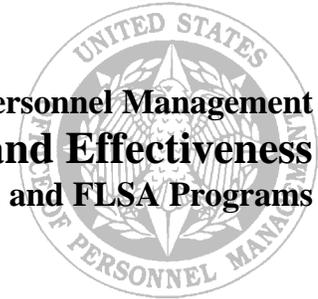


**U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness  
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs**



**Chicago Oversight Division  
230 South Dearborn Street, DPN 30-6  
Chicago, IL 60604-1687**

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

<b>Appellants:</b>	<b>group appeal- 5 appellants</b>
<b>Agency classification:</b>	Lock & Dam Equipment Mechanic Supervisor, WA-5318-11
<b>Organization:</b>	Department of the Army Corps of Engineers
<b>OPM decision:</b>	Title at agency discretion WA-5318-11
<b>OPM Decision Number:</b>	C-5318-11-01

/s/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frederick J. Boland  
Classification Appeals Officer

January 14, 1999

\_\_\_\_\_  
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:**

Mr. appellant

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The appellants contest the classification of their job at the WA-11 level. They are assigned to job number 01945, Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanic Supervisor, WA-5318-11, located in the Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, (city and state).

The appellants request that their job be graded as Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanic Supervisor, WA-5318-12. They believe their work warrants additional credit under Factors 1 and 3 (Nature of Supervisory Responsibility and Scope of Work Operations Supervised.) They agree that their official job description accurately lists their major duties.

The appellants provide extensive historical and administrative information relating to the manner in which the grade of their position has changed. Likewise they have identified issues and duties which are not included in the FWS Job Grading Standard for Supervisors, such as the loss of a subordinate supervisory position and the loss of engineering support at the district; however, since these factors are not included in the descriptions of the supervisory situations in the job grading standard, they cannot be directly considered or credited in determining the job's grade.

## **JOB INFORMATION**

The appellants are stationed at various locks and dams along the Ohio River and report to a Supervisory Civil Engineer, GS-810-13, who is located in (city and state). The appellants each supervise about 17 employees engaged in the operation, maintenance, and repair of lock and dam equipment, machinery, and structures. There are no subordinate supervisors in the appellants' organization. The work they direct is generally divided into two types: those employees involved in the operation of the locks and dam and those involved in lock and dam repair. There is no formal organization structure reflecting this division in labor. The lock operations are staffed 24 hours per day, seven days per week, while the lock and dam repair crew normally works a normal five-day workweek. The number of employees supervised may increase seasonally to as many as 25.

The normal organizational composition at each of the locks and dam facilities is approximately the same, e.g. typically one Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanic Leader, WO-5318-11, one Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanic, WA-5318-11; two Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanics, WA-5318-10; three Lock and Dam Operators, WY-5426-9; four Lock and Dam Operators, WY-5426-8; two Lock and Dam Operators, WY-5426-7; three Laborers, WY-3502-3; and one Navigation Project Assistant (OA), GS-303-6. Some variation in staffing exists from facility to facility, but the variations are minor.

## **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **Pay System Determination**

A job is exempt from the General Schedule only if the paramount requirement of the job is knowledge and experience in trades, crafts, or laboring. The primary duty for the appellants' job is direction of workers in various trades. The chief requirement of their job is knowledge and experience in trades

and labor related to the operation, maintenance, and repair of lock and dam equipment, machinery, and structures. Consequently, this job is exempt from the General Schedule and falls under the Federal Wage System (FWS).

### **Code and Title Determination**

The occupational code of a supervisory job is normally the same as the code for the kind of work that is supervised. When work of more than one occupation is supervised, the occupational code of a supervisory job is the same as the code of the occupation that best reflects the overall nature of the work of the occupations supervised and/or that is the most important for recruitment, selection, placement, and other personnel purposes. Usually this is the occupational code appropriate for the highest level of non-supervisory work supervised. In the appellants' case, occupational series 5318 is the highest level and therefore the appropriate series for this job.

Official titles are prescribed for occupations covered by OPM job grading standards. However, because series 5318 does not have a job grading standard, but only an occupational series definition, the title for the appellants' job is at the discretion of the agency, consistent with the titling instructions in Section III, Part I, B of the *Federal Wage System for Trades and Labor Occupations*.

### **GRADE DETERMINATION**

Jobs responsible for the technical and administrative supervision of trades and labor work are graded by the OPM *Job Grading Standard for Supervisors*, dated December 1992, when such responsibility is, like the appellants', a regular and recurring part of the job and exercised on a substantially full-time and continuing basis. The grading plan for wage grade supervisors consists of three factors: Nature of Supervisory Responsibility, Level of Work Supervised, and Scope of Work Operations Supervised.

The appellants raise specific issues regarding two of the three factors discussed in the standard. Accordingly, this decision only details our analysis of those disputed factors. However, we independently reviewed their duties and responsibilities against the other factor and concur with the agency's credit level assignment.

#### **Factor I: Nature of Supervisory Responsibility**

*This factor covers the nature of supervisory duties performed and the type and degree of responsibility for control over the work supervised. Four basic supervisory situations are described with examples of the supervisory tasks performed in terms of planning, work direction, and administrative responsibility. To be credited, the level of supervisory responsibility described for a situation must be fully met.*

The appellants believe that they should receive additional credit for their supervisory responsibilities. Among other things, they state:

The reengineering of the Assistant Lockmaster job from supervisor to leader put total responsibility of the lock and dam on the Lockmaster/Manager... As the Senior Federal Wage System employee at a lock and dam site, we provide technical advice on how to accomplish routine, non-routine and emergency work most efficiently and

economically. We plan and schedule work in order to minimize delay time and remain operational at all times for navigation and recreational interests. Based on knowledge, technical information and experience, we provide input and technical advice to higher grade engineers to accomplish the non-routine work (i.e. major overhaul, rehab, update of equipment) with minimal negative impact to our customers. The planning of current and future work is critical to the continuous operation of a lock and dam. Subordinate employees must be properly trained to accomplish the various types of work performed at a lock and dam. We are responsible to plan and verify the employees training.

The appellants' responsibilities match Situation #2. The appellants are responsible for one recognized organizational segment, their assigned locks and dam, and are responsible for the supervision of all of the assigned workforce, directly or through their work leaders. Assigned workers are engaged in lock and dam operations or lock and dam maintenance and repair. The planning activities are generally limited. For example, lock and dam operations planning primarily consists of developing a work and leave schedule that ensures there are two trained operators on each shift of the 24-hour daily operations. The planning activity for the lock and dam repair crew is variable, but generally limited to a few weeks to a month in duration, and consists of an established maintenance cycle, smaller individual planned repair projects, and emergency repair of equipment that is within the capability of local staff. The equipment repair planning is generally informal and does not require the development of a formal written plan with attendant accomplishment reports.

Significant scheduled repairs and maintenance are performed by the district repair crews on a schedule developed by the Lock and Dam Projects Office, which considers input from the lock masters as well as established maintenance and repair cycles and funding availability. This long term planning cannot be credited to the appellants because it is not under their direct supervision.

The work direction performed by the appellants is also typical of the examples in Situation #2, i.e., they investigate and resolve work related problems and determine their causes and implement corrective actions for the problems within their authority.

The appellants' administrative responsibilities are also typical of Situation #2 because they plan and establish leave schedules, determine training needs, assess employee performance and make formal appraisals of subordinates, and initiate recommendations for personnel actions relating to their subordinates.

The appellants do not fully meet Situation # 3 because their work operations are not of such scope, volume or complexity that they are carried out by subordinate supervisors in two or more separate organizational segments and they are not controlled through one or more levels of supervision.

Their planning is not equal to the level expressed in Situation #3. Their planning is informal and generally limited to periods of less than a quarter. There is little need to allocate resources and distribute work since there are no subordinate organizational segments at the locks and dams. They do not have subordinate supervisors that develop work plans that support an overall work schedule. They have no need to obtain prior approval to modify their overall work schedules because their work schedules are not formal and are not part of a larger planning process.

Their work direction is also not typical of Situation #3, again because of the limited complexity of the workforce they manage. They have no subordinate supervisors whose efforts they need to

coordinate, and while utilization of the existing workforce is necessary, it does not require reassignments from one organization to another and is typically for a short duration. The work unit does not require the development of either qualitative or quantitative work standards with management officials or engineering personnel. The appellants do review completed work and coordinate work operations with the supervisors of contractors and the district repair crew. However, their supervisory responsibilities are limited to their own workforce.

Their administrative responsibilities are also not typical of Situation #3. They do not have so complex an operation as to require the management of the organization through subordinate supervisory staff and therefore do not have the attendant administrative responsibilities. They do serve as management representatives in labor matters; however, that role is limited to the role of a first line supervisor.

The appellants' responsibilities fully meet Situation #2 and fall far short of Situation #3.

We evaluate this factor at Situation #2.

### **Factor III: Scope of Work Operations Supervised**

*This factor considers supervisory responsibilities in terms of: (1) the scope of the assigned work function and organizational authority; (2) the variety of functions supervised; and (3) the physical dispersion, work coordination, and location of subordinate employees.*

#### **Subfactor A: Scope of Assigned Work Function and Organizational Authority.**

*This subfactor covers the purpose of the job in the organization, the extent and nature of the job's authority, and the importance of the job's decisions.*

The appellants believe that they should receive additional credit because of an increase in the complexity and level of responsibility. They state:

As managers, we must utilize several subordinate leaders for scheduling, assigning work, verifying work results, and the issuance of instructions through subordinate leaders. We must schedule employees to cover the rotating shift schedules and vacancies for leave usage. We make adjustments for emergency situations or to aid with work at other lock and dams. Each lock and dam supervisor must make interpretive decisions within the program limits established at higher levels. Each lock and dam develops standard operating procedures (SOP) for lock and dam operations that are particular for that lock and dam. Each lock and dam is responsible for the administration of service contracts and insures that the contractors comply with the specifications as outlined in the contracts.

Each appellant is the supervisor and manager of a locks and dam facility with a subordinate workforce which they directly supervise. There is one work leader in the repair crew but there are no subordinate supervisors assigned to the organization. Two distinct but closely related functions are supervised: the operation of the locks and dam and the maintenance and repair of the locks and dam. The size of the workforce makes it unnecessary to establish formal procedures for assigning work and reviewing work results. The appellants establish the schedule for lock operations as well as the operating procedures for the lock and dam. The appellants personally establish the work priorities for the lock and dam repair crew through the work leader. The work performed by the repair crew consists of scheduled maintenance, unscheduled repair of equipment failures, and smaller

modifications and improvements that are within the limited scope of work of the lock and dam repair crew. The maintenance work is on a long term schedule while the repairs and improvements are completed based on their effect on operations and time available.

These are all characteristics of level A-2. They exceed level A-1 where the supervisor has a single function to be concerned with and little discretion to exercise. They do not meet level A-3 where the supervisor, because of the scope and complexity of the assignment, must utilize subordinate supervisors and formal work planning, assignment, and accomplishment techniques.

We evaluate this subfactor at Level A-2 and credit 45 points.

**Subfactor B: Variety of Functions.**

*This subfactor covers the difficulties of technical supervision of work functions. Similar or related work functions have a common or related body of knowledges, skills, work procedures, and tools (e.g., pipefitting and plumbing, carpentry and woodworking, etc.) Work that is incidental or in support of the primary function is not considered.*

The agency has credited Level B-4 for subfactor B and the appellants do not contest this determination. Our review of this subfactor supports their determination.

We evaluate this subfactor at Level B-4 and credit 60 points.

**Subfactor C: Workforce Dispersion.**

*This subfactor covers the difficulty of monitoring and coordinating work of non-supervisory and supervisory personnel based upon the duration of work projects, the number of work sites, the frequency of dispersion, and the necessity to monitor and coordinate the work. No points are credited for this subfactor if subordinates are located in the same contiguous work area with the supervisor, when dispersion occurs infrequently, or when dispersion is inherent and the work is performed in the absence of direct supervision (e.g., as when operating a motor vehicle).*

The agency has credited Level C-1 for subfactor C and the appellants do not contest this determination. Our review of this subfactor supports their determination.

We evaluate this factor at C-1 and credit 5 points.

The total credit for Factor III is 110 points, which matches Level B (70-110 points) of the conversion chart on page 19 of the standard.

**Tentative Grade Assignment**

According to the Grading Table on page 22 of the standard, Supervisory Situation #2 coupled with a non-supervisory workforce grade of 11 and Level B work scope equates to the supervisory grade of 11.

## **Grade Level Adjustment**

*Both upward and downward grade adjustments from the tentative grade are required based on certain circumstances. A situation requiring a downward adjustment is offset by an upward adjustment. Grade level adjustments may not exceed one grade level.*

### **Downward**

A downward adjustment is indicated when the tentative grade of the appellants' job would be the same grade as his superior. The appellants' supervisor, an Engineer, is paid under the General Schedule rather than the Federal Wage System; hence this provision is not pertinent.

### **Upward**

Upward grade adjustments are indicated for borderline jobs and work situations that impose special or unusual demands. The appellants believe that their position has significant strengthening factors that should be considered in an upward adjustment of their position. They state:

The assumption of responsibilities by the Lockmaster is a matter of additional workload vice higher level of responsibilities. We agree that additional workload has significantly increased since the S.O.S. But the complexity and level of responsibility has increased at a higher level because of new management procedures, policies and downsizing of supporting organizations. As managers, we are responsible for contract administration of service contracts as the contracting officer representative (COR), for the receiving and invoicing of services and goods purchased by contract or VISA credit card in CEFMS, for the accountability of real estate property owned by the Corps of Engineers in the jurisdictional areas of the river pool, for the accountability as hand receipt holder of accountable goods (hand receipt value is in excess of \$1 million per project), for the initiation, review and approval for travel requests and voucher payment, and for the responsibility of required training and administration of programs for employees in the performance of their duties (confined space, health and safety requirements, lock and dam operator program, maintenance program, etc.). The final responsibility of any work performed at a project falls back to the responsible employee assigned to that project. With the downsizing of Construction Division, construction projects require us as managers to inspect the work in progress for compliance to plans, specifications and safety. All of these responsibilities have added to the complexity of the daily our workload as Lockmaster/Managers of a lock and dam project.

While all of the factors cited above directly impact the appellants, they are not unusual circumstances, but common supervisory responsibilities, though new to the appellants. The job grading standard for supervisors, however, focuses on the circumstances and responsibilities identified below to determine a position's grade.

### **Borderline Jobs**

An upward adjustment is indicated when the supervisory job substantially exceeds the situation credited under Factor I and the base level of work determined under Factor II is not the highest level of subordinate work for which the supervisor has full technical responsibility. The appellants received full credit under Factor II for the highest level of work supervised, WG-11. Therefore, no upward adjustment is warranted.

### **Special or Unusual Demands**

In some situations, special staffing requirements may impose a substantially greater than normal responsibility for job design, job engineering, work scheduling, training, counseling, motivating, and maintaining security. This may occur under special employment programs and at correctional institutions having *exceptionally* difficult attitudinal, motivational, control, and security problems. An upward grade adjustment is indicated when exceptional conditions affect the majority of the subordinate workforce and: 1) are permanent and continuing; 2) require the tailoring of assignments, tasks, training, security, and other supervisory actions to individuals; and, 3) require regular and recurring counseling and motivational activities.

The appellants' work encompasses common (e.g., training inexperienced workers) demands that all supervisors must accommodate, but no special or unusual demands.

Neither downward nor upward adjustments to the WA-11 tentative grade are indicated.

## **DECISION**

For the reasons stated above, the proper grading of the appellant's job is WA-11 with the title at the agency discretion.