

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

Philadelphia Field Services Group  
600 Arch Street, Room 3400  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1596

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

**Appellant:** [appellant's name]

**Agency classification:** Welding Worker  
WG-3703-8

**Organization:** Fabrication Branch  
Allied Trades Division  
Directorate of Maintenance  
[name] Depot  
Department of the Army  
[location]

**OPM decision:** Welding Worker  
WG-3703-8

**OPM decision number:** C-3703-08-01

/s/ Robert D. Hendler

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Robert D. Hendler  
Classification Appeals Officer

January 12, 2004

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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 the 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]  
[appellant's address]

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## **Introduction**

On August 29, 2003, the Philadelphia Field Services Group, of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [appellant's name]. He occupies a job currently graded as Welding Worker, WG-3703-8. He believes that his job should be graded as Welder, WG-3703-10. The appellant works in the Fabrication Branch, Allied Trades Division, Directorate of Maintenance, [name] Depot, Department of the Army, [location]. We received the complete appeal administrative report on October 14, 2003. We accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

## **Background information**

The appellant's agency accepted his job grading appeal on May 30, 2003, and issued its decision on August 4<sup>th</sup>. The appellant filed his appeal with OPM through his servicing Civilian Personnel Operations Center on August 19, but it was sent directly to OPM by his activity Civilian Personnel Advisory Center on August 21.

## **General issues**

In his appeal memorandum, the appellant states that he believes that the agency adjudicator overlooked or misunderstood information that he had provided. He says that he is performing the same type of work using the same welding standards and work processes that grade 10 co-workers perform in his work area. The appellant and his supervisor have certified to the accuracy of the job description of record (JD) #[number], and the appellant points to information in the JD in support of his appeal, e.g., accountability to check final distortion of critical sections to maintain a close tolerance of approximately + or -0.015 inches.

Our job grading decisions must be based solely upon a comparison between the actual duties and responsibilities of the job and the appropriate job grading standards (JGS's) (5 U.S.C. 5346). Since comparison to JGS's is the exclusive method for grading jobs, we may not compare the appellant's job to other jobs that may or may not be graded properly as a basis for deciding his appeal. A JD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position or job by an official with the authority to assign work. A job is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by an employee. Job grading appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a job 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 grades a real operating job, and not simply the JD. Therefore, this decision is based on the work currently assigned to and performed by the appellant and sets aside any previous agency decision.

## **Job information**

The appellant's JD of record states that he performs electric, oxyacetylene, plasma-arc, and inert gas shielded welding; i.e., MIG/TIG, in the repair, rebuild, or modification of bodies, chassis, and parts of vehicle assemblies, by welding, cutting, bending and shaping a variety of metals such as ballistic steel and aluminum, cast iron, cast steel, magnesium mild steel, and stainless steel. The record shows that most work is performed on motor vehicles, e.g., repairing parts of

Humvees, self-propelled howitzers, and vehicles used to move missiles. Welding includes repairs to vehicles and modifications to those vehicles, e.g., adding metal boxes to the sides of vehicles to carry equipment.

In addition to the on-site audit with the appellant, we interviewed his first-level supervisor, [name], on December 11, 2003. In deciding this appeal, we carefully considered the audit and interview findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his agency at our request. We find that the JD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

### **Occupational code, title, and standard determination**

The agency has determined that the job is mixed in that the duties involve a combination of welding work covered by the 3703 Welder occupation and vehicle body repair work covered by the 3809 Mobile Equipment Metal Mechanic occupation. Because the welding work represents the major portion of the total job and is the primary consideration for recruitment and placement, the agency placed the job in the 3703 Welder occupation. Applying the titling criteria in the Welder JGS, the agency assigned the title of Welding Worker which covers jobs below the grade 10 level. The appellant agrees that his job is covered by the 3703 series, but believes that it should be titled Welder based on his performing grade 10 work. Based on our review of the record, we agree that the job is covered by the 3703 series, and is properly titled Welding Worker based on the grade determination that follows.

### **Grade determination**

The 3703 Welder JGS uses four factors to determine grade level: *Skill and Knowledge*, *Responsibility*, *Physical Effort*, and *Working Conditions*.

#### *Skill and Knowledge*

Grade 8 welding workers apply skill and knowledge to set up and operate various electric resistance welding machines, or to use one or more manual welding processes, e.g., a gas welding process such as oxyacetylene or oxyhydrogen, and an arc welding process such as gas carbon-arc or gas metal arc, to weld parts made of commonly used metals. Welding workers at the grade 8 level assure proper spacing, pressures, and heat cycles when operating electric resistance welding machines. They control the torch or arc, and the positioning and feeding of the welding rod or electrode when welding manually, to prevent burning of base metals and to obtain the desired penetration and weld bead dimensions.

As needed, grade 8 welding workers apply skill in using jigs and fixtures and in clamping pieces together to assemble and set-up the parts to be welded. When welding contoured shapes, they adjust the arms of the electric resistance welding machine to obtain set-ups that will provide access to all surfaces to be joined. Incidental to the welding work, grade 8 welding workers also may apply knowledge of one or two related trade processes, such as flame-cutting, when close tolerances do not have to be met.

In comparison with the grade 8 level, grade 10 welders apply knowledge of a wider range of manual welding processes and make more difficult welds. For example, the gas welding torch processes used by grade 10 welders involve processes such as oxyacetylene, oxyhydrogen, and other industrial gases. The arc processes used (including inert gas-shielded ones) involve methods such as gas metal-arc, gas tungsten-arc, gas carbon-arc, plasma-arc, and atomic hydrogen welding. Grade 10 welders apply a knowledge of welding standards and how various metals and alloys such as different kinds of steel, aluminum, cast iron, nickel, monel metal, brass, copper, bronze, magnesium, beryllium, and titanium react to different welding processes and techniques. They weld metal parts and structures that may vary in size, shape, and thickness from very thin (such as .025 inches or less) to very thick (such as armor plating), requiring multiple welding passes, and weld dissimilar metals such as copper to steel. In comparison with the grade 8 level, grade 10 welders also use greater skill to make welds that require complete penetration as well as complete fusion of base and filler metals even when welding in hard to reach places. As needed, grade 10 welders devise special jigs and fixtures to hold the parts to be welded. They use techniques such as preheating, heat sinks, and stress relieving to maintain specified dimensions and to prevent distortion or burning of the parts being welded. Incidental to the welding work, they also apply a knowledge of several related trade procedures, such as brazing, soldering, flame and arc-cutting, surface hardening, annealing, and metal spraying.

The appellant believes that his work meets the grade 10 level in that he often has to devise and make his own special fixtures for clamping pieces to be welded. He states that he applies a variety of manual welding processes to make more difficult welds including welds in hard to reach places that must meet close tolerances to .015 inches, strength, and other requirements such as evenness of fit and smoothness of contour.

The appellant's regular and recurring work fully meets the grade 8 level in that he uses electric, oxyacetylene, plasma-arc, and inert gas-shielded welding; i.e., MIG/TIG, to weld parts made of commonly used metals. Typical of grade 8 work, the appellant deals with commonly used metals including several types of steel, aluminum, and cast iron. As at that grade, he uses jigs and fixtures, clamps pieces together to assemble and set-up the parts to be welded. While the appellant routinely welds to tolerances more typical of grade 10 and does devise his own jigs and special fixtures, his regular and recurring work fails to meet the full scope of the grade 10 level factor definition. Unlike the grade 10 level, he does not regularly work with all types of commonly used metals and alloys as defined in the JGS including different kinds of steel, cast iron, nickel, monel metal, brass, copper, bronze, magnesium, beryllium, and titanium. His work does not routinely require welding dissimilar metals, such as copper to steel. The record also does not show that the appellant's fabrication of jigs and special fixtures require the regular and recurring application of grade 10 knowledge and skill. Higher graded co-workers are routinely assigned responsibility for the most complex new work projects that routinely require developing fixtures and jigs prior to their introduction into the shop production process. Because the appellant's work does not fully meet the grade 10 level and does not so substantially exceed the grade 8 to warrant consideration of an intervening grade, this factor is credited at the grade 8 level.

### *Responsibility*

Grade 8 welding workers perform welding operations on the basis of written or oral instructions from the supervisor, and from blueprints, sketches, and work orders that clearly show what is to be done. At this grade level, welding workers select the techniques, machines, materials, and, when needed, the jigs and fixtures commonly used to do the assigned work. Welding workers are responsible for making welds to meet specifications, and to assure proper penetration and freedom from pockets, scales, or other defects. Work is only spot-checked during its progress. The supervisor advises on unusual problems and checks the overall work for adequacy.

In comparison, grade 10 welders determine the work to be done and the steps needed to accomplish it. They plan and lay out the work from blueprints, sketches, drawings, specifications, and work orders. They determine the welding techniques to use and select the proper materials such as the right size and type of welding electrodes or rods. In comparison with the grade 8 level, grade 10 welders apply a variety of manual welding processes to make more difficult welds, including welds in hard to reach places that must meet close tolerances strength, and other requirements such as evenness of fit and smoothness of contour. The work is done with little or no in-progress check. Final products are reviewed to see that completed welds are free from cracks, slag, or other defects, and meet specifications and accepted trade standards. Welds are subject to radiographic, magnetic particle, dye penetrant, pressure inspection, and other tests. The supervisor is called on for advice on unusual problems.

The appellant points to his responsibility for reading blueprints and drawings to lay out his work, his responsibility for inspecting and certifying his own work that must meet specific tolerances, and that his work is not inspected in progress as supporting a higher grade for this factor. Both grade 8 and grade 10 work involves responsibility for reading and interpreting blueprints, sketches, and work orders. Work at both these grade levels includes responsibility for meeting specifications. The limited oversight that the appellant receives and self-certification of work that does not require final inspection in the quality control room reflect that that appellant works under more limited supervision that typical of the grade 8 level. However, because the appellant does not perform the full range of grade 10 welding work as discussed previously, he does not deal with the variety of issues and does not exercise the greater judgment and independent action on work found at the grade 10 level. Because his additional responsibility does not so substantially exceed the grade 8 to warrant consideration of an intervening grade, this factor is credited at the grade 8.

*Physical Effort and Working Conditions* are the same at all grade levels. Because they do not have grade level impact, and the appellant's work meets the levels described in the JGS, we will credit both factors as being met and will not address them further.

## **Decision**

The appealed job is properly graded as Welding Worker, WG-3703-8.