



## United States Office of Personnel Management

**Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness**  
*Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions*  
November 2000  
Article No. 25-04

**Standards:** [Production Control, GS-1152 \(April 1992\)](#)  
[Industrial Specialist, GS-1150 \(February 1972\)](#)  
[Ship Surveying, GS-873 \(April 1988\)](#)  
[Equipment Specialist, GS-1670 \(November 1994\)](#)  
[Quality Assurance Specialist, GS-1910 \(March 1983\)](#)

**Factor:** N/A

**Issue:** Series coverage

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

Two groups of appellants occupied positions classified as Shipbuilding Specialist (Industrial Repair Facility), GS-1101-11. The agency classified the position to the GS-1101 series because it involved a combination of Industrial Specialist, GS-1150, and Production Control, GS-1152, work. The appellants previously occupied Ship Surveyor, WD-8, jobs in the Federal Wage System production facilitating pay plan. They were placed in their current positions when their assignments changed from performing work in a single trade to working in multiple trades.

Based on reviewing position descriptions (PD's) from other Federal agencies, the appellants claimed that they were performing Ship Surveying, GS-873, work because they were responsible for planning functions in all disciplines (trades) and administering contracts at ship repair facilities. The appellants also said they performed Equipment Specialist Series, GS-1670, work when they developed lists of parts and equipment in performing their planning work. The PD further implied that the appellants performed Quality Assurance Specialist, GS-1910, functions.

## Resolution

The GS-1150 series includes positions that primarily require a practical knowledge of the nature and operations of an industry or industries, and the materials, facilities, and methods employed. Work in the GS-1152 series requires similar skills and knowledge. GS-1152 functions include planning, estimating, scheduling, and expediting the use of labor, machines, and materials in specific manufacturing or remanufacturing operations. The GS-1152 standard states that some positions are involved in the preparation of contract bids that include the preproduction analysis of specific proposed work packages to determine workload capacity, labor, material, services, and machine requirements, to arrive at the most competitive bid.

The GS-1152 standard recognizes the close relationship between the two series, directing that positions responsible for planning, evaluating, and maintaining technical surveillance over Government production operations, either in contractor or Government-operated facilities, be classified in the GS-1150 series. Positions that have significant production control responsibilities for contractor operations for analyzing, planning, and scheduling specific production operations or workload are to be classified in the GS-1152 series. OPM found that the appellants' work matched this second situation.

OPM responded to the appellants' other claims regarding series coverage.

- The Ship Surveying Series, GS-873, covers work involved in surveying vessels, including installed components, to determine the condition and need for an extent of work required to place the vessels in condition to meet specified requirements. Specifically excluded from the series is work primarily concerned with inspecting construction, assembly, modification, conversion, overhaul, or repair of vessels or inspections involved in the procurement of vessels chiefly to assure compliance with contracts, plans, and specifications.

Use of the term "specification" in the GS-873 series, however, is materially different from that proposed by the appellants. While the appellants had access to and used engineering manuals to estimate time and material costs, these decisions were primarily based on technically established maintenance and overhaul requirements. Work typical of the GS-873 occupation was instead assigned to and performed by the organization's engineering staff and/or the contract port engineer who orchestrated the maintenance and overhaul for an entire assigned vessel.

- Employees in several occupations develop parts and materials lists, including supply technicians and specialists. However, equipment specialists make similar recommendations based on such considerations as equipment operational characteristics, material composition, and the accessibility of the equipment components for repair. The record showed that other Detachment components and/or command-level engineering organizations made the technical decisions on material composition and similar issues covered by the GS-1670 occupation.
- OPM found that inspection was the purpose and function of the appellants' contractor quality surveillance work. In contrast, inspection is only one of a variety of techniques used by Quality Assurance Specialists, GS-1910, to develop objective evidence of the effectiveness of quality

procedures and controls, identify potential problem areas or inherent weaknesses in the product itself, and determine the need to adjust surveillance or control over operations. These analytical quality assurance program functions were assigned to the Detachment's quality assurance staff.

OPM found that the appellants' primary and paramount work was fully covered by the GS-1152 series. It concluded that the appellants' other assignments were ancillary and integral to the position's primary and paramount GS-1152 functions. The variety of functions performed by each appellant; i.e., "multi-trading," was recognized in the established specialized title of "Ships." As a result, OPM classified the position as Production Controller (Ships), GS-1152.

### **“Back to the Basics”**

The series determination decision in this case illustrates that closely related standards must be read in concert with each other to assure proper series allocation. The decision also illustrates that occupations do not always use terminology interchangeably. The definition of “specifications” in the GS-800 Group is materially different from that of the GS-1100 Group.

Duties and responsibilities assigned to positions are controlled by the mission assigned to the organization in which those positions are found. The positions created to perform an assigned mission must be considered in relation to one another; i.e., each position reflects only a part of the organization's work as a whole. The port engineer position undermined the appellants' claim that their work was covered by the GS-873 series. In addition, the appellants' proposal to classify their positions based on position-to-position comparison was precluded by law. The existence of the engineering and quality assurance staffs also prevented crediting the appellants' positions with the function assigned to those organizations.

**Link to [C-1152-11-01](#), [C-1152-11-02](#)**