

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

Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242

Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under section 5103 and 5346 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Materials Handler
(Forklift/Motor Vehicle Operator)
WG-6907-06

Organization: Furnishings Management Office
Family Housing Flight
[number] Civil Engineering Squadron
Air Education Training Command
Department of the Air Force
[installation]

OPM decision: Materials Handler
(Forklift/Motor Vehicle Operator)
WG-6907-06

OPM decision number: C-6907-06-02

Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

December 27, 2002

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's name and address]

Civilian Personnel Officer
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[installation address]

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Introduction

The Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [appellant] on August 21, 2002. We received the agency's administrative report on September 16, 2002. The appellant's position is currently classified as Materials Handler (Forklift/Motor Vehicle Operator), WG-6907-06. He believes the position should be classified in the General Schedule (GS) system as Supervisory General Supply Specialist, GS-2001, at the grade 9 level. The appellant works in the Furnishings Management Office, Family Housing Flight, [number] Civil Engineering Squadron, Air Education Training Command, Department of the Air Force, at [location]. He first appealed to the Department of Defense's Civilian Personnel Management Service. Their decision, issued on June 27, 2002, sustained the pay plan, occupational code, and grade of the position. We have accepted and decided this appeal under sections 5103 and 5346 of title 5, United States Code.

We conducted telephone audits with the appellant on October 16, 18, 22, and 31, 2002. We also interviewed his immediate supervisor by telephone on October 25, 2002. The appellant provided additional information by electronic mail. In deciding this appeal, we fully considered audit findings and all information of record provided by the appellant and his agency, including current work assignments and the official Air Force Core Personnel Document (core document), number 30060. The appellant and supervisor certified to the currency and accuracy of this description.

Job information

The appellant works in the Furnishings Management Office under the direct supervision of the Housing Flight Chief. The mission of the Office is to provide furnishings and appliances for approximately 890 rooms and public dayrooms in 13 dormitories and other lodging facilities scattered throughout the installation. In addition, the Office is responsible for the repair and maintenance of appliances in temporary lodgings.

The appellant oversees Buildings 309 and 319, two nonautomated warehouses approximately 10,000 square feet each. He is responsible for the safe storage and removal of furnishings and appliances. This requires establishing locations in the warehouses, taking into consideration the size, quantity, and the space available. Other duties include keeping a record of stored items, checking materials for damages, and checking the correctness of deliveries. The appellant annually conducts a physical inventory of warehouse stock. Others conduct an inventory of dormitory and lodging properties in tandem, and copies are given to the appellant to reconcile inventory accounts, resolve discrepancies, and prepare adjustments. The appellant uses standard materials handling equipment, e.g., dollies pallet jacks, and fork lifts, to move materials. According to the core document, all of these duties account for 30 percent of the appellant's time.

The appellant is responsible for the accounting of all furniture and appliance transactions; tracking items in warehouses, dormitories, temporary lodgings, and in shops for repair; adjusting records upon receiving or issuing stock; and notifying appropriate officials of any damage to

furnishings and appliances by initiating reports of survey. These duties occupy 30 percent of the appellant's time.

Overseeing the replacement, repair, and acquisition of furnishings and appliances expends 20 percent of the appellant's time. The appellant has a government credit card for purchases less than \$2500. Office supplies and warehouse incidentals (e.g., cleaning pads and furniture blankets) are typical examples of these types of purchases. However, orders above \$2500 require authorization from the Housing Flight Chief and the Deputy Director of the [number] Civil Engineering Squadron. The appellant can initiate the purchase by placing order requests through the Automated Business Services System, which then automatically sends it for authorization. The Contracting Office then places the order. However, most of the appellant's purchasing duties revolve around working with General Services Administration vendors and scheduling site visits to the dormitories. The appellant will at times contact vendors to ensure items arrive by the estimated delivery date. Providing input and assisting with the budget formulation, e.g., identifying furnishings and appliances needing to be replaced, is also part of his work.

The job requires operating a pickup truck with a payload capacity of 1½ tons to pick up or drop off furnishings and appliances on and off the base. The core document indicates the operation of trucks and forklifts accounts for 15 percent of the time. The appellant said he spends only 5 percent of his time on the operation of a forklift and pickup truck, rather than the 15 percent allotted by his agency. The appellant stated that the "extra" 10 percent of his time is spent on supply support work.

Five percent of the appellant's time is spent supervising one Materials Handler, WG-6907-05, also assigned to the Furnishings Management Office.

The appellant's core document and other material of record furnish much more information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Pay category determination

Section IV of the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards* provides guidance for determining whether a position is covered by the General Schedule or the Federal Wage System (FWS). Section 5102(c)(7) of title 5, United States Code, exempts from coverage under the GS those "employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts, or in unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled manual-labor occupations, and other employees including foremen and supervisors in positions having trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge as the paramount requirement." The paramount requirement of a position is defined as the essential, prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the primary duty or responsibility for which the position has been established. Whether particular types of positions are trades, crafts, or manual labor occupations within the meaning of title 5 depends on the facts of duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements; i.e., the most important, or chief, requirement for the performance of a primary duty or responsibility for which the position exists. If a position requires trades, crafts, or laboring experience and knowledge as a requirement for

the performance of its primary duty, and this requirement is paramount, the position is under the FWS.

The appellant believes his position should be classified in the GS because he spends a significant portion of his time on supply support and purchasing work. Performing GS duties, in and of itself, does not automatically classify a position in the GS. Furthermore, the percentage of time spent on duties is not by itself a pay system determinant and, therefore, could not be considered a factor in deciding the appropriate pay system.

The appellant believes his position fits within the GS-2001 General Supply Series. This series includes positions involving a combination of supply work covered by two or more two-grade interval series in the GS-2000 Supply Group when no other series is appropriate for the paramount knowledge and abilities required for the position. In addition, it may also include analytical or administrative supply work not specifically covered by another series. The appeal record does not contain any information to indicate that the appellant's work includes the activities in which GS-2001 supply specialists routinely function. The appellant provides data to the Housing Officer for use in budget formulation, makes recommendations on furnishing needs and costs, and prepares requisitions for replacements and repairs. These duties do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the GS-2001 series. Further, the appellant works in strict adherence to Air Force Instruction 32-6004, dated April 18, 2002. These instructions provide guidance for furnishings and appliances programs, clearly defining the appellant's duties and responsibilities. The appellant stated that these instructions cover most of his work and spells out the prescribed steps to be taken. Because those duties do not require a high order of analytical ability or a substantial knowledge of the principles and practices of supply work, the work is not included in the GS-2001 series.

The primary purpose of the appellant's position is to oversee two warehouses, with responsibility, among other things, for the receipt and storage of furnishings. To perform this work, the appellant must have an in-depth knowledge of warehouse plans, methods, procedures, and techniques. The work requires knowledge of the methods used in processing materials into and out of a supply system and knowledge of the physical distribution functions of a warehouse. These are considered trades knowledge. The primary and paramount duties of the appellant's position flow from the mission and function of the organization. During the course of the work, the appellant also provides related supply support and purchasing work that is ancillary to the primary work. That supply-related work does not encompass the full range of supply functions as described in the GS-2000 group and does not require the set of knowledge, skills, and abilities for positions assigned to that group. The appellant's supply-related work is similar to work described at the GS-4 grade level of the GS-2005 classification standard. We conclude that the paramount requirement for the job's existence is the performance of work requiring the application of knowledge and experience typical of the FWS. Therefore, the position is excluded from the GS and appropriately classified in the FWS.

Occupation, title, and standard determination

The 6907 occupation covers jobs involved in receiving, storing, assembling for issue or shipment, and shipping a variety of bin and bulk supplies, materials, and equipment.

Performance of the work requires a knowledge of the methods used in processing material into and out of the supply system and an understanding of the procedures to be followed in removing from storage and assembling items for shipment or issues as shown in issue requests. This includes knowledge of methods used to check types and quantities of items against receiving and shipping documents and skill in palletizing, stacking or otherwise placing and arranging items in storage in consideration of size, shape, weight, quantity, type, stock number or other codes, and other storage factors. These jobs may be found at freight terminals, mechanized and non-mechanized warehouses, open storage areas, and other similar operations. Most work requires the incidental or regular use of motor vehicles and skill in operating forklifts.

The appellant's duties are most appropriately covered by this occupation. Jobs covered by the 6907 occupation are titled Materials Handler. The agency has identified the ability to operate a forklift and motor vehicle as necessary to the job and, therefore, should be included as a parenthetical to the title. The appropriate title and occupational code for the appellant's job is Materials Handler (Forklift/Motor Vehicle Operator), WG-6907. The duties are properly evaluated using the Job Grading Standard (JGS) for Materials Handler, 6907.

The appellant also performs a number of supervisory duties described in the Job Grading Standard for Federal Wage System Supervisors. For example, he assigns, directs, and reviews work; adjusts work priorities; recommends personnel actions; affects minor disciplinary measures; approves leave; interviews and selects for vacancies; recommends ratings for performance appraisals; provides guidance, direction, and feedback; ensures safety of employee; and provides any formal or on-the-job training needed. Performing a wide range of supervisory duties does not, however, overshadow the fact that the environment in which these duties are performed does not meet the intent of the JGS. The standard is used to grade the jobs of supervisors who, as a regular and recurring part of their jobs, and on a substantially full-time and continuing basis, exercise technical and administrative supervision over subordinate workers in accomplishing trades and labor work. The appellant spends only five percent of his time supervising one WG-5 Materials Handler and, therefore, does not meet the criteria for evaluation against the JGS for FWS Supervisors.

Grade determination

The 6907 JGS uses the following four factors to determine grade level: Skill and Knowledge; Responsibility; Physical Effort; and Working Conditions.

Skill and Knowledge

At grade 6, workers may serve as the primary materials handler in a small warehouse, such as a base or post supply facility, with responsibility for performing a full range of warehouse functions. These include receiving, locating, storing, shipping, issuing, and rewarehousing materials, commodities, or equipment in accordance with established procedures and operating requirements. They lay out storage space and establish item and material locations; prepare inventory and production reports; screen and identify shipping and receiving documents for discrepancies; and direct shipments to shipping or storage areas.

Typical of the 6 level, the appellant serves as the primary materials handler for two warehouses. The work requires an in-depth knowledge of the overall warehousing plan, documentation requirements, and accepted warehousing methods, procedures, and techniques. As required for the grade 6 level, the appellant must have a thorough knowledge of the physical distribution functions of a warehouse such as receiving, storing, issuing, and preserving. Similar to grade 6 materials handlers, the appellant lays out storage, prepares inventory reports, and directs shipments to storage areas. The appellant also operates a pickup truck on and off the base and is skilled in operating a forklift.

This factor is credited at the grade 6 level.

Responsibility

At grade 6, materials handlers are responsible for a full range of warehouse functions and work with a high degree of independence with general direction provided by the supervisor. Review of the work is based on results achieved, including the accuracy of stock balances, orderliness of storage areas, adherence to general warehouse plans, and customer service effectiveness. In smaller facilities, grade 6 materials handlers may have responsibility for the movement of the stock as well the maintenance of stock level inventories. Materials handlers at this level are typically expected to deal with a variety of issues and exercise greater judgment and independent action on work control and storage. They also provide guidance to lower graded employees.

Consistent with the 6 level, the appellant performs a full range of warehouse functions in the areas of receiving, ordering, storing, stocking, inventorying, locating, rewarehousing, and security. The appellant is guided by Air Force Instruction 32-6004, Chapter 3, which provides instructions on warehouse management, covering areas ranging from storage and material handling to repair and replacement. Even though these instructions cover most aspects of the job, it is evident that the appellant operates with a high degree of independence in warehouse management. For example, Air Force Instructions direct the establishment of "...a warehouse location system to illustrate item locations and to assist in planning and management of space." Even though the desired outcome is spelled out, the directives do not necessarily instruct users on how to achieve that end. The appellant clearly exercises a high degree of independence in the execution of these instructions. The appellant accomplishes his work with the help of a WG-5 Materials Handler. Similar to grade 6 materials handlers, the appellant is responsible for directing and guiding the work of the subordinate employee. The supervisor occasionally visits the buildings with the general standpoint of checking the orderliness of the warehouses, efficiency of storage operations, and building maintenance.

This factor is credited at the grade 6 level.

Physical Effort and *Working Conditions* are the same at levels 4, 5, and 6. Because these two factors do not have grade level impact and the appellant's work meets the levels described in the JGS, we will credit both factors as being met and will not address them further.

In summary, the appellant's materials handling work is credited at the grade 6 level.

Decision

Based on the paramount requirement to perform the work, the position is excluded from the General Schedule. The position is graded as Materials Handler (Forklift/Motor Vehicle Operator), WG-6907-6.