

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Atlanta Oversight Division
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972
Atlanta, GA 30303

Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant: (Appellant)
Agency classification: Building Management Specialist
GS-1176-11

Organization: Building Operations
Social Security Administration

OPM decision: Building Management Specialist
GS-1176-11

OPM decision number: C-1176-11-01

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

4/16/99

-
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[Appellant]

Mr. Bert Fowler
Director, Center for Personnel
Operations
Social Security Administration
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6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Introduction

On January 27, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted an appeal for the position of Building Management Specialist, GS-1176-11, [organizational location], [geographical location]. The appellant is requesting that his position be classified as Building Management Specialist, GS-1176-12.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.). This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

General issues

The appellant compares the duties of his position to those of Management Analyst, GS-343-12, positions in his organization. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others as a basis for deciding his appeal.

The appellant does not believe his position description is accurate because it does not include some contracting duties, and he lists a number of reasons that duties in his position description should be credited at a higher grade. He also states that his title should be Assistant Building Manager.

OPM considers a position description adequate for classification purposes when it is considered so by one knowledgeable of the occupational field involved and of the application of pertinent classification standards, principles, and policies, and supplemented by otherwise accurate, available, and current information on the organization, functions, programs, and procedures concerned. We find the current position description adequate. For purposes of this appeal, our decision will be based on the official position description of record. The statements the appellant makes in support of a higher grade do not describe duties of the position and, therefore, are not related to the adequacy of the position description. Such statements are considered when determining the grade of the position.

The law (5 U.S.C. 5101) requires OPM to establish the official titles of positions in published classification standards. Accordingly, position classification standards generally prescribe the titles to be used for positions in the covered series. Only the prescribed titles may be used on official documents relating to a position. The requirement to use official titles, however, does not preclude agencies from using internally any unofficial title they choose for a position.

As part of the supplemental information regarding his duties and responsibilities, the appellant referenced criteria from the Building Management Series, GS-1176, used to determine the grade

of building manager positions having direct responsibility for managing the operation of one or more buildings. Since the appellant is not the Building Manager, reference to this criteria is not applicable to the grading of his position.

Position information

The appellant is assigned to position description number [#]. The supervisor and agency have certified to the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant serves as Building Management Specialist for the [organizational location], Social Security Administration, [geographical location]. This position's working title is Assistant Building Manager. This is a government leased facility housing 1953 employees and physically consisting of more than 600,00 square feet and an additional 595,000 square feet of parking and grounds area. The appellant is responsible for assisting the Building Manager in the day to day operations related to maintenance, repairs, improvement, cleaning, and protection of space. A number of carpenters, custodians, electricians, painters, plumbers, and heating and refrigeration equipment maintenance personnel are contracted to perform these functions. The appellant assists in overseeing repairs and improvements to the building and equipment; ensuring that work conforms with contract specifications; conducting inspections to ensure the lessor's compliance with lease specifications regarding services and maintenance; and ensuring that laws and regulations related to matters such as safety, work hours and overtime are adhered to by contracted staff. He also assists in the management, utilization, planning, and alteration of space; oversight of the cleanliness of cafeteria operations; review of utility requirements to ensure that the quantities supplied by providers meet the facility's needs; and development of policies on hazardous material removal.

The appellant works under the supervision of the Manager, [organizational location], who provides primarily general and administrative supervision. The Building Manager, who is the Building Operations group leader and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility, is the appellant's contact for his daily activities. The appellant works with a high degree of independence in performing his duties and resolving problems in his area of responsibility. The Building Manager and the supervisor are advised of the appellant's progress in carrying out his duties, as well as informed of any unusual developments. Evaluation of the appellant's work is accomplished through periodic inspections, feedback from occupants, compliance with agency policies, and attainment of objectives.

Series determination

The agency placed the position in the Building Management Series, GS-1176. The appellant does not contest the agency's series determination.

The Building Management Series, GS-1176, covers positions that involve management of buildings and other facilities to provide organizations with appropriate office space and essential

building services. Employees in this series typically perform one or more of the following functions: (1) applying business knowledge to directly manage, or assist in managing, the operation of one or more buildings and the surrounding property; (2) directing comprehensive building management programs; or (3) performing staff level work in the study of building management methods and the development of standard building management practices. We agree with the agency's decision. The position is properly placed in the GS-1176 series.

Title determination

The title *Building Management Specialist* is authorized for positions involved in building operations programs subordinate to building managers.

Standard determination

Building Management Series, GS-1176, August 1971.
Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide, August 1990.

Grade determination

Building Manager positions are graded by comparison to the criteria in the Building Management Series, GS-1176, standard. The GS-1176 standard requires the grades of building management specialists and other staff positions to be determined by criteria in the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide or other criteria appropriate for the work.

The Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to nonsupervisory General Schedule positions.

A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor levels. For a position factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor-level description in the standard, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

Under FES, positions which significantly exceed the highest factor level or fail to meet the lowest factor level described in a classification standard must be evaluated by reference to the Primary Standard, contained in Appendix 3 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards. The Primary Standard is the "standard-for-standards" for FES.

The appellant disagrees with the agency evaluation of factors 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9. We have reviewed the agency evaluation of factors 1, 5, 6, and 7, and agree with their determination. Therefore, only those factors contested by the appellant will be addressed in this decision.

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls:

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work. The agency credited level 2-4. The appellant believes that Level 2-5 is correct.

At Level 2-4, the employee and supervisor develop a mutually acceptable project plan within a framework of priorities, funding and overall objectives which typically includes identification of the work to be done, the scope of the project, and deadlines for its completion. Within the parameters of the project plan, the employee is responsible for planning and organizing the study, estimating costs, coordinating with staff and line management, and conducting all phases of the study. The supervisor is kept informed of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems with widespread impact. Completed projects are reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives.

At Level 2-5, the employee is recognized as an authority in the analysis and evaluation of programs and issues and is subject only to administrative and policy direction concerning overall project priorities and objectives. The employee is typically delegated complete responsibility and authority to plan, schedule, and carry out major projects concerned with the analysis and evaluation of programs or organizational effectiveness. The employee typically exercises discretion and judgment in determining whether to broaden or narrow the scope of projects or studies. Analyses, evaluations, and recommendations developed by the employee are normally reviewed only for potential influence on broad agency policy objectives and program goals. Findings and recommendations are normally accepted without significant change.

Level 2-4 is met. The appellant operates with a significant degree of independence in carrying out assignments. He typically resolves most problems encountered and keeps the building manager and his supervisor informed of progress on assignments and unusual problems related to matters affecting the operation of the facility, contracts, leases, maintenance and custodial services, and other areas in which he is involved. The appellant functions within a framework of priorities and objectives, a project plan acceptable to the supervisor and himself, and general agency policies and procedures. He is responsible for completion of all phases of the assigned project. Completed work is evaluated in terms of the effectiveness in achieving objectives and compliance with agency policy.

Level 2-5 is not met. The appellant does not have sole responsibility for planning, scheduling, or carrying out major projects which impact the operations of the facility or influence agency policies and overall program goals. This position functions as an assistant to the individual

responsible for directing the building management program. He has specific responsibilities in areas associated with day to day operations, but the ultimate authority, responsibility, and accountability for significant activities that impact operations lie with the building manager and his superior.

This factor is credited at Level 2-4 for 450 points.

Factor 3 - Guidelines:

This factor covers the nature of guidelines used; and the judgment needed to apply them. The agency credited Level 3-3. The appellant believes that Level 3-4 is correct.

At Level 3-3, guidelines consist of standard reference materials, texts, and manuals covering the application of analytical methods and techniques and instructions and manuals covering the subjects involved. Analytical methods contained in the guidelines are not always directly applicable to specific work assignments. However, precedent studies of similar subjects are available for reference. The employee uses judgment in choosing, interpreting, or adapting available guidelines to specific issues or subjects studied. The employee analyzes the subject and the current guidelines which cover it and makes recommendations for changes. Included at this level are work assignments in which the subject studied is covered by a wide variety of administrative regulations and procedural guidelines. In such circumstances the employee must use judgment in researching regulations, and in determining the relationship between guidelines and organizational efficiency, program effectiveness, or employee productivity.

At Level 3-4, guidelines consist of general administrative policies and management and organizational theories requiring considerable adaptation or interpretation for application to issues and problems studied. At this level, administrative policies and precedent studies provide a basic outline of the results desired, but do not go into details as to the methods used to accomplish the project. Administrative guidelines usually cover program goals and objectives of the employing organization, such as agency controls on size of workforce, productivity targets, and similar objectives. Within the context of broad regulatory guidelines, the employee may refine or develop more specific guidelines such as implementing regulations or methods for the measurement and improvement of effectiveness and productivity in the administration of operating programs.

Level 3-3 is met. The appellant has a variety of specific and general guidelines, consisting of standard reference materials, texts, or manuals, available from which to work. These guidelines cover areas such as equipment, procedures, policies, regulations, contracts, etc., related to building management. However, they may not be directly applicable for each specific assignment or cover unique situations. In these instances, the appellant must develop, interpret, or adapt guidelines to achieve objectives. Many of his assignments involve activities covered by a variety of administrative regulations and procedural guidelines. The appellant must research regulations and use judgment in determining the relationships between guidelines and the functions of his organization's activities.

Level 3-4 is not met. At this level, guidelines typically consist of administrative policy statements, pertinent legislative history, court decisions, agency management policy initiatives, state and local laws, etc. The employee must use judgment to determine their intent and to interpret and revise existing policy and regulatory guidance for use by others within and outside the organization. The appellant's assignments typically involve activities covered by a variety of administrative regulations and procedural guidelines that are more specific than legislation and court decisions as described at this level. In addition, he is not responsible for interpreting or revising existing policy for use by others as is characteristic of Level 3-4.

This factor is credited at Level 3-3 for 275 points.

Factor 4 - Complexity:

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work. The agency credited Level 4-4. The appellant believes Level 4-5 is correct.

At Level 4-4, the work involves gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues, and developing recommendations to resolve substantive problems of effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or program support setting. Subjects and projects assigned at this level usually consist of issues, problems, or concepts that are not always susceptible to observation and analysis. Difficulty is encountered in measuring effectiveness and productivity due to variations in the nature of administrative processes studied. Information about the subject is often conflicting or incomplete, cannot readily be obtained by direct means, or is likewise difficult to document. Characteristic of this level is originality in refining existing work methods and techniques for application to the analysis of specific issues or resolution of problems.

At Level 4-5, the work consists of projects and studies which require analysis of interrelated issues of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of substantive mission-oriented programs. Typical assignments require developing detailed plans, goals, and objectives for the long-range implementation and administration of the program and/or developing criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Decisions about how to proceed in planning, organizing and conducting studies are complicated by conflicting program goals and objectives which may derive from changes in legislative or regulatory guidelines, productivity, and/or variations in the demand for program services. Options, recommendations, and conclusions developed by the employee take into account and give appropriate weight to uncertainties about the data and other variables which affect long-range program performance.

Level 4-4 is met. The appellant's work consists of building management functions involving a variety of problems related to equipment, repairs, leases, maintenance, contracts, space alteration and utilization, etc. The appellant is involved in inspections of equipment, facility and maintenance repairs; analysis of maintenance requirements and costs; review and analysis of utility

services; and review of contract provisions and compliance. These activities are conducted to gather information, analyze issues, identify problems, and develop recommendations to resolve problems. In many instances, problems encountered are not easily identifiable through direct observation or analysis, or are difficult to measure and document. The appellant is required to be innovative in refining or revising existing methods and techniques to resolve problems and handle issues that have a negative impact on the efficiency of operations.

Level 4-5 is not met. The assignments and projects for which the appellant is responsible do not typically involve analyzing various major program issues and their relationship to each other or the development of long-range program goals and objectives. The majority of his analytical activity focuses on the individual aspects of operations, such as equipment repair, maintenance and custodial contract compliance, or delivery of services, etc. The appellant's assignments, while essential to the operations at the facility as a whole, are not complicated by conflicting program goals and objectives or by a need to evaluate the overall program effectiveness or to assess one program in light of its impact on other programs.

This factor is credited at Level 4-4 for 225 points.

Factor 8. Physical Demands:

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. The agency credited Level 8-1. The appellant believes Level 8-2 is correct.

At Level 8-1, the work is primarily sedentary, although some slight physical effort may be required.

At Level 8-2, assignments regularly involve long periods of standing, bending, and stooping to observe and study work operations in an industrial, storage, or comparable work area.

Level 8-1 is met. The appellant's work is primarily sedentary in nature and is performed in an office setting. Although some periodic physical effort is involved (climbing ladders, bending and stooping to inspect machinery, walking and standing during monitoring activities, etc.), the focus of his responsibilities are the administrative and analytical aspects of building operations.

Level 8-2 is not met. Although the appellant's work involves some periodic activity requiring limited physical effort, there are no indications that his work routinely involves or requires lengthy or recurring periods of physical exertion, agility, dexterity, etc., in the kind of setting described at this level.

This factor is credited at Level 8-1 for 5 points.

Factor 9. Work Environment:

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings, or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. The agency credited Level 9-1. The appellant believes Level 9-2 is correct.

At Level 9-1, work is typically performed in an adequately lighted and climate controlled office.

At Level 9-2, assignments regularly involve visits to manufacturing, storage, or other industrial areas, and involve moderate risk or discomforts. Protective clothing and gear and observance of safety precautions are required.

Level 9-1 is met and exceeded. The appellant's work is performed in a variety of settings such as offices, a warehouse, parking areas, and facility grounds. There are occasions when the appellant's activities are outside and may involve exposure to inclement weather or require hearing or eye protection, or a hard hat.

Level 9-2 is not fully met. The appellant's activities involve periodic inspections of areas containing equipment or machinery, air conditioning, heating, etc., to oversee or arrange for repairs, to monitor the activities of contract maintenance and custodial personnel and agency personnel responsible for inspecting their work, and to identify problems. However, the majority of his assignments do not involve regular and recurring exposure to risks or discomforts, use of protective clothing and equipment, or observance of special safety precautions and he does not regularly visit manufacturing and industrial areas as intended to credit this level.

Although level 9-1 is exceeded, Level 9-2 is not fully met, therefore, it cannot be credited. This factor is credited at Level 9-1 for 5 points.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Knowledge Required By The Position	1-7	1250
2. Supervisory Controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	3-c	180
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	2540

In accordance with the grade conversion chart in the standard, a total of 2540 points falls within the range for a GS-11, 2355 to 2750 points.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Building Management Specialist, GS-1176-11.