

**JOB GRADING APPEAL DECISION OF THE
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
CHICAGO FIELD OFFICE**

APPELLANTS: [the appellants]

JOB NUMBER: 3505A

AGENCY GRADING: Supply Clerk, GS-2005-4

JOB LOCATION: Department of Veterans Affairs
Medical Center
Environmental Management Service
Textile Care Section
[location]

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT DECISION: **WG-7601**, Title at discretion of agency
Grade to be determined

OPM DECISION NUMBER: C-7601-00-01

This appellate decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on administrative, certifying, payroll, and accounting offices of the Government. It is the final administrative decision on the pay plan and series of the job, not subject to further appeal. It is subject to discretionary review only under the conditions specified in 5 C.F.R. 532.705 (f). This certificate must be implemented no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period following the date of the decision.

/s/

FREDERICK J. BOLAND
CLASSIFICATION APPEALS OFFICER

March 6, 1997

DATE

DECISION TRANSMITTED TO:

[CCs]

INFORMATION CONSIDERED

- Appellants' letter of appeal, dated December 13, 1996, and earlier correspondence.
- Human Resources Management Service's report on the position, dated January 13, 1997, and its enclosures.
- Agency classification appeal decision on the position, dated November 3, 1995.
- Audit of the appellants' position by telephone discussion of duties with them on January 8 and 9, 1997, and with their supervisor on February 20, 1997.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- OPM *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, dated August 1991.
- OPM *Job Grading System for Trades and Labor Occupations*, Part 3, "Definitions of Trades and Labor Job Families and Occupations", dated June 1993.

INTRODUCTION

The appellants contest a decision made by [The Department of Veterans Affairs], in classifying their position. They are assigned to position number 3505A, classified January 13, 1994, as Supply Clerk, GS-2005-4. The position is located in [VA].

The appellants request that their position be classified under the Federal Wage System as a Materials Handler, WG-6907-3, because they believe their work is primarily physical (receiving, handling, and storing), rather than clerical, in nature. They agree that their position description accurately reflects their major duties, but feel their responsibility for the Patient Assistance Program has diminished from that stated. They also note that they make three daily rounds collecting patient belongings rather than two, that they search for contraband in patient effects, and assist in transferring employee uniforms and inspecting them for wear.

JOB INFORMATION

[the activity] consists of about 19 workers and includes the appellants, a GS-10 Laundry Plant Manager, a WS-3 Laundry Plant Foreman, a WL-4 Laundry Worker Leader, 3 WG-4/5 Laundry Machine Operators, 10 WG-2 Laundry Workers, and a WG-3 Sewing Machine Operator.

The appellants check the clothing and personal effects of patients admitted to the Medical Center. Typically they go from building to building picking up patient effects at Admissions or designated locked areas. Patient belongings sometimes are delivered to the appellants' work area, as when patients are transferred from nursing homes to the Medical Center. The appellants inventory, store, and check articles in and out in response to patient requests for their belongings.

The appellants operate a three-wheeled battery powered cart with a flat bed, which they use to haul the clothing and personal effects they collect. In addition, they operate a marking machine and heat stamping machine to label clothing with the patient's name.

They estimate most of their time (about 85 percent) is devoted to collecting, storing, and checking patient belongings. The remainder of their time is spent completing simple checklists or forms listing patient belongings, packing and forwarding the belongings of patients who transfer or leave without reclaiming their belongings (by comparing their record cards against the Center's patient gain/loss sheet) and providing, under the Patient Assistant Program (PAP), indigent patients with hygiene kits (toothbrush, comb, etc.) or donated clothing. They occasionally assist the Sewing Machine Operator by hanging uniforms and checking for rips, tears, or broken zippers.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Pay System Determination

A position is exempt from the General Schedule (GS) if its primary duty involves the performance of physical work that requires knowledge or experience of a trade, craft, or manual labor nature. It is subject to the General Schedule, however, even if it does require physical work, if its primary duty requires knowledge or experience of an administrative, clerical, scientific, artistic, or technical nature not related to trade, craft, or manual labor work.

The appellants' primary duty involves the custody and control of patient clothing and personal effects. This duty distinguishes their position from all others in the Textile Care Section, which are more directly related to sewing and laundry. Their work involves the bagging and storing of newly admitted patients' clothing and personal effects, simple record keeping, and cross-checking. The checking of patient clothing involves physical work (collecting, lifting, bagging, marking, and storing clothing) and is akin to the personal services rendered by locker-room attendants and wardrobe handlers. Work of this type falls under the Federal Wage System (FWS). It is covered by the Personal Services, WG-7600, family, which is defined as work "providing grooming, beauty, or other personal services to individuals, patrons, guests, passengers . . . or attending to their personal effects." [The former 7608 Wardrobe Handling series described work "checking costumes and uniforms . . . and maintaining records and safekeeping of" (the same). Although the 7608 series has not been carried over to the current list of trades and labor occupations, it has value as a precedent when evaluating similar functions.]

The appellants' record keeping and inventory duties, while clerical in nature, are incidental to the manual labor they perform. They are similar to the record keeping and inventorying performed in other trade/labor jobs like Materials Handler or Wardrobe Handler. Their other duties, like assisting with the hanging of uniforms and checking for rips, tears, or broken zippers, are FWS duties. Their work does not require knowledge of supply terminology and forms, as even beginning Supply Clerk jobs would. They do no supply coding and use no supply manuals, catalogs, etc., nor do they follow-up on requisition status. Their inventory duties involve simple tallying and the physical handling of stock which the GS-2005 Supply Clerical and Technician classification standard identifies as FWS work.

Consequently, we find the position to be exempt from the General Schedule and most appropriately placed under the Federal Wage System.

Code and Title Determination

An FWS job is coded to the occupation which represents the best match between the content of the job and the definitions of the various occupations. Jobs requiring the performance of work in two or more occupations are coded to the occupation which is most important for recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, or reduction in force purposes. This is ordinarily the occupation having the highest skill and knowledge requirements, as long as that occupation's duties are regular and recurring.

Aside from their personal service work, the appellants perform duties related to laundry or other occupational areas, such as helping in the hanging of uniforms and checking for rips, tears or broken zippers. These additional duties, however, require no greater skill or physical capacity than their personal service work and are less important from a recruitment, selection, placement, etc., standpoint. Hence, they do not affect the series classification of their work.

The Personal Services, WG-7600, family covers the appellants' primary duty, but has no series specifically established for collecting, storing, or safeguarding personal effects. (The former 7608 Wardrobe Handling series represents a similar function, but in a different context.) Jobs that cannot be identified with an established occupation within their family are assigned to the miscellaneous 01 series of the family. Hence, the appellants' work is coded to the WG-7601 series.

No title has been prescribed for the WG-7601 series. The appellants' job title, therefore, is at the discretion of the agency, but must be consistent with the principles and instructions in Section III, "Codes and Titles" of Part 1 of the *Job Grading System for Trades and Labor Occupations*.

DECISION

The proper pay plan and series code for the job is WG-7601. The agency will exercise its first level classification authority to determine the grade level of the duties by applying appropriate job grading criteria.