

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
MERIT SYSTEMS OVERSIGHT AND EFFECTIVENESS
DALLAS OVERSIGHT DIVISION
CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION

Under section 5346(c) of title 5, United States Code

Appellants: [the appellants]

Position: Carpenter, WG-4607-9
Position Number: 1118A

Organization: [work unit]
Engineering Service
Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Decision: Carpenter, WG-4607-09
(Appeal denied)

OPM Decision Number: C- 4607-09-01

Approved by:

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

9/27/96
Date

Copy of decision sent to:

[CCs]

bcc: Jeffrey Miller
Director, Classification Appeals Program

INTRODUCTION

The appealed position is assigned to [VA]. The [VA] has classified the position as Carpenter, WG-4607-9, and that classification was sustained in the appeal decision issued by [VA]. After the unfavorable appeal, the appellants filed an appeal with the Office of Personnel Management under the provisions of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code. The appellants believe that certain woodworking assignments they have received warrant classification of the position to Woodcrafter, WG-4605-10.

The appellants are assigned to the same job description number as identical additional positions and certify that their job description accurately describes their duties and responsibilities. With two exceptions, discussed later, we agree.

This is the final administrative decision of the Government, subject to discretionary review only under the conditions specified in title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 532.705.

JOB INFORMATION

The VAMC is a 389-bed hospital serving approximately 8,000 patients per year primarily from the metropolitan Oklahoma City area and the western two-thirds of the state. The facility has a staff of 1,400 employees. The facility has three surgical wards, three intensive care units, and several remote outpatient clinics. The facility provides general medical care, surgery services, and treatment for acute psychiatric disorders to eligible veterans and their families.

The Engineering Service develops and administers facility-wide programs for safety, building construction, operations, and regular maintenance for the medical center. The Service is divided into nine subordinate teams or sections, which includes the Structural Response Team. Supervision of Structural Response Team employees is provided by a Supervisory Maintenance Mechanic (WS-4749-10) and a Carpenter Leader (WL-4807-10). The Structural Response Team is composed of six employees, including the previously-mentioned carpenter, three carpenters (WG-4607-9), and two painters (WG-4102-9).

The Structural Response Team is responsible for general repairs and modifications made to the basic shell of the building which houses the medical facility. The typical work of these positions involves a variety of duties such as the repair, installation, and removal of walls, windows, ceilings, dividers, floor coverings, doors, and bookcases. Team members also install, remove, and repair a variety of locks and locking devices fitted to doors, cabinets, and other storage units throughout the facility.

The work of this and other Engineering Service teams is frequently supplemented by the use of large "Purchase and Hire" construction teams. These construction teams are composed of a number of carpenters and other skilled trades workers serving under

time-limited appointments to handle specific construction projects, such as the renovation of an entire wing of the facility. While "Purchase and Hire" teams are employed, they perform the majority of regular carpentry assignments, which frees up the appellants to perform increased locksmithing and other assignments.

SERIES AND TITLE DETERMINATION

The appellants perform duties in the construction, installation, alteration, maintenance, and repair of structures, partitions, walls, doors, panels, floor coverings, bookcases, and similar items throughout the facility using wood, wood substitutes, and composite building materials. These duties match those described in the Federal Wage System Job Grading Standard established for Carpenter, WG-4607. The standard provides that jobs classified below the grade 9 level are titled Carpentry Worker. Jobs at or above the grade 9 level are titled Carpenter.

The appellants contend that they should be classified to the Woodcrafter series, WG-4605. Woodcrafters perform assignments in making and repairing high-grade wooden items such as fine cabinetry, furniture, decorative woodwork, and orthopedic devices. The typical work involves shaping and contouring surfaces; precise joining, machining, and decorating techniques; skilled use of the full range of woodworking tools, machines, and woodworking techniques (including uses for which these machines have not been designed); and application of an extensive knowledge of the appearance, durability, strength, and machining characteristics of a wide range of hardwoods, softwoods, and wood substitutes. Woodcrafters produce pieces which have intricate shapes and designs, include precise and fancy features and details (such as marquetry, carving, scrollwork, friezes, inlays and complex joints), and include interlocking parts which must precisely fit and join.

The appellants' regular and recurring assignments do not meet the minimum requirements of the Woodcrafter standard. The evidence file contains no examples of assignments at this level. Although the appellants were invited to submit information on examples of such work assignments, none was received during the course of our review. The supervisor and the carpenter leader stated during our telephone interviews that the appellants do not regularly receive assignments of this type. While the appellants may occasionally make structural and other repairs to furniture, cabinets, doors, and other wood products, this work is infrequent and non-decorative in nature and does not form a substantial part of their assignment. All creation of high quality decorative woodwork products is performed by a "Purchase and Hire" employee. All construction of orthopedic devices and fixtures is performed by an employee in another unit.

In their July 27, 1995, memorandum on appeal to their agency, the appellants acknowledge that they do not perform work assignments typical of the Woodcrafter WG-10 series on a regular or recurring basis. The appellants again affirmed this during our

telephone interview. They stated that they have refused all assignments requiring the performance of work at this level in the belief that they should not be required to perform these duties until their position is actually classified to this series and grade.

Accordingly, these duties as described in the job description at items 1.H. and 1.I. are determined not to be regular and recurring aspects of the appellants' job and must be deleted from the job description.

We concur with the agency's determination that the proper series is Carpenter, WG-4607. The appropriate title for the position may be determined only after the grade of the position is established.

GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION

The Job Grading Standard for Carpenter, WG-4607, provides descriptions of the work only at the grade 7 and 9 levels, but it permits classification at higher levels if jobs differ substantially from the levels of skill, knowledge, and ability described in the standard.

This standard grades the work in accordance with five factors: (1) general, (2) skill and knowledge, (3) responsibility, (4) physical effort, and (5) working conditions.

Factor 1 - General

At the WG-9 level, carpenters use skilled techniques to construct, repair, and modify wood and wood substitute structures and items requiring close tolerance and structural soundness. They construct and repair a wide variety of structural items, including miscellaneous items such as counter tops, bookcases, equipment cabinets, and items requiring limited decorative trim and molding. Carpenters at this level set up and operate a variety of woodworking machines and tools and utilize a variety of joining techniques. They interpret drawings, blueprints, and specifications independently; determine the layout of the work; and plan and carry out projects from initial layout to completion. Accuracy, spacing, fit, structural soundness, and finished appearance are essential.

The appellants' work fully matches this level and does not materially exceed it. Therefore, grade 9 is credited for this factor.

Factor 2 - Skill and Knowledge

At the WG-9 level, carpenters have a thorough knowledge of wood and wood substitute materials and construction techniques. They are skilled in the setup, operation, and maintenance of the full range of woodworking and precision carpentry equipment and are able to produce finished products with precise fits, accurate dimensions, and acceptable appearance. Carpenters at this level are able to interpret complex building instructions,

sketches, blueprints, and building codes and to use advanced shop mathematics to plan, compute, and lay out complex projects. They are able to mill heavy lumber; cut bevels, rabbets, chamfers, grooves, and compound miter joints and apply plastic laminates to wood and other surfaces.

The appellants' work fully matches this level and does not materially exceed it. Therefore, grade 9 is credited for this factor.

Factor 3 - Responsibility

At the WG-9 level, carpenters lay out work, determine material and equipment needs, and plan and accomplish a wide range of work sequences from basic repairs to complex project segments with minimal supervision or review of work in progress. They use initiative and judgment in accomplishing work assignments. Review of work is primarily for compliance with building codes, objectives, timeliness, and quality of workmanship.

The appellants' work fully matches this level and does not materially exceed it. Therefore, grade 9 is credited for this factor.

Factor 4 - Physical Effort

Physical effort at this level is the same as that described at grade 7 of this standard. The appellants' work fully matches this level and does not materially exceed it. Therefore, grade 9 is credited for this factor.

Factor 5 - Working Conditions

Working conditions at this level are the same as those described at grade 7 of this standard. The appellants' working conditions are consistent with those described at this level. Therefore, grade 9 is credited for this factor.

SUMMARY

The carpentry work performed by the appellants is evaluated at the grade 9 level. We compared the locksmithing duties performed by the appellants to the Job Grading Standard for Locksmith and found that these duties do not exceed the grade 9 level.

DECISION

The appealed position is properly classified as Carpenter, WG-4607-9.