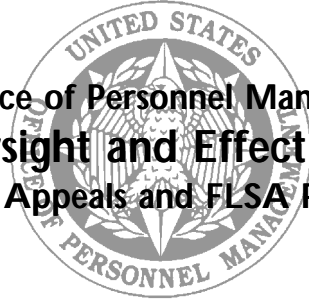


U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness  
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Dallas Oversight Division  
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22  
Dallas, TX 75242

**Job Grading Appeal Decision**  
**Under Section 5346 of Title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [appellant's name]

**Agency classification:** Aircraft Engine Mechanic  
WG-8602-11

**Organization:** Propulsion Flight  
[Squadron, Group, Wing]  
[geographic location]

**OPM decision:** Aircraft Engine Mechanic  
WG-8602-11

**OPM decision number:** C-8602-11-01

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon  
Bonnie J. Brandon  
Classification Appeals Officer

7/1/99  
Date

As provided in section S7-8 of the Operating Manual, Federal Wage System, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions specified in section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section H).

**Decision sent to:**

[appellant's name and address]

Chief, Civilian Personnel Flight  
[address of servicing personnel office]

HQ AFRC/DPCC  
U.S. Department of the Air Force  
155 2nd Street  
Robbins Air Force Base, GA 31908-1635

Director, Civilian Personnel Operations  
U.S. Department of the Air Force  
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HQ USAF/DPCC  
1040 Air Force Pentagon  
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## Introduction

On March 15, 1999, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [the appellant]. [The appellant's] job is currently classified as Aircraft Engine Mechanic, WG-8602-11. The appellant believes his job should be evaluated as Aircraft Engine Mechanic Supervisor, WS-8602-9. In an appeal decision issued by the U.S. Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service on February 23, 1999, the agency concluded the job was properly classified as Aircraft Engine Mechanic, WG-8602-11. The appellant works in the Propulsion Flight, [Squadron, Group, Wing], at [name of an Air Force Base]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

## General issues

In his August 10, 1998, appeal to his agency, the appellant said his job should be classified as Propulsion Shop Supervisor, WS-8602-9. The record shows the appellant does not disagree with the accuracy of his official position description (PD), position number [number], but he claims that the supervisory duties and responsibilities have not been evaluated correctly. In particular, he stressed his responsibility for planning, directing, and administering the day-to-day work of his four subordinate WG-8602-10 Aircraft Engine Mechanics. He believes that his job is covered by the Job Grading Standard (JGS) for Federal Wage System (FWS) Supervisors because of the amount of time he spends on supervisory responsibilities.

The appellant submitted a copy of a description for a WS-8602-8 Aircraft Engine Mechanic Supervisor job at another air force base and indicated that his job should be classified the same as the other job. By law, jobs must be graded solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM job grading standards (JGS's), guidelines (5 U.S.C 5346), and instructions. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. We have evaluated the work assigned by management and performed by the appellant according to the JGS requirements. In reaching our decision, we carefully reviewed the information provided by the appellant and his agency, including the appellant's PD of record. We find the PD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the appellant and is hereby incorporated by reference into this decision.

Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify jobs based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. However, the agency also has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant considers his position so similar to others that they all warrant the same classification, he may pursue the matter by writing to his agency's personnel headquarters, i.e., the Department of the Air Force. In doing so, he should specify the precise organizational location, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the jobs in questions. Otherwise, the agency should explain to him the differences between his job and the other.

## **Job information**

The purpose of the appellant's job is to serve as small shop chief in the Propulsion Flight, exercising technical and administrative supervisory responsibility over four employees who occupy identical additional jobs as WG-8602-10 Aircraft Engine Mechanic. The appellant receives his assignments from his supervisor, the WS-8602-10 Aircraft Engine Mechanic Supervisor of the Propulsion Flight. The appellant then assigns the daily work to subordinate employees, relaying work priorities and deadlines. He reviews work in progress and, upon completion, ensures the adequacy of the work performed. The appellant keeps his supervisor informed of work status.

The appellant takes time and attendance and notifies his supervisor of personnel available for duty. He establishes performance standards and initiates formal appraisals of subordinates. The appellant counsels employees and, when possible, adjusts complaints before they become formalized. He maintains time and attendance records and prepares and coordinates leave schedules with the supervisor. The appellant enforces safety rules and regulations. He also maintains the supervisor's record of employee training, time and leave schedules, and other records as required.

Most of the appellant's time (about 75 percent) is spent with line engine repairs. The appellant removes, installs, repairs, inspects, and tests engines and auxiliary power units of C-130H aircraft. He performs functional tests and maintenance operational checks and evaluates the performance of the engines and the auxiliary power units. The appellant assembles and tears down engines, determines whether component parts can be repaired or must be replaced, and makes diagnostic checks and adjustments as needed. The appellant's job description and other material of record provide much more information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

The appellant operates under the general supervision of the WS-8602-10 Aircraft Engine Mechanic Supervisor who also provides general supervision to a WS-8602-8 who supervises five Aircraft Engine Mechanics at grade 10. The WS-10 has supervisory responsibility over the Propulsion Flight and has final authority over leave, awards, discipline, and all administrative matters.

## **Occupation, title, and standards determination**

The agency has assigned the appellant's job to the Aircraft Engine Mechanic occupation, but the appellant believes it should be assigned as Aircraft Engine Mechanic Supervisor.

All aspects of the classification criteria (i.e., coverage, percentage of time, grading factors, and the full intent of the JGS) must be fully met for jobs to be evaluated under the FWS JGS for Supervisors. Appropriate application of the JGS requires full and careful analysis of all relevant factors. The central coverage criteria in the JGS, i.e., the ongoing requirement that supervisors perform supervisory duties on a substantially full-time and continuing basis are stringent. Substantially full-time means performing supervisory/leader duties to such an extent that, for all

intents and purposes, it is considered to be comparable to full time or 100 percent. Consequently, jobs that perform supervisory functions on less than a substantially full-time basis (i.e., less than 85 percent of the time) do not meet the basic criteria for coverage and should not be evaluated under the FWS JGS for Supervisors. Although such employees have supervisory responsibilities as a regular and recurring part of their jobs, the supervisory responsibility is not exercised on a substantially full-time basis as required under the supervisory JGS. When such a situation occurs, the job is graded under the regular nonsupervisory grading structure and not under the FWS JGS for Supervisors.

According to the official PD, which the appellant and his supervisor have stated is accurate and complete, the journey level duties comprise approximately 75 percent of the work time and the supervisory duties occupy approximately 25 percent of the work time.

Duties and responsibilities assigned to a job flow from the mission assigned to the organization in which they are found. The jobs created to perform that assigned mission must be considered in relation to one another; i.e., each job reflects a part of the work assigned to the organization. Therefore, the duties and responsibilities assigned to the appellant's job and performed by him may not be considered in a vacuum.

The identical additional PD's occupied by the appellant's subordinates contain duties and responsibilities typical of journey level jobs in the WG-8602 Aircraft Engine Mechanic trade. At the grade 10 level, detailed technical instructions or supervision is not necessary. The subordinates do their own planning and work independently. They receive their assignments with a minimum of accompanying instructions concerning the work methods or the materials to be used. The appellant is available for advice or assistance on very difficult problems.

The subordinate identical additional PD's reflect the need for very little technical supervision. The journey level concept within the FWS presumes that occupants of such jobs are delegated significant work planning responsibilities. For example, WG-8602-10 employees independently determine the type and extent of repairs needed, and complete the repairs with occasional spot checks during progress. They repair and rework engine parts and components and replace accessories such as portions of electrical, pneumatic, and hydraulic systems, reassembling and trimming the unit to maximum operating capability. WG-8602-10 employees have a thorough knowledge of engine repair practices in order to identify and correctly choose between alternative methods and trade techniques. If the appellant were to exercise the breadth and depth of supervision necessary to occupy his time on a substantially full-time and continuing basis, the subordinate jobs could not sustain their grading at the journey level. While the appellant may spend a significant amount of time on administrative functions to support the Aircraft Engine Mechanic Supervisor (e.g., providing for shop facility and other support needs), his technical supervision over journey level work should be minimal. In summary, the appellant's job clearly falls short of coverage by the FWS JGS for Supervisors.

## Grade determination

In the FWS, grade levels of jobs are not determined by accumulation of grade levels of work performed but by the highest grade of work that is regular and recurring as defined by established OPM job grading guidance. To be credited, a level in a JGS must be met fully.

The JGS for WG-8602 Aircraft Engine Mechanic uses four factors for grade determination: *Skill and knowledge*, *Responsibility*, *Physical effort*, and *Working conditions*.

### *Skill and knowledge*

The appellant's skill and knowledge to perform his journey level work fully meet the grade 10 level. At this level, aircraft engine mechanics must have a thorough knowledge of the installation, operation, and repair of gas turbine or reciprocating aircraft engines and accessory systems to maintain, repair, or test different types of engines in aircraft test cells or maintenance shops and to determine methods of repair to use, the degree of disassembly necessary, and serviceability of parts or rework required before reassembly. Grade 10 aircraft engine mechanics must have a thorough knowledge of engine repair practices to identify and correctly choose between alternative methods and trade techniques and to adapt accepted repair procedures to new or unfamiliar engines or accessory systems. Aircraft engine mechanics at this level must be skilled in the interpretation and use of technical orders, manufacturers' catalogs, maintenance bulletins, etc., to obtain the needed technical information. They have the ability to troubleshoot engine malfunctions and make a tentative diagnosis, select needed tools, and test equipment. As at the grade 10, the appellant uses this knowledge and skill to make diagnostic checks, modify engines and component parts, repair or replace parts, and perform final functional and operational tests of engines.

The appellant's small shop chief functions reflect the exercise of skill and knowledge that exceed the WG-10 level entailed in planning, accomplishing, and maintaining the shop technical program. To perform that work, the appellant must be able to plan and schedule work for himself and his four subordinates; determine the best way to accomplish section workload; make sure adequate tools, equipment, and materials are available; and provide input to the Aircraft Engine Mechanic Supervisor on the full range of section needs. OPM job grading guidance on small shop chief jobs refers to the JGS for Pest Controller, WG-5026. That JGS provides grading criteria for jobs that are responsible for a complete facility pest control program requiring a complete pest management program. The program is large enough to typically require the assistance of up to two other pest controllers but is not large enough to require direction by a full-time FWS supervisor. The WG-5026 JGS recognizes that the skill and knowledge demands required to perform this range of program management warrant the addition of one grade above the level of work led. We find the appellant exercises similar skill and knowledge in performing his small shop chief functions, resulting in evaluation of this factor at the grade 11 level.

### *Responsibility*

The responsibility exercised by the appellant to perform his journey level work fully meets the grade 10 level. Aircraft engine mechanics at this level receive work assignments orally or through work orders. They independently determine the type and extent of repairs needed and complete repairs with occasional spot checks during progress. They refer to operations logs, trouble reports, and technical manuals when locating and correcting defects and follow clearance and adjustment specifications found in technical manuals. The supervisor ensures that overall work meets accepted trade standards and provides assistance on unusual problems when requested. As at the grade 10 level, the appellant receives work assignments in the form of written or oral work orders; he plans the sequence in which the work will be accomplished, selects tools, and carries out all work assignments in accordance with technical specifications; and his work may be spot checked for adequacy and compliance with technical orders.

The WG-5026 JGS recognizes that pest controllers who plan, organize, direct, and perform complete facility pest control programs; determine the approaches, methods, and courses of action in dealing with program issues; assure program methods and results adhere to regulatory requirements; and advise management on program needs exercise responsibility graded one level above the full performance level. The appellant exercises similar responsibilities in his small shop chief functions, resulting in the evaluation of this factor at the grade 11 level.

*Physical effort* and *Working conditions* described in the WG-8602 JGS are the same at all defined grade levels.

### *Summary*

Based on the preceding analysis and application of the whole job grade criteria of the FWS, the appellant's personally performed work is evaluated properly at the grade 10 level and his small shop chief work is evaluated properly at the grade 11 level.

### **Decision**

In applying established FWS and grading principles, the appellant's job is graded properly as Aircraft Engine Mechanic, WG-8602-11.