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

San Francisco Oversight Division
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94583

Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under Section 5346 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant:	[The appellant]
Agency classification:	Electrician WG-2805-10
Organization:	[The appellant's installation] Department of the Navy
OPM decision:	Electrician WG-2805-10
OPM decision number:	C-2805-10-02

Carlos A.Torrico
Classification Appeals Officer

March 10, 2000
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 conditions 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:

[The appellant's address]

[The appellant's servicing personnel office]

Director, Plans, Programs, and Diversity
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Department of the Navy
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Field Advisory Services Division
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Introduction

On June 1, 1999, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a job grading appeal from [the appellant], whose job is currently classified as Electrician, WG-2805-10. However, he believes that his duties warrant upgrading to the WG-11 level. Prior to appealing to OPM, [the appellant] appealed to the Department of Defense. In an appeal decision dated May 13, 1999, the Department of Defense sustained the current classification. The appellant works in the [appellant's work unit and installation], Department of the Navy. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

This appeal decision is based on a thorough review of all information submitted by the appellant and his agency, and telephone interviews with the appellant and his first and second level supervisors. Both the appellant and his supervisor have certified to the accuracy of [the appellant's] official job description number QKO163400. However, our review disclosed that the appellant no longer performs work on a regular and recurring basis with "high voltage" electrical systems as described in the job description. Such work is now contracted out to a private company, and the appellant is only involved on an emergency basis. Therefore, the agency should correct the job description to comply with our findings. The appellant makes various statements about his agency's evaluation of his job. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of the appellant's job. By law, OPM must classify jobs solely by comparing current duties and responsibilities to OPM job grading standards and guidelines (5 U.S. Code section 5346). Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying jobs, we have considered his statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

Job information

The appellant works in the [appellant's work unit]. His duties include installing, repairing, altering and maintaining the installation's electrical equipment and systems. Equipment includes transfer panels, circuit breakers, power generators, various size motors, heating controls, lighting systems, shop equipment, fuel handling electrical system components,etc.

The material of record and the results of our interviews furnish more information on the appellant's duties and how they are performed.

Occupation, title and standard determination

The primary purpose of the appellant's job is to perform preventive maintenance, troubleshooting and repairs on the electrical systems and equipment (e.g., generators, secondary side of low voltage transformers, distribution panels, electric motors and pumps, alarms systems, office, shop, pier and street lighting) at the installation. This work favorably compares to that classified in the Electrician 2805 occupation which involves work in the installation, maintenance, troubleshooting, and repair of electrical wiring systems and associated fixtures, controls, and equipment in

industrial, institutional, office, and residential buildings. Neither the appellant nor his agency disagree on assignment of the job's duties to the 2805 occupational code. The appellant's job is titled Electrician, and evaluated below by application of the grading criteria in the job grading standard for Electrician 2805, dated June 1989, (reissued in HRCD-7, July 1999).

Grade determination

The job grading standard for Electrician 2805 identifies and describes key characteristics which are significant for distinguishing between levels of work. It evaluates grade levels by considering four factors: Skill and Knowledge, Responsibility, Physical Effort, and Working Conditions. These four factors are addressed below and compared to the appellant's job.

Skill and Knowledge

As described on pages 6-7 of the 2805 standard, grade 10 level electrician work involves installing, modifying, repairing, maintaining, and troubleshooting new and existing electrical lines, circuits, systems, controls, and equipment. They must have 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, computers and other electrical equipment. At the grade 10 level, 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 knowledge of various gauges, couplings, circuit breakers, etc., and the ability to apply various electrical codes, interpret building plans and blueprints, wiring diagrams, and engineering drawings. Additionally, some positions require a basic familiarity with electronics to the extent necessary to troubleshoot electrical circuits containing electronic components.

Work at the grade 11 level (pages 8-9) involves nonstandard industrial or research and development applications which lack clear precedent and require extensive adaptation of methods. Unlike work at the grade 10, electricians at grade 11 must have a thorough knowledge of the construction, installation, operation, and troubleshooting of sophisticated circuitry and controls associated with *unique* projects. For example, they independently formulate the layout sketch of required electrical circuits, wire new test setups, install various gauges and recording instruments to measure performance of test articles, and troubleshoot the electrical portions of test equipment to determine cause of malfunction. At the grade 11 level, critical limits are controlled by intricate interlock of safety systems of novel design and great complexity. Electricians at this level use imagination and skill to construct unique and complex installations, e.g., developing prototype applications, devising modifications to hardware for use in experiments such as modifying controls or constructing feedback control systems. They are knowledgeable of the uses of materials that can withstand a variety of environments or other test and experimental conditions, and are knowledgeable of special safety precautions involving handling of hazardous materials such as toxic chemicals, explosive material, etc.

The appellant's job fully meets the grade 10 criteria, but falls short of the skill and knowledge required at grade 11. According to his supervisors the appellant's primary responsibility is to perform preventive maintenance on electrical equipment. Similar to grade 10, this work involves maintaining the existing electrical systems at the work site, and laying out and installing electrical wiring and associated components, gas detectors, high level alarms, scully systems; installing switch and outlet boxes including pulling, splicing, and connecting wire and testing circuits for continuity and safety; maintaining and repairing a wide variety of electrical equipment on low voltage systems including 120 volts thru 480 volts, secondary side of low voltage transformers, generators, distribution panel, various size motors and controllers, motors used for fuel transfer pumps, support equipment systems and electric motor operated valves. The appellant also maintains, repairs and installs various lighting systems. Our fact-finding disclosed that unlike the grade 11 level, the appellant is not involved on a regular and recurring basis with nonstandard industrial or research and development applications which lack clear precedent and require extensive adaptation of methods, or troubleshooting of sophisticated circuitry and controls associated with *unique* projects. Thus he is not faced with the complex layout and installation requirements typical of grade 11. The appellant refers to geographical isolation as being *unique* and adding complexity to his assignments. However, our interviews revealed no uniqueness because of geographical isolation. The [appellant's installation] is located near the town of [name of local town], and is also only 9 to 12 miles from the [local naval ship repair facility] at [local city]. In addition, the standard focuses on the uniqueness of projects and the novel design and complexity of electrical systems, not the geographic location of the work site. Years ago major projects were done by employees of the [appellant's unit]. Now the organization has changed to performing preventive maintenance, and more complex projects are contracted to local companies.

Considering the level of skill and knowledge required of the appellant to do his job, assignment of grade 10 for this factor is appropriate.

Responsibility

Grade 10 electricians (page 7) work from building plans, wiring diagrams, and engineering drawings. They plan and layout the routing, placement, and arrangement of industrial or similarly complex systems, circuits, controls, and equipment. They determine installation and repairs including 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. Grade 10 electricians complete modifications, repairs, and installations with little or no check during the progress or upon completion of work. The supervisor checks overall work to see that it meets accepted trade standards and is completed in a timely manner.

Grade 11 electricians (page 9) plan and layout work with a minimum of supervision. They must have the ability to work to project objectives proposed by engineers, including planning and laying out the sequence of work from drawings or blueprints which may be incomplete regarding the specific wiring required in the *unique* application of equipment. They often work directly with engineers, scientists, and sponsors to build or modify electrical circuits on the basis of rough notes and desired performance criteria.

The level of responsibility exercised by the appellant fully meets the grade 10 criteria, but falls short of the grade 11 level. Similar to that level he is responsible for independently planning, laying out and performing his work for tasks involving complete electrical systems. He determines the best methods of installation and repair and is responsible for the safe and proper operation of systems and equipment. He receives assignments from the Maintenance Supervisor either verbally or through work orders. The appellant independently plans the sequence of work and determines the nature of maintenance and repairs required, and the tools, instruments and methods of work. The supervisor checks overall work to see that it meets trade standards and is completed in a timely manner. However, there is little or no check during the progress or upon completion of work. The appellant is on call for emergency situations and must act independently in carrying out the work. These emergency calls are not considered "regular and recurring" and do not affect the overall grade of this job.

Although the appellant works independently, the type of work he is responsible for is not typical of that done by grade 11 electricians. The appellant is concerned with installation, maintenance and repair of standard, complete electrical systems which are not of a *unique* nature. Unlike the grade 11 level, he does not work closely with engineers and scientists to build or modify electrical circuits on the basis of rough notes and desired performance criteria. Whenever situations occur in which the appellant is unfamiliar, there is a Mechanical Engineer, Foreman and Deputy Director available to provide necessary guidance ***or*** to consider contracting out the work.

The appellant's level of responsibility is evaluated at grade 10.

Physical Effort

This factor is the same at grades 8, 10, and 11, and is not grade controlling. The appellant's job meets the grade 8 criteria as described on page 5 of the standard. Like that level he makes repairs and installations from ladders, platforms, and other hard-to-reach places. This requires him to stand, stoop, bend, kneel, climb, and work in tiring and uncomfortable positions. He frequently carries tools, equipment, and parts that weigh up to 20 pounds, and sometimes weighing up to 40 pounds.

Working Conditions

Working conditions at grade 10 are the same as those described at grade 8 (page 5). Work is performed inside and outside, sometimes in bad weather; in work areas that are noisy, dirty, dusty, and greasy; in close quarters such as attics; and on scaffolding or cranes at heights of 30 feet or more. Incumbents are exposed occasionally to the possibility of injury from electrical shock and rotary devices such as electrical motors, and frequently to the possibility of cuts and bruises. In addition to the working conditions described at grades 8 and 10, grade 11 electricians may be exposed to temperature extremes in test facilities; and to radiation, chemicals, or carcinogens.

The appellant's working conditions favorably compare to the grade 8 level. He carries out duties and responsibilities both inside and outside, and is exposed to noise from diesel water pumps and air compressors, fuel, dust, and grease. He works in close quarters, and is subject to falls,

electrical shock, burns, cuts and bruises. All required safety precautions are taken. Protective devices such as respirators, earplugs, safety hats, nonconductive gloves and footwear are provided.

Based on our fact-finding, we found no evidence that the appellant's working conditions fully meet those described at the grade 11 level. Although we note that he is occasionally exposed to some chemicals, unlike grade 11 electricians his exposure does not include (in addition to chemicals) extremes in temperature and noise levels, and exposure to radiation and carcinogens frequently found at test facilities.

By application of the Electrician 2805 job grading standard, the grade determining factors for the appellant's work are evaluated at grade 10.

Decision

The appellant's job is properly classified as Electrician, WG-2805-10.