

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

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

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Materials Examiner and Identifier
(Munitions/MVO)
WG-6912-7

Organization: Munitions Storage Branch
Component Maintenance Division
[number] Maintenance Directorate
[number] Flying Training Wing
Department of the Air Force
[geographic location]

OPM decision: Materials Examiner and Identifier
(Specializations determined by agency)
WG-6912-7

OPM decision number: C-6912-07-01

/s/ Robert D. Hendler

Robert D. Hendler
Classification and Pay Claims
Program Manager

February 3, 2006

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]

Chief, Civilian Personnel Flight
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Introduction

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Dallas Field Services Group accepted a job grading appeal on October 14, 2005, from [names of two appellants]. The appellants were assigned to a job classified by the agency as Materials Examiner and Identifier (Munitions/Motor Vehicle Operator), WG-6912-7. They believe the job should be classified as Explosives Work Inspector, WG-6502-10. The job is assigned to the Munitions Storage Branch, Component Maintenance Division, [name] Maintenance Directorate, [name] Flying Training Wing, at [location]. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346(c) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

Background

The employees appealed the classification of their job using agency procedures. The decision of the Department of Defense's Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS), dated August 15, 2005, found the job correctly classified as Materials Examiner and Identifier, WG-6912-7, with a parenthetical title at the agency's discretion. [one appellant] was promoted on October 2, 2005, to the position of Distribution Facilities Specialist, GS-2030-9, that functions as the Branch supervisor. As he is no longer in the job he appealed, his appeal was cancelled.

General issues

In their agency appeal, the appellants indicated they found that the Department of Army has job descriptions (JDs) that describe work comparable to theirs but classified in the WG-6500 Ammunition, Explosive, and Toxic Material Work Family. However, they did not submit copies of those JDs. The remaining appellant later provided a copy of a job announcement for an Air Force job of Munitions Handler (MVO) classified as WG-6511-8 that he believes is comparable to the work he performs. By law, OPM must classify jobs in accordance with published OPM standards and guidance. Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for grading jobs, (5 U.S.C. 5346) we cannot compare the appellant's job to others that may or may not be graded correctly.

Like OPM, the appellant's agency must grade jobs based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. However, the agency also has primary responsibility for ensuring that its jobs are graded consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant considers his job so similar to others that they all warrant the same grading, he may pursue the matter by writing to his agency's headquarters human resources office. In doing so, he should specify the precise organizational location, grading, duties, and responsibilities of the jobs in question. If the jobs are found to be basically the same as his, the agency must correct their grading to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain to him the differences between his job and the others.

Job information

The Munitions Storage Branch includes the appellant, another identical additional job, and a Distribution Facilities Specialist, GS-2030-9, position that manages the munitions and explosive

supply account and provides supervision. The primary purpose of the appellant's job is the inspection and maintenance of the base munitions/explosive stockpile in support of the [name] Flight Training Wing's flying, mobility, and security commitments.

The appellant is responsible for receiving, inspecting, and storing all munitions/explosives in the installation's stockpile. He inspects items upon receipt to assure the shipment includes the proper stock items; verifies their condition; stores items in appropriate locations using prescribed procedures; issues items to authorized users; inspects returned items; and performs periodic inspections during storage to assure condition, shelf-life, etc. The items handled include a variety of explosives used for training dogs, e.g., dynamite, ammonium nitrate, plastic explosives; war training devices such as smoke grenades, ground and air burst simulators, 40 mm grenade launchers; a variety of small arms munitions and pepper spray used for training and by military police; and the explosive items used on and for the aircraft. These include three types of flares used for emergency purposes by air and ground crews and approximately 75 different items used on the T-1, T-6, T-37, and T-38 aircraft to catapult canopies, eject seats, activate fire extinguishing equipment, etc.

Items with a prescribed shelf-life are either returned for overhaul/repair or disposed of, in accordance with set criteria and procedures. These items must be properly packed for shipping in accordance with Department of Transportation (DOT) and Air Force instructions. Items that the appellant determines are damaged or unstable are destroyed by an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team. All items must be accounted for in the combat ammunition system (CAS) data base. He transports items from the munitions maintenance facility to the munitions storage facility on base using a half-ton truck. Occasionally, the appellant delivers munitions to two nearby Air Force bases.

The job description (JD) number [number] contains more information concerning the duties and responsibilities of the job. The appellant and the supervisor both certified as to the accuracy of the JD which we find contains the major duties and responsibilities performed by the appellant and we hereby incorporate it into our decision.

Occupation, title, and standard determination

The pay category was not questioned and we agree that the job is covered by the Federal Wage System (FWS).

The appellant's job includes a mixture of work covered by more than one occupational series. The work relates to aspects of the WG-6500 Ammunition, Explosives, and Toxic Materials Work Family; the WG-6900 Warehousing and Stock Handling Family; the WG-5703 Motor Vehicle Operator job grading standard (JGS); and the WG-7002 Packer JGS. The agency has used an internal organization title of Munitions Inspector and the appellant believes the work should be graded by comparison with the JGS for Inspectors. We will address each of these occupations individually.

The JGS for Inspectors is used to grade nonsupervisory jobs that involve examining services, materials, and products that are processed, manufactured, or repaired by workers performing

trade or craft work to determine that the physical and operating characteristics are within acceptable standards, specifications, or contractual requirements. Inherent in FWS inspection work is the use of the paramount trade, craft, or laboring skills and knowledge to perform the work being inspected. The appellant is not directly responsible for inspecting the work of employees in the manufacture of munitions but rather that the facility has received the correct items, determining that received items are in satisfactory condition, and filing discrepancy reports if they are not. Exclusion 7 of the JGS discusses condition classifying and receiving examining, commodity examining, and other work that does not require a comprehensive knowledge of the trades process involved in making or repairing the item. For this reason, coverage of the JGS for Inspector is not appropriate.

The JGS for Explosives Operator, 6502, covers work in the manufacturer of powder, propellant grains, solid or liquid explosives, and mixtures for flares or signals, and the manufacture, assembly, disassembly, renovation, modification, and deactivation of ammunition, explosives, or chemical or toxic filled munitions. This includes jobs involving operation of equipment, jigs, or machines designed or modified to perform particular munitions operations. This work requires knowledge of explosives and explosives safety practices, the ability to operate equipment designed or modified for munitions operations, and the skill to safely perform operations with explosives. While the appellant's work does require knowledge of explosives and explosives safety practices, the work does not involve the manufacture, assembly, or deactivation typical of Explosives Operator work and assignment to the 6502 occupation is not appropriate. Exclusion 3 indicates coverage is not appropriate for work involved in receipt, storage, issue, transfer, and check of ammunition, ammunition parts, powder, and explosives. The JGS refers the user to the 6907 Materials Handling occupation.

The 6511 Missile/Toxic Materials Handling occupation includes jobs involves in readying and handling for storage, transfer, or shipment of explosives or toxic munitions such as poison gasses, radioactive materials, or solid propellant ballistic missiles that require strictly controlled temperature of humidity, limitation of shock and vibration, or frequent checks to prevent physical or chemical changes that could make them unsafe or prevent proper operations. This work requires knowledge of the materials and of mechanical details of containers and controls. The readying and handling work includes mechanical assembly and disassembly of munitions and containers such as checking and replacing environmental controls, attaching pads, positioning pads precisely and tightening to close tolerances; frequent checking of condition for replacement or repair of containers or components; and, often, careful transporting in order to not exceed critical acceleration, vibration, temperature, or similar characteristics. The appellant deals primarily with conventional munitions. His work does not require the assembly and disassembly of munitions and containers to check such things as environmental controls, etc. as described in the occupational definition. For this reason, the 6511 occupation is not appropriate.

The JGS for Materials Handler, 6907, addresses work involving receipt, storage, and assembly for issue, shipment, and distribution of a wide variety of bin and bulk supplies, materials, equipment, and commodities using mechanized, automated, and manual material moving equipment, devices, and systems. While the appellant does perform these functions, his work goes beyond the receipt, storage, issue and transfer work typical of the 6907 occupation. The JGS for Materials Examiner and Identifier, 6912, involves work in identification, examination,

classification, acceptance, and disposition of materials and equipment. Materials examiners and identifiers determine physical condition, adherence to product specifications, and equipment defects using shipping documents, contracts, catalogs, drawings, and related documents. This occupation is most consistent with the primary purpose of the appellant's work and the highest level skills involved.

The JGS for Packer, 7002, covers work involved in preserving and/or packing and repacking equipment, parts, tools, materials, and other items in various types of containers to protect them from damage, deterioration, or corrosion during shipment and storage. The grade 5 level discusses working with hazardous materials such as chemicals, acids, pesticides, combustibles, explosives, munitions, poisons, and radioactive materials, following specialized safety and regulatory requirements and procedures. Because this work does not control the grade of the job, we will not address it further under **Grade determination**.

The JGS for Motor Vehicle Operator, 5702, covers the work of operating gasoline, diesel, or electric powered wheeled vehicles to haul cargo and fuel, transport passengers, or to tow and recover equipment. Based on the record, the appellant's driving assignments would not exceed the grade 5 level. Because this work does not control the grade of the job, we will not address it further under **Grade determination**.

Based on all the information available and the primary purpose of the work, the job is appropriately assigned to the 6912 series and titled Materials Examiner and Identifier. The parenthetical titles of Munitions/Motor Vehicle Operator are appropriately used to identify additional qualification requirements of the job and may be used at the agency's discretion. The JGS for 6912 must be used to determine the grade level.

Grade determination

The JGS uses four factors for making a grade level determination: *Skill and Knowledge*, *Responsibility*, *Physical Effort*, and *Working Conditions*. *Physical Effort and Working Conditions* are defined only at the grade 5 level and are the same at all grade levels. These factors are not considered to be grade controlling and will not be addressed further.

Skill and Knowledge

At the grade 7 level, the highest level described in the JGS, examiners must have a thorough knowledge of the techniques and equipment used in examination and classification of standard, unusual, and highly specialized items. They independently assess the condition of the most complex categories of materials and equipment such as those that are toxic, radioactive, perishable, classified, precious/strategic metals, or complex electronic or mechanical equipment. In supply centers, they are allowed to handle and independently accept or reject items such as complex electronic and mechanical equipment, assemblies, components, and hazardous materials such as explosives, toxic chemicals and flammables, gas cylinders, and classified and high value equipment. Supply center examiners may refer equipment to an item manager for missing parts or return an item to a vendor when improperly sent. In a property reutilization and disposal center, they determine disposition of specialized equipment, materials, and components which

can include sensitive weapons systems along with equipment containing precious metals or hazardous materials. They search catalogs, tech orders, schematics, and computerized data to identify specialized items. They use things such as technical specifications and vendor contracts to examine and compare items against shipping documents and must be knowledgeable of special handling techniques and procedures for processing of hazardous and toxic materials, etc.

Because of the nature and variety of items the appellant works with, we find this is comparable to, but does not exceed, the grade 7 level. He determines if damage has been done during shipment, if materials have deteriorated during storage; e.g., corrosion or denting on outer cases, damage to connectors or couplings, leakage of nitroglycerin or crystals from dynamite wrappings, moisture condition of black powder, etc. The CAS database must be maintained with current information including condition codes, locations, inspection due dates, etc. Comparable to the grade 7, the appellant must determine the proper shipping procedures and locations for shipping items for repair/rework or to disposal locations. If items are considered too unstable for shipment, arrangements are made for an EOD team to dispose of the items. Therefore, the grade 7 level is credited.

Responsibility

At the grade 7 level, examiners perform with a high degree of independence and a minimum of supervision. They are responsible for independent decisions relating to acceptability of materials, assigning coding classifications, and insuring all safety procedures and requirements are followed when handling hazardous, explosive, and toxic materials.

The supervisor outlines the appellant's responsibilities, goals, priorities, and deadlines. Like at the grade 7 level, the appellant works independently to carry out the required tasks and resolves common problems. The work must be performed in accordance with DOT, Department of Defense, and Air Force instructions, technical orders, and local directives. Work is periodically reviewed through database products, inspection reports, and other documents. Therefore, the grade 7 level is credited.

Decision

The job is classified as Materials Examiner and Identifier, WG-6912-7. A parenthetical title to indicate the specialized qualification requirements of Munitions/MVO may be used at the discretion of the agency.