

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

Dallas Field Services Group
Plaza of the Americas, North Tower
700 North Pearl Street, Suite 525
Dallas, TX 75201

Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code

Appellants: [names – 4 appellants]

Agency classification: Supply Technician
GS-2005-7

Organization: Material Management Section]
Logistics Management Service
[name] Veterans Health Care System
Department of Veterans Affairs
[location]

OPM decision: Supply Technician
GS-2005-7

OPM decision number: C-2005-07-06*

Marta Brito Pérez
Associate Director
Human Capital Leadership
and Merit System Accountability

March 28, 2005
Date

* This decision was initially released with a duplicate number.

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:

[appellants' names and addresses]

Human Resources Officer
[servicing personnel address]

Team Leader for Classification
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Introduction

On November 5, 2004, the Dallas Field Services Group of the U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [four appellants]. The appellants occupy identical additional Supply Technician, GS-2005-7, positions, hereinafter referred to as position, assigned to [assigned organization],[name] Veterans Health Care System [VHCS], Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). [Names of 2 appellants] are employed at the [city] Medical Center and [names of two appellants] are employed at the [city] hospital. The appellants believe their position should be classified as Inventory Management Specialist, GS-2010-9. We received the agency's administrative report on December 13, 2004. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

Background

The appellants believe their duties and responsibilities are better described in an Inventory Management Specialist, GS-2010-9, position description (PD) from another VA facility. They indicated their PD contained some inaccuracies and requested their supervisor change their classification to Inventory Management Specialist, GS-2010-9. The Human Resources (HR) Office updated the PD of record and determined that the work was properly classified as Supply Technician, GS-2005-7. The appellants question the adequacy of the agency's review and believe the full extent of the duties and responsibilities of the position were not considered. Following the initial request to OPM for appeal, the appellants' supervisor certified the PD proposed by the appellants as accurate. The HR office adopted the new PD, [number], revised December 7, 2004, and again evaluated the duties as GS-2005-7.

By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). The law does not authorize use of other methods or factors of evaluation, such as comparison to other positions that may or may not have been classified correctly. Because our decision sets aside all previous agency decisions, the appellants' concerns regarding their agency's classification review process are not germane to this decision.

Like OPM, the appellants' agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. Agencies are obligated to review their own classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with OPM appeal certificates (5 CFR 511.612). The agency has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellants consider the appealed position so similar to others that they warrant the same classification, they may pursue this matter by writing to their agency's human resources management headquarters. They should specify the precise organizational location, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the positions in question. If the positions are found to be basically the same as the appealed position, or warrant similar application of the controlling standards, the agency must correct their classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain to the appellants the differences between the appealed position and the others.

Position information

The [VHCS] is one of the largest integrated healthcare systems in the VA. It includes two medical centers, a large outpatient clinic and five smaller community based outpatient clinics providing over 1,000 patient beds and serving 730,000 outpatients. The LMS is one of four components of the [VHCS] Business Office. The LMS is organized into three sections: purchasing and contracting, supply processing and distribution, and material management. Material Management is responsible for the supply fund management, property management, inventory control, and storage and distribution operations. The appellants are assigned to the Material Management Section and are supervised by the Section Chief, a Supervisory Inventory Management Specialist, GS-2010-12. The Section includes three Inventory Management Specialists, GS-2010-9, one Supply Technician, GS-2005-5, one GS-2005-6, and seven GS-2005-7s, including the four appellants.

The primary purpose of the appellants' position is to order, issue, coordinate, and manage the inventory of non-controlled medications, operating supplies, and medical supplies for outpatients for the [VHCS]. Two of the appellants have primarily responsible for the Medical Center in [city] and the large out patient clinic while the other two serve the hospital at [second city] and the five community based outpatient clinics. They described their duties during our interviews as follows.

The appellants establish stock levels, revise reorder frequencies, and meet supply requirements as necessary to provide continuous support to the Pharmacy Service. They process all requisitions for pharmacy medications and supplies. They issue supplies at scheduled and off-schedule intervals; review requisitions to detect and investigate unusual demands that may impact future requirements; and process and post all items received after reviewing documents to determine price, quantity, and descriptions. They monitor changes to the items listed on the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), national, and local VA formularies based on practical experience and familiarity with supply operations. They identify the supply items needed and determine stock levels using automated systems. The appellants use the Integrated Funds Distribution-Controlled Point Activity-Accounting and Procurement (IFCAP) and Generic Inventory Packages (GIP) systems to organize and track the daily accounting of inventory, distribution, and expenditures. They also use the Pharmaceutical Prime Vendor Program (PPVP) that generates and stores all inventory management data. The appellants operate the automated systems to determine whether items are identified and stocked under different stock numbers and/or descriptions and maintain the filing systems that contain documents that relate to the supply ordering, receipt of stock, and amendments for purchases from all sources.

The appellants deal with unpredictable and unusual outpatient prescriptions that are filled through the Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP). They ensure that specialty items and non-controlled medications are properly justified and purchased using the appropriate methods to include open market and procurement sources. Purchases of open market items are referred to the Purchasing and Contracting staff. The appellants deal with vendors on all aspects pertaining to sales and shipments and resolve problems and discrepancies. They prepare correspondence to follow-up on delinquent orders, inventories, back-ordered items, and rebates/credits from manufacturers.

The supervisor certified on November 29, 2004, and the appellants agreed, that the most recent revision of the PD is accurate. A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position by an official with the authority to assign work. A position consists of duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by the employee. Classification appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a position and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities currently assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision classifies a real operating position, not simply the duties and responsibilities presented in the PD. The appeal decision is based on the work currently assigned to and performed by the appellants and sets aside any previous agency decision. Our fact-finding confirmed that the PD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities performed by the appellants and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

In deciding this appeal, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and their agency, including the revised PD. We conducted telephone interviews with the appellants on December 28, 2004, and with the appellants' supervisor on January 14, 2005. We also interviewed the Chief of LMS on January 12, 2005, and the Chief of Pharmacy on January 21, 2005.

Series, title, and standard determination

The GS-2010 Inventory Management Series includes positions that involve analytical work in managing, regulating, coordinating, or otherwise exercising control over supplies, equipment, or other material. The work includes one or more phases of material management including initial planning, provisioning and requirements determination, acquisition and distribution, accountability, and ultimate issue for consumption, retention, or disposal. The work requires knowledge of acquisition processes; automated records and control systems; material substitution criteria; and storage, issue, and disposal processes.

Inventory management work is classified in the GS-2010 Series when the preponderance of the work requires performing the inventory management, material coordination, and inventory control functions of the type described in combination with levels of responsibility and authority also described. Examples include making decisions which consider more than the status of an individual item or problem presented; reviewing planned work programs, schedules, and other planning data to advise others of major categories of material which will be needed; planning and coordinating material support to assigned program areas, including extensive provisioning conferences and personal contacts to negotiate stock levels, participating in planning for new data processing systems in terms of defining nature of information required, organizational responsibilities, computer network requirements, and nature of output desires.

The GS-2005 Supply Clerical and Technician Series includes positions involved in supervising or performing clerical or technical supply support work necessary to ensure the effective operation of ongoing supply activities. It requires knowledge of supply operations and program requirements and the ability to apply established supply policies, day-to-day servicing techniques, regulations or procedures.

The GS-2005 Standard provides guidance on distinguishing between GS-2005 work and two-grade interval supply specialist work, including GS-2010 inventory management specialist work. Supply specialists apply knowledge of systems, techniques, and underlying management concepts for determining, regulating, or controlling the level and flow of supplies from initial plan through acquisition, storage, issue, and utilization or disposal. Supply specialists must have a broad understanding of an interrelated chain of activities involving the process of supply, often extending from the conception or acquisition of a new item through storage, distribution, property utilization, consumption, or disposal. They plan and develop the supply system, programs, or services, and develop, adapt, or interpret operating methods or procedures. Supply specialists perform assignments requiring a deep knowledge and understanding of programs and the needs and operations of the organizations serviced. For example, they apply a knowledge of present and proposed programs, program changes, work operations, work sequences and schedules and apply knowledge of the technical characteristics or properties of supply items to plan and forecast inventory needs under changing technological or program requirements.

The Grade Evaluation Guide for Supply Positions (Guide), used to grade two-grade interval work in the GS-2000 Supply Group, provides an illustration of GS-2010 hospital work at Level 1-6. In this case, the employee provides supply support for the surgery and inpatient care departments in a hospital, ordering and stocking a variety of technical supplies ranging from common administrative and medical support materials through surgical instruments and surgical support equipment, e.g., heart-lung machines, X-rays, and supporting supplies such as film. The employee maintains accountability records for nonexpendable materials, traces acquisition sources and methods, resolves problems associated with timely deliveries and lead times, arranges for disposal of surplus and excess property, and monitors the operations and records of store rooms and distribution points, including stock levels, rates of usage, reorder points, and requests for new items. Problems must be resolved through cataloging, inventory, and acquisition channels involving new or unique surgical equipment and related items peculiar to the missions supported. The employee coordinates requirements with users, seeks assistance in identifying and locating required items, resolves user problems associated with obtaining and maintaining stocks, and prepared written analyses of activities and problems with recommendations for solution for high level supply management.

In contrast, GS-2005 supply technicians follow established methods and procedures that have been developed by supply specialists and management personnel. They perform assignments requiring less extensive knowledge of programs, operations, or organizations services and requiring a more limited knowledge of system characteristics or technical uses of items or supply or equipment. Supply technician work may include such duties overseeing stock maintenance, conducting physical inventories, receiving and preparing requisitions, searching catalogs and records to find substitutes, processing documentation for stock item receipts, maintaining accounting and reporting systems, and operating computer terminals. While some supply technicians may perform some of the same work tasks as supply specialists, they do so based on practical experience and familiarity with supply operations, the supply mission of the organizations, and supply regulations, policies, procedures, and directives.

The record shows the appellants' primary function is to maintain the inventory, issue, and coordinate the items needed by the Pharmacy to ensure the effective operation of ongoing supply

activities which is typical of work in the GS-2005 series. As indicated, the appellants are responsible for maintaining an inventory of non-controlled medications and pharmacy supplies. They establish requests for replenishment of stocked items to be approved by the Chief of Pharmacy Service, issuing medications after receipt, placing them on shelves and monitoring expiration dates. They are responsible for following up when there are problems with shipments, e.g., wrong items, wrong quantities, or damage. The appellants must observe the mandatory source priorities and refer open market purchases to the purchasing and contracting staff. They monitor and process all drug recalls and prepare correspondence relating to obtaining pharmaceuticals.

Their work is based on applying a practical knowledge of supply operations, regulations, policies, procedures, directives, and program mission managed and overseen by higher graded supply specialist. The work does not require the in-depth knowledge required of supply specialists in order to plan and forecast inventory needs under changing technological or programmatic requirements. They are not responsible for planning and developing the supply system, programs, or procedures. For example, the appellants determine the quantity of drugs, the items that are in short supply, and may substitute medical supplies for other authorized supplies previously negotiated by the agency. The appellants are not responsible for developing and planning the current and future supply system requirements to meet customer needs. The appellants must be familiar with seasonal trends to anticipate shortages and price changes that can influence fluctuations in inventory. For example, they may project the quantity of vaccine needed for influenza based on past trends and seasonal patterns. However, this does not require the level of judgment based on the possession of analytical and a theoretical or conceptual understanding of supply principles and techniques required by supply specialists. They use VA's PPVP; the IFCAP; which contains all repetitive items and historical data as well as the vendor file; the GIP, which is VA's perpetual inventory computer package; and the Purchase Card menu option. They also use a hand-held device to scan the barcode of each item to determine the quantity needed to be reordered. This function is completed for all items and the aggregate data collected is downloaded to a computer and sent to the wholesaler for reordering.

Because the appellants are not performing two-grade interval supply management work, we may not use the Guide to evaluate their positions. The appellants' positions are properly classified as Supply Technician, GS-2005, and the directly applicable published Supply Clerical and Technician Series, GS-2005, position classification standard must be used for grade level determination.

Grade determination

The GS-2005 standard is written in Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Positions graded under the FES format are compared to nine factors. Levels are assigned for each factor and the points associated with the assigned levels are totaled and converted to a grade level by application of the Grade Conversion Table contained in the standard. Under the FES, a factor level description in a standard describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. For a factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor level description. If a position fails in any significant aspect

to meet a particular level in the standard, the next lower level and its lower point value must be assigned unless an equally important aspect that meets a higher level balances the deficiency.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that the technician must understand to do acceptable work (for example, steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, regulations, and principles) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply that knowledge.

Level 1-4 is the highest level described in the standard. The work at this level requires a thorough knowledge of governing supply regulations, policies, procedures, and instructions applicable to the specific assignment. The standard describes two broad types of work functions. In the first, employees use this knowledge to conduct extensive and exhaustive searches for required information. They reconstruct records for complex supply transactions and/or provide supply operations support for activities involving specialized or unique supplies, equipment, parts such as special purpose laboratory or test equipment, prototypes of technical equipment, parts and equipment requiring unusual degrees of protection in shipment and storage, or others that are unique to the organization's mission or are seldom handled. The second type of work function is performing routine aspects of supply specialist work based on practical knowledge of standard procedures, where assignments include individual case problems related to a limited segment in one of the major areas of supply management, for example, cataloging, inventory management, or storage management.

The appellants must have knowledge of governing supply regulations, policies, procedures and instructions applicable to the medications and supplies required to support the Pharmacy Service. The appellants manage, coordinate, and stock pharmaceutical supplies; chemotherapy drugs; over the counter drugs; and general medical supplies such as ostomy, urology, and incontinence supplies; catheters; wound care items; blood glucose testing strips; tube feeding supplies; syringes; and needles. These items are not equivalent to the more complex, special equipment discussed in the first work function. While pharmaceuticals may be considered specialized, the requesting offices provide much of the initial information. The appellants act on assignments by preparing requisitions and processing supply transactions. As typical of the second work function under Level 1-4, the appellants work with the Pharmacy on acquisition and storage related functions for a broad range of disposable items based on well-established inventory management practices and procedures. They review requisitions to ensure commitments are within authorized funds and deliveries are phased to correspond to usage requirements. The appellants review items' usage to adjust ordering frequency, review potential item substitutions based on use by the Pharmacy, and market availability. For example, the medical staff may inquire about new pharmaceuticals that have recently entered the market and the appellants confer with them regarding the availability of the medications and when they could order them. However, they have no responsibility for nor do they engage in the selection of medications. They meet with Pharmacy Service employees to determine underutilized items that are obsolete or excess to the needs of the Pharmacy. Similar to the second work function at Level 1-4, the appellants carry out program decisions made by the management of the Pharmacy Service and

higher-level officials within Logistics by performing routine aspects of inventory management work for a wide range of medical stock. Level 1-4 is fully met but not exceeded.

Level 1-4 is credited for 550 points.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the extent of review of completed work.

At Level 2-3, the highest level described, the supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines, and assists the employee with unusual situations which do not have clear precedents. In some circumstances, the employee works independently from the supervisor or specialist in a remote location. Although usually available by telephone and periodic on-site visits, contact with the supervisor is infrequent. Considerable independence is exercised with continuing assignments. The employee plans and carries out the successive steps and handles problems and deviations in the work assignment in accordance with instructions, policies, previous training, or accepted practices in the occupation. When the employee assists a supply specialist in performing segments of more complex technical operations, the work may be subject to closer technical guidance and control. Completed work is usually evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements. The methods used in arriving at the end results are not usually reviewed in detail.

The appellants' work meets but does not exceed Level 2-3. The appellants work under the general supervision of the Chief of Material Management Section who defines objectives, priorities, and deadlines. They plan and perform their daily duties with considerable independence. Their contact with the supervisor is infrequent. However, he does make on-site visits to the Pharmacy. The appellants carry out the successive steps and handle problems and deviations in their work assignments in accordance with the instructions, policies, or past precedents. For example, the appellants take action on drug recalls that affect the current stock and ensure that the replacement stock is procured. They provide recommendations to Pharmacy employees on substitutes that are available in the system in the place of medications that have been recalled. The appellant's work is reviewed by use of computer generated reports, purchase order review, and communication with the supported services. Work is review for accomplishments and outcomes in meeting the Pharmacy's goals and objectives.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them.

At Level 3-3, the highest level described for this factor in the standard, the guidelines are similar to the next lower level, but because of the problem solving or case nature of the assignments, they are not completely applicable or have gaps in specificity. The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines such as policies, regulations, precedents, and work

directions for applicable to specific cases or problems. The employee analyzes the results of applying guidelines and recommends changes.

The appellants' work meets but does not exceed Level 3-3. The guidelines consist of the Federal Medication Management regulations; VA Handbooks; State, Federal, and VA Acquisition Regulations, and Federal Supply Schedule contracts. The guidelines are not always applicable to specific conditions or there are gaps in specificity when applying them to specific supply requirements. For example, the appellants work with customers and follow agency directives to plan the most efficient and effective way to handle the Federal Drug Administration's recall of medications and appropriately return the stock to the manufacturer. Like Level 3-3, the appellants use judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines and work directions for application to specific cases or problems; analyze the results of applying guidelines; and recommend changes. For example, new data entered into the Script Pro system requires the appellants to conduct continuous checks to determine the stock levels, reorder points, and codes. The Script Pro's automated outpatient pharmacy dispensing machine is programmed by the appellants to fill prescriptions at 30 and 90 day intervals and monitors the usage levels of prescriptions. They continue to review and adjust stock levels based on current usage, availability, and cost.

Level 3-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-3, the highest level described in the standard, the work involves unusually complicated or difficult technical duties involving one or more aspects of supply management or operations. The work at this level is difficult because it involves actions that are not standardized or prescribed, deviations from established procedure, new or changing situations, or matters for which only general provision can be made in regulations or procedures. This typically involves supply transactions that experienced employees at lower grades have been unable to process or resolve, or which involve special program requirements for urgent, critical shortage items requiring specialized procedures and efforts to obtain. The employee decides what needs to be done depending on the analysis of the subject, phase, or issues involved in each assignment, and the chosen course of action may have to be selected from many alternatives. Decisions are based largely on the employee's experience, precedent actions, and the priority assigned for resolving the particular problem. The methods and procedures used vary based on the circumstances of each individual case. The work involves conditions and elements that the employee must identify and analyze to discern interrelationships with other actions, related supply programs, and alternative approaches.

The appellants' work meets but does not exceed Level 4-3. Their work is complicated by the need to manage conflicting objectives, i.e., maintaining sufficient stock levels to meet the [VHCS] needs complicated by monetary and inventory limitations. They must understand and

be able to fully utilize the various computerized systems to complete their work efficiently. Managing medical items is difficult because of unpredictable demand and technological change. The work involves identifying, analyzing, and determining a solution to supply problems. They investigate errors in the receipt, shipment, and adjustments. They examine incoming medications to determine if those with brand names are now offered as generic brands, which items to refrigerate, and make the needed adjustments. The appellants may encounter a situation where medical items ordered did not appear in the bulk shipment due to a manufacturing problem. They find out if the problem is due to a raw material shortage or simply supply versus demand and how it will affect customers. They advise the Pharmacist(s) of the shortage of medical supplies and rely on their experience and past precedents to deal with the problems. The appellants monitor the availability of storage and take the frequency of use into consideration when buying, storing, and transferring supplies.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work; that is, the purpose, breadth and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-3, the work involves dealing with a variety of problem situations either independently or as part of a broader problem solving effort under the control of a specialist. Problems encountered require extensive fact finding, review of information to coordinate requirements, and recommendations to resolve conditions or change procedures. The employee performs the work in conformance with prescribed procedures and methods. The results of the work affect the adequacy of local supply support operations, or they contribute to improved procedures in support of supply programs and operations.

Similar to Level 5-3, the highest level described in the standard, the purpose of the appellants' work is to provide inventory support to the Pharmacy by maintaining adequate stock levels at reasonable prices. All clinical programs within the [VHCS] are dependent on the effective management of the Pharmacy and the appellants work contributes to that mission. Their work involves resolving a variety of supply problems, questions, or situations that pertain to a large number of pharmaceutical supplies. The appellants' advice, recommendations, and technical assistance affect the efficiency of established supply operations within Pharmacy Service. Like Level 5-3, the work of the appellants is local in nature, but affects all of the clinical programs for which medical support is provided and is essential to ensure patient care needs are met.

Level 5-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factors 6 and 7, Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts

The personal contacts that serve as the basis for the level selected for Factor 7 must be the same as the contacts that serve as the basis for the level selected for Factor 6.

Personal contacts

Personal contacts include face-to-face contacts and telephone contact with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place.

At Level 6-2, contacts are with employees in the same agency, but outside the immediate organization. Persons contacted generally are engaged in different functions, missions, and kinds of work, such as representatives from various levels within the agency or from other operating offices in the immediate installation. Contacts may also be with members of the general public as individuals or groups, in a moderately structured setting. For example, they are usually established on a routine basis at the employee's work place or over the telephone, the exact purpose may be unclear at first, and one or more of the parties may be uninformed concerning the role and authority of other participants. Typical of contacts at this level are employees at approximately the same level of authority in shipping companies, vendor employees concerned with the status of orders or shipments, and others at comparable levels.

In contrast, Level 6-3 contacts are with individuals from outside the employing agency in a moderately unstructured setting. For example, the contacts are not established on a routine basis, the purpose and extent of each contact is different, and the role and authority of each party is identified and developed during the course of the contact. Typical of contacts at this level are supply employees in other departments or agencies, inventory item managers, contractors, or manufacturers.

Level 6-2 is met. The appellants make contacts with employees, customers, and manufacturers to exchange and clarify work related information. The appellants make contacts with couriers such as the United Parcel Service and FedEx and with vendors on a daily basis. Routine contacts are made with Pharmacy employees and medical staff at various levels within the facility or other hospitals or clinical programs. The regular and recurring contacts are more structured than those typical of Level 6-3.

Purpose

At Level 7-b, the highest level described in the standard, the purpose of the contacts is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts or to resolve operating problems by clarifying discrepancies in information submitted by serviced organizations, resolving automated system problems causing erroneous transaction records, or seeking cooperation from others to resolve complicated supply actions.

The purpose of the appellants' contacts is to resolve discrepancies associated with supply transactions, determine priorities of need from users, and check availability of items against delivery dates and vendor shortages. The appellants adjust and account for inventories, review acquisitions for stock, and maintain an accurate accounting and reporting system for non-expendable items.

The combined factors are credited at Level 2b (75 points).

Factor 8, Physical demands

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. This includes physical characteristics and abilities and the physical exertion involved in the work.

At Level 8-2, the highest level described in the standard, the work requires some physical exertion such as long periods of standing; walking over rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces; recurring bending; crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, or similar activities. This level of physical demands occur, for example, when employees are regularly assigned to activities such as tracing misplaced items or conducting physical inventories in warehouses, depots, and other storage areas, or when they are regularly involved in stocking and retrieving items from shelves and cabinets.

Similar to Level 8-2, the appellants are required to stand, walk, bend, crouch, stoop, and stretch when retrieving stock items or conducting inventory. They routinely lift bulk medical items weighing up to 50 lbs and push and pull a four-wheel dolly that may weigh up to 100 pounds.

Level 8-2 is credited for 20 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. Although the use of safety precautions can practically eliminate a certain danger or discomfort, such situations typically place additional demands upon the employee in carrying out safety regulations and techniques.

At Level 9-1, the employee typically works indoors in an environment involving everyday risks or discomforts which require normal safety precautions typical of such places or offices or meeting rooms. Observance of normal safety practices with office equipment, avoidance of trips and falls, and observance of fire regulations is required. The area is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated.

At Level 9-2, the work environment involves moderate risks or discomforts which require special safety precautions, such as working around moving warehouse equipment, carts, or machines. Employees may be required to use protective clothing or gear such as masks, gowns, safety shoes, goggles, hearing protection, and gloves.

Similar to Level 9-1, the appellants perform work in an office-like setting involving everyday risks or discomforts which require normal safety precautions. The office has adequate ventilation, heat, and light. The storage areas do not involve the risks or require the protective equipment typical of Level 9-2. Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

Summary

In summary, we have evaluated the appellants' positions as follows:

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-4	550
2. Supervisory controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. & 7. Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts	2b	75
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
Total		1,500

A total of 1,500 points fall within the GS-7 grade level point range of 1355-1600 points on the Grade Conversion Table.

Decision

The appellants' positions are properly classified as Supply Technician, GS-2005-7.