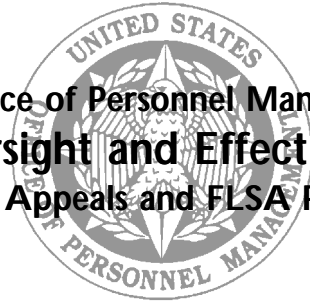


U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness  
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Atlanta Oversight Division  
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Classification Appeal Decision  
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code**

<b>Appellant:</b>	[Appellant]
<b>Agency classification:</b>	Electrical Engineer GS-0850-11
<b>Organization:</b>	Department of the Air Force
<b>OPM decision:</b>	Electrical Engineer GS-0850-11
<b>OPM decision number:</b>	C-0850-11-01

/s/  
Kathy W. Day  
Classification Appeals Officer

February 1, 2000  
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

### **Decision sent to:**

[Appellant]

[Civilian Personnel Officer]

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## **Introduction**

On October 8, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Electrical Engineer, GS-850-11, [organization], U.S. Department of the Air Force, [geographic location]. The appellant is requesting that his position be classified as an Electrical Engineer, GS-850-12.

The appeal was accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

## **General issues**

The appellant was initially placed in this GS-850-11 position from a GS-12 engineering position in the Maintenance Engineering Section on January 9, 1994, as a result of a reduction-in-force. The appellant contends that his current position description does not include his assigned duties as the base manager for corrosion, utilities, and energy, and that consideration of these duties would upgrade his job to GS-12.

We reviewed the position description, considered the written information provided by the appellant and the [AFB] civilian personnel office, and conducted an extensive interview with the appellant. The civilian personnel office advised that interviewing the Chief of the Infrastructure Engineering Section would not be productive because the incumbent has been the supervisor of the section for only two months. The Chief of the Maintenance Engineering Branch was not available for an interview.

## **Position information**

The position description for the appellant's job is Air Force standard core personnel document (SCPD) number [#] which was established on December 27, 1996. [AFB] management officials certified that this SCPD accurately describes the major duties of the appellant's position. After carefully reviewing all the available information, we have concluded that the duties being performed by the appellant, including those duties in question, are adequately described for classification purposes in the assigned SCPD.

The primary purpose of the position is to perform operation and maintenance engineering involving maintenance, repair, upgrade, design, and operation of electrical circuits, equipment, and systems to infrastructure facilities, including utility systems, using a professional knowledge of electrical engineering. As the base energy and corrosion manager, the appellant must ensure that corrosion control measures and energy conserving approaches are properly addressed in architect and engineer designs. He analyzes data related to existing equipment and facilities for any possible corrosion problems and/or to determine ways of saving energy. The SCPD states under duty #1 that the incumbent "reviews architect and engineer contract drawings and in-house

designs for construction, renovation, or improvements to determine electrical compatibility, maintainability, and functionality.” Also duty #1 states that he “inspects, conducts studies, and evaluates reliability....and maintainability of existing equipment and systems....”

Based on the interview with the appellant, we determined that the total amount of time spent on all the responsibilities covered by duty #1 is approximately 40 percent rather than 25 percent as currently estimated in the SCPD. Of this 40 percent, the appellant attributed only 5 percent to the corrosion related duties. The appellant also stated that he spends less than 10 percent of his time on SCPD duty #2, providing support to trades and crafts shops, now estimated as 20 percent of his job.

Other aspects of his energy and utilities manager duties include reviewing contractor proposals in relation to expected energy savings, ensuring that current contractors install the agreed upon energy conservation measures, and reviewing and verifying the base monthly utility bills. These duties are generally described under SCPD duty #5 which refers to “reviewing designs and monitoring a variety of real property facilities construction projects...” and “performing various economic analyses.” SCPD duty #6 states the appellant will “assist the energy/utilities manager with developing and instituting electrical power conservation measures.... and verifying and maintaining accurate electrical utility measurements and billing.” Although the duties are accurate, the appellant functions as the energy/utilities manager rather than an assistant to the manager.

The supervisor sets the overall objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides background information and guidance on unusual problems. The appellant independently plans and carries out the details of the work. Completed assignments are reviewed for general adequacy and conformance with agency policy.

### **Series and title determination**

The appellant does not contest the series or title determination. The agency placed the position in the Electrical Engineering Series, GS-850, and we agree. The GS-850 series includes professional engineering positions which primarily require a knowledge of physical and engineering sciences and mathematics, electrical phenomena, and the principles, techniques, and practices of electrical engineering. *Electrical Engineer* is the authorized title for nonsupervisory positions in this series.

### **Standard determination**

Electrical Engineering Series, GS-850, dated February 1971.

Civil Engineering Series, GS-810, Part IV, Facilities Engineering Management, dated June 1966.

## **Grade determination**

The GS-850 series uses two evaluation factors to determine the degree of difficulty and complexity and level of responsibility for engineering positions - *Nature of assignment* and *Level of responsibility*.

### ***Nature of assignment***

The agency determined that the appellant's duties meet the GS-11 level. The appellant believes the GS-12 level is correct.

At the GS-11 level, engineers apply a broad knowledge of diverse engineering concepts and procedures of a function or subject-matter area and carry out a wide range of professional engineering studies and assignments. Agency manuals, standards and precedents normally apply to the assignments. However, GS-11 engineers make significant adaptations. Typical of this level is the engineer involved in the maintenance and operation of equipment and systems who develops or evaluates the adequacy of maintenance programs and repair procedures; inspects new or modified equipment and systems for conformance to requirements and prescribes corrective measures when problems are found; and resolves equipment failures and performance problems.

Comparable to the GS-11 criteria, the appellant performs operation and maintenance engineering involving maintenance, repair, upgrade, design, and operation of electrical circuits, equipment, and systems to infrastructure facilities, including utility systems, using a professional knowledge of electrical engineering. As the base energy and corrosion manager, the appellant must ensure that corrosion control measures and energy conserving approaches are properly addressed in architect and engineer designs. He analyzes data related to existing equipment and facilities for any possible corrosion problems and/or to determine ways of saving energy. He also analyzes a wide variety of problems or conditions to provide or recommend ways of dealing with them. The appellant uses agency manuals and standard guides for most situations although he must use his judgment to decide which is the applicable guideline, and when and how adaptations should be made.

GS-12 engineers apply deep and diversified knowledge to atypical or highly difficult assignments. Precedents for their assignments are sometimes absent and they must be knowledgeable of research and developmental activities and technological advances in order to incorporate them into assignments.

Unlike the GS-12 level, the appellant's assignments are not unusual or highly complex. Although he analyzes a variety of problems and conditions, there are standards and guides available which normally apply or can be adapted to fit the situation.

GS-11 is credited for Nature of assignment.

***Level of responsibility***

The agency determined that the appellant's duties meet the GS-11 level. The appellant believes the GS-12 level is correct.

Supervisors of GS-11 engineers provide background information and guidance on unusual problems or novel issues. The engineers receive most assignments within their subject-matter or functional speciality without instruction; and they independently plan and carry out their work.

The appellant's position is comparable to the GS-11 level. He receives most assignments without instruction; determines the nature of the questions and issues; and independently carries out the investigation, analysis, and details of the work. His supervisor normally assumes that the drawings, specifications, and data prepared by the appellant are technically accurate and complete. Therefore, the supervisor accepts them without intensively reviewing them.

At the GS-12 level, engineers are free to analyze problems and develop their own approaches because available technical manuals or specifications are frequently inadequate. Technical decisions and recommendations are accepted by higher authorities and they act as spokespersons for the agency.

The GS-12 level is not met. The appellant does not independently develop new approaches and does not have the individual authority to authorize important modifications. He also does not act as the spokesperson for the Branch or Section.

GS-11 is credited for Level of responsibility.

Both *Nature of assignment* and *Level of responsibility* are credited at GS-11. Therefore, the overall evaluation is GS-11.

The incumbent's duties were also evaluated in relation to the Civil Engineering Series, GS-810, Part IV, Facilities Engineering Management. Engineers performing functions covered by Part IV make judgments and recommendations as to what facilities to build, with what resources, and what actions would ensure that approved facilities are maintained. Grade levels in Part IV are defined in terms of the scope and complexity of facilities for which the position has engineering management responsibility, the range of facilities engineering activities managed, and the level of responsibility assigned.

The agency classified the duties of this position using the GS-810 standard at the GS-11 level, and we concur. The appellant performs work as described in the GS-11 criteria in that his duties relate primarily to one locale or installation; the facilities are varied in type or purpose; there exist ample precedents for the planning, design, and construction; a higher graded engineer administers the entire facilities engineering program for the managing activity; and the appellant typically deals with a variety of administrative and engineering personnel on the base, as well as with contractors.

The appellant may also work with higher graded engineers as a member of a task group or in relation to a special project.

The appellant's duties do not meet the GS-12 level because at this higher level the engineer must be fully responsible for coordinating functions relating to facilities of substantial complexity and variety, possibly in a number of locations, or under the control of a number of different activity managers. Also at this higher level, the engineer must often search out and develop new or greatly modified engineering methods.

### **Summary**

The appellant's responsibilities equate to the GS-11 level by reference to both the GS-850 and GS-810 standards.

### **Decision**

The appellant's position is properly classified as Electrical Engineer, GS-850-11.