

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



Atlanta Oversight Division
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

Appellant: [Appellant]

Agency classification: Aircraft Electrician
WG-2892-11

Organization: U.S. Air Force

OPM decision: Aircraft Electrician
WG-2892-11

OPM decision number: C-2892-11-02

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

/s/ 7-26-99

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).

Decision sent to:

[Appellant]

[Civilian Personnel Officer]

*[Position Classification Specialist
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Introduction

On April 7, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted a job grading appeal for the position of Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11, [organizational location] [base location]. The appellant believes his job should be classified as

Aircraft Electrician Supervisor, WS-2892-8.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 532, subpart G, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

General issues

On May 25, 1998, this position was upgraded from Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11, to Aircraft Electrician Supervisor, WS-2892-8, as a result of a Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS) appeal decision. Based on an OPM advisory, CPMS reversed that decision by letter dated February 24, 1999, and determined that the appellant's job was properly graded as Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11.

The appellant believes he is held accountable as the supervisor of his shop 100 percent of the time and should be evaluated on that basis. He also disagrees with the use by CPMS of the Pest Controller Job Grading Standard (JGS) as a reference for small shop chief criteria.

Classification guidance provides that under certain circumstances, standards covering work similar to the work being evaluated may be used for cross reference. In the case of the Pest Controller JGS, the standard includes a discussion concerning work which requires program operation responsibilities and the appropriate assignment of an additional grade level to such work. That standard was appropriately referenced by CPMS in their evaluation of your shop operation and program duties.

By law, we must grade jobs solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards, guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5346), and instructions. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. The job grading appeal process is an independent, third party review that includes a determination as to the duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the appellant, and constitutes the proper application of the JGS to those duties and responsibilities. We have evaluated the work assigned by management and performed by the appellant according to these job grading requirements. In reaching our decision, we carefully reviewed the information provided by the appellant and his agency, including the position description of record. In addition, telephone interviews were conducted with the appellant and his supervisor.

Job information

The appellant is assigned to position description number [#]. The appellant, his supervisor and the agency certified the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant functions as an Aircraft Electrician in an Air Reserve Technician position responsible for the supervision of the [Section]. He provides administrative and technical supervision to 2 Aircraft Electricians, WG-2892-10, and 12 reservists who are assigned to his section for training one weekend a month and sometimes occasional days during the month. The

function of the appellant's section is to test, troubleshoot, repair, adjust, overhaul, inspect, align, service, and calibrate the full range of aircraft electrical systems and electrically operated components for the aircraft assigned to the base, as well as any transient aircraft.

Based on work data for a 4-month period, the appellant spends approximately 40 percent of his time as part of a team performing the journey level electrical work of the section. He states that the subordinate electricians are fully capable of completing their work independently. He does not normally need to provide any technical supervision, and they all work together as equal members of the team. Work is dispatched daily from the flight line Maintenance Control Unit when planes scheduled for landing at the base have maintenance problems or when unscheduled flights must be diverted into the base and require emergency repairs. Priorities are set by Maintenance Control based on clearly established criteria and guidelines. The appellant schedules the routine maintenance for the planes assigned to the base; schedules and monitors equipment maintenance for the shop equipment; plans, schedules and monitors test and calibration services; ensures shop readiness for safety and bio-environmental inspections; conducts internal inspections; monitors the daily work assignments and changes assignments as necessary based on work coming from dispatch; and performs periodic technical quality control and safety checks on employees as they work.

The appellant assigns work to his subordinates and monitors the use of employees, equipment, facilities, and materials. He writes and updates the procedures for his shop based on guidance and directives coming from Air Force, the base commander, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, etc. He coordinates with other branches as necessary. He provides information on long-range material, i.e., parts, needs for budget purposes and tracks expenditures for his shop. He schedules and approves leave, writes performance standards and evaluates performance, recommends awards, determines training needs and schedules training, takes minor disciplinary actions, and recommends personnel for selection.

The remainder of the appellant's time is spent in administrative work related to the scheduling, training, and supervision of Air Force reservists assigned to his shop and scheduled for training one weekend a month and occasionally other days throughout the month. He receives overall program guidance and objectives from the supervisor of the Aircraft Systems Branch.

Occupation, title and standard determination

The agency determined that the appellant's job was properly allocated to the Aircraft Electrician series, WG-2892. The appellant agrees with the series determination but believes the position should be designated supervisory.

Appropriate application of the JGS for Federal Wage System (FWS) Supervisors requires full and careful analysis of all relevant factors. The central requirement in the JGS for FWS Supervisors, i.e., the ongoing requirement that supervisors have substantially full-time and continuing

responsibility for the technical and administrative supervision of subordinate workers, is stringent. An advisory opinion issued by OPM's Classification Policy Division has defined *substantially full-time* as 85 percent or more of the time. Our audit found that the appellant spends roughly 40 percent of his time overseeing shop operations and performing administrative tasks in support of the shop, approximately 40 percent of the time performing the journey level work of the shop, and the remainder of the time scheduling training and performing administrative tasks associated with the reservists assigned to his section. He clearly does not spend 85 percent of the time supervising the WG-10 subordinates in the performance of their work, i.e., he does not spend substantially full-time reviewing work for technical accuracy, taking time and attendance, assessing performance, approving leave, making daily work assignments, taking disciplinary action, etc. To be credited at the WG-10 level, the employees are expected to work independently and once given their assignments, to determine how best to complete them, to coordinate the work with others as necessary, to resolve technical discrepancies, and to recommend solutions to problems. The appellant visits the work sites to personally perform work and to ensure subordinates are following standard safety and technical practices but does not have to monitor the subordinates on a routine basis and expects them to accomplish ongoing assignments without further direction. Daily priorities are essentially established by dispatch based on aircraft needs and emergencies. While the appellant makes the assignments and changes them as dispatch notifies him of a new problem, the subordinates determine what tools and equipment to use and they plan their work.

The appellant's job clearly falls short of coverage by the JGS for FWS Supervisors.

Grade determination

When the supervisory responsibilities, i.e., those responsibilities described in Factor 1 of the JGS for FWS Supervisors, are not exercised on a substantially full-time basis (85 percent of the time), the job is graded under the regular nonsupervisory grading structure and not under the supervisory standard. The appellant spends approximately 40 percent of his time personally performing the journey level aircraft electrician work. In addition, his subordinates function very independently at the WG-10 level and seldom, if ever, require any technical guidance or direction. Work priorities are for the most part established by the Maintenance Control Unit according to established guidance which the appellant cannot change. With only 2 civilian journey level employees, little turnover, and no discipline problems, the appellant spends almost no time on administrative activities such as advising employees on performance issues, handling disciplinary problems, investigating complaints, and recruiting. We find the appellant functions as a Small Shop Chief. Therefore, his job is appropriately evaluated by reference to the WG-2892 JGS with reference to the WG-5026, Pest Controller, JGS for a discussion of proper crediting for planning, organizing, and directing the programs of his shop.

The agency determined that the WG-2892 work for which the appellant has responsibility is appropriately graded at the WG-10 level. The appellant does not contest the accuracy of that determination. We have reviewed the job description and agree with the agency determination.

The WG-5026 JGS recognizes that pest controllers, i.e., employees, with responsibility for planning, organizing, directing, and performing complete pest control programs (or in the appellant's case, the programs of the [Section]); for determining the approaches, methods, and courses of action to take in dealing with program issues; for assuring that methods and results adhere to regulatory requirements; and for advising management on program needs exercise a level of responsibility that is graded one full level above the full performance level. The appellant functions as a Small Shop Chief and exercises similar responsibilities in overseeing the operations of his shop. With the full-performance level of the WG-2892 work for which he is technically responsible credited at WG-10, adding one grade level results in crediting the appellant's Small Shop Chief duties at the WG-11 level.

Decision

The appellant's job is properly graded as Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11.