



United States  
Office of Personnel Management

**Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness**  
*Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions*  
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**Standard:** ~~Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide, Part I~~  
**Factor:** ~~Factor IV, Element 3: Physical Dispersion~~  
**Issue:** Assigning credit to a second-line supervisory position

**Although the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide was superseded by the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#), the discussion in this article is still valid under the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.**

### **Identification of the Classification Issue**

This issue arose in an Office of Personnel Management region's consideration of a position classification appeal. The Chief of the Police Division at a military installation served as a second-line supervisor over three seven-member squads plus a smaller fill-in-squad within a Police Branch. Each squad was headed by a Supervisory Police Officer who was under the direct supervision of the Division Chief. These squad supervisors were assigned to the same duty post as the Division Chief; the police officers were assigned to various patrol areas throughout the installation. The Division Chief's duty hours coincided with the major portion of the first shift five days a week, a small portion of the second shift, and none of the third. In accordance with guidance in Factor IV, Element 3, the subordinate squad supervisory positions were each credited with two points for "physical dispersion." The issue was whether the Division Chief position, as a second-line supervisor, should also receive such credit.

### **Resolution**

Credit can be given for physical dispersion when a substantial portion of the work force for which the supervisor is responsible is regularly assigned to one or more locations which are physically

removed from the location of the main unit under conditions which make day-to-day supervision difficult to administer.

The area protected by the police officers included about 7400 acres, 300 buildings, 40 miles of streets and roads, and 26 miles of perimeter. Five patrol areas were established at the installation, to each of which a police officer was assigned for each shift. The Chief of the Police Division had overall responsibility for the physical security of these areas. However, as a second-line supervisor, the physical dispersion of the police officers did not impact on his day-to-day supervisory responsibilities since the squad supervisors were responsible for assigning personnel to each area, making periodic rounds, and assuring that the police officers carry out their assigned duties. Further, as Factor IV, Element 3, specifies that, for purposes of this element, employees whose daily duties require the making of certain rounds shall not be considered "physically separated" from the supervisor, the squad supervisors could not be counted for physical dispersion.

When evaluating second-line supervisory positions, care must be exercised to determine whether the physical dispersion of indirectly supervised subordinates has any impact on the position being reviewed. Credit should not be given automatically to a second-line supervisor's position, but only when that position is responsible for assigning employees to work at remote locations and ensuring the work is accomplished effectively and efficiently, so as to make the day-to-day supervisory responsibilities difficult to administer.