



# United States Office of Personnel Management

**Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness**  
*Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions*  
December 2001  
Article No. 27-08

**Standards:** [Medical Equipment Repairer, 4805 \(June 1974\)](#)  
[Electronics Technician, GS-856 \(December 1965\)](#)

**Factor:** N/A

**Issue:** Distinguishing between Federal Wage System (FWS) and  
General Schedule (GS) Positions

## **Identification of the Classification Issue**

The appellant's position was classified as Medical Equipment Repairer, 4805. He believed it should be classified as Electronics Technician, GS-856.

## **Resolution**

The appellant was responsible for maintaining, repairing, and troubleshooting medical equipment, and modifying such equipment as requested by the manufacturer. The 4805 job grading standard specifically covers installing, modifying, troubleshooting, maintaining, testing, calibrating, and repairing medical, laboratory, and dental equipment (electronic, electrical, and mechanical). It excludes technicians who perform such work incidental to the development and evaluation of medical equipment. Development and evaluation are engineering functions. Even though installation, maintenance, repair, and testing are mentioned in the GS-856 standard, it is the design, development, and evaluation work that is considered paramount and that controls the pay category. For example, regular and significant technical evaluations, development of specialized circuits or components, and complex modifications to standard electronic designs are hallmarks of electronics technician work. While electronics technicians may combine their knowledge of electronic theory and the ability to use their hands and tools to carry out their assignments, the knowledge of electronic theory is the paramount requirement of the work and the manual dexterity and skill are secondary.

The appellant's regular and recurring work assignments and the limited degree to which he performed modification work did not require the knowledge and abilities of an electronics technician. Rather, his duties involved the repair and maintenance of medical equipment used in patient diagnosis and treatment. OPM concluded that the paramount requirement of the appellant's job was the performance of work that required the application of knowledge and experience typical of the Federal Wage System, and sustained the agency's classification to the 4805 occupation.

### **“Back to the Basics”**

The *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards (Introduction)* says that a position is exempt from the General Schedule if its primary duty involves the performance of physical work which requires knowledge or experience of a trade, craft, or manual labor nature. The *Introduction* further states that a position is subject to the General Schedule, even if it requires physical work, if its primary duty requires knowledge or experience of an administrative, clerical, scientific, artistic, or technical nature not related to trade, craft, or manual-labor work.

The nature of Federal Wage System work has changed somewhat as repair tools and equipment have become computerized, to the point that some FWS employees may do very limited “manual” labor in the traditional sense of that term. However, the basic purpose of troubleshooting, testing, calibrating, and repairing remains the same. The primary determinant of pay category is the knowledge and experience required to perform the work, not the types of tools used.

**Link to [C-4805-11-02](#)**