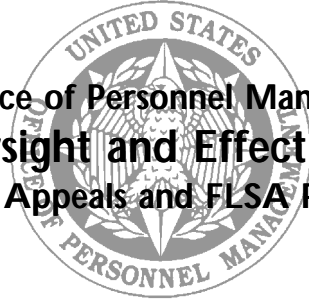


U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness  
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Dallas Oversight Division  
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22  
Dallas, TX 75242

**Job Grading Appeal Decision**  
**Under Section 5346 of Title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [appellant]

**Agency classification:** Engineering Equipment Operator  
(Road Construction Work)  
WG-5716-08

**Organization:** [appellant's activity]  
Department of the Air Force  
[geographic location]

**OPM decision:** Engineering Equipment Operator  
WG-5716-08

**OPM decision number:** C-5716-08-01

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon  
Bonnie J. Brandon  
Classification Appeals Officer

1/18/00  
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 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).

Since this decision changes the classification of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the first pay period that begins after the 60<sup>th</sup> day from the date the appellant filed an appeal with the agency (5 CFR 532.705(d)). The servicing personnel office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected job description and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the date of this decision

### **Decision sent to:**

[appellant's name and address]

[servicing personnel office]  
Department of the Air Force

Director, Civilian Personnel Operations  
U.S. Department of the Air Force  
AFPC/DPC  
550 C Street West  
Randolph Air Force Base, TX 78150-4759

Director of Civilian Personnel  
HQ USAF/DPCC  
1040 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1040

Chief, Classification Branch  
Field Advisory Services Division  
Defense Civilian Personnel Management  
Service  
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200  
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

## **Introduction**

The Dallas Oversight Division of the U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a job grading appeal from [the appellant] on September 27, 1999. [The appellant] works in the [appellant's activity], Department of the Air Force, [geographic location]. [The appellant] believes his job as Engineering Equipment Operator (Road Construction Work), WG-5716-08, should be classified at a higher grade level. We have accepted [the appellant's] appeal as timely and decided it under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code.

The appellant's job was previously evaluated by both the Air Force Civilian Personnel Flight and the Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service. In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and his agency, including the official job description [number]. Both the appellant and his supervisor agree that the official job description is accurate. We also considered information obtained during telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor.

## **Job information**

The primary purpose of the appellant's job is to operate construction equipment to move, dig, backfill, grade, or level earth and other materials. The appellant also performs asphalt repair and cement finishing work. Typical tasks include trenching for utilities, replacing utility poles and fire hydrants, repairing sidewalks, making cold patch asphalt repairs, maintaining perimeter fences, and sweeping streets. The job description and other material of record furnish more information about the appellant's duties and responsibilities.

## **Occupation determination**

The appellant's job involves performing work in several wage grade occupations. Guidance in Section III of the *Introduction to the Federal Wage System Job Grading System* states that jobs requiring the performance of work in two or more occupations are coded to the occupation that is most important for recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, or reduction-in-force purposes.

The WG-5716 Engineering Equipment Operator occupation covers jobs that involve the operation of engineering and construction equipment, such as graders, tractors with bulldozer or angledozer blades, front-end loaders, backhoes, trench diggers, and large industrial tractors with pan or scraper attachments. The duties performed by the appellant that are most important in terms of recruitment and selection and that require the highest level of skill and qualifications (as explained in the following section on grade determination) are those involving the operation of such equipment. Therefore, the appellant's job is best coded in the WG-5716 occupation.

## **Title determination**

The WG-5716 Job Grading Standard (JGS) for Engineering Equipment Operator prescribes the title *Engineering Equipment Operator* and does not authorize the use of parenthetical titles. The agency has added the parenthetical title of *Road Construction Work*. When authorized, a parenthetical designation should be used only when it would add materially to the understanding

and identification of the job, where it would be helpful or necessary to identify further the duties and responsibilities involved, and such duties and responsibilities reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work. Since most of the appellant's work does not directly involve road construction, the parenthetical title is not warranted. Therefore, the appellant's job is properly titled *Engineering Equipment Operator*.

### **Grade determination**

The grade of a mixed job, such as the appellant's, is based on duties that (1) involve the highest skill and qualifications of the job and (2) are a regular and recurring part of the job, even if the duties involved are not performed for a majority of the time. While each kind of work in a job is evaluated, *the proper grade of such a position is not determined by a combination of these separate components of the job, but by evaluation of the regularly assigned work which is paramount in the position.* In most instances the highest level work assigned to and performed by the employee for the majority of time is grade-determining. We compared the duties performed by the appellant that do not involve equipment operation against applicable job grading standards and found that none of these duties exceed the grade 8 level. Since these duties do not represent the highest skill and qualifications requirements of the appealed job, we do not discuss them further in this decision.

The WG-5716 JGS for Engineering Equipment Operator is used to determine the grade of the appellant's equipment operation duties. The standard provides a general description of the work at the 8, 10, and 11 grade levels and uses four factors for determining grade level. These factors are skill and knowledge, responsibilities, physical effort, and working conditions.

#### *General*

Work at the grade 8 level requires the operation of one or more types of construction equipment to push, pull, pile, or load materials such as sand, gravel, earth, coal, or refuse. Operators adjust the attachments for proper level, angle, or depth, according to the work to be done and the type of equipment used. Work is generally done on flat or rolling terrain, refuse dumps, and construction sites with simple terrain problems.

At the grade 10 level, work requires the operation of one or more types of construction equipment to excavate, backfill, grade, or level earth to rough specifications on such projects as breaking new ground for trails, roads, canals, tunnels, or construction sites; move earth on mountains and steep slopes, graded curves and shoulders, rocky or soft ground, hilly forests, and other surfaces with similar rough features; and grade surfaces, compact soils, or roll to exact specifications on flat or rolling terrain. Attachments are adjusted for proper positioning and working order, usually without stopping the power unit or the equipment. The operator must steer and operate by using clutches, levers, brakes, and valves according to the slope or tilt. The equipment is operated close to buildings, trees, drop-offs, rocks, or other obstructions. This level of work is considered to be more complicated than that described at the grade 8 level because of the increased operating complexity of the equipment *and* the requirement to operate on all types of terrain. While

surfacing to fine specifications requires more "touch," it is done on terrain similar to that described at grade 8.

### *Skill and knowledge*

Operators at the grade 8 level are required to know the uses of the different sets of controls for operation of the equipment and attachments and be skilled in handling these controls to perform the work. Frequently, these different controls are handled at the same time, requiring good hand, foot, and eye coordination and the operator must be able to move the equipment about in confined areas. Operators are also required to have a basic knowledge of the nature of the soil and features of the terrain to determine the proper approach according to the condition of the surface and subsurface.

At the grade 10 level, the operators must have more skill than at grade 8, in order to grade surfaces to rough or fine specifications by adjusting attachments while the vehicle is in motion and on all types of terrain. In addition to the hand, foot, and eye coordination required at grade 8, good depth perception and a high degree of concentration are required to perform the operations necessary to grade the surface. Operators are required to have more knowledge of a variety of soil composition and conformation than that outlined at the grade 8 level, as well as more knowledge of the purpose and limitations of a greater variety of attachments.

The appellant primarily operates a backhoe, front-end loader, trencher, and skid loader to dig, push, pull, pile, or load materials and grade surfaces to rough or fine specifications. He is knowledgeable and skilled in the use of the controls and the various attachments for the equipment which may be operated in a confined area, close to buildings, utility lines, or other workers. The appellant operates on primarily level or rolling terrain and occasionally on sloping terrain, such as drainage ditches. He is not, however, required to have more than a basic knowledge of soil composition and conformation, as envisioned at the grade 10 level. In addition, the complexity of his work does not meet the intent of the grade 10 level, as described under *General*, where increased operating complexity of equipment and the requirement to operate on all types of terrain are both necessary in order to receive full credit for that level. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at the grade 8 level.

### *Responsibilities*

At the grade 8 level, operators follow oral instructions or written work orders concerning the location of the job and the work to be done. The work is performed largely without direct supervision. They operate the equipment in a safe manner according to safety rules and regulations and use the equipment properly so that it is not damaged.

Grade 10 operators follow oral instructions or written work orders as described at grade 8. However, grade 10 operators perform the more difficult tasks of rough grading the earth to the general contour desired as well as fine surfacing on flat or rolling terrain. Work is performed without direct supervision. The responsibility for the safe operation of the equipment and for

seeing that the equipment is not damaged is greater because of the requirement to work on rough terrain.

The appellant works largely without direct supervision following oral and written work orders. He performs rough grading as well as fine surfacing on flat or rolling terrain; however, he does not work on rough terrain where circumstances make safe operation of the equipment more difficult, as described at the grade 10 level. Further, the scope of the appellant's responsibilities does not meet the intent of the grade 10 level, as described under *General*, where the work involves moving earth on mountains and steep slopes, graded curves and shoulders, rocky or soft ground, hilly forests, and other surfaces with similar rough features and such projects as breaking new ground for trails, roads, canals, tunnels, or construction sites. The appellant's level of responsibility does not fully meet the description for the grade 10 level. Therefore, the appellant's work responsibilities are evaluated at the grade 8 level.

### *Physical effort*

Heavy physical effort is used by grade 8 operators in constantly reaching; bending; turning; and moving hands, arms, feet, and legs to handle different sets of controls to operate the equipment and attachments. Considerable strain is caused by the constant vibration of the equipment. Because of the location of some of the controls and attachments, the operators are frequently required to work in awkward or strained positions.

The physical effort of grade 10 operators is similar to that described at the grade 8 level, but is somewhat more strenuous because of the generally larger pieces of equipment and the requirement for more frequent adjustments under more adverse operating conditions.

The appellant's job requires the physical effort described for the grade 8 level. The equipment operated by the appellant does not consist of larger pieces of equipment nor does it require the more frequent adjustments necessary when operating under more adverse conditions. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at the grade 8 level.

### *Working conditions*

Grade 8 level work is performed in all types of weather, often in an open driver's seat or platform, on hills, slopes, grades, rolling surfaces, and forests. The operators are exposed to injury due to the possibility of the equipment overturning. They are subject to noise, vibration, dust, dirt, and fumes from the motor and exhaust.

At the grade 10 level, the operation of larger and more complicated equipment in more difficult circumstances increases the exposure to injury, overturning, noise, and vibration than that described at the grade 8 level.

The appellant performs his equipment operations duties outside in all types of weather on primarily flat terrain. The appellant does not operate the larger and more complicated engineering equipment that would increase exposure to injury, overturning, noise, and vibration as described

in the job grading standard for the grade 10 level. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at the grade 8 level.

### **Decision**

All four factors are assessed at the WG-8 grade level based on application of the WG-5716 job grading standard. The appellant's job is classified properly as Engineering Equipment Operator, WG-5716-08.