

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership & Merit System Accountability
Classification Appeals Programs

Chicago Field Services Group
230 South Dearborn Street, Room 3060
Chicago, IL 60604-1687

Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code

Appellants: [appellant]
[appellant]
[appellant]
[appellant]

Agency classification: Electrical Worker
WG-2805-8

Organization: [special] Section
Maintenance Engineer [section]
Operations and Maintenance Division
Civil Engineer Directorate
[#] Air Base Wing
Department of the Air Force
[city and state]

OPM decision: Electrical Worker
WG-2805-08

OPM decision number: C-2805-08-01

/s/Marta B. Pérez

Marta Brito Pérez
Associate Director
Human Capital Leadership
and Merit System Accountability

June 15, 2004
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 the conditions and time limits 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:

[appellant 1]
[address]
[city and state]

[appellant 2]
[address]
[city and state]

[appellant 3]
[address]
[city and state]

[appellant 4]
[address]
[city and state]

[chief of human resources]
Chief, Civilian Personnel Division
[section] MSG/DPC
U.S. Department of the Air Force
[address]
[Air Force Base], [city and state]

Director, Civilian Personnel Operations
HQ AFPC/DPC
U.S. Department of the Air Force
550C Street West, Suite 57
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas 78150-4759

Chief, Civilian Policy
HQ USAF/DPPH
U.S. Department of the Air Force
1040 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1040

Introduction

On September 10, 2003, the Chicago Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from Messrs [appellants]. They occupy identical additional jobs, hereinafter referred to as job, currently graded as Electrical Worker, WG-2805-8. However, they believe that their job should be graded as Electrician, WG-2805-10 or WG-2805-11. The appellants work in the [special] Section, Maintenance Engineer Branch, Operations and Maintenance Division, Civil Engineer Directorate, [location] Air Base Wing, Department of the Air Force, [name] Air Force Base in [location]. We received the complete appeal administrative report on October 17, 2003. We accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

Background information

The appellants' agency accepted their job grading appeal on April 24, 2003, and issued its decision on June 18, 2003. The agency decision was Electrical Worker WG-2805-8. The appellants filed their appeal with OPM on July 9, and it was received by OPM on July 14, 2003.

General issues

The appellants request the grading of their job as Electrician WG-2805-10 or WG-2805-11, and that it be backdated to October 1, 2002. The appellants believe that if their appeal is upheld, they will be entitled to back pay retroactive to October 1, 2002. However, the U.S. Comptroller General states that an "...employee is entitled only to the salary of the position to which he is actually appointed, regardless of the duties performed. When an employee performs the duties of a higher grade level, no entitlement to the salary of the higher grade exists until such time as the individual is actually promoted. Consequently, back pay is not available as a remedy for misassignments to higher level duties or improper classifications" (CG decision B-232695, December 15, 1989).

In their appeal the appellants state that they agree with and accomplish the major duties described in their job description (JD) but that it is not complete, that the complexity of the work has not been adequately showcased, and that they take issue with the way in which the major duties are presented. The appellants and their supervisor have certified to the accuracy of the JD of record (JD) [#####-#####].

Our job grading decisions must be based solely upon a comparison between the actual duties and responsibilities of the job and the appropriate job grading standards (JGS's) (5 U.S.C. 5346). A JD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position or job by an official with the authority to assign work. A job is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by an employee. Job grading appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a job and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities currently assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision grades a real operating job, and not simply the JD. Therefore, this decision is based on the work currently assigned to and performed by the appellants and sets aside any previous agency decision.

Job information

The appellants' JD of record states that they install, repair, and maintain [location name] Air Force Base electronic and electric security and fire alarm systems and dedicated central monitoring systems. The record also shows that the appellants use diagnostic and troubleshooting knowledge and skills to identify and repair devices. Some of the system components include state-of-the-art microprocessors and are more complex than other devices that the appellants maintain and repair in older systems or boards. Upkeep of newer systems typically requires the update of chips or the removal of old for the new snap-in type boards. The appellants use laptop computers in their work; for example, to recalibrate using a DOS-program. They also use laptop computers to program all of the functions, parameters, and specifications required of the intrusion detection systems. The appellants maintain hardware on the two central monitoring systems; base intrusion detection systems and fire detection systems.

The appellants are involved in minor installations; such as a replacement of a panel, and they estimated two such occasions during the last 12 months. They also complete "add-on" work to existing systems. Major installations are conducted by contractors because of the time involved. Although the appellants may assist contractors in an installation, there is a contractor inspector who monitors contract work.

The record shows that the appellants work independently. There are no higher level workers determining job layouts, work sequences, and material requirements for the appellants. There are times when the immediate supervisor schedules some of their work for them. In emergency situations, the supervisor will interrupt an appellant during the course of completing regular work, and shifts their priorities for the day or for a few hours to complete the emergency job. . Our fact-finding revealed that a contract inspector monitors and examines work completed by contractors, even if the appellants assist the contractors

In addition to the telephone audit with the group representative, [appellant], we interviewed their first-level supervisor, [supervisor's name], on January 26, 2004. In deciding this appeal, we carefully considered the audit and interview findings and all information of record furnished by the appellants and their agency. We find that the JD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned and performed by the appellants and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

Occupational code, title, and standard determination

The agency has determined that the job is covered by the 2805 Electrician occupation. Applying the titling criteria in the Electrician Job Grading Standard (JGS), the agency assigned the title of Electrical Worker which covers jobs below the grade 10 level. The appellants agree that their job is covered by the 2805 series, but believe that it should be classified at the grade 10 or 11 level and therefore, titled Electrician. Based on our review of the record, we agree that the job is covered by the 2805 series, and is properly titled Electrical Worker based on the grade determination that follows.

Grade determination

The 2805 Electrician JGS uses four factors to determine grade level: *Skill and Knowledge, Responsibility, Physical Effort, and Working Conditions.*

Skill and Knowledge

The appellants believe that their work meets either the grade 10 or grade 11 work because the equipment today is much more complex than in the past. They are maintaining life-safety systems for an Air Force Base; the fire and security alarm computer-based systems. The appellants say that systems are interrelated, tied into one base communication system, and are multiplexed together into a digital system. They work closely with the communications staff in their work as a result of the interrelated and multiplexed systems. They use a line analyzer to test communications between the central monitoring station and the field installed intrusion detection systems, allowing the appellants to set decibel levels and locate any abnormalities in the communication link.

At the grade 8 level, work involves making repairs that can be accomplished by removing, replacing, tightening, splicing, soldering, and insulating defective wiring, controls, equipment, and fixtures. Grade 8 electrical workers require knowledge of where fixtures, wiring, and controls, such as light switches, circuit breakers, fuses, relays, and outlets, are installed and how they operate. They must have the ability to read and follow wiring diagrams that specify where wiring, fixtures, and controls are installed or are to be hooked up and show the type of wiring, fittings, and equipment installed or to be used. Electrical workers must have the skill needed to remove and replace fixtures and controls, and to make repairs such as tightening connections, wrapping exposed wiring with insulating tape, and soldering loose wire leads to contact points. They must also have the skill needed to rearrange old or install new outlets, relays, switches, and light fixtures in existing systems, and to test circuits to see if they are complete after making repairs or installations. At this grade, electrical workers must have the skill needed to measure, cut, and bend wire and conduit to specified lengths and angles. They must have skill in the use of hand tools and portable power tools, such as screwdrivers, pliers, wire cutters, strippers, drills, soldering irons, and manual or power conduit benders and threaders; and a limited variety of test equipment, for example, meggers, test lamps, and ammeters.

In comparison with the grade 8 level, grade 10 work involves installing, modifying, repairing, maintaining, troubleshooting, testing, and loading new and existing electrical lines, circuits, systems, and associated fixtures, controls and equipment. Grade 10 electricians must have a knowledge of the operation and installation of a variety of complete electrical systems and equipment, such as series, parallel, and compound circuits for single and multiple phase alternating current of varying voltage, amperage, and frequency; wiring systems in industrial complexes and in buildings; and power or regulating and control circuits and distribution panels to industrial machinery, ships' control equipment, computers or laboratory and other electrical equipment. Because grade 10 electricians plan, lay out, install, modify, troubleshoot, and repair a variety of complete systems as well as any parts of these systems, they must have greater knowledge than grade 8 electrical workers about how various circuits, equipment, and controls operate, fit, and work together.

Grade 10 electricians must have knowledge of the various gauges, sizes, and types of wire, conduit, couplings, fittings, relays, boxes, circuit breakers, and other electrical devices, and the

ability to arrange and install them in ways that insure proper and safe operation of electrical systems and equipment. They must have the ability to interpret and apply the National Electrical Code, local codes, building plans, blueprints, wiring diagrams, and engineering drawings, and to use trade formulas to calculate common properties, e.g., voltage, voltage drop and current capability in series and parallel circuits, resistance, inductance, capacitance, power factor, current flow, and temperature, and length in single and multiple raceways, conduits, gutters, and cable trays. They must have skill in the use of hand tools; power tools, such as cable pullers, hydraulic benders, and pipe threading machines; and a wide variety of test equipment, for example, multimeters, frequency meters, watt meters, power factor meters, vibro-grounds, phase rotation meters, audio tone location equipment, high potential testers, ground fault interrupter testing equipment, recording amp meters, circuit analyzers, circuit breaker testers, resistance bridges, and cathodic protection test sets. Additionally, some jobs require a basic familiarity with electronics to electronic components. For example, the electrician may recognize parts, such as resistors, capacitors, and transistors; may operate basic test equipment such as signal generators, signal tracers, and oscilloscopes; and may read schematics of uncomplicated assemblies to determine locations of defective parts.

The appellants' regular and recurring work fully meets the grade 8 level in that they repair electrical systems and perform limited assignments in the installation of electrical systems. Typical of that level, they apply the level of skill and knowledge needed to follow system diagrams, remove and replace components, and to test the repairs that they make. Unlike the grade 10 level, they do not regularly work on all types of systems. In addition, they do not perform the full range of duties that require the application of grade 10 level skill and knowledge on a regular and recurring basis; i.e., plan, layout install, modify, troubleshoot, and repair a variety of complete systems as well as parts of systems. Electrical intrusion alarm and fire alarm systems are just one of many systems that grade 10 Electricians install, modify, repair and maintain. Work requiring the application of grade 10 level knowledge and skill on the systems maintained by the appellants is performed by contractors. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at the grade 8 level.

Responsibility

The appellants say that they perform their duties with little or no supervision. Job orders are placed on a clipboard and the appellants prioritize them and select orders to complete. There are no higher grade employees that accompany them on jobs or that determine requirements for specific jobs. Periodically the supervisor will schedule or assign specific projects to one of the appellants; however, that is the exception rather than the rule. The supervisor is contacted when there are schedule problems or personal conflicts. The appellants use operating manuals and prints, especially those that come with new systems, in the performance of their duties. When prints do not exist, the appellants have drawn their own diagrams. The appellants perform final acceptance inspections and ensure systems meet accepted standards independently.

At the grade 8 level, a higher grade worker or a supervisor plans, lays out, and assigns work orally or through work orders and wiring diagrams. Grade 8 electrical worker selects tools, decides on methods and techniques to use, and carry out the work with little check during its progress. They use materials called for in work orders and schematic drawings, or obtain replacement parts by comparison with samples such as switches and wall outlet fixtures. They

replace worn or bad switches, relays, and outlets by unscrewing or cutting wiring from connections, inserting the replacement, and splicing, tightening, and soldering wiring to connections. They also install or rearrange light fixtures, switches, and outlets by following schematic drawings that provide the exact work specifications, for example, the location where the electrical wiring is to be hooked into the installed system, the type, size, and measurements of wire, conduit, couplings, and fittings to use, and the type and placement of the electrical device to be installed. Routine repair and maintenance duties are accomplished independently; if unusual problems arise, or if installation or repair of unfamiliar or complex industrial electrical systems is assigned, a supervisor or higher grade worker provides advice and checks to see that completed work meets requirements.

Unlike grade 8 electrical workers who receive specific instructions, grade 10 electricians work from building plans, wiring diagrams, and engineering drawings. They are responsible for planning and laying out the routing, placement, and arrangement of industrial or similarly complex systems, circuits, controls, and equipment. Grade 10 electricians determine installations and repairs including such things as the types, sizes, gauges, and lay out of conduit, wiring, couplings, fittings, relays, controls, and distribution panels, and other electrical devices used in a variety of complete electrical systems and the best methods of installation and repair. They are responsible for safe and proper operation of systems and equipment, and for compliance with the National Electrical Code. They complete installations, modifications, and repairs, and load and test systems, circuits, equipment, and controls with little or no check during the progress or upon completion of the work. The supervisor checks overall work to see that it meets accepted trade standards and is completed in a timely manner.

The level of responsibility exercised by the appellants fully meets the grade 8 criteria. However, the responsibility level falls short of the grade 10 level. Although the appellants function with little or no supervision, and do not have a higher grade employee setting job order requirements or inspecting their work, they do not lay out the complex systems described at the grade 10 level. Because the appellants do not perform the full range of grade 10 electrical work as discussed previously, they do not deal with the variety of issues and do not exercise the greater judgment and independent action on work found at the grade 10 level. Because their additional responsibility does not so substantially exceed the grade 8 to warrant consideration of an intervening grade, this factor is credited at the grade 8.

Physical Effort and Working Conditions

These factors are the same at all grade levels. Because they do not have grade level impact, and the appellants agree their work meets the levels described in the JGS at the grade 8 level, we will credit both factors as being met and will not address them further.

Decision

The appellants' job is properly graded as Electrical Worker, WG-2805-08.