

Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [Name of appellant]

Agency classification: Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic
WG-5803-10

Organization: [Appellant's organization/work location]
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

OPM decision: Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic
WG-5803-10

OPM decision number: C-5803-10-01

/s/ Robert D Hendler

Robert D. Hendler
Classification and Pay Claims
Program Manager
Center for Merit System Accountability

May 15, 2008

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 and time limits specified in section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) (address provided in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section H).

As indicated in this decision, our findings show that the appellant's official job description (JD) does not meet the standard of adequacy described in *Federal Wage System-Appropriated Fund Operating Manual, Subchapter S6-6.d*. Since job descriptions must meet the standard of adequacy, the agency must revise the appellant's JD to reflect our findings. The servicing human resources office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected JD within 30 days of the date of this decision to the San Francisco Oversight and Accountability Group.

Decision sent to:

[Appellant's mailing address]

[Mailing address of appellant's representative]

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Bureau of Land Management

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Introduction

On August 30, 2007, the San Francisco Oversight and Accountability Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [name of appellant]. On September 25, 2007, we received the agency's complete administrative report. The appellant's job is currently graded as Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic, WG-5803-10, but he believes because of technological advances in heavy equipment over the years it should be upgraded to grade 11. The appellant works in the [appellant's organization/work location] Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of the Interior. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

The appellant believes that the 5803 Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic job grading standard (JGS) is outdated. However, the content of standards established for his job is not appealable (5 CFR 532.701).

Both the appellant and his supervisor believe that the appellant's JD [number] is not entirely accurate because it does not reflect the complexity of the duties the appellant currently performs. A JD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a job by an official with the authority to assign work. A job is the work made up of the duties and responsibilities performed by an employee. Job grading appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a job and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision grades a real operating job, and not simply the JD. Therefore, this decision is based on the actual work assigned to and performed by the appellant.

The appellant is assigned to a standard agency JD used for jobs at field maintenance locations. Under the "Major Duties" section, the JD indicates the incumbent of the job performs a "full-range of overhaul and repair on a variety of complex and inter-connected systems found on wheeled and track-type heavy engineering equipment." A similar statement is made in the discussion of the "Responsibility" factor. Under the "Skills and Knowledge" factor, the JD indicates the incumbent "modifies, alters and/or substitutes parts to fit and mesh into systems for which the parts were not designed" and must possess the ability to "develop or improvise methods, alter parts and make repairs in the absence of technical guidelines." However, as discussed later in this decision, our findings disclosed the appellant does not work on complex and inter-connected systems, and does not modify or alter parts on a regular basis. Additionally, because technical guidelines and references fully cover his repair work, he is not called upon to improvise methods in the absence of them. Therefore, the agency must revise the JD to reflect our findings addressed in this decision.

The appellant contends that similar jobs in other agencies and organizations are graded at a higher level, thus his job should be higher graded. In adjudicating this appeal, our responsibility is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of this job. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing his current duties and responsibilities to appropriate job grading standards (JGS) (5 U.S.C. 5346). Since comparison to JGSs is the

exclusive method for grading jobs, we cannot compare the appellant's job to others in different agencies which may or may not be properly graded as a basis for deciding this appeal.

Job information

The appellant performs mechanical maintenance and repair on 25 or more pieces of road construction equipment and heavy trucks, and a variety of smaller pieces of equipment. He services the vehicles of two road crews and maintains, troubleshoots, diagnoses, repairs, inspects, tests, and operates heavy road/construction equipment such as motor graders, crawler tractors, hydraulic excavators, articulated bidirectional tractors, rollers, bulldozers, backhoes, front-end loaders, dump trucks, and a fire engine. He works on a variety of systems (e.g., electrical, hydraulic, computerized, fuel, air), and uses technical manuals, specialized diagnostic equipment, computer programs, industry contacts, troubleshooting guides, etc.

Each piece of equipment is on a regular replacement schedule, based on a specified number of operator hours. Most are replaced within ten to twelve years, although heavily-used brush cutters are replaced about every seven years. The appellant and his supervisor discuss specifications for the best replacement, considering recent technical improvements for that type of equipment, size of engine needed, configuration of dump boxes or other components, best brands for the use intended, etc. The appellant helps define the optimal specifications, and the supervisor coordinates the replacement.

In determining the best replacement vehicles, the appellant studies the operator and service manuals for each new piece of equipment and talks with the dealer to become familiar with the equipment. From his review he makes recommendations to his supervisor regarding how to set up the new vehicle, e.g., setting operator controls and defining efficient operating guidelines, customizing with additional special components including an apron for rock dozing or installing specialty buckets without affecting the warranty. Additionally, the appellant sets operator controls for the most efficient use of the new vehicle and to prevent major failures, and programs limits in the electronic control module (ECM) to prevent operator error or abuse. These include settings to ensure miles per hour (MPH) or revolutions per minute (RPM) are controlled, especially on wheeled vehicles (vs. tracked), because they tend to have more mechanical problems due to faster ground speed and jarring of parts and engines.

The appellant regularly performs preventative maintenance and inspection work on each piece of equipment and occasionally operates welding equipment for fabrication and repair purposes. Operators of each piece of heavy equipment document their daily use in service books and report the information to their supervisors. The two division supervisors track the service periods and alert the appellant when preventative maintenance and inspections are due. For each piece of equipment the appellant regularly changes the engine oil every 200 hours of use, changes the transmission oil every 500 hours of use, and changes all other fluids every two years. He adjusts, repairs and replaces system components, reinforces stress points on steel pieces, and rebuilds and strengthens buckets and other components. He checks the ECM on each piece of equipment for RPM and MPH patterns, fuel mileage, efficiency of engine use, and fault codes, e.g., such as a drop of water in the system.

In addition to daily operator maintenance and inspections, the appellant regularly conducts safety and/or comprehensive inspections on each piece of equipment, some monthly, some every six months, some annually, and some every 1000 hours of use which are the most time-consuming. He refers to the vehicle's operator manual when conducting most inspections. When a problem is found, it is written up and added to his vehicle repair checklist and includes his parts order. He performs the repair as his schedule permits. The appellant indicated that he routinely inspects vehicles for wear, loose components, fractures, electrical issues, lines rubbing, etc., in addition to carrying out scheduled inspections. Between the operators and the appellant, a "walk-around" vehicle inspection schedule was developed which has proven to prevent most major failures.

For the majority of his time, the appellant works out of a 3,300 gross vehicle weight (GVW) mobile field service truck (away from major repair shops), sometimes traveling up to 250 miles in a day. In the truck he carries nine pallets of tools, a welder, spare steel, hydraulic jacks, air compressors, an electric hydraulic crane, boom, cutting torches, numerous spare parts and fluids, and a laptop computer. He uses two road maintenance shops and a smaller fire cache shop to move equipment out of the weather into a cleaner environment, and away from potential vandalism when necessary. Because few additional tools are stocked in the installation shops, he typically provides the same level of service in the field working out of his mobile service truck as in the shops.

The appellant uses skill and knowledge to diagnose and repair moderate problems, and refers more time-consuming, major repairs to outside, private sector shops. He generally encounters approximately four major repairs a year, which are sent to commercial repair shops 80-100 miles away. A small local commercial shop is also utilized for repairs the appellant does not have time to complete due to breakdowns in the field which typically occur on a daily basis. The appellant sends all warranty work to the appropriate dealership or manufacturer for completion.

Frequent and typical engine repairs he performs involve hydraulic repairs (e.g., cylinders get knocked out or bent by trees and logs, leaks in high-pressure systems, leaky seals), electrical repairs (e.g., switches and sensors), metal work (e.g., big cutter bars, hubs, re-torquing loose components, rebuilding pin bosses that hold booms together), fabrication and welding (e.g., re-strengthening steel), and some fuel system repairs. As needed, he replaces valves, pumps, hydraulics, starters, alternators, and batteries. Most often, the appellant works on the grader, loader, backhoes, chip spreader, excavator, crawler tractor, and brush cutters.

The appellant plans his own work, responding to breakdowns and repairs first. The principal function of the job is to keep all of the heavy equipment up and running for both road maintenance crews. Sometimes there are multiple breakdowns and the appellant prioritizes his work accordingly. The nature of the work is fast-paced, with constantly changing priorities and unexpected repair situations. When priority repair projects are completed and there are no breakdowns, the appellant has numerous small projects in the shops to work on.

The appellant talks with his supervisor twice a day to report what he's working on and to discuss equipment and repair issues, special assignments, scheduling, large purchases, and/or outstanding resource needs. Two equipment operator crew foremen inform the appellant of upcoming projects so that he can plan ahead and order anticipated parts to avoid one to five days

of downtime while awaiting parts. Operator, service and parts manuals are located in the appellant's office in the fire cache shop, and he is able to research problems and/or order parts when in the vicinity, usually once or twice a day.

In reaching our job grading decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and his agency, including the official JD which, although inaccurate in some aspects, we find to be sufficient overall for purposes of describing the work performed and incorporate it by reference into this decision. In addition, to help decide the appeal we conducted separate telephone interviews with the appellant and his immediate supervisor.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency allocated the appellant's job to the Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic, 5803 occupational series, titling it Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic; and the appellant does not disagree. We concur with the agency's title and occupational series determination. The JGS for the 5803 series contains appropriate grading criteria which we have applied below to the appellant's job.

The appellant's rationale stresses the inspection work he performs and believes it supports a higher grade level. All aspects of the job grading criteria must be fully met for jobs to be evaluated under the FWS JGS for Inspectors. Appropriate application of the JGS requires full and careful analysis of all relevant factors. The JGS for Inspectors indicates it is generally used to grade nonsupervisory jobs that involve examining services, materials, and products that are processed, manufactured, or repaired by workers performing trade or craft work to determine that the physical and operating characteristics are within acceptable standards, specifications, or contractual requirements.

Under a formal inspection program, FWS inspectors typically perform several different categories of inspections. For task evaluations, they observe a mechanic performing a job and determine if it is performed in accordance with appropriate directives and technical orders and then grade the mechanic. In quality verification inspections, they evaluate maintenance procedures, processes, or products to determine if they are being accomplished in accordance with standards, codes, technical orders, work specifications, drawings, and work control documents. Inspectors also perform a variety of core and other inspections that may involve such things as work control documents, safety practices, maintenance of a clean work area, and maintenance and control of tools and equipment. They use checklists, rating instructions, technical data, and other guidelines in performing these inspections.

As noted in published OPM interpretive guidance (OPM's Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions, No. 07-06), "the inspection work covered by the JGS for Inspectors always involves comparison of work that has been partially or completely finished in accordance with standards, specifications, or contractual requirements." In contrast, inspections performed by the appellant are typical of those performed by journey-level trades and crafts employees prior to or after completing repair, maintenance, and/or overhaul work. Rather than part of a total inspection process, the appellant's review of commercially provided repairs is an extension of the "inspection" work typical of the testing and troubleshooting performed by mechanics and

workers in the trade rather than the full range of FWS inspection work covered by the FWS JGS for Inspectors

Grade determination

The 5803 JGS uses four factors to determine the grade level of a job: *Skill and Knowledge*, *Responsibility*, *Physical Effort*, and *Working Conditions*. A job is graded as a whole against the level of demands found at different grades. No single factor is considered by itself, but only in relation to its impact on the other factors. A job is allocated to the grade best representing the overall demands of the work.

Skill and Knowledge

In order to diagnose, repair, overhaul, and modify heavy mobile equipment, systems, and vehicles, grade 10 level mechanics have a thorough knowledge of the mechanical makeup, operation, and working relationships of heavy-duty systems, assemblies, and parts, including such major systems as diesel, multifuel, and gasoline engines, including supercharged and turbocharged engines; turbine engines; automatic and manual transmissions and gear reduction systems, including those with torque converters, planetary gears, and power take offs; drive line assemblies including differentials, power dividers, and dual speed axles; electrical and electronic systems and accessories, including ignition systems, charging and starting systems, and wiring and lighting systems; carbureted and fuel injection systems; and emission control systems.

Mechanics at grade 10 are knowledgeable of electrical, electronic, hydraulic, pneumatic, and other nonmechanical systems which have a functional relationship and effect on the operation of mechanical systems. They have a thorough knowledge of hydraulic lifting, loading, turning, and positioning systems and their mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, and electronic controls. They have a basic knowledge of electronics sufficient to identify and replace defective components, such as sensors, diodes, and circuit boards, and they refer more complex problems to electronics mechanics. Heavy mobile equipment mechanics at this level are able to trace and locate defects which cause hydraulic and other major systems to fail or not perform up to specifications regarding power output, lifting capacity, speed, and pressure. They analyze malfunctions and determine the extent of repairs necessary by visual and auditory examinations and by the use of a wide variety of test equipment, such as engine analyzers, dynamometers, exhaust analyzers, vacuum and fuel pump testers, injector testers, ignition timers, tachometers, voltmeters and gauges, micrometers, calipers, and dial indicators.

Grade 10 level mechanics are able to select and comply with technical manuals, illustrations, specifications, diagrams, schematics, and similar guides to make repairs and modifications according to specifications and procedures. For example, some of these guides describe and show the complete assembly of engines and transmissions, and the layout of hydraulic systems with related pneumatic, electrical, and mechanical connections and controls. Mechanics at this level have skill in measuring, fitting, and installing components, such as pistons, valves, bearings, gears, and cylinders, to specified clearances. They can connect, mesh, align, and adjust parts and systems to assure proper operation of the complete system or vehicle. For example, they adjust pumps, power boosters, drive chains, and tension devices; synchronize remote or

manual electrical and hydraulic controls; and set timing of magnetos, distributors, injectors, and injection pumps to engine specifications.

Mechanics at the grade 11 level apply greater skill and knowledge than mechanics at grade 10 in the repair, overhaul, and modification of vehicles and equipment which are substantially more complex than those described at the grade 10 level. For example, interconnected systems can present greater difficulty in determining the cause of the problem and in isolating the malfunction. Grade 11 level mechanics apply greater knowledge of the principles behind the various operational systems of the heavy vehicles and equipment in diagnosing and troubleshooting malfunctions when standard procedures and existing methods do not suffice. They exercise a greater level of skill in the use of diagnostic equipment, including computer-controlled test equipment, to identify problems which are difficult to locate and repair. They develop or improvise methods, alter parts, and make repairs in the absence of technical guidelines. For example, they modify parts to fit and mesh into systems for which the parts were not designed; improvise modifications to equipment to correct recurring malfunctions; or design modifications to meet special test requirements or other special needs. They are able to use specialized diagnostic equipment to diagnose problems in complex state-of-the-art electric and electronic systems to identify and replace defective components such as chips, sensors, and printed circuit boards, or to refer more complex problems to electronics mechanics.

Grade 11 level mechanics regularly apply an intensive knowledge of the characteristics of various major mechanical and nonmechanical systems more complex than those typical of the grade 10 level. For example, they overhaul transmissions which have braking, steering, and differential systems mechanically integrated with the transmission; engines such as 12-cylinder and 1,000 horsepower engines, large engines with pistons which directly power multiple hydraulic and pneumatic systems, or other large multiple and interconnected engine systems; and systems which require great skill in making difficult, precise fittings and adjustments of moving parts to clearances of one ten-thousandth of an inch or closer, such as intricate fuel injection systems.

The appellant's job meets the grade 10 level. The appellant regularly diagnoses and repairs more than 25 pieces of wheeled and track-type heavy construction and road maintenance equipment, and like grade 10 has a thorough knowledge of their complex mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, and electric systems, controls, and features. He works on heavy-duty systems and assemblies related to diesel and gasoline engines, including turbine engines, on vehicles with automatic and manual transmissions, gear reduction systems and torque converters, power differentials and dual speed axles and various electronic and electrical systems including ignition, charging, and fuel injection systems. The most complex pieces of equipment identified by the appellant are two heavily used brush cutters which have two separate hydraulic systems and a reputation for needing a day of repair for every day of use. The control for the boom is similar to a helicopter and is very small and difficult to work on. Pulling the heads and the pump off the brush cutters is more complex than any other equipment due to the hydraulics.

Like grade 10 mechanics, the appellant is knowledgeable of the functional relationships between systems. For example, he uses an electronic pulse system on the road grader to send a signal to a solenoid (electrical system), which can move a hydraulic valve or adjust another mechanical

system. Similar to grade 10, he is able to trace and repair defects which cause hydraulic systems failures limiting power output or lifting capacity. For example, he electronically adjusted a hydraulic pump for an excavator bucket to provide more power output in order to reach full lifting capacity when it was not picking up the amount of material it should. He has a good understanding of how the systems are related and is able to troubleshoot around a system or component if there's a failure (e.g., a faulty solenoid), which he can bypass to get at the mechanical component for adjusting or repairing another way. Like the grade 10 level, the appellant demonstrates sufficient knowledge of electronics in repairing truck computers, electronic control module (ECM) units, a potentiometer, numerous switches (multi-function, 2-way, 3-way), solenoids, hot and burnt wiring, and flow control valves.

Comparable to the grade 10 level, the appellant applies visual and auditory examination and uses a variety of test equipment to analyze malfunctions and determine needed repairs. These include engine and exhaust analyzers, vacuum, fuel ignition and injector testers, voltmeters and gauges, and the use of a laptop computer. After determining the extent of repairs needed, the appellant either performs the work or determines whether to refer repairs and replacements out to private commercial shops based on the estimate of time it would take to complete, the complexity of the project, availability or expense of needed tools, and the current demands of other repair jobs. Projects requiring four to five days to complete are the maximum that are kept in-house, unless that particular piece of equipment is not immediately needed. Most brake work is jobbed out due to potential asbestos exposure.

The appellant annually attends technical training and refers to technical manuals, service managers at dealerships, professional contacts at commercial shops, mechanics in other districts, computer diagnostic programs, and the Internet in order to make repairs and modifications. Like mechanics at the grade 10 level, the appellant selects and complies with written safety guidelines, technical manuals and specifications, operator manuals, service manuals, and parts manuals covering all pieces of equipment that he services. From flash codes on the dash of John Deere graders and loaders, cat graders, and backhoes, the appellant can select and apply the appropriate technical manual to determine off-site the source of a malfunction, and ensures that the necessary parts and tools are available before driving to the site to make repairs. Standard repair procedures and existing methods typically suffice, and the supervisor noted the appellant is not lacking specific and fully applicable written technical repair guidance in any area.

Similar to grade 10 mechanics, the appellant exercises skill in measuring, fitting, and installing components, such as bearings, gears, and cylinders, to specified clearances. For example, he periodically sets augers on the chip spreader to a clearance of one one-thousandth of an inch. The appellant can connect, mesh, align, and adjust parts and systems to assure proper operation of the complete system or vehicle. For example, he often makes adjustments to special components such as changing a bucket for a different application, adjusting boards on graders, putting in and taking out shims, adding bracing and plating to strengthen high stress areas, and adjusting tracks.

The appellant's job does not meet the grade 11 level. Unlike that level, he is not regularly and consistently assigned the types of difficult and complex work characteristic of grade 11 including the overhaul and repair of substantially complex pieces of heavy equipment having multiple

interconnected systems such as those found on large missile carrying tanks, locomotive cranes, and diesel electric floating derricks. In contrast, the heavy road construction equipment under the appellant's care does not contain complex interconnected systems, e.g., the cat has only two separate hydraulic systems, one for propulsion and one for blade control. The excavators and dozers operate their drive systems off of a computer and their applications off of different valving. The cat grader has a separate pneumatic system and a separate hydraulic system. The most complex pieces of heavy equipment (i.e., two brush cutters), have two independent hydraulic systems which are not interconnected.

Unlike grade 11 mechanics, the record shows that the appellant's duties do not include major mechanical overhauls, repairs, or rebuilds of engines, differentials, rear-ends, and transmissions, including transmissions with integrated braking, steering and differential systems. While the appellant has occasionally done a partial transmission repair, he has not done a complete transmission overhaul on any of the assigned vehicles. If the appellant finds that an engine needs to be torn down he turns to the installation's engine exchange program to exchange non-working for working parts, rather than attempting to repair the non-functioning parts. None of the equipment under the appellant's care requires regular adjustments of moving parts to clearances of one ten-thousandth of an inch or closer, and all vehicles are single engine lacking multiple, interconnected operating systems.

As opposed to grade 11 mechanics who perform jobs which are not fully covered by repair manuals and written guidance, and who must frequently improvise, substitute, and alter parts to fit and mesh in systems for which they were not designed, written references used by the appellant are comprehensive and cover most situations encountered in the course of work, and improvisation is not required. In addition, although the appellant uses sophisticated diagnostic tools such as laptop computers, electronic digital meters, compression testers and various gauges, to identify, repair, and/or replace various parts and electronic components, these tools are applied to engine systems typical of the grade 10 level, e.g., bulldozers, road graders, front-end loaders, backhoes, fire engines, and heavy construction and earth moving vehicles.

Due to the agency's emphasis on regular preventative maintenance and the purchase of high quality equipment replacements, despite his extensive knowledge and experience the appellant is not called upon to apply the skill and knowledge to make the kinds of major mechanical repairs and overhauls of vehicles described at the grade 11 level.

Responsibility

Grade 10 level mechanics make independent judgments and decisions within the framework of accepted trade practices and oral and written instructions by the supervisor. They use judgment in determining the extent of repairs needed, based on analysis performed, user reports, inspection reports, and vehicle records. They select work methods, tools, and manuals to complete work assignments. Work at this level is accomplished with little or no review during progress or upon completion.

Grade 11 level mechanics exercise significantly more judgment and independence in determining the methods and techniques required to solve unusually complex maintenance and

repair problems. For example, they plan and improvise repair procedures, find ways to mechanically and physically adapt or alter items to fit and mesh into systems for which the items were not specifically designed, or find ways to diagnose and correct defects when existing methods and procedures do not give the desired results. Some mechanics at this level may recommend modifications to engineers who have final approval authority over significant design changes. The supervisor assigns work orally or through work orders or schedules. The employee independently determines work methods, sequences, tools, and equipment to use in making the extensive and complex repairs to the vehicles and equipment previously described at the grade 11 level.

The appellant's level of responsibility meets the grade 10 level. Comparable to that level, the appellant works independently applying accepted trade practices. He is expected to analyze and determine the extent of repairs needed based on inspections and review of vehicle records, plan work sequences, select appropriate tools, repair parts and manuals, and otherwise carry out assignments through to completion. Like the grade 10 level, the appellant receives assignments orally or through work orders, and completes them with little or no supervisory review.

The appellant's level of responsibility does not meet the grade 11 level where mechanics apply significantly more judgment and independence in determining work methods and techniques to solve unusually complex and extensive maintenance and repair problems. While the appellant works independently, unlike the grade 11 level his recurring assignments do not require him to improvise repair procedures, determine methods to adapt or alter items for which they were not specifically designed, or find ways to analyze and correct equipment defects when existing methods do not produce the desired results. In contrast to the types of assignments typical of grade 11, the appellant performs repair jobs which are not unusually complex or extensive. When such repair situations do occur, because of time and resource limitations they are referred out to private commercial shops. Unlike grade 11, in performing repairs the appellant utilizes readily available standard methods, techniques, and equipment for diagnosing and correcting defects which usually solve the mechanical problem encountered. The appellant indicates he once had to alter a piece of equipment by building a two winged sub-soiler and attaching it to a vehicle so that soil could be fractured 30 inches below the surface for removal of logging roads after timber had been harvested. Although we understand this required the use of some basic welding skills and tools and was an unusual task for which the equipment had not been originally designed, it occurred over four years ago and no such unusual or complex projects have occurred since then involving adapting items to other systems. Therefore, such assignments have not been regular and recurring and would not impact the appellant's current level of responsibility. In addition, OPM guidelines indicate for a job's level of responsibility to truly meet a higher grade, the responsibilities should be exercised within the context of higher graded assignments. As discussed under the first job grading factor, this is not the case in the appellant's job. The appellant's ancillary purchasing functions do not impact on or control the crediting of this factor.

Physical Effort

The physical effort factor is described at the grade 8 level and is the same for all grades higher in the JGS. Heavy mobile equipment repairers at the grade 8 level work in tiring or uncomfortable positions for long periods. The work requires frequent standing, bending, reaching, stretching,

climbing, and crouching. They work on top of, under, and in tight compartments of vehicles in cramped or awkward positions. They perform strenuous work while standing, lying, or sitting. They frequently lift and carry items, unassisted, weighing up to 40 pounds, and often exert similar effort in pushing, pulling and positioning parts, assemblies, and equipment. They frequently lift and move heavier items with the assistance of other workers or with lifting devices such as jacks, hoists, and cranes. They are sometimes required to work from ladders or work platforms at varying heights.

Because the appellant's physical effort in his job fully meets that described for work at the grade 8 level and above, this factor has no grade level impact and thus requires no further discussion.

Working Conditions

The working conditions are described at the grade 8 level and are the same for all grades higher in the JGS. Heavy mobile equipment repairers at the grade 8 level work both inside and outside. When inside, they are frequently exposed to drafts, changing temperatures, and noise which is difficult to talk above. When outside, they sometimes work in bad weather, mud or snow, or wet or icy areas. Both inside and outside, workers are exposed to irritations and discomfort from dust, grease, heat and fumes. They typically work on parts and systems which are dirty, oily, or greasy. They are subject to cuts, burns, chemical irritations, bruises, electrical shock, and injuries from falls while repairing, positioning, and moving equipment. They follow prescribed safety practices and use safety equipment such as protective ear devices, hard hats, hard-toe shoes, gloves, respirators, and protective clothing. Some of these safety items may be uncomfortable to wear or use, and may be worn or used for long periods.

Because the appellant's working conditions in his job fully meet those described at grade 8 level and above, this factor has no grade level impact and thus requires no further discussion.

Decision

The appellant's job is properly graded as Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic, WG-5803-10.