

Position Classification Flysheet for General Inspection, Investigation and Compliance Series, GS-1801

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SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions the primary duties of which are to administer, coordinate, supervise or perform inspection, investigative, analytical, or advisory work to assure understanding of and compliance with Federal laws, regulations, or other mandatory guidelines when such work is not more appropriately classifiable in another series either in the [Investigation Group, GS-1800](#) or to another occupational group.

SERIES COVERAGE

This is a general series for the Investigation Group, GS-1800. Included in this group are occupations established primarily to effect compliance of individuals or organizations with laws, rules, regulations, executive orders, or other mandatory guidelines. Compliance is assessed by such means as inspections, investigations, and analysis of reports. Compliance may be obtained by methods such as persuasion, negotiation, and technical assistance. Compliance may also require actions such as citation of violations, drafting of complaints, and referral of cases for administrative or legal proceedings. This general series covers positions having these kinds of functions when there is no more appropriate series; that is, when they are not elsewhere classifiable.

EXCLUSIONS

The General Inspection, Investigation, and Compliance Series, GS-1801, does not include positions that involve primarily:

1. Work classifiable to another, more specific, series in the [Investigation Group, GS-1800](#).
2. Work related to compliance assessment or enforcement that has been recognized in a specific occupational series, e.g., Accounting Series, GS-0510, covered in the [Job Family Position Classification Standard for Professional and Administrative Work in the Accounting and Budget Group, GS-0500](#); [General Attorney Series, GS-0905](#); [Wage and Hour Compliance Series, GS-0249](#); [Consumer Safety Series, GS-0696](#), etc.
3. Work in analyzing operating programs to evaluate their effectiveness in achieving an organization's objectives. Such positions are classified in the appropriate subject matter series.
4. Work in developing, analyzing, evaluating, advising on, or improving the effectiveness of work methods and procedures, organizations, manpower utilization, distribution of work assignments and similar functions of management. Such positions are classified in the [Management and Program Analysis Series, GS-0343](#).

5. Work in monitoring and evaluating the business practices of individuals and organizations for compliance with the terms of Federal contracts. Such positions are classified in the [Contracting Series, GS-1102](#).
6. Inspections work primarily concerned with material or process acceptability. Such positions are classified in the [Quality Assurance Series, GS-1910](#).

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Work related to obtaining compliance with or enforcing Federal laws, regulations, or other mandatory guidelines takes many forms. This discussion describes compliance work in general with specific illustrations of some types of positions included in the General Inspection, Investigation, and Compliance Series, GS-1801. However, there are many other occupations besides those found in this general series or elsewhere in the Investigation Group, GS-1800, that are devoted either wholly or in part to a program of compliance or enforcement. Some occupational series involving such work include: [Wage and Hour Compliance, GS-0249](#); [Plant Protection and Quarantine, GS-0436](#); Financial Institution Examining, GS-0570*; [Consumer Safety, GS-0696](#); [Civil Engineering, GS-0810](#); [Environmental Engineering, GS-0819](#); [Nuclear Engineering, GS-0840](#); [General Attorney, GS-0905](#); [Contracting, GS-1102](#); and [Railroad Safety, GS-2121](#).

The products, practices, and implements of various industrial, commercial, agricultural, or other business establishments as well as those of public institutions, labor organizations, and private individuals are the subjects of compliance inspections, investigations, negotiations, and analyses. While subject matter knowledge differs among positions from one compliance or enforcement program to another, there are common characteristics that run through them all. Compliance positions include both line and staff work involving tasks such as onsite inspections or surveys to assess compliance, investigations to substantiate alleged or suspected instances or patterns of noncompliance, negotiations with persons or organizations whose activities have been found to be at odds with mandatory guidelines, and analysis of reports required of individuals or organizations engaged in regulated activities to assess their compliance with mandatory guidelines. Many such positions also involve work in explaining and promoting the regulatory or compliance program to those whose activities are subject to it and to the general public as well.

Compliance positions require knowledge of program related legislation and regulations, a knowledge of the type of activities where compliance is sought, and knowledge of inspections or investigative techniques including the writing of reports that substantiate findings and serve as a basis for administrative or legal action. The inspections, investigations, negotiations, or analytical work involved requires evaluative judgment based on application of statutory or regulatory provisions and administrative procedures to varied situations that arise in the course of an assignment.

Federal compliance programs vary in their approaches and in the degree of authority given to those charged with assessing or obtaining compliance. Programs range from strict enforcement by arrest and prosecution of violators coupled with seizure of goods, implements, etc., to obtaining voluntary compliance by persuasion and technical assistance of persons or organizations whose compliance is sought. Between these extremes there are unannounced surveys such as those conducted by a program monitoring eligible individuals, colleges, and training schools for compliance with veterans education benefits and associated civil rights laws and regulations. Many programs, such as that charged with assuring consumer product safety, respond to complaints and accident reports with investigations in addition to conducting unannounced inspections of regulated manufacturers. Still other programs, such as those intended to regulate trade, conduct investigations based on requests, complaints, or allegations of violations of the law administered. While incumbents of positions in any Federal program responsible for onsite assessments of compliance generally have authority to enter the premises of and examine any records kept by the subject of an inspection or investigation, some such as Surface Mining Reclamation Specialists have authority to order immediate cessation of an activity found to be in violation of the laws and regulations administered. Others are expected to point out violations to the subjects of their inquiries and, if possible, persuade them to comply, but where they meet resistance or where an immediate remedy is not possible, they submit a report of findings to higher management for further administrative or legal action. Generally, in programs where violations can sometimes pose an imminent danger to the life, health, and safety of the public, employees responsible for assessing compliance have the authority necessary for stopping a dangerous practice, correcting a hazardous condition, or for banning a dangerous product.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN COMPLIANCE AND OTHER KINDS OF WORK

To help distinguish compliance-oriented work from other, superficially similar, kinds of work, the following distinctions are offered: Inspections primarily concerned with legal and regulatory compliance determinations differ from those aimed at material or process acceptability. These latter, quality inspections, focus on whether or not a product or process meets quality standards established by technical specifications or codes. A compliance inspection on the other hand aims at assessing whether or not there is adherence to the environmental, health, safety or other provisions of a mandated program. Compliance inspections look for conditions that relate to matters other than the durability and consistency of a product or process itself. For example, a toy may be free of technical defects. It may appear and operate in the manner intended, but it may be cited in a product safety inspection for noncompliance with product safety laws, rules, or regulations that prohibit the use of lead based paint or that require cautionary statements on the toy.

Inspections or surveys for compliance differ also from program evaluation studies. The program evaluation study, like the quality inspection, focuses on the product or process itself. For example, such a study might seek to learn whether a vocational rehabilitation program succeeds in returning severely disabled persons to the workforce in significant numbers, in suitable jobs,

and for substantial periods of time. A compliance survey of a vocational rehabilitation program on the other hand might look at the program's administration to judge whether it was being run in accordance with legislative or other mandatory guidelines.

Management analysis studies are concerned with assessing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization while compliance inspections or surveys are primarily concerned with assessing an organization's adherence to guidelines intended to foster that efficiency and effectiveness.

Because of the wide variety of compliance programs, no absolute distinction can be made between investigations for compliance and other noncriminal investigations. Some compliance programs may require [General Investigating Series, GS-1810](#) type investigations which cover the character, practices, suitability, or qualifications of persons or organizations seeking, claiming, or receiving Federal benefits, permits, or employment. Other compliance programs may require a kind of investigating work associated with one of the various Federal safety programs involved with determining the root causes of accidents. Where investigating work is required of a compliance program position, sound judgment must be used to determine whether the investigating work is paramount and if so, whether or not it is more appropriately covered by a more specific investigating series.

An obvious difference does exist between compliance oriented investigations and criminal investigations. If, during the course of a compliance program investigation, possible criminal violations are found, they are typically referred to organizations responsible for criminal investigation where knowledge of Federal criminal statutes, rules of criminal procedure, and criminal investigative techniques such as undercover work is of primary importance.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN 1 AND 2-GRADE INTERVAL INSPECTIONS WORK

Inspections work not involving trades, crafts, or manual laboring knowledge as a paramount requirement may be found in either the one- grade or in the two-grade interval pattern. Whether or not a position is properly considered two-grade interval depends on whether or not there is a requirement for analysis and exercise of judgment beyond matching situations found to well established precedents or clear cut guidelines; Inspections where the work is of the two-grade interval variety generally combine several phases including, but not necessarily limited to, observation, interview, and examination of records. Depending on the needs of the compliance program, the techniques may be patterned after those employed in financial audits and use statistical sampling methods to varying degrees. Judgments made by inspectors engaged in work typical of the two-grade interval pattern are ordinarily based on the interpretation and application of pertinent law and regulations to situations found during the course of an inspection. Situations found in inspections of the two-grade interval pattern are not susceptible to instant determinations of compliance or noncompliance. They require subsequent evaluation of inspection data and findings are generally recorded in a written narrative.

Information useful in distinguishing one-grade from two-grade interval inspections work can be found in discussions in the classification standards for the [Job Family Position Classification Standard for Assistance Work in the Human Resources Management Group, GS-0200](#); the [Medical Technologist Series, GS-0644](#); the [Management Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-0344](#); and the introductory statement to the [Engineering and Architecture Group, GS-0800](#).

TITLING

Considering the wide variety of programs and organizations that could have positions classified to this series, titles are not specified. Agencies may use any appropriate title consistent with the general guidelines on titling practices contained in [Introduction to the Position Classification Standards](#).

EVALUATION OF POSITIONS

This material does not include grade level criteria.

Positions classified to this series should be evaluated by reference to position classification standards for related kinds of work. (See [The Classifier's Handbook – Using Grade or Factor Levels not Described in Published Standards](#).)

Supervisory Positions

Positions classified in this series that meet the criteria of the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) for titling as supervisors are to be evaluated using that guide.

Nonsupervisory Positions

Listed below are some suggested guides and standards for grade evaluation of compliance positions.

Inspections - This facet of compliance work may be evaluated by reference to a classification guide or standard for a specific occupational series in the Investigation Group, GS-1800 involving analogous knowledge and skills.

Investigations - This facet of compliance work may be evaluated by reference to the [Grade Level Guides for Classifying Investigator Positions, GS-1810/1811](#); the position classification standards for the [Wage and Hour Compliance Series, GS-0249*](#), the [Consumer Safety Series, GS-0696*](#), and the [Safety Management Series, GS-0018](#); and the [Guide for the Evaluation of Program Specialist Positions](#).

Conciliation and Negotiation - This facet of compliance work may be evaluated by reference to the classification standard for the [Wage and Hour Compliance Series, GS-0249](#).

Public Information and Education - [The Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work](#), and the standard for the [Public Affairs Series, GS-1035](#) may be referred to in evaluating this facet of compliance work.

* Single-agency standard