

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

Chicago Oversight Division
230 South Dearborn Street, DPN 30-6
Chicago, Illinois 60604

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

Appellant: [appellant]

Representative: [representative]

Agency classification: Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic
WG-2606-11

Organization: Department of Army
[Center]
[installation]
[city and state]

OPM decision: Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic
WG-2606-11

OPM decision number: C-2606-11-01

/s/ Ricardo Sims for

Douglas K. Schauer
Classification Appeals Officer

September 14, 2001

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 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:

[appellant]
[address]
[city and state]

[representative]
[address]
[city and state]

Agency:

[name]
Personnel Officer
Attn: [division]
[installatiton]
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Introduction

The Chicago Oversight Division of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [the appellant] on December 4, 2000. [the appellant] is an Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic, WG-2606-11, assigned to the Equipment Maintenance Division, [division] Center, [installation] [city and state]. The appellant contests his agency's classification of his position, and believes the position should be classified as Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic, WG-2606-12. We have accepted and decided the appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code. Separate telephone interviews were conducted with the appellant and his supervisor.

General issues

The appellant indicates in his appeal that he doesn't believe that the WG-2606 Job Grading Standard (JGS) adequately addresses the kind of work that he performs. By law, the OPM must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). All relevant classification guidance has been utilized to evaluate the appellant's statements and arrive at a proper classification. In addition, the content of standards published for his job is not appealable (section 532.701 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations).

Position information

The major duties of the appellant's position include maintaining, monitoring, and performing trouble analysis and final alignment/calibration of complex integrated systems. The appellant performs maintenance on these integrated systems. He maintains software, initiates program changes and repairs electronic digital computers and peripheral equipment, such as laser-guided vehicles, robotic welders and programmable logic controllers. The appellant also installs industrial equipment in accordance with Occupational, Safety, and Health Administration (OSHA) and National Electrical Code (NEC) regulations.

Series and title determination

The appellant's duties are consistent with those described in the WG-2606, Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic series. Work of this series includes the installation, maintenance, troubleshooting, repair, and calibration of electronic controls and indicating and recording systems used on industrial machinery or engines, and in automated materials storage and handling systems. The prescribed title for non-supervisory positions in the WG-2606 series, grade WG-10 and above, is Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic.

Grade determination

In the OPM JGS for Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic, WG-2606, dated April 1987, grades are determined using four factors, Skill and Knowledge, Responsibility, Physical Effort, and Working Conditions. In grading positions with these four factors, all pertinent job facts related to the factors are analyzed. The levels for factors "Physical Effort" and "Working

Conditions” are the same for all positions at WG-08 grade levels and above in this series. Because they do not have grade impact, the appellant does not raise them as an issue, and the appellant’s work meets the levels described in the standard, we credit both factors as met and will not address them further.

Skill and Knowledge

This factor covers the nature and level of skill, knowledge and mental application required in performing assigned work. Positions vary in such ways as the type, amount, and depth of skill and knowledge needed, as well as in the manner, frequency, and extent to which they are used.

The appellant is credited with the WG-11 level where mechanics are required to work on highly complex systems. At the WG-11 level, mechanics must be skilled in the interpretation of engineering drawings, which combine electrical and electronic schematics, logic diagrams and mechanical drawings in order to trace signal flow throughout the system while troubleshooting malfunctions of complex systems. The WG-11 mechanic must be skilled in the interpretation of installation and repair instructions which describe only general applications for the various components of the specific system, since the various components are often produced by many manufacturers with differing design philosophies. Examples of this include when new numerically controlled (NC) units are retrofitted onto older machines, or when environmental monitoring and control systems (EMCS) controls are connected through customized interface devices to electrical, mechanical, pneumatic, or hydraulic controls of components which vary greatly in operating theories and operating tolerances as a result of differing age, purpose, and manufacturers’ practices. The appellant is required to regularly troubleshoot and repair the Automated Storage and Retrieval System (ASRS).

The appellant’s position does not meet the WG-12 level where a mechanic serves as a lead worker on teams that install and put into operation major electronic control systems that are new to the activity, or which are major modifications of existing systems, so that there is little knowledge of the system problem areas and expertise in its repair. At the WG-12 level, the troubleshooting and repair that is conducted is performed on new systems during operational tests and procedures are improvised to cope with unforeseen defects. The appellant indicated that the systems he services have been in place since 1987. He stated that he has to make more extensive modifications to keep them operating because parts are becoming obsolete or are no longer available. This type of repair of complex systems as a result of differing age of equipment is consistent with the WG-11 level described above. Although the appellant projects that more extensive modifications will occur, credit cannot be given for proposed system changes. The appellant draws a correlation between systems he services and an automated warehouse materials handling system described at the WG-12 level. The WG-12 mechanic interprets electronic, electrical, and mechanical drawings, specifications and schematics of complete custom systems such as a new automated warehouse materials handling system with numerous remote units and functions which must be coordinated. The standard goes on to describe skill required to troubleshoot complex electronic systems that have unusual circuit arrangements and theories and that lack developed documentation. The appellant must on an irregular basis modify new equipment to ensure its adaptability in order to keep a fourteen-year-old system fully operational, but this does not meet the intent of the WG-12. In order for a level

to be credited the work must constitute a regular and recurring part of the job.

This factor is credited at WG-11.

Responsibility

This factor covers the nature and degree of responsibility involved in performing work. Positions vary in responsibility in such ways as the complexity and scope of work assigned, the difficulty and frequency of judgements made, the kind of supervisory controls, and the nature of work instructions and technical guides used.

Generally, the appellant receives his work assignments via work orders, and day to day assignments are carried out independently. The appellant claims that his work is not spot-checked in progress, and completed work is reviewed based on the successful completion of repair and whether the systems are operable. The appellant decides what method is the most appropriate to complete assignments. The appellant's position is equitable to the WG-11 level where mechanics must improvise changes to techniques and procedures to reach specified parameters when aging of components or modification of circuits have changed operating conditions. Mechanics at the WG-11 level must apply sound judgement, which is also indicative of the appellant who serves as the sole mechanic for the ASRS. The WG-12 level is not met where mechanics routinely provide work direction to lower graded employees in the unit. At the WG-12 level, mechanics are required to solve unusually complex installation and repair problems. At the WG-12 level for example, they independently judge whether there is a need for modification of test devices or work sequences and for special or nonstandard trade techniques. The appellant describes judgement and independence in recognizing the need for and making extensive revision to established equipment and machinery. This is consistent with the WG-11 level where mechanics are responsible for knowing and judging the impact of repairs, making further tests and alignment to insure completed equipment is operating properly.

This factor is credited at WG-11.

Decision

Since all grading elements of the appellant's position equate to the WG-11 level, that is determined to be the final grade. The appellant's position is properly classified as Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic, WG-2606-11.