

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

Atlanta Field Services Group
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Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Materials Handler Supervisor
WS-6907-6

Organization: [name] Branch
[name] Division
[name] Department
[organization]
Department of the Navy
[location]

OPM decision: Materials Handler Supervisor
WS-6907-6

OPM decision number: C-6907-06-03

Marta Brita Pérez
Associate Director, Division for 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 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).

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Introduction

On December 31, 2003, the Atlanta Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [appellant] who is employed as a Materials Handler Supervisor, WS-6907-6. His job is located in the [name] Branch, [name] Division, [name] Department, [organization], Department of the Navy, [location]. The appellant requests that his job be graded as WS-6709-8. We also received a complete administrative report for the appeal on December 31, 2003. The appellant filed a job grading appeal with his agency and on October 1, 2003, the agency sustained the current grading of his job. We accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General information

The appellant makes various statements regarding the agency's evaluation of his job. He compares a number of his job responsibilities with those of General Schedule (GS) positions at the refit facility. The appellant also raises issues concerning the increased number of subordinates he supervises and the increased training and monitoring he provides without a change in the grade of his job. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper grading of the job. By law, 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). Since comparison to standards and guidelines is the exclusive method for grading jobs, we cannot compare the appellant's job to others as a basis for deciding the appeal. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

In reaching our decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including information obtained from telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor

Job information

[Organization] provides industrial and logistical support for incremental overhaul, modernization and repair of Trident submarines and provides global submarine supply support. The appellant serves as Materials Handler Supervisor for the [name] Branch, one of the five branches comprising the [name] Division. The branch is responsible for carrying out receipt and acceptance inspections, staging, redistribution, handling, and disposal of specialized materials for the refit facility. These include controlled materials, planned equipment replacement items, hazardous and flammable materials, general support items, special handling materials, strategic weapons materials, and staged material for submarine refits. The branch is also responsible for providing waterfront logistical support, control and delivery of direct turn-over or stock material, and the redistribution of material destined for the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office for [organization] and all tenant activities at the base. The appellant is responsible for supervising 17 subordinates (15 Material Handlers, WG-6907-6, one Supply Technician, GS-2005-7, and one Supply Clerk, GS-2005-5) assigned to the seven sections that make up the branch. These subordinates are assigned to buildings in various locations around the base.

The [name] Division Officer administers general supervision and provides assignments in terms of overall material division objectives. The appellant independently directs branch work efforts and makes decisions based on standard operating procedures, established policies, and knowledge of warehousing operations. Work is reviewed primarily in terms of overall branch effectiveness.

The appellant is assigned to job description number [#]. Both the appellant and his supervisor have certified the accuracy of the job description. We find that the job description of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into this decision. The job description and other material of record furnish much more information about the appellant's duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Pay system determination

Section 5103 of title 5 U.S.C. requires that OPM determine the applicability of section 5102 of title 5. Therefore, a pay category determination is the first step in the classification process. Section 5102 (c) (7) exempts from the GS employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts, or unskilled, semiskilled, or skilled manual-labor occupations, and other employees in positions having trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge as the paramount requirement. The *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards* defines paramount requirement as the essential, prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the primary duty or responsibility for which the position has been established. Whether a position is in a trade, craft, or manual labor occupation depends primarily on the 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 clearly requires trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge to perform its primary duty, the position is under the Federal Wage System (FWS).

The primary duty for the appellant's job is direction of workers in trades and craft occupations. The chief requirement of his job is knowledge and experience in that work. Consequently, his job is exempt from the GS and falls under the FWS.

Occupational code, title, and standard determination

The appellant's primary duties and responsibilities involve exercising technical and administrative supervision over 15 subordinate Materials Handler, WS-6907, jobs which represent the majority of the jobs assigned to and performing the primary work of his organization. Jobs involving the exercise of technical and administrative supervision of subordinate workers in accomplishing trades and labor work as a regular and recurring part of the job, and on a substantially full-time and continuing basis, are graded by the FWS JGS for Supervisors. The appellant's job meets supervisory coverage criteria and must be graded by application of this JGS. The occupational code of a FWS supervisory job is normally the same as the code for the kind of work that is supervised, and jobs are identified by the job title of the selected occupation followed by the title of Supervisor. We find that appellant's job is allocated properly as Materials Handler Supervisor, WS-6907.

Grade determination

The JGS for Supervisors' grading plan uses three factors: *Nature of Supervisory Responsibility*, *Level of Work Supervised*, and *Scope of Work Operations Supervised*.

Factor I, Nature of Supervisory Responsibility

This factor considers the nature of the supervisory duties performed, and the type and degree of responsibility for control over the work supervised. The factor describes four basic supervisory situations. These, in sequence, depict successively higher levels of supervisory responsibility and authority for scheduling work operations, planning use of resources, (i.e., subordinate workers, equipment, facilities, materials, and tools) to accomplish scheduled or unscheduled work, directing subordinates in performing work assignments, and carrying out administrative duties. In order for a job to be credited at a level, the job must fully meet the situation. This means that a job must meet all of the bullets under the specific situation. The agency credited Situation # 2 for this factor.

Supervisors in Situation #2 are responsible for supervising workers directly or through subordinate leaders and/or supervisors in accomplishing the work of an organizational segment or group. Supervisors in Situation #2 differ from supervisors in Situation #1 primarily in planning work operations of greater scope and complexity; determining the sequence, priority, and time for the performance of particular operations within the limits of broader work schedules and time limits; and exercising greater administrative authority. In addition to the duties described in Situation #1, supervisors in Situation #2 perform the following:

Planning

- Plan use of subordinate workers, equipment, facilities, materials on a week-to-week or month-to-month basis;
- Establish deadlines, priorities, and work sequences, and plan work assignments based on general work schedules, methods, and policies set by higher level supervisors;
- Coordinate work with supporting or related work functions controlled by other supervisors;
- Determine the number and types of workers needed to accomplish specific projects;
- Redirect individual workers and resources to accomplish unanticipated work (e.g., work resulting from "open and inspect" types of work orders);
- Inform higher level supervisors of the need to revise work schedules and re-estimate labor and other resources; and

- Participate with their superiors in the initial planning of current and future work schedules, budget requests, staffing needs, estimates, and recommendations as to scheduling projected work.

Work Direction

- Investigate work related problems such as excessive costs or low productivity and determine causes;
- Implement corrective actions within their authority to resolve work problems; and
- Recommend solutions to staffing problems, engineering requirements, and work operations directed by other supervisors.

Administration

- Plan and establish overall leave schedule;
- Determine training needs of subordinates and arrange for its accomplishment, set performance standards, and make formal appraisals of subordinate work performance; and
- Initiate recommendations for promotion or reassignment of subordinates.

In addition to the basic supervisory functions outlined in the JGS for Situation #1, the appellant has authority and responsibility to carry out the Situation #2 planning, work direction, and administrative duties listed above. These include planning and coordinating work on a weekly or monthly basis depending on planned and unplanned activities, preparing work reports and records, resolving work related problems, setting performance standards and rating employees, determining training needs, etc. The appellant determines work schedules and overtime needs and recommends these to his supervisor. He prioritizes work based on requirements. The branch provides a centralized receiving operation for all materials, other than those destined for the Base Exchange and foodstuffs, for all base activities. The appellant must coordinate the arrival, movement, and delivery of these materials with planners and supervisors in other organizations and arrange for and coordinate support for his operations (crane operator, riggers, etc.) from other organizations. He participates in weekly meetings with the division supervisor and other branch supervisors to discuss matters related to current and future work schedules, implementation and improvement of systems and processes, coordination of activities and the resolution of problems with supported organizations, etc.

The appellant determines and adjusts the number and types of workers, based on their familiarity and knowledge of materials and specific organizational functions, required to meet frequent unanticipated requirements. These typically involve situations where high priority procurement of materials on an expedited basis is required to get a submarine underway. Each of the various sections supervised by the appellant performs specific types of work or functions related to the receipt, inspection, acceptance, segregation, control, staging, distribution, handling, securing, and

disposal of specialized materials. For example, one section has responsibility for the initial receipt, “open box” inspection, and acceptance of materials from external supply activities and commercial sources. This section also enters incoming materials into the automated supply management system and other automated systems that track material delivered directly to other organizations. One section is responsible for receiving and staging classified and critical production materials, including hazardous materials, for delivery to organizations directly engaged in refit work. Another section has responsibility for accepting, storing, and controlling excess materials offloaded from submarines during refitting activities, such as those that were ordered but not used or needed for the submarines. The appellant adjusts assignments for priorities and frequent unanticipated workload surges based on workers’ familiarity with materials and functional operations.

Supervisors in Situation #3 are responsible for the overall direction and coordination of subordinate work activities and functions. Supervisors in Situation #3 differ from supervisors in Situation #2 primarily in that the work operations are of such scope, volume, and complexity that they are (1) carried out by subordinate supervisors in two or more separate organizational segments or groups, and (2) controlled through one or more levels of supervision. This terminology anticipates that segments and groups directed by one level of supervision will be assisted by work leaders and/or other senior staff because of the scope of work operations overseen. In addition to the duties described in Situation #2, supervisors in Situation #3 perform the following:

Planning

- Plan on a quarterly or longer basis the overall use of subordinate personnel and other resources under their control;
- Determine resource requirements, materials, and the number of subordinates and the types of skill necessary to accomplish long-range work schedules;
- Allocate resources and distribute work to organizational segments or groups under their control;
- Analyze work plans developed by subordinate supervisors and monitor the status of their work in relation to the overall schedule requirements, including unanticipated or emergency requirements;
- Obtain prior approval of changes that would modify or deviate overall work schedules or affect work operations controlled by supervisors not under their control; and
- Provide information and advice to higher level supervisors, management officials, and staff organizations on feasibility of work assignments as scheduled, budget estimates, and workload data to assist in developing or reviewing proposed long-range schedules and work requirements, and may participate with superiors in planning conferences and meetings.

Work Direction

- Assign and explain work requirements and operating instructions to subordinate supervisors and set deadlines and establish the sequence of work operations to be followed;
- Maintain balanced workloads by shifting assignments, workers, and other resources under their control to achieve the most effective work operations;
- Review and analyze work accomplishments, cost, and utilization of subordinates to evaluate work progress, control costs, and anticipate and avoid possible problems by recommending corrective action to superiors;
- Participate with management officials and/or engineering personnel to develop qualitative and/or quantitative work standards;
- Evaluate work operations and review completed work and inspection reports to assure that standards are met; and
- Coordinate work operations with the supervisors of other organizations and functions.

Administration

- Assure that subordinate supervisors effectively carry out policies to achieve management objectives;
- Recommend promotion or reassignment of subordinate supervisors, make formal appraisals of their performance, and determine their training needs;
- Schedule leave of subordinate supervisors, review personnel actions and performance appraisals initiated by them, and act on personnel problems referred by subordinate supervisors, and maintain administrative records; and
- Serve as a management representative at hearings, meetings, and negotiations involving labor management relations.

Situation #3 is not met. The appellant is a first line supervisor and does not have responsibility for the overall direction and coordination of subordinate work activities and functions as described in this situation. The appellant's work operations do not have the scope, volume, and complexity requiring that subordinate supervisors responsible for directing work in two or more separate organizational segments or groups.

Situation #2 is assigned for Factor I.

Factor II, Level of Work Supervised

This factor concerns the level and complexity of the work operations supervised, and their effect on the difficulty and responsibility of the supervisor's job. The level of nonsupervisory work, i.e., FWS, credited under this factor considers all substantive work, whether under the direct or indirect supervision of the job being graded, for which the supervisor is technically accountable. Substantive work is that work which directly carries out the main purpose or mission of the work operations supervised, and primarily determines the technical qualifications required to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the supervisory job being graded. Technical accountability is responsibility for the quantity and quality of the work performed by subordinates, requiring the application by the supervisor of knowledge of the methods, techniques, procedures, tools, materials, and practices of the involved occupation (or occupations).

The record shows that the highest level of nonsupervisory work supervised by the appellant meeting these criteria is grade 6. Therefore, this factor is credited at grade 6.

Factor III, Scope of Work Operations Supervised

This factor considers the scope of the job's supervisory responsibility in terms of: (1) the scope of the assigned work function and organizational authority; (2) the variety of functions the job is required to supervise; and (3) the physical dispersion, work coordination, and location of subordinate employees. This factor is divided into three subfactors, which are in turn subdivided into levels with points assigned to each level. An appropriate level is selected for each subfactor and the corresponding point values are totaled. The total points are then converted to specific levels under Factor III using the conversion chart located at the end of the factor.

Subfactor A. Scope of Assigned Work Function and Organizational Authority

This subfactor measures the scope of the assigned work function or mission, i.e., the purpose of the job in the organization, the extent and nature of the job's authority in relation to the organizational assignment, and the importance of the job's decisions. The agency credited Level A-2.

At Level A-2, supervisors have first or second level supervisory and decision authority over an organizational segment which typically has been established on the basis of being a distinct work function or mission. Supervisors at this level react to variations in the workplace and maintain a balanced workload between subordinate work groups, making adjustments in workload as necessary. Decisions typically involve the work or assignments and how they are completed.

Level A-2 is met. The appellant functions as the first line supervisor of the Branch which is composed of seven sections performing a variety of operational functions. He plans the work in accordance with established policies, prioritizes work based on requirements received from higher authority; plans the use of equipment, facilities, and materials; determines the work sequence for carrying out assignments, the number of employees required, the availability of equipment and materials required; etc.

At Level A-3, supervisors have second level or higher supervisory and decision authority for work functions or a portion of a mission requirement (e.g., a specific program in a designated geographic location or a specific function). The scope of the mission or work functions at this level typically requires supervisors to utilize several subordinate supervisors and leaders through structured working relationships among subordinate groups of employees, formal procedures for scheduling and assigning work and work results, and the issuance of instructions through subordinate supervisors and leaders.

Level A-3 is not met. The appellant does not have the second level or higher supervisory and decision authority typical of this level. The organization that he directs does not require a comparable organizational structure or formalized work planning and control functions.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level A-2 and credited with 45 points.

Subfactor B. Variety of Functions

This subfactor evaluates the difficulties of technical supervision of work functions which may vary from being essentially similar to markedly dissimilar. Similar or related work functions have a common or related body of knowledges, skills, work procedures, and tools. Supervision of dissimilar or unrelated work functions require broader technical knowledges and planning and coordination skills than those required for supervision of similar work functions. Work that is incidental to or in support of the primary function has no affect on this subfactor. The agency credited Level B-1.

At Level B-1, supervisors direct the work of subordinates in accomplishing an assigned function in one or more similar or related occupations at grades 1-7.

At Level B-2, supervisors direct the work of subordinates in two or more dissimilar or unrelated occupations at grades 1-7.

Level B-1 is met. The appellant directs the work of subordinates in accomplishing an assigned function in one occupation, WG-6907, at grade 6. The work performed by the two supply clerical and technician positions the appellant supervises is non-FWS work and is not considered in applying the JGS criteria.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level B-1 and credited with 25 points.

Subfactor C. Workforce Dispersion

This subfactor evaluates the varying levels of difficulty associated with monitoring and coordinating the work of nonsupervisory and supervisory personnel who vary from being co-located to widely dispersed. Dispersion of workforce considers the duration of projects, number of work sites, frequency of dispersion, and the necessity to monitor and coordinate the work. No points are credited for this subfactor if subordinate employees are located in the same contiguous work area with the supervisor, when dispersion occurs infrequently, or when

dispersion is inherent, and the work is performed in the absence of direct supervision, e.g., operating a motor vehicle. The agency credited Level C-1.

At Level C-1, subordinate employees are located in several buildings or at work sites within a defined location such as a military base, National Park, or large Federal complex consisting of many multifloor buildings and support facilities. Work assignments vary in terms of duration; however, most assignments at this level are of a limited duration (e.g., assignments are typically accomplished within a few days or weeks). In addition, this level also includes off-base (i.e., within the local commuting area) facility support and maintenance assignments.

Level C-1 is met. The appellant supervises 15 Materials Handlers assigned to seven sections. One section consisting of seven employees is co-located with the appellant. Employees in the other six sections, each consisting of one to three employees, physically work in eight different buildings (with two employees rotating by assignments through two or three buildings) in various locations around the base. The buildings are located at distances ranging from one and three-quarters miles to five miles away from the appellant's location. The geographical dispersion of his subordinates and the coordination of the Branch's operational functions place significant additional demands on the appellant. The appellant must coordinate the arrival, movement, and delivery of materials at various sites with planners and supervisors in other organizations, routinely adjust staff levels among his sections to deal with varying workloads, arrange for and coordinate support for his operations (crane operator, riggers, etc.) from other organizations, and shift subordinates as required to contend with unexpected circumstances and work surges.

At Level C-2, subordinate employees are located in work groups of varying sizes at numerous job sites within large military bases (e.g., air rework facilities, supply depots, shipyards, and comparable Federal facilities). Employees or work groups at this level may on occasion work outside of the commuting area or across State lines. Work assignments at this level are typically on an ongoing basis and are accomplished within several weeks or months. For example, this would include employees who regularly repair, overhaul, and maintain ships in dry dock or aircraft at depots.

Level C-2 is not met. The employees directed by the appellant work in eight buildings within a five mile area rather than the numerous sites typical of Level C-2 and are not engaged in comparable on-going assignments. The work performed by the appellant's branch supports the refit facility's mission of providing quick turnaround repair, replenishment, logistic update, and system certification of ballistic missile submarines. In contrast to assignment length of time typical of Level C-2, the work performed at the refit facility must be completed within limited timeframes to ensure that each submarine is returned to patrol duties in a timely manner. The appellant's supervisor stated that the typical length of a submarine's stay for a refit is 21 days.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level C-1 and credited with 5 points.

Factor III is credited with subfactor A-2 for 45 points, subfactor B-1 for 25 points, and subfactor C-1 for 5 points. A total of 75 points falls within the range of 70 to 110 points which equates to Level B.

Tentative Grade Determination

According to the grading table for Supervisory Situation #2, Level B coupled with grade 6 level of work supervised equates to grade 6 supervisory work.

Grade Level Adjustments

Both upward and downward changes from the tentative grade are required based on circumstances described below. In determining the adjustment to be made, a work situation requiring a downward grade adjustment balances and cancels a situation requiring an upward grade adjustment. The appellant believes his job should have an upward grade adjustment.

Downward

A downward grade adjustment is indicated when the grade of a supervisor's job, resulting from application of the grading table, would be the same as the grade of the supervisor's superior. In this instance, the appellant's supervisor is a Lieutenant Commander (0-4) on a GS equivalent Supply Officer Billet and this situation does not apply.

Upward

Upward grade adjustments are indicated for borderline jobs and work situations that impose special or unusual demands on the supervisor.

Borderline Jobs

An upward adjustment is indicated when the job being graded substantially exceeds the supervisory situation credited under Factor I and the level of work supervised credited under Factor II is not the highest level of work performed by subordinate workers for which the supervisor has full technical accountability.

Neither condition is met in the appellant's case. His work situation fully meets, but does not exceed, the situation credited under Factor I (Situation #2), and he does not supervise any work higher than the grade credited under Factor II (WG-6).

Special or Unusual Demands

In some situations, the nature of the work operations supervised, the mission to be accomplished, or other circumstances impose special demands on the supervisor involved. Special staffing requirements may impose on the supervisor a substantially greater responsibility for job design, job engineering, work scheduling, training, counseling, motivating, and maintaining security than that which is normally encountered. This may occur under special employment programs and at correctional institutions having exceptionally difficult attitudinal, motivational, control, and security problems. An upward grade adjustment may be made for work operations involving such exceptional conditions that affect the majority of the subordinate workforce and are

permanent and continuing, require tailored job assignments, work tasks, training, security measures, and other supervisory actions to fit individual workers, and involve regular and recurring counseling and motivational activities essential to the effective handling of the special work situation.

The appellant's work involves additional training demands resulting from heightened security requirements throughout the nation and particularly for an installation where his position is located. This requires the appellant to provide initial training to subordinates on unusual substances and how to look for them while checking material and then to monitor to ensure subordinates are thorough in checking packages for unusual content. However, this requirement does not constitute a special demand on the appellant's position comparable to the demands identified above requiring tailored job assignments, work tasks, training, security measures, etc., and requiring regular and recurring employee counseling and motivational activities.

Neither a downward or upward adjustment to the tentative grade 6 supervisory level is indicated.

Decision

The appellant's job is properly graded as Materials Handler Supervisor, WS-6907-6.