



United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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Standard: [Job Grading Standard for Supervisors](#) (WS) (~~August 1982~~)
Factor: Factor II, Level of Work Supervised
Issue: Credit for journeyman level skills for inmates

Although there have been several revisions of the Job Grading Standard for Federal Wage System Supervisors, the discussion in this article is still valid.

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in an Office of Personnel Management region's consideration of a job grading appeal. The appeal involved a supervisor of prison inmates in the performance of work in the WG-2805 Electrician Series. The appellant based his appeal on the fact that some of the inmates that he supervised were qualified journeyman electricians and they accomplished various duties and responsibilities without close supervision. As a result, he claimed that the level of work he supervised should be classified at the journeyman WG-10 level rather than the WG-08 level.

Resolution

Regardless of ability, inmates were not permitted to use drills, ladders (6 feet or longer), extension cords (10 feet or longer), benders, tube cutters, and other related types of materials and equipment. They did not usually work unescorted in the switch room or in the fence light system, in control rooms, sally ports, telephone room, or other security areas, and were not permitted access to blueprints of any security area. Thus, the inmates worked at less than journeyman level, performing tasks such as reattaching conduit; installing lights and outlets; replacing motors, smoke detectors, and switches; and repairing fixtures and electrical equipment.

The Office of Personnel Management concluded that the WG-08 level was appropriate for the inmates because, irrespective of the possession of journeyman electrician skills by some of the inmates, the restricted assignments fell short of the WG-10 level. As noted in the explanation of the job grading system, trades and labor jobs (like General Schedule positions) are graded considering the actual skill, knowledge, and other requirements of the work *performed*. Accordingly, the Level of Work Supervised was WG-08.