



United States
Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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Standard: [Secretary, GS-0318](#)
Factor: Factor I - Knowledge Required by the Position
Issue: Distinguishing between Work Situation B and Work Situation C

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in the Office of Personnel Management's processing of a classification appeal.

A secretary to the Group Commander of a Combat Support Group at an Air Force Base requested that her position be reclassified to the series and grade allocated by the servicing personnel office. The position's classification had been changed by the Headquarters personnel office.

The Combat Support Group, through ten sections, squadrons, divisions, etc., provided base support services to the co-located combat wing and tenant units.

The secretary contended that her position met the minimum criteria for Work Situation C by the GS-0318 standard.

Resolution

The Office of Personnel Management regional office found that Work Situation B was most appropriate for the work environment. In a previous evaluation (Digest Volume 1, No. 1) the Office of Personnel Management noted that the subelement "Work Situation" is designed to measure the complexity of the Organization served, i.e., the immediate office of the supervisor and any subordinate offices, meaning only those units under the direct line authority of the supervisor. The presence of administrative support offices, whether under the line control of an

organization or not, however, is not conclusive evidence either for or against Work Situation C; it is the degree of managerial autonomy which is the ultimate consideration.

The Combat Support Group had 10 subordinate sections, divisions, and squadrons, most of which were further subdivided into branches (chaplain services, personnel, security, mail, audio-visual services, civil engineering, and many others), each involving different administrative requirements and needs. Management of the Combat Support Group's functions was accomplished through inter-mediate supervisors and systems of formal internal procedures, controls, and reporting requirements. Therefore, the criteria for Work Situation B were met.

In determining whether Work Situation C was met, the evaluation was guided by the Secretary Series Explanatory Memorandum, the definition in the standard, and benchmark descriptions for the types of organizations described at Work Situation C. The GS-0318 Explanatory Memorandum states, "Managerial autonomy contemplates such responsibilities as long range planning, commitment of resources, program evaluation, decisions which impact on relationships with other groups, etc." The evaluation also noted, from review of benchmarks, that significant technical authority is not necessarily concomitant with managerial authority which would warrant Work Situation C. In this specific case the Wing Commander had final administrative and managerial decision authority. Therefore, the Combat Support Group was not fully comparable to the intent of Work Situation C.

In evaluating this subelement, the classifier should distinguish between technical and administrative/managerial authority and recognize that the presence of one of the conditions cited under Work Situation C in the standard does not justify Work Situation C without the requisite managerial autonomy.