



United States
Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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Standards: [Pest Controller, 5026](#)
[Industrial Controls Mechanic, 2606](#)
[Electronics Mechanic, 2604](#)

Factor: N/A

Issue: Cross Application of Related Job Grading Standards (JGS's)

Identification of the Classification Issue

The issue arose in an OPM oversight division's adjudication of two job grading appeals. The first appeal was from a Gardener, 5003, who performed a range of gardening and related duties, including the application of pesticides to control plant pests and diseases. He claimed that possession of a state Class 3 license for applying pesticides and his exposure to the dangers of pesticides, which necessitated his use of protective clothing and devices, exceeded the Grade 8 level, the highest level described in the 5003 job grading standard. The second appeal was from a Utility Systems Repairer-Operator, 4742, who claimed the Electronic Industrial Control Mechanic, 2606, job grading standard (JGS) should be applied to evaluate his central environmental monitoring and control system (ECMS) duties.

Resolution

The oversight division found that the application of pesticides was typical of work in the Gardener, 5003, occupation, and was directly addressed in the 5003 JGS at the Grade 6 level, i.e., "selects and uses fungicides, insecticides, and herbicides for the control of common plant diseases, plant insects, and weeds" and "is usually exposed to chemical sprays and dusts more frequently than at the lower grades." After consultation with OPM central office, the oversight division also applied the 5026 JGS to the appealed job. The 5026 JGS, revised in 1987, contains more detailed information regarding the application of general use and restricted pesticides than the 5003 which was published in 1971. This technical information must be considered in order to assure that

pesticide related gardening duties are fairly and accurately evaluated by the application of the most current Federal Wage System (FWS) grading criteria.

The appellant applied general insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides to a limited range of native plants and lawn areas at the activity. The work was limited to outdoor application. The appellant was not responsible for or permitted to apply pesticides in buildings. The oversight division found that the 5026 work performed did not meet the Grade 7 level, which is the lowest level described in the JGS. At the Grade 7 level, pest controllers deal with plant pests and common household, structural, and nuisance pests, such as ants, mosquitos, cockroaches, rats, and mice. They employ commonly used insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, and fungicides and weigh, measure, and mix pesticide emulsions and baits. The appellant dealt with more limited numbers and types of pesticides in controlling outdoor plant diseases and pests. Because the job did not deal with the range of pest control problems and, thus, did not entail application of the full range of skill, knowledges, and responsibility envisioned at the Grade 7 level, the oversight division determined that the 5026 work performed did not exceed the Grade 6 level.

In the second appeal, OPM found that because the installation did not have an EMCS service contract, the appellant performed occasional ECMS repair work. However, the percentage of such work performed, i.e., less than 10 percent, was not a large enough percentage of the work time to constitute grade controlling work within the meaning of the Federal Wage System (FWS), as discussed in previous *Digest* guidance. OPM found the kind of repair work was not typical of Grade 11 work. As in the first appeal, JGS's must be read in concert with one another to be understood and applied correctly. The recently released Electronics Mechanic, 2604, job grading standard, provided a detailed definition of Grade 11 work in the electronics group that had to be read in conjunction with the 2606 JGS:

In comparison with grade 10 mechanics who service functionally independent components of moderate complexity or a system of limited complexity, grade 11 electronics mechanics install, modify, overhaul, maintain, troubleshoot, and repair complex electronics equipment and a complete operational system(s) consisting of numerous complex integral components which require a wide range of electronics principles and practices. . . . Grade 11 electronics mechanics apply a comprehensive knowledge of operating electronics principles such as circuit elements, digital logic, microprocessors, core memory, interface circuits, digital data transmission, microwaves, antennas, signal behavior amplification and display.

OPM found the range of repairs performed on the ECMS and the range of skills and knowledge to perform those repairs were more circumscribed than envisioned at the Grade 11 level. These repairs were limited to occasionally replacing circuit boards and microchips and did not routinely require the use of microsoldering or more advanced repair techniques. OPM found, therefore, that had the 2606 JGS been appropriate to use for grading purposes, it would not have yielded the Grade 11 level requested by the appellant.