

# Position Classification Standard for Freight Rate Series, GS-2131

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## SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes all classes of positions the duties of which are to administer, supervise, or perform work involved in the procurement of common carrier and other transportation service by rail, motor, air, water, and miscellaneous means, for the domestic and foreign movement of freight. This requires: the study and application of published classification guides, rate tariffs, dockets, agreements, contracts, and related carrier and Federal publications in the classification of freight and the determination of appropriate rates and routes. In addition to positions that determine classification, rates, and/or routes prior to shipment, this series includes positions engaged in the pre-audit or the post-audit of freight bills to determine the propriety of the rates paid or to be paid.

This standard supersedes the standard previously published in September 1953 under the title of Freight Traffic Series, GS-2131.

Freight rate positions performing the post-audit of freight bills were formerly classified in the Transportation Rate Auditing Series, GS-2133.

This standard does not include grade-level description for supervisory positions. The [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) will be used to evaluate supervisory freight classification positions and supervisory freight rate positions.

Excluded from this series are the following:

1. Positions concerned with the performance of research or other professional and scientific work in transportation economics when the performance of such work requires specialized training in the theory and fundamentals of economics. Such positions are properly classified in the [Economist Series, GS-0110](#).
2. Positions concerned with classifying, searching, indexing, recording, and filing tariffs and supplements, Section 22 and other quotations, tenders, carriers dockets and proposals, interstate Commerce Commission decisions and orders, State commissioner's issuances, special agreements, rate advices, carrier facility files, Comptroller General decisions, trade bulletins and periodicals, billing guides, agency regulations, and other reference data pertaining to freight movement when this work is not a part of a training process for developing classification specialists or rating specialists or when the filing work is not part of a position which is otherwise classifiable in the Freight Rate Series. Such positions are properly classified in the [Mail and File Series, GS-0305](#).
3. Positions concerned with the examination of vouchers, shipping documents, invoices, and related papers requesting payment for freight transportation services rendered when the purpose of such work is to determine the propriety of the expenditure of Federal funds but not the propriety of the rates Charged. Such positions are properly classified in the [Voucher Examining Series, GS-0540](#).

4. Positions which involve the conduct of formal hearings before Federal and other regulatory bodies or participation in cases before the courts when such work requires specialized training in law or admission to the bar. Such positions are properly classified in an appropriate series in the [Legal and Kindred Group, GS-0900](#).
5. Positions concerned with the examination, development, review, or authorization of claims by or against the Government arising from the loss or damage of freight while in the custody or control of carriers for movement. Such positions are properly classified in the [Transportation Loss and Damage Claims Examining Series, GS-2135](#).
6. Operating-level positions concerned with establishing facts regarding individual cases involving loss and damage to freight shipments are classifiable in the Freight Rate Series, GS-2131, only when the preliminary examination review or reconstruction of the case requires the application of classification, rating, and/or routing knowledge in determining transportation rates. If rate determination is not involved and this knowledge is not required, such positions are properly classified in the [Transportation Loss and Damage Claims Examining Series, GS-2135](#).
7. Positions concerned with all work (other than rate and tariff examining work) involved in the regulation by the Federal Government of the transportation industry. Such positions are properly classified in the [Transportation Industry Analysis Series, GS-2110](#).
8. Positions concerned with administering, supervising, or performing work involved in planning, developing, adapting, installing, operating, and/or controlling traffic management programs which insure the economical and efficient utilization of common and other transportation carrier services to best meet the operating program needs. This includes serving as an adviser to management in the many areas in which traffic management can contribute to effective overall program administration; analyzing and providing advice, interpretation, and guidance on transportation matters which affect procurement, contracts, source of supply, distribution, site locations and relocations, etc.; recommending litigation when necessary to protect the Government's interest and providing support on technical transportation matters to counsel; presenting evidence to support the Government's position before carriers and their committees, associations, conferences, and Federal and State regulatory bodies and otherwise negotiating new or adjusted classifications, rates, routes, services, contracts, and agreements. Such positions are properly classified in the [Traffic Management Series, GS-2130](#).
9. Positions concerned with administering, supervising, or performing work which involves two or more transportation functions which individually are typical of different series in the Transportation Group but which do not constitute the specific combination of functions and responsibilities typical of the Freight Rate Series. Such positions may be classified in the [General Transportation Series, GS-2101](#), or in a specific series in the transportation Group, or sometimes in the [GS-2130 Series](#), whichever is most appropriate in terms of the qualifications required, the preponderant as well as the highest grade level work, and the career pattern which is appropriate for the incumbents.

10. Positions concerned with supervising or performing work involved in the procurement of common and other passenger carrier services for the domestic and foreign transport of passengers without passenger traffic program responsibility; also positions concerned with pre-auditing or post-auditing passenger carriers bills. Such positions are classified in the [Transportation Clerk and Assistant series, GS-2102 series](#).
12. Positions concerned with administering, supervising, or performing work involved in planning, directing, or operating rail, motor, air, or water transportation systems and service and terminal facilities. Such positions are properly classified in the [Transportation Operations Series, GS-2150](#).
13. Positions concerned with dispatching, scheduling, or controlling the movement, quantity, and density of freight, cargo, or traffic on rail, motor, air, or water transportation systems and at terminals. Such positions are properly classified in the [Dispatching Series, GS-2151](#).

## CLASS TITLES

The Freight Rate Series is composed of two specializations, one concerned with the classification of freight, the other with rate, route, and classification work. Each specialization includes two authorized position titles which differ as to the grade levels at which each is used.

Freight classification specialization. -- This specialization includes positions which are concerned with determining appropriate classifications for freight in accordance with classification guides and/or the study of transportation characteristics of freight which is new or not usually shipped in commercial channels. Also, some positions are concerned with the development of exhibit material and related information for use by others to determine and negotiate new classifications or classification adjustments.

The authorized titles for this specialization are:

Freight Classification Assistant GS-4-6  
Freight Classification Specialist GS-7 and above.

Freight rate specialization. -- This specialization includes positions which are concerned with determining the legally applicable and most economical rates and routes for shipment of freight by any or all modes of transportation in accordance with published tariffs and tariff routings, etc. This involves the determination of appropriate rates and routes which requires consideration of suitability of specific routes, the availability of appropriate facilities, carrier and handling equipment requirements, the propriety of using two or more carriers in combination, and other factors. Frequently the rate specialist classifies the commodities to be shipped and then determines the applicable rate and route. This specialization includes positions which perform a combination of rating and classification duties. Some positions are concerned with the development of exhibit material and related information for use by others to determine and

negotiate for new and adjusted rates. This specialization also includes the positions concerned with pre-audits and post-audits of freight bills.

This specialization also includes positions in the General Accounting Office which are concerned with the technical analysis and examination of payments made to air, rail, highway, and water carriers for freight transportation services furnished for the account of the United States to determine the validity and propriety thereof and conformity with tariffs, quotations, agreements, or tenders, the examination, analysis, and settlement of unpaid bills submitted for direct settlement, administratively reported debts, supplemental bills, and requests for reconsideration of disallowances or overcharge notice; the preparation of bases for use in court actions or in complaints before the Interstate Commerce Commission; and the notifying of departments and agencies on individual cases of irregular shipping and routing practices, inadequate or improper commodity descriptions, excessive transportation cost authorizations, and instances in which the principles of sound traffic and transportation management have not been applied. It requires classification of the commodity shipped and determination of the most economical lawful and legal rates applicable to the shipments as made. It includes furnishing information concerning rates, routes, and other technical data to departments and agencies, upon request.

The authorized titles for this specialization are:

Freight Rate Assistant GS-4-6  
Freight Rate Specialist GS-7 and above.

The following authorized titles apply to [supervisory positions](#) in both specializations;

Supervisory Freight Classification Specialist  
Supervisory Freight Rate Specialist

#### *Explanatory statement*

Transportation procurement in the Federal Government is subject to agency controls and guides. The military services are controlled by (1) the Military Traffic Management Agency which has responsibility for the direction, control, and supervision of all functions incident to the effective and economical procurement and use of commercial freight service within the United States by the military departments, (2) the Military Sea Transportation Service which provides sea transportation for cargo of the military establishment (excluding that transported by units of the fleet), and (3) the Military Air Transport Service which provides airlift for the services. The General Services Administration is responsible for direction, control, and supervision of all functions incident to the effective and economical procurement and use of commercial freight services for its own programs as well as assigned programs of other civilian agencies and the development of Government-wide policies and regulations governing the procurement and utilization of transportation services for the civilian agencies. The General Accounting Office performs the following functions in the field of Government freight transportation: (1) The technical analysis and examination of payments made to air, rail, highway, and water carriers for

freight transportation services furnished for the account of the United States to determine the validity and propriety thereof; (2) the examination, analysis, and settlement of unpaid bills submitted for direct settlement, administratively reported debts carriers' supplemental bills, and requests for reconsideration of disallowances or overcharge notices; (3) the collection directly from carriers, by refund, set off, or otherwise, of amounts determined to be due the United States; (4) the preparation of advisory reports to the Attorney General setting forth recommendations as to the legal and technical bases available for use in prosecuting or defending transportation suits by or against the United States, and incorporating technical, fiscal, and other factual data from pertinent records; (5) the furnishing of transportation specialists to appear as expert witnesses and to assist in pretrial conferences, and the drafting of pleadings, orders, and briefs in connection with transportation suits by or against the United States; (6) the conducting of surveys independently or jointly with departments or agencies to determine the effectiveness and adequacy of administrative policies, programs, and procedures pertaining to freight traffic management and related fiscal and transportation practices; (7) the furnishing to departments and agencies, upon request, of information concerning rates, fares, routes, and other technical data; (8) the advising of departments and agencies as to irregular shipping and routing practices, inadequate commodity descriptions, excessive transportation cost authorizations, and other instances in which the principles of sound traffic and transportation management have not been applied.

Federal statute requires that payment for transportation of property for or on behalf of the United States by common carriers subject to the Interstate Commerce and Civil Aeronautics Acts is made upon presentation of bills therefore, prior to audit by the General Accounting Office. Also, by law certifying and disbursing officers are relieved of responsibility for overpayments made to carriers which are due to use of improper rates, classifications, or failure to deduct amounts due to equalization or other agreements. Therefore, the General Accounting Office has the final responsibility for determining the propriety of each such payment from appropriated funds and for effecting recovery from carriers of all overcharges and overpayments involved.

Departments and agencies which pay transportation charges from nonappropriated funds under commercial bills of lading usually conduct their own post-audits. Upon request, the General Accounting Office renders advisory service to Government agencies and corporations which are exempt from the mandatory GAO post-audit of freight bills.

## **THE FREIGHT RATE PROCESS**

Freight rating is a term used broadly in this standard to connote all steps collectively necessary in the procurement of transportation services.

The sequence of steps in the freight rating process is described in terms of three distinct parts. Some positions combine all of the parts; other positions are limited to duties involving one or more parts in the process.

1. **Classification:** This work involves determining appropriate classifications for various items or commodities by reference to published classification guides. In addition to simple comparisons, classification also includes the study of the transportation characteristics of items or commodities which are new or not usually shipped in commercial channels. These may be compared with freight items or commodities which have been classified to determine the appropriate classification by analogy. Classification may include the development of narrative and exhibit material and related information to request new classifications or classification adjustments; it may also include the preparation of material concerning classification matters in cases to be presented before representatives of the carriers, regulatory bodies, and the courts.
2. **Rating:** This work involves the determination of the appropriate, legally applicable, and most economical rates and routes for the movement of domestic and foreign freight via any or all modes of transportation. These determinations are made in accordance with published classifications, tariffs, and tariff routings. However, factors such as the following are considered in selecting the appropriate rates and routes: Suitability of specific routes (including those not specified in tariffs); weather, physical, and seasonal characteristics; availability of appropriate terminal facilities; availability of carriers including carrier operating authorities and handling equipment required; availability and application of transit privileges including substitution of tonnage and out-of-line or back hauls; agreements and propriety of using various modes of transportation singly or in combination; the selection of junction or interchange points; the consolidation of shipments; numerous alternative origin and destination points; the documentation of shipments including governmental requirements, State, Federal, and foreign; miscellaneous and accessorial service (sorting, packing, pre-cooling, heating, storage, loading and unloading, blocking and bracing, cartage, demurrage, diversion, drayage, dunnage, free time, switching, lighterage and lighterage limits, port charges, diversion and reconsignment, towage, wharfage, etc.). Rating may also include the development of narrative and exhibit material and related information to be used by others request and negotiate new or revised rates; it may also include the preparation of material concerning rate matters in cases to be presented before representatives of the carriers, regulatory bodies, and the courts. The steps in the rating process are also followed in the pre-audit and post-audit of freight bills since the purpose is to determine appropriateness of the classification, rates, routes, and the actions of the carriers.
3. The General Accounting Office post-audit and examination involves the determination of the most economical lawful and legal rates and applicable routes for the movement of domestic and foreign freight via any or all modes of transportation for use in the post-audit of paid transportation bills; for use in the settlement of carriers' supplemental bills and requests for reconsideration of disallowances or overcharge notices; for use as a basis for court action, or a complaint before the Interstate Commerce Commission; and for use in reporting of traffic management errors of Government agencies or contractors. The rate determination includes the proper classification of the commodities shipped, which may or may not be the same as that applied by the shipper or the carrier. These determinations are made in accordance with published classifications and tariffs,

contract, or rate tenders, decisions of the courts, Federal and State regulatory agencies, and the Comptroller General, and general and specific information on file in the General Accounting Office. They require the consideration of factors described under Classification and Rating, above.

In addition to the above three types of work, preliminary work in support of the freight rating process may also be classifiable in this series, but only when it is an integral part of the training process for development of employees into freight classification assistants and specialists or is part of a position which is classifiable in this series by reason of its other duties. Preliminary work includes such duties in support of the classification, rating, routing, and rate auditing functions as: (1) determining weight and cube of articles to ascertain whether movement will be less than car or truck load, car or truck load, express, or mail; (2) attaching tags to documents or stamping them to indicate content of shipment (e.g., biologicals), and otherwise imprinting stamps in accordance with ICC regulations; (3) screening documents for accuracy and completeness of commodity description, accountability, code, number of pieces, tare weight, cube, total weight, high-speed, premium, routine or regular movements; etc.; (4) referring to lists, directories, or other employees to obtain correct information, etc.; (5) verifying freight charges, e.g., for diversion, reconsignment, time extension, demurrage, etc., by comparing freight bills with bills of lading and other shipping instructions and orders, sales or purchase contracts, and other supporting documents; (6) indexing, recording, filing, and searching tariffs, tariff supplements, Section 22 and other quotations, negotiated or voluntary or other unsolicited tenders, carriers, dockets and proposals, ICC decisions and orders, State public utility commission issuances, special agreements, rate advices, carrier facility files, Comptroller General Decisions, trade bulletins and periodicals, billing guides and similar classification publications, agency regulations, storage-in-transit billings, and other reference data pertaining to the procurement of transportation services.

Under the same restricted conditions and for the same purposes, this series may also include simple or elementary classification, rating, routing, and rate auditing work which does not require the knowledge and application of published classification guides, rate tariffs, dockets, agreements, contracts, and related carrier and Federal publications.

## **GRADE-DISTINGUISHING ELEMENTS**

The key element in assessing the difficulty of freight rate positions is the extent to which the assistant or specialist must know and use the tariff and related publications. The extent of tariff utilization is measured in classification work by the kind of commodities classified and in rating work by certain characteristics of the traffic, e.g., the geographic area covered, variety of commodities shipped.

In addition to the extent of tariff utilization, grades of these positions are also affected by the conditions under which the work is performed, e.g., by the kind and level of responsibility carried. For purposes of this standard all of the criteria by which grade levels are determined have been grouped under the elements of Nature and Purpose of Work, Finality of Action,



Judgment Exercised, and supervision Received. Following is a discussion of each of these four elements:

*1. Nature and purpose of the work*

(A) Freight Classification Assistant or Specialist--

The level of difficulty of the classification of freight is measured primarily by the kind of freight to be classified since this indicates the extent of use and study of tariffs necessary. In some less difficult classification cases, the description of the merchandise is comparable in all respects with descriptions in published classifications. In other less difficult cases, the classification may be determined easily on the basis of information which is readily available. More difficult classification cases present problems of definition and development of information and require study and verification of numerous transportation characteristics and conditions and involve complex and controversial freight such as that which has been previously improperly classified, and similar difficult or involved problems.

(B) Freight Rate Assistant or Specialist

- (1) The level of difficulty of the freight rating process is measured by the complexity of the traffic which is indicated by:
- a. The geographic area in which shipments are made.
  - b. The number of nonrecurring or unusual combinations of points of origin and destination (the extent to which unusual traffic patterns are involved).
  - c. The number of modes of transportation considered and utilized.
  - d. The variety of commodities shipped.
  - e. The extent to which the shipments involve transit privileges or special handling or require authorization and payment for accessorial services.

There are a great variety of possible combinations of degrees of the elements which measure the complexity of traffic. At each grade level only a few representative combinations have been shown. Any combination which is not described specifically in the standard should be placed in the level it most nearly resembles.

- (2) The level of difficulty in the post-audit process is measured by the complexity of the work assignment which is indicated by:
- a. The post-audit action required.
  - b. The type of shipment.

- c. The mode of transportation.
- d. The commodity shipped.

The following are examples illustrating the nature and volume of applicable tariffs and related publications which may be used in making decisions and taking various actions:

- (1) Freight classification assistants and specialists are concerned with carriers' classifications; exceptions to classifications; tariffs; agency classifications; supply and shipping catalogs; blueprints; drawings; specifications, technical manuals; Federal and State laws relating to the movement and classification of freight; decisions of courts, regulatory agencies, and the Comptroller General. The volume of these guides used by an assistant or specialist and the intensity of his use of them are dependent upon the variety of freight assigned to him for shipment or other action.
- (2) Freight rate assistants and specialists, depending upon the variety of freight, number of origin and destination points, and the variety of modes, in addition to the items listed in (1) above are concerned with:
  - (a) Rail: Class and/or commodities tariffs, local, joint and proportional applying to all rail shipments or rail in combination with other modes of transportation; tariffs and carriers tenders providing transit privileges and charges therefore; tariffs and carriers tenders defining and providing charges for miscellaneous and accessorial services; consolidated freight and other related classifications, bulletins, guides and similar carrier publications and related agency publications concerning the services, rates, equipment, and schedules of rail freight carriers, Interstate Commerce Commission tariff rules, pertinent provisions of Federal and other regulatory acts, and established freight traffic methods, procedures, and policies;
  - (b) Motor: Motor Carriers' Directory; National Highway Users' Guide; class and/or commodity tariffs, special commodity tariffs; files of special rate quotations; scope of operations tariffs and tariffs providing lists of participating carriers, rate-stop tariffs, routing guides, and scope of territorial directories;
  - (c) Air: Publications of domestic and/or foreign air carriers (including certificated; noncertificated, charter, Government-owned, etc.) including general and specific commodity tariffs, directional rate and deferred rate tariffs, rules and regulations tariffs; guides to rail, water, and motor carriers connecting with air carriers, guides to locations of materials-handling facilities at principal junction points; transit time for carriers of various types; publications of motor carriers connecting with

air carriers; contracts and charter agreements between air carriers and the Federal Government; international laws, treaties, and agreements;

- (d) Water: Class and commodity rate tariffs, rate agreements, and related publications issued by inland, coastwise, intercoastal, and ocean commercial water carriers; charter parties; rate publication of Government-owned or Government-chartered water carriers and such ocean carriers as operate on regular schedules and primarily at fixed rates; publications of rail and motor routes and carriers connecting with commercial water carriers; regulations of various domestic ports and inland waterways; international laws, agreements, and treaties;
- (e) Miscellaneous Carriers: Guidelines applicable to miscellaneous carriers; i.e., freight forwarders, express, parcel post, etc.
  1. Freight Forwarders: Freight forwarders class and commodity tariffs and rate tenders, including offers to meet rail or motor rates which requires use of rail and motor tariffs exceptions, etc.
  2. Express: Class and commodity tariffs and special rate tenders.

## *2. Finality of action*

There are basically two kinds of review work performed subsequent to the initial determination: pre-audits and post-audits.

- A. Pre-audits: Pre-audits are conducted prior to payment of the freight bills. Carriers submit their freight bills covering the shipment and all accessorial charges for services performed for specific movements. In addition, when the carrier considers that his original bill was issued in error, he submits balance-due bills or other adjustment billings. All bills are studied on the basis of careful tariff inspection to insure, prior to approval for payment, that any correction required or made in the billing is authorized in the tariff. The pre-audits require the same type of study and consideration as do the original determinations. The decisions as to mode and route cannot be changed, but incorrect classifications or rates may be changed by the assistant or specialist performing the pre-audit. The decisions made in the initial rating and routing actions as to the accessorial services to be rendered are not subject to change but the absence of this responsibility in the pre-audit process is counterbalanced by the authority and responsibility to determine whether the services billed were, in fact, authorized, performed, and properly billed. Because of this compensating factor, the freight rate assistants and specialists conducting pre-audits have essentially the same degree of overall responsibility as do the assistants and specialists making the original determinations. Therefore, grades of these positions are determined by the same nature of the traffic criteria which are applied to the

- positions of freight rate assistants and specialists who make the original determinations.
- B. Post-Audits: Subject to statutory limitations, freight bills may be corrected after payment is made. Because of their complex nature different interpretations may be placed upon freight tariff and classification publications. Subsequent movements of freight -- after the initial bill is paid -- might alter the original rate, or the original interpretation may have been incorrect. For these and other reasons, it is customary that post-audits be made of paid freight bills by the agency originally authorizing the action and/or the General Accounting Office, generally depending upon the source of funds. These are conducted in the same manner as indicated above for pre-audits. The post-audit is performed to insure that all factors and possible classification and route combinations are investigated and applied in order to obtain the lowest applicable rate for the service rendered. Important in the review is the verification that services billed were actually authorized and rendered. Any overcharges or charges for services or privileges not actually authorized and rendered must be recovered. The freight rate assistant or specialist performing the post-audit may not change any mode or routing decision but may correct the classification or rate determinations.

The post-audit assignment requires a fuller and broader knowledge of commodities, modes of transportation, and the intricacies of tariffs than is required to make the initial rating decision. This greater knowledge requirement typically stems from the centralization of the post-audit function where a more expert application is made because the simpler cases have usually been processed correctly at the operating level. The assignment involves negotiating directly with carrier representatives in an effort to recover overcharges. (Usually this negotiation takes the form of documented correspondence.) This demands an authoritative knowledge since this negotiation is tantamount to the last chance for the Government to recover overcharges, and any factual, technical, or procedural error may result in final settlement for an incorrect amount or on an erroneous basis. For positions in any agency having responsibility for post-auditing its own freight bills (i.e., not subject to detailed post-audit of individual bills by the General Accounting Office) an additional grade has been credited in the grade-level criteria for the post-audit review function where the post-audit is accepted as final and is not subject to intensive review by the supervisor or another employee nor reviewed in higher echelon offices within the agency.

### *3. Judgment exercised*

Judgment is used by the freight classification assistants and specialists and the freight rate assistants and specialists in selecting, interpreting, and applying appropriate technical guides and publications; determining the nature, sources, suitability, and validity of classification data, and proper interpretation placed upon classification rulings and decisions; determining the most appropriate routes and economical rates consistent with the requirements of movement of freight; determination of appropriate types of carriers, consideration of special routing, handling equipment, facilities requirements,

and other similar problems. Originality and ingenuity are often employed in meeting conflicting demands of classification, rate, routing, and operating program needs and schedules. Vague or conflicting classification publications, tariffs, and other rating and routing publications create the most difficult requirement, e.g., the judgment required to decide whether or not the selected classification and/or tariffs are applicable and appropriate

#### *4. Supervision received*

##### A. Close supervision

Continuous guidance and instructions are received. Explanations are provided as a foundation for increasing the employee's knowledge and understanding of classification, rating, and routing techniques. Work is checked thoroughly both during progress and upon completion. Positions which, in all other respects, meet the criteria of specific classes at GS-5 and above but are found to be under "close supervision" are classified in the next lower grade.

##### B. General technical supervision

As distinguished from "close supervision," technical guidance of a more general nature is received. General instructions are received as to the nature and coverage of the work to be accomplished, including the priority order of assignment and target dates for completion. Within these guidelines, employees select and apply appropriate tariff, classification, and other technical criteria, methods, techniques, and work sequences which will effectively accomplish the work. The majority of assignments are performed without technical assistance, but unusually difficult classification, rating, and routing situations or problem cases encountered during the course of the work are referred to the supervisor before decision or commitment. Review of completed work is for compliance with regulatory guides and program policies and for soundness of decisions and conclusions. This is the kind and level of supervisory control assumed to exist in each of the grade levels described in this standard at GS-5 and above.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND DEFINITIONS**

Mode of transportation, as used in this standard, means type of carrier -- modes include rail, air, water, motor, and miscellaneous. Miscellaneous modes include freight forwarders, pipelines, express services, parcel post, and other modes used in remote areas. In order to insure efficient and economical movement of freight and the suitability of specific routes, more than one or all modes may be considered. Also, frequently the most economical and suitable route may result in the use of a combination of two or more modes.

Agency, as used in this standard, means executive department or independent agency.

Tariff: A schedule of rates charged by transportation lines, together with governing rules and regulations.

Transit privilege: A service granted on a shipment enroute, such as milling, compressing, refining, etc.

Transit rate: A rate restricted in its application to traffic which has been milled, stored, or otherwise specially treated in transit.

The pertinent grade-distinguishing elements to be considered in classifying positions in this series are discussed at each grade level. Also, for the purposes of clarity, the functions of classifying and rating (the latter including routing) are discussed separately.

There is no separate discussion at each grade level of qualifications required. Knowledge of and ability to use the tariffs and technical publications are the overriding requirements. The extent of these requirements at successive grade levels is revealed by the differences in the work described.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POSITIONS**

The typical entrance level shown in this standard is GS-4. Positions at this grade level perform basic transportation clerical duties in learning freight rate work and in preparation for higher-level assignments. \*The duties described at the GS-4 level are classifiable in this series only when the development of skills in these duties constitutes a portion of a planned training program and where there is a scheduled program of advancement into the specialized classification, rating, and/or rate auditing work..

As shown under Supervision Received (page 16), positions which perform the combination of duties representative of or equivalent to a defined grade level at GS-5 and above are classified one grade lower than shown in the standard if the supervisory control over the position is close and continuous.

Where the full performance level in an organization is higher than grade GS-6 (because of such factors as the great variety of commodities shipped, the extensive geographic area involved, or the requirements generated by transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services for the commodities shipped) usually intermediate positions are required between the entrance grade levels and the full performance grades. Such developmental assignments usually are intentionally limited in some fashion. Typical limitations which may be imposed are a lesser variety of commodities assigned or recurrent shipments involving a smaller number of points of origin and destination. The combinations which result from these limitations can be evaluated by comparison with the typical combinations described at the intermediate grade levels.

In some instances, where there is unusual complexity of the classification, routing, and rating functions, the entrance level may be established at grade GS-5. This is possible when the assignment includes performing rate determination work of the type described at GS-5 or higher for the purpose of receiving training and instructions in the use of rate and other tariff guides, bulletins, and related carrier publications applicable to the commodities, geographic area, accessorial, transit, or special handling services involved.

## **FREIGHT RATE ASSISTANT, GS-2131-04**

The Freight Rate Assistant GS-4 receives assignments which are selected to provide knowledge of how to use basic materials, familiarity with freight terminology and sources of information, documents used in freight movements, and methods of accomplishment. The relationship between the preliminary processes and the classification, rating, and routing processes are outlined during the progress of assignments. However, many of the day-to-day activities of an employee in a position in this class are not susceptible of close review. Written materials, such as reports, bills of lading, etc., are reviewed for compliance with established policies and procedures. Occasionally the records and files maintained by the GS-4 freight rate assistant are spot-checked for general efficiency of operations.

An employee occupying a position of this kind performs a variety of duties such as the following:

- (a) Maintains tariff files, special quotations, publications, billing guides, or similar freight classification, rating, and routing guides; codes, classifies, cross-references, files and locates, and refiles this material.
- (b) Compiles data concerning carload, truckload, LCL's (less than carload) and LTL's (less than truckload), classification ratings, size and use of carriers' equipment ordered, etc.
- (c) Assembles and organizes material for billing and shipping guides to be issued by his office.
- (d) Prepares bills of lading, reviews the rates and routes, using easily accessible information.
- (e) Performs elementary rating, routing and classification duties.

## **FREIGHT RATE ASSISTANT, GS-2131-05**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) 1. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
- (a) Movements are made principally within a geographic area comprised of a relatively small number of States, for example, the New England or the southern States;
  - (b) Movements are primarily recurrent between a limited number of points;
  - (c) Movements are primarily limited to one or two modes;
  - (d) A limited variety of commodities are shipped, most of which do not require special handling or accessorial services;
  - (e) Few shipments involve transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.
- (B) Pre-auditing freight bills for correctness when the same conditions and limitations in (A) are involved.

## **FREIGHT RATE ASSISTANT, GS-2131-06**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) 1. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
- (a) Movements are made principally within a geographic area comprised of approximately one-half of the United States;
  - (b) Movements are primarily recurrent between a limited number of points;
  - (c) Movements are primarily limited to one or two modes;
  - (d) A limited variety of commodities are shipped;
  - (e) Few shipments involve transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.



2. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
  - (a) Movements are made principally within a geographic area comprised of a relatively small number of States, for example, the New England or the southern States;
  - (b) Many movements are not recurrent and do not follow an established pattern between shipping points;
  - (c) A substantial number of shipments require consideration of several modes, and several modes are utilized regularly;
  - (d) A normal variety of commodities are shipped;
  - (e) A substantial portion of the shipments involves transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.
- (B) Pre-auditing freight bills for correctness when the same conditions and limitations in (A) are involved.
- (C) Performing post-audit of combined classification, rating, and routing decisions of the level described at GS-5 when the post-audit is accepted as final as described in the Explanatory Statement on page 15.

## **FREIGHT RATE SPECIALIST, GS-2131-07**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) 1. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
  - (a) Movements are made principally within a geographic area of the country comprised of a relatively small number of States, for example, the New England or the southern States;
  - (b) Many movements are not recurrent and do not follow an established pattern between points;
  - (c) A substantial number of shipments require consideration of several modes, and several modes are utilized regularly;
  - (d) A great variety of commodities are shipped;

- (e) A substantial portion of the shipments involves transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.
2. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
- (a) Movements are made principally within a geographic area comprised of approximately one-half of the United States;
  - (b) Many movements are not recurrent and do not follow an established pattern between points;
  - (c) A substantial number of shipments require consideration of several modes, and several modes are utilized regularly;
  - (d) A normal variety of commodities are shipped;
  - (e) A substantial portion of the shipments involves transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.
3. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
- (a) Movements are made nationwide (and sometimes to contiguous foreign countries) including shipments to seaports when there is no responsibility for rates beyond the seaports;
  - (b) Many movements are not recurrent and do not follow an established pattern between a limited number of points;
  - (c) Movements are primarily limited to one or two modes;
  - (d) Either a limited or normal variety of commodities are shipped;
  - (e) Few shipments involve transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.
- (B) Preauditing freight bills when the same conditions and limitations described in (A) above are present.
- (C) Performing post-audit of combined classification rating and routing decisions of the level described in GS-6 when the post-audit is accepted as final as described in the Explanatory Statement on page 15.
- (D) Performing the General Accounting Office post-audit and examination, determining the most economical legal and lawful rates and routes for the movement of freight when the

work assignment includes the analysis and post-audit of paid transportation bills involving:

- (1) Domestic, import, and export shipments, including inbound transit shipments, originating at any point in the United States or in foreign countries and terminating in a specific section of the U.S. (i.e., Eastern or Western half of the country).
- (2) Shipments terminating in delivery by one of the following modes of transportation:
  - (a) Rail
  - (b) Motor
  - (c) Water
  - (d) Freight Forwarder
  - (e) Air.
- (3) Shipments of a great variety of commodities, including commodities difficult to classify and which present minor problems of definition and development.

All findings and reports of overcharges are subject to a thorough technical review. Correspondence with carriers to recover overpayments is reviewed closely.

## **FREIGHT RATE SPECIALIST, GS-2131-08**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) 1. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
  - (a) Movements are made principally either (1) within a geographic area comprised of approximately one-half of the United States; or (2) nationwide (and sometimes to contiguous foreign countries) including shipments to seaports when there is no responsibility for rates and routes beyond the seaports;
  - (b) Many movements are not recurrent and do not follow an established pattern between points or ports;
  - (c) A substantial number of shipments require consideration of several modes, and several modes are utilized regularly;
  - (d) A great variety of commodities are shipped;

- (e) A substantial portion of the shipments involves transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.
2. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
- (a) Movements are worldwide with responsibility for rates and routes to final destination;
  - (b) Many movements are not recurrent and do not follow an established pattern between points or ports;
  - (c) A substantial number of shipments require consideration of several modes, and several modes are utilized regularly;
  - (d) A limited variety of commodities are shipped;
  - (e) Few shipments involve transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.
- (B) Pre-auditing freight bills when the same conditions and limitations in (A) above are present.
- (C) Performing post-audit of combined classification, rating, and routing decisions of the level described at GS-7 when the post-audit is accepted as final as described in the Explanatory Statement on page 15.

## **FREIGHT RATE SPECIALIST, GS-2131-09**

- (A) 1. Determining most efficient and economical rates and routes for the movement of freight when:
- (a) Movements are worldwide with responsibility for rates and routes to final destination;
  - (b) Many movements are not recurrent and do not follow an established pattern between points, ports, or foreign destinations;
  - (c) All modes are utilized regularly with substantial use of combination of modes for individual shipments;
  - (d) Either a normal or a great variety of commodities are shipped;
  - (e) A substantial portion of the shipments involves transit privileges, special handling, or accessorial services.

- (B) Pre-auditing freight bills when the same conditions and limitations in (A) above are present.
- (C) Performing post-audit of combined classification, rating, and routing decisions of the level described at GS-8 when the post-audit is accepted as final as described in the Explanatory Statement on page 15.
- (D) Performing the General Accounting Office post-audit and examination, determining the most economical legal and lawful rates and routes for the movement of freight when:

1. The work assignment includes:

The audit of paid transportation bills; examination, analysis, and settlement of unpaid bills submitted for direct settlement, administratively reported debts, carriers' supplemental bills, and requests for reconsideration of disallowances or overcharge notices; the preparation of bases for complaints before the Interstate Commerce Commission; the preparation of bases for court actions when the United States is either the plaintiff or defendant; the determination and reporting of traffic management errors in individual shipments; and the furnishing of information concerning rates, routes, and other technical data to departments and agencies.

2. The work assignment involves:

- (a) Domestic import and export shipments, including inbound, intermediate, and outbound transit shipments, originating' at any point in the United States or foreign countries.
- (b) Shipments terminating in delivery by one or more of the following modes (but necessarily involving some individual shipments which move by a combination of modes or otherwise require a determination of applicable charges via more than one mode):

- 1. Rail Carriers
- 2. Motor Carriers
- 3. Water Carriers
- 4. Freight Forwarders
- 5. Air Carriers.

- (c) Shipments of an unlimited variety of commodities, including those commodities more difficult to classify and which present problems of definition and development, require study and verification of numerous transportation characteristics and conditions, or involve complex and controversial classification of commodities that were previously improperly classified.

Findings and reports of overcharges are subject to a technical review. Correspondence and negotiation with the carriers to recover overpayment are also subject to a technical review.

## **FREIGHT RATE SPECIALIST, GS-2131-10**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for performing post-audit of combined classification, rating, and routing decisions of the level described at GS-9 when the post-audit is accepted as final as described in the Explanatory Statement on page 15.

## **FREIGHT RATE SPECIALIST, GS-2131-11**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for assignments which involve:

1. Performing the final technical review for the General Accounting Office of paid and unpaid transportation bills which have been audited and examined by GS-9 freight rate specialists in the General Accounting Office. This review is accepted as final and is not subject to intensive review by the supervisor nor is it reviewed in higher echelon offices; and
2. Performing the review, examination, and settlement of carriers bills, protests, or requests for reconsideration and other correspondence, prior to the accumulation of associated records or other development, for the purpose of (a) determining whether a legitimate and procedurally correct supplemental billing or protest has been presented; (b) advising the carrier of the termination of unsupported supplemental billings and protests or of the existence of litigation which requires action to be held in abeyance pending final judicial decisions; or (c) directing the accumulation of associated records or such other action considered necessary to permit settlement of the supplemental billings or protests; and
3. Considering and disposing of carriers' protests to the General Accounting Office audit action and appeals for reconsideration of disallowances. Disposing of protests and appeals may be accomplished by (a) preparing a letter to the carrier, furnishing new or additional technical or other information to deny and dispose of the carrier's protest or appeal; (b) preparing a statement of facts for submission to the Comptroller General where such action is requested specifically or otherwise desired; (c) issuing instruction to the appropriate examining section to revise the settlement action on the supplemental billing, protest, or reconsideration.

## **FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION ASSISTANT, GS-2131-04**

The Freight Classification Assistant GS-4 receives assignments which are selected to provide knowledge of how to use basic materials, familiarity with freight terminology and sources of information, documents used in freight movements, and methods of accomplishment. The relationship between the preliminary processes and the classification, rating, and routing processes are outlined during the progress of assignments. However, the day-to-day activities of an employee in a position in this class are not subject to close review.

Written materials, such as reports, bills of lading, etc., are reviewed for compliance with established policies and procedures. Occasionally the records and files maintained by the GS-4 freight classification assistant are spot-checked for general efficiency of operations.

An employee occupying a position of this kind performs a variety of duties such as the following:

- (a) Reviews stock catalogs to insure that classification lists for freight which moves regularly in commercial channels are appropriate; reviews amendments to lists of stock items to select and include additional items described in classification publications issued by the carriers; removes from the stock catalogs those items which are no longer shipped by the agency, and otherwise keeps this information current; secures required or additional information necessary for the identification or classification of freight through reference to material such as contracts, specifications, and similar sources within the office.
- (b) Assembles and organizes material for billing and shipping guides to be issued by his office.
- (c) Prepares bills of lading and determines the freight classification descriptions for a variety of commodities within a supply class (standard and nonstandard medical supplies) by comparing with similar easily accessible information.
- (d) Maintains file with transportation data on all items for which the activity has designated supply responsibility, including the stock number, nomenclature, Uniform Freight Code item number, less than carload and truckload rating, and description as described in applicable tariff.

## **FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION ASSISTANT, GS-2131-05**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) Determining classifications of freight which have been specifically described in publications of the carriers, special quotations, stock catalogs, billing guides, and other published freight classification guides;

- (B) Reviewing freight classifications for correctness when the same degree of difficulty described in (A) is involved. At this level the classifications being reviewed have been proposed by operating (nontransportation) units.

## **FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION ASSISTANT GS-2131-6**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) Determining classifications of freight:
  1. By the rule of analogy, which involves comparison of the freight to be classified with officially established classifications assigned to freight similar in identity and in transportation characteristics; or
  2. When the identity and/or transportation characteristics have changed, or do not agree in all respects, with published classifications which renders the original freight classification and descriptions no longer specifically applicable.
- (B) Reviewing freight classifications for correctness when the same degree of difficulty described in (A) above is involved.

## **FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION SPECIALIST, GS-2131-07**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) Advising shipping, purchasing, and other offices within the agency as to appropriate freight classifications involving questionable, borderline, and alternative classifications such as those:
  1. For which there are no recorded or published classifications;
  2. Which have been improperly classified;
  3. For which the classification has been contested;
  4. For which alternative classifications are possible;
  5. Which are peculiar to the agency, not usually shipped commercially, and require the translation of technical descriptive terms into freight and transportation nomenclature.
- (B) Recommending and upon the approval of the supervisor preparing requests for rulings on freight improperly classified, not previously classified, or when new or amended classifications are sought by own agency, which involves the development and assembly of pertinent information and preparation of exhibits in



accordance with general instructions concerning sources and manner of presentation, for use by others in negotiations.

- (C) Reviewing freight classifications for correctness when the same types described in (A) above are involved.

## **FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION SPECIALIST, GS-2131-08**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) Preparing requests to regulatory bodies for ruling on the classification of commodities when this involves:
  - 1. Determining, without referral to the supervisor, the classifications to be recommended, the kind of information suitable for use in justifying the proposed classification, and the method of presentation.
- (B) Developing narrative material and exhibit material designed to:
  - 1. Defeat carriers' proposed supplements to classifications and other proposed changes in classification descriptions and ratings, packing requirements, minimum weights, and similar matters (when such proposals would result in increases in the cost of transportation within own agency), for use by others in negotiations with the carriers or in presentation to the regulatory bodies.
- (C) Advising offices of other departments and agencies as to the appropriate freight classifications involving a wide variety of questionable, borderline, and alternative classifications when the same kind of analysis, evaluation, and decisions are required that are required in (A) and (B) above. Examples of commodities or shipments presenting problems of this nature are those:
  - 1. For which there are no recorded or published classifications;
  - 2. Which have been improperly classified;
  - 3. For which the classification has been contested;
  - 4. For which alternative classifications are possible which would provide more economical rates;
  - 5. Which are not usually shipped commercially, and require the translation of technical descriptive terms into freight and transportation nomenclature.

- (D) Reviewing freight classifications and actions for correctness when the same types and considerations as listed above are involved.

## **FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION SPECIALIST, GS-2131-09**

Positions in this class are characterized by responsibility for:

- (A) The preparation of requests for rulings for other departments and agencies, when this involves:
  - 1. The determination, on own initiative, of the kind of information suitable for use in justifying the proposed classifications and of the manner of its presentation.
- (B) The development of narrative material and exhibit material designed to:
  - 1. Defeat carriers' proposed dockets, supplements to classifications, and other proposals showing proposed changes in classification descriptions and ratings, packing requirements, minimum weights, and similar matters, when such proposals would result in increases in the cost of transportation for other departments and agencies.
- (C) Reviewing freight classifications and actions for correctness when the same considerations listed above are involved.