

Federal Wage System Job Grading Standard for Cooking, 7404

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WORK COVERED

This standard covers nonsupervisory work involved in the preparation of regular or special diet foods and meals. This includes cooking meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, and vegetables and making soups, gravies, sauces, desserts, and other foods. Cooks use standardized recipes and menus and personal knowledge and experience to measure, assemble, and mix ingredients; regulate cooking temperatures; and add seasoning to foods. They use specialized knowledge and skill to design and prepare decorated foods and aesthetic food arrangements. This includes techniques to mold food items into various forms, carve fruits and vegetables into various shapes, and create ice sculptures.

WORK NOT COVERED

This standard does not cover work which primarily involves:

- Preparing regular and special diet bakery products such as bread, rolls, cakes, cookies, pies, doughnuts, pastries, puddings, fillings, and icings. (See [Job Grading Standard for Baking Series, 7402.](#))
- Cutting, trimming, and removing bones from meat and preparing and processing fish and poultry. (See [Job Grading Standard for Meatcutting Series, 7407.](#))
- Food service work or simple food preparation work or a combination of both, including setting and waiting on tables; attending food counters; serving food; assembling trays for hospital patients; washing dishes, pots, and pans; transporting food, equipment, and supplies by manual or motorized carts; and assisting in food preparation. (See [Job Grading Standard for Food Service Working Series, 7408.](#))

TITLES

Jobs covered by this standard are to be titled *Cook*.

GRADE LEVELS

This standard describes three levels of nonsupervisory cooking work (grades 4, 6, and 8). The standard does not describe all possible grades at which jobs might be established. If jobs differ substantially from the skill, knowledge, or other work requirements described for the grade levels in the standard, they may be graded above or below the levels described based on sound job grading methods.

COOK, GRADE 4

General: Grade 4 cooks perform a full range of simple cooking by preparing and cooking items that require little or no processing such as pancakes, sausage, eggs, hamburgers, and fresh or canned vegetables. They prepare all forms of hot cereals; broil meats; prepare and cook concentrated or dehydrated soups, sauces, and gravies; and make cold sandwich fillings. Cooks at this level prepare pureed diet foods such as peas and spinach and convenience items such as frozen hash browns, fish fillets, and chicken nuggets. Some cooks at this level prepare and bake pizza.

In addition, cooks at this level:

- prepare food by peeling, chopping, grinding, paring, cutting, slicing, dicing, pureeing, dredging, flouring, or breading;
- weigh, measure, and assemble ingredients for regular and modified menu items;
- set up and replenish a salad bar;
- portion foods for distribution and meal service; and
- cover, date, and store leftovers according to established procedures.

They mix ingredients according to precisely written recipes that produce quality products, minimize preparation time, and avoid food material waste.

Cooks at grade 4 operate a variety of kitchen equipment which utilizes gas, electricity, steam, or microwave heat sources. They disassemble and assemble component parts and accessories for cleaning, and follow safety procedures regarding the operation of equipment to avoid personal injury or damage to the equipment. They clean and use a variety of cooking utensils required to measure, weigh, and process food items. They clean, store, and maintain all kitchen utensils and clean and maintain all equipment and work areas after each use practicing a "clean as you go" concept. They perform various other cleaning tasks (e.g., walls and ceilings, floors, work tables, walk-in refrigerators, and duckboards) following an established cleaning schedule. The cooks follow established sanitation procedures when handling food. They ensure that foods are stored at the correct temperatures to prevent bacteria growth. They maintain accurate food inventories and rotate stock items to prevent spoilage.

Skill and Knowledge: Grade 4 cooks require a working knowledge of the methods and procedures relating to food preparation in small quantities, and the skill to apply such information to cook a limited variety of prepared foods (i.e., foods that are completely prepared in advance and are then kept warm during meal service such as soup) or short-order foods (i.e., "prepared to order" foods that are cooked as they are ordered). They know how to read and can understand written food service material (e.g., food labels, standardized recipes, computerized

food production sheets, metric conversion tables, and basic work instructions) and have a knowledge of special and modified diets.

They perform basic arithmetic computations in multiplying ingredients in a recipe and calculating how many servings a container will hold. They know the various tables of weights and measures and are able to convert from the U.S. standard system to the metric system. Grade 4 cooks regulate cooking temperature and steam pressure, and check for correct cooking time and the condition of the food being cooked. Cooks at this level are knowledgeable of the characteristics of the various foods they prepare such as color, flavor, consistency, texture, and temperature and cooking time required. They are skilled in planning, coordinating, and timing the sequence of steps required to have their menu items ready for serving at mealtime. They are able to season foods according to set procedures, making adjustments when appropriate. They are knowledgeable of infection and spoilage control procedures. At this grade, cooks know how to operate, breakdown, and clean the food service equipment they use such as a meat grinder, coffee urn, griddle, and broiler.

Responsibility: Grade 4 cooks receive assignments in the form of written and oral instructions from their immediate supervisor. Instructions typically consist of the cook's worksheet, menus, standardized recipes, and meal schedules. A higher grade cook or supervisor checks to see that the work is being done properly and is available to answer technical questions. The employee is responsible for the proper use and cleaning of equipment, safety practices, personal hygiene, and conformance with food service sanitation requirements. When learning new or more difficult work, cooks at this level receive detailed instructions from a journey level cook or the supervisor on cooking methods and use of equipment. Work is evaluated by the supervisor or higher grade cook in terms of quality of food cooked and adherence to instructions and time schedules.

Physical Effort: Cooks at this grade level perform work requiring continual standing and walking, and frequent stooping, reaching, pushing and pulling, and bending. They frequently lift or move objects weighing up to 18 kilograms (40 pounds) unassisted, and occasionally lift or move objects weighing over 18 kilograms (40 pounds) with the assistance of lifting devices or other workers.

Working Conditions: The work is performed in kitchen areas which are well lighted but are often hot and noisy. The cooks are exposed to steam, fumes, and odors from cooking and to extreme temperature changes when entering walk-in refrigeration or freezing units. There is danger of slipping on wet floors that have been recently mopped or where food has been spilled. They are subject to possible cuts from knives and burns from steam, hot foods, stoves, and hot grease and water.

COOK, GRADE 6

General: Cooks at this grade level prepare and cook a variety of menu items including regular and special diet entrees and dessert items. Working alone or with a higher grade cook, they roast, broil, bake, fry, boil, steam, and stew meats, fish, and poultry. They prepare soups, stocks, broths, gravies, sauces, and puddings without the use of packaged mixes. They make a variety of dessert items such as baked Alaska, crepes, and mousses. They adjust standardized recipes for the number of servings required in large quantity cooking. They slice meat items by hand conforming to a specific size requirement or weight specification. They maintain the proper temperature for all foods during holding, transport, reheating, and serving to assure quality control and food safety.

Cooks at grade 6 perform yield testing for selected food items to determine the serving weight or volume after preparation and gather other test data to assist management in making purchasing and menu pricing decisions. Some cooks at this level may also maintain rotation of food inventories to prevent spoilage. In some work situations they provide assistance to the supervisor or a higher grade worker in ordering food in accordance with daily and weekly menu requirements. They may prepare food production worksheets from computerized recipe files.

Cooks at this grade also:

- prepare cold food platters such as ham, salmon, and roast beef platters, and salads and hors d'oeuvres;
- mix and prepare cold sauces, meat glazes, molded aspics, and salad dressings; and
- carve vegetables and fruits as garnishes for food platters and dishes.

Some cooks at this level operate specialized equipment to cook food in large quantities and to rapidly chill and store the prepared items under refrigeration for long periods of time. This kind of food preparation system is typically used in a hospital or similar health care facility. These cooks follow special health and safety procedures in storing items in the food bank and in reheating food items.

In some work situations, under the guidance of their immediate supervisor or a higher grade cook, these cooks may prepare an entire meal which requires coordinating the cooking of several items with different cooking times and characteristics. They plan the cooking process to produce a complete meal on time and at the proper temperature.

Skill and Knowledge: Grade 6 cooks have basic knowledge of food preparation principles and a practical understanding of the physical changes that occur during the processing and cooking of food. They have working knowledge of the planning process involved in cooking an

entire meal including the different preparation methods for various food items, the necessary time for cooking these different items, and how to schedule and coordinate their preparation to produce a properly cooked meal on time.

They evaluate a variety of raw and cooked food items to decide if they are fresh and whether cooked foods are done by their appearance, consistency, texture, and temperature. Cooks at this level have a knowledge of how to prepare specialty sauces such as bechamel and hollandaise. Also, they have a knowledge of cold food presentation and the skill to carve and use colorful fruits and vegetables as garnishes. They have a knowledge of standard formulas used in yield testing to determine portion cost and to adjust ingredients in standard recipes when altering the number of servings required. Some cooks at this level may have a working knowledge of special and modified diets, and of the cooking techniques to use in following the adjusted recipes. They know the principles of food spoilage, food borne illness, and food safety. These cooks know how to follow standardized recipes and cooking techniques. Some cooks at this level have skill in using standardized recipes and cooking techniques that have been adapted to the requirements of a specialized food preparation system. They are skilled in operating and cleaning specialized equipment such as a cook tank, agitating kettle, pump fill station, tipper tie, blast chiller, and vacuum packer. Cooks at grade 6 have practical knowledge of methods and procedures necessary for ordering, issuing, and storing food items in accordance with inventory and sanitation requirements. They know how to operate, breakdown, and clean the standard food service equipment they use such as a food processor, slicing machine, rotary or convection oven, and a deep fat fryer.

Responsibility: Grade 6 cooks receive work assignments orally and in writing from their immediate supervisor or a higher level cook in the form of a cook's worksheet, menus, standardized recipes, meal schedules, and special work orders. They plan, coordinate, and time their work assignments to assure that food items are prepared on time and are at the proper temperature. Cooks at this level make judgments about the recipe modifications needed to meet changes in the number of servings required. They adjust the amounts and proportions of ingredients in recipes while maintaining the original balance between ingredient quantities and the number of portions needed. They suggest to a higher level cook or their supervisor adaptations of standardized recipes to allow for differences in the cooking equipment specified in the recipe and the equipment that is available. They assist in training lower grade cooks and advise them on how to improve their work methods. They are responsible for the safe use and care of kitchen equipment. Work at this level is evaluated in process and upon completion by the supervisor or higher grade cook in terms of the timeliness, quality, flavor, and appearance of prepared foods and conformance to sanitation and safety standards.

Physical Effort: The physical effort is the same as described at [grade 4](#).

Working Conditions: The working conditions are the same as those described at [grade 4](#).

COOK, GRADE 8

General: Cooks at this grade independently prepare all types of meats, poultry, seafood, vegetables, fruits, sauces, and gravies for regular and modified diet menus. They prepare, cook, season, and portion food for all meals by following standardized recipes at different levels of difficulty and plan, regulate, and schedule cooking procedures so that numerous completed food products are ready at the appropriate temperature and time. They plan and prepare or coordinate the preparation of entire meals. They prepare and present food so that it is visually appealing to customers, and it conforms to established food standards in terms of shape, size, texture, color, and flavor. The cooks also prepare foods for such modified diets as diabetic, sodium restricted, and low-cholesterol. Cooks at this level prepare menu items using special or difficult recipes that require numerous interrelated steps, many ingredients, and lengthy preparation time. They prepare a variety of menu items using several different and complex methods of preparation such as cook/chill.

Cooks at grade 8 examine all food for quality and freshness before preparation. They prepare, season, and cook braised and sauteed meats, poached fish, steamed or fricasseed poultry, creamed soups, and casserole dishes. They monitor temperatures and steam pressures, evaluate the condition of food being cooked at frequent intervals, and turn and baste meat to add flavor and to prevent uneven cooking and drying out. Cooks at this level may make substitutions and adjustments in food preparation procedures and seasoning to make the food more attractive and to improve taste. They make modifications to recipes for ingredient quantities, the number of servings, and the size of the equipment available. They test and evaluate new food products and develop and modify standardized recipes, including detailed equipment lists.

In some work situations, cooks at this level may coordinate the work of lower graded cooks engaged in a variety of standard cooking operations simultaneously at one or more work centers. They direct and monitor the preparation of menu items by lower grade cooks, and review menus and standardized recipes with them to assure that food items are made correctly.

Skill and Knowledge: At this grade, cooks have a thorough knowledge of the full range of food preparation principles including the techniques and procedures necessary to develop new or revise current recipes. They know the procedures related to cooking in large quantities. Grade 8 cooks have skill necessary to overcome practical production problems, evaluate final food products, and initiate corrective action when an item does not meet established quality standards. They develop standardized recipes for quantity cooking. They are able to expand and modify recipes according to the capacity of the equipment in the kitchen as well as in response to adjustments in the number of servings needed.

They have a thorough understanding of the importance of flavoring materials such as vanilla, herbs, and spices and the special rules that apply to the use of seasonings when modifying or extending recipes for large quantities of food. Cooks at this level plan and coordinate a full

range of food preparation activities involving quantity food production where a number of items are cooked simultaneously and require varied cooking methods, timing requirements, many ingredients, and numerous interrelated steps.

They have the skill to manage various cooking processes so that food items are served at their peak taste, texture, and appearance with minimum holding periods and so that safe and critical temperature and time control points are met. Some cooks at this level are required to have a knowledge of special and modified diets such as high protein, low cholesterol, low fat, calorie restricted, and sodium restricted diets. They instruct lower level cooks how to use exchange lists in diabetic meal planning to provide the patient with a greater variety of food choices, or they give guidance on which meats, fish, and other foods are prohibited and which are permitted and with what degree of frequency in a controlled diet, including preferred cooking methods.

Cooks at this level apply skill in the operation, breakdown, and cleaning of food service equipment used in large quantity food production (e.g., trunion kettle, chopper, vegetable peeler, and vertical cutter-mixer). They have broad knowledge of sanitation regulations and proper food protection procedures.

In some work situations, grade 8 cooks may need to be skilled in assisting and guiding lower graded cooks on the more intricate tasks involved in carrying out a comprehensive cleaning schedule, such as the cleaning of air-conditioning or ventilation equipment and mechanical dishwashers. They may also organize and coordinate the work of lower grade cooks at one or more work centers in a production kitchen in order to accomplish a variety of quantity cooking operations.

Responsibility: Grade 8 cooks work under the direction of a supervisor who establishes written daily work assignments and who provides general instructions orally or in writing. They are responsible for analyzing and correcting production problems independently, and coordinating the cooking process for food items assigned directly to them. They may also be responsible for coordinating the cooking of items prepared by other cooks at one or more work centers. Cooks at this level know the type and quantity of food to prepare from the cook's worksheet or oral instructions. They determine when items are done and make changes or adjustments in recipes for the improvement of flavor, texture, and appearance. They calculate and determine portion servings from quantities of food issued such as roasts. They provide instruction to lower grade cooks in food preparation principles and techniques, and on sanitation and safety practices. Their work is subject to spot checks by the supervisor for conformance with quality food standards, timeliness, and adherence to established operating procedures including the proper use of commercial food service equipment.

Physical Effort: The physical effort is the same as described at [grade 4](#).

Working Conditions: The work conditions are the same as those described at [grade 4](#).