

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

San Francisco Oversight Division
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94105-0001

**Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

Appellant: [The appellant]

Agency classification: General Engineer, GS-801-13

Organization: [The appellant's organization]
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration (NOAA)
U.S. Department of Commerce

OPM decision: GS-801-13; title at agency discretion.

OPM decision number: C-0801-13-02

Carlos A. Torrico
Classification Appeals Officer

January 24, 2001
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

Appellant:

[The appellant's address]

Agency:

[The appellant's servicing personnel office]
U.S. Department of Commerce

Director for Human Resources Management
U.S. Department of Commerce
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Introduction

On March 20, 2000, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellant]. His position is currently classified as General Engineer, GS-801-13. However, he believes the position should be graded at the GS-14 level and classified as a supervisory position. The appellant works in the [appellant's organization], National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

This appeal decision is based on a careful review of all information submitted by the appellant and his agency. In addition, to help decide the appeal, an Oversight Division representative conducted separate phone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor.

The appellant indicated that his official position description (PD) is not accurate. However, his supervisor has certified to the accuracy of the appellant's official PD. The record indicates that the appellant grieved the inaccuracy of the PD utilizing the agency's grievance procedure; however, the matter was not resolved. In such cases it is OPM policy to decide the appeal based on the actual duties that management has assigned and that the appellant performs. Based on our findings discussed later in this evaluation, we have determined that the appellant's PD of record is inaccurate and outdated in describing the duties of the position.

The appellant makes various statements about his agency and the evaluation of his position. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing his current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 2107, and 5112). Therefore, we have considered the appellants' statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

The appellant discusses several duties/projects that he performed two to eight years ago. However, 5 U.S.C. 5112 indicates that we can consider only current duties and responsibilities in classifying positions. OPM guidelines and previous decisions show that in evaluating positions such as the appellant's, current duties are those that have occurred during the past year. Therefore, we could not consider duties performed over a year ago in deciding this appeal.

Position information

Given the concerns and issues addressed by the appellant in his appeal, it is useful to provide some historical background regarding the changing duties of his position over the years. The appellant's PD was established in 1984. At that time, the purpose of the position was to accomplish maintenance and repair tasks for NOAA ships and to function as a project leader by supervising a group of subordinate

engineers (port engineers). Duties involved formulating project goals, preparing project statements of work, reviewing completed statements for accuracy, completeness, and applicability, developing repair and maintenance plans for assigned ships and projects, interfacing with project managers and staff officials to provide necessary maintenance and repair support, maintaining current status of ships' condition, maintaining records on ship stability, monitoring purchase and ship repair contracts, acting as the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), supervising wage marine operating and maintenance personnel, and providing solutions to engineering problems.

In approximately 1995, upper management determined that the organization was not cost effective with competitors and decided to reorganize and downsize. It took several years to implement the resulting organization, which eventually combined the east and west coast engineering groups into a single marine center activity. One of two Division Chiefs was eliminated when the east and west coast port engineering work combined under the purview of the [unit name] Division Chief. Other positions were abolished due to attrition. As a result, the [unit name] Division was reorganized into three branches, namely: (1) Port Engineers (East Coast), (2) Port Engineers (West Coast), and (3) [name of appellant's unit]. About a year ago, all the General Engineers (or port engineers) were upgraded to the GS-13 level due to increased responsibility over their assigned projects. The position of the appellant's supervisor was upgraded to the GS-15 level due to increased program responsibility over the east and west coast programs and personnel. The appellant's position was reorganized to be the head of [name of appellant's unit]. Presently, he is no longer responsible for supervising a group of General Engineers performing port engineering work; however, he continues to supervise two subordinate employees in the performance of specialized naval architecture and electrical engineering support work.

The appellant now performs support program responsibilities as head of the [name of appellant's unit]. Our fact-finding disclosed that he no longer serves as a project leader nor does he supervise the work of other port engineers. He provides port engineers access to contractors for design work, initiates the design tasks, tracks design tasks through to completion of the drawing and provides it to the port engineer for installation on the ship. He furnishes specialized support in areas of regulatory requirements, naval architecture support, American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) coordination, and the use and support of preventive maintenance tools such as Shipboard Automated Maintenance Management System (SAMMS), vibration analysis, and lube oil analysis. In addition, the appellant is responsible for maintaining the configuration baseline of all NOAA ships by maintaining ships' selected records "as built"; providing ABS support to the fleet inspector for monitoring the material condition of the fleet and the fleet's compliance to regulatory policies and directives; and monitoring the material readiness and condition of the vessels. In carrying out his functions, he supervises two employees, an electrical engineering technician located on the east coast in [name of city/state], and a naval architect located onsite in [the appellant's duty location].

Based on the preceding discussion, we find that the appellant's PD does not accurately reflect his current duties and responsibilities. As indicated in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, Section III.E, "A position description is a statement of the major duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships of a given position. The description of each position must be kept up to date and include information about the job which is significant to its classification. For a nonsupervisory

position, the description should include enough information so that proper classification can be made when the description is supplemented by other information about the organization's structure, mission, and procedures. The position description should define clearly the major duties assigned and the nature and extent of responsibility for carrying out those duties."

Since position descriptions must meet the standard of adequacy in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, we have directed the agency, by separate letter, to review and revise the appellant's PD to meet that standard.

Series, title and standard determination

The agency classified the appellant's position in the General Engineering Series, GS-801. The appellant does not disagree with the agency's series determination. However, he believes the title should reflect the supervisory duties and responsibilities that he currently performs.

The GS-801 series includes all classes of positions the duties of which are to advise on, administer, supervise, or perform research or other professional and scientific work of a special or miscellaneous character which is not specifically classifiable in any other engineering series, but which involves the application of knowledge of such engineering fundamentals as the strength and strain analysis of engineering materials and structures, the physical and chemical characteristics of engineering materials such as elastic limits, maximum unit stresses, coefficients of expansion, workability, hardness, tendency to fatigue, resistance to corrosion, engineering adaptability, engineering methods of construction and processing, etc.; or positions involving professional work in several branches of engineering.

The appellant's work requires a broad knowledge of professional engineering and related fields to manage the NOAA fleet support-engineering program. Similar to positions classified in the GS-801 series, his duties involve professional work in several branches of engineering including naval architecture, mechanical, electrical and civil engineering, and he must apply knowledge of load and stress analysis as it relates to the design, construction, extension, restoration, modification, maintenance and repair of a total ship's equipment and systems. The appellant's position is concerned with naval architecture and other related engineering fields, but it does not entail responsibility for design of a vessel as a total entity, thus it is appropriately classified in the GS-801 series rather than a more specific engineering series. The position is properly placed in the General Engineering Series, GS-801.

There are no prescribed titles for positions in the GS-801 series. Titles are to be constructed by the employing agency in keeping with guidance provided on titling practices in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards. Therefore, the appellant's position may be titled at the discretion of the agency.

Using the prefix "Supervisory" in the official title of the appellant's position is dependent on the position meeting the criteria of the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG), dated April 1998, for evaluation as a supervisor. As stated in the GSSG, it is used to grade GS supervisory work and related managerial responsibilities that (1) require accomplishment of work through combined technical and

administrative direction of others, and (2) constitutes a major duty occupying at least 25% of the position's work time, and (3) meets at least the lowest level of Factor 3 in the guide, based on supervising Federal civilian employees, Federal military or uniformed service employees, volunteers, or other non-contractor personnel.

The appellant provides both administrative and technical direction to two subordinate positions. However, for the reasons discussed below, including the very small workforce actually supervised and the employees' level of independence, we have concluded that he spends no more than 15% of his time supervising his subordinates, and therefore his supervisory duties do not constitute a major duty consuming at least 25% of his work time.

The appellant directly supervises two employees, a Naval Architect, GS-871-12, and an Electrical Engineering Technician, GS-802-12. The naval architect position is co-located with the appellant in [name of city], while the duty station of the electrical engineering technician is at the NOAA facility, [name of city/state]. The appellant performs the full scope of supervisory authorities and responsibilities over these employees. However, he and his supervisor disagree on the percentage of work time spent on supervisory functions. The supervisor indicates that the appellant spends no more than 15% on supervisory responsibilities. The appellant believes that he spends 25-50% of his time performing supervisory duties (whether directly or indirectly) over his two subordinate employees, to any assigned maintenance team employees, and to other organizational positions. This includes acting as the Division Chief Engineer in the absence of his supervisor.

The position description for the GS-12 Naval Architect indicates that the incumbent is "...a specialist in the field of naval architecture and is expected to exercise judgment in developing, analyzing and reviewing the design of ships, ships structure, stability and systems. Completed work is reviewed by the supervisor for desired results and for conformance with policy..." The PD indicates that the employee generally works without close supervision. This matches the GS-871 standard (dated June 1961, and reissued in HRCDD-7, July 1999) on page 33 that describes occupants of GS-12 positions "independently determine the technical action necessary in developing objectives and programs" and that "completed work is reviewed for attainment of objectives and for compliance with agency policies and practices." Therefore, given the level of independence of this position, providing technical and administrative supervision is determined to be minimal.

The position description for the GS-12 Electrical Engineering Technician states that he "plans and carries out the work exercising a high degree of initiative, ingenuity and seasoned judgment. The incumbent coordinates the work with others and resolves complex problems. Completed work can be reviewed for adequacy in meeting objectives and for conformance to policy and regulations..." That level of responsibility and independence from supervision favorably compares to the degree of responsibility described for electrical engineers at the GS-12 level in the standard for the Electrical Engineering Series, GS-850 (February 1971). As described in that standard, GS-12 level electrical engineers "are free to analyze problems and develop their own approaches and work plans. They receive little technical advice or guidance." In addition, since the position is physically located at a site dispersed from the appellant, it is likely that the incumbent works independently with east coast port

engineers. According to the appellant's supervisor, a lead/senior GS-13 position in the east coast office also provides the technician with collateral tasks and therefore is pulled away from the appellant's technical supervision on many occasions. The appellant's supervisor also noted that he occasionally assigns work directly to the technician and in doing so, he supervises the technician's project. Communication between the appellant and the technician is conducted through the e-mail system or telephonically. Based on the preceding analysis, we have also determined that the GS-12 Electrical Engineering Technician functions with relative freedom from supervision.

The appellant noted that he supervised a fleet maintenance team of approximately ten marine employees for the deactivation of ships. The supervisor agreed that the appellant provided day-to-day supervision in 1995-1996 for a two-year period. That team no longer exists and the supervisor noted that he does not foresee assigning another team to the appellant. Only current duties and responsibilities that are regular and recurring can be considered in classifying positions. OPM guidelines and previous decisions show that we can only evaluate current duties performed by the appellant that occurred approximately within the past year. Therefore, we cannot consider past supervisory duties and responsibilities performed in deciding this appeal.

The appellant also indicated that he "indirectly" supervises an automation clerk who assists him in maintaining and updating the engineering plan files, and that he oversees the port engineers nation-wide who take care of the ships on a daily basis, e.g., repairing broken pipes, maintaining ship requirements, and coordinating shipyard efforts. He mentions that he provides advice and technical guidance, and authorizes actions at a senior engineering level for long term planning, design coordination, naval architecture, etc. However, those tasks do not constitute supervision, and are considered inherent in the appellant's responsibilities as the head of the [appellant's unit]. In addition, our fact-finding disclosed that the automation clerk and all the port engineers are directly supervised by the appellant's supervisor, the Division Chief, who has full supervisory authority over those employees. Thus only the Chief is credited with supervision of those employees.

The appellant indicated that he often serves as the acting Division Chief during his supervisor's absence. The supervisor has called upon the appellant to attend meetings for him in his absence and to report significant issues; however, the supervisor's intent was not for the appellant to take over the full scope of duties and responsibilities over the Division. The supervisor pointed out that the appellant does not interface as the Division Chief would with the East or West Coast ports engineers. The appellant does interface with the port engineers regarding engineering needs, however, this is in his capacity as the support engineering branch chief. The supervisor mentioned that while he is on travel, he generally carries his computer, checks his own e-mail and is able to remotely direct the division. Performing certain tasks in the absence of the supervisor is incidental, temporary and short term, and has no impact on the appellant's grade. Furthermore, the intent of the appellant's position is not to fully share in the duties, responsibilities, and authorities of the Division Chief. Therefore, the position does not meet the requirements as stated in the GSSG for evaluation as a "deputy" position.

During the interview, the appellant mentioned that a preventive maintenance engineering position at the GS-12/13 level in his organization might be filled in the near future. He indicated that the PD has not

been written or classified because of the complexity in integrating the position within the new organization, and because of budgetary restraints. However, we cannot consider potential supervisory responsibilities for a position that does not currently exist.

We conclude that only two subordinate positions can be considered in determining the applicability of the GSSG. However, considering the level of work performed by the two subordinate employees, their relative freedom from supervision, and the fact that one of them is geographically located on the east coast, it is determined that the appellant provides only minimal supervision over them taking up no more than 15% of his time. This precludes the appellant's position from meeting the threshold required for coverage of the supervisory guide; that is, spending 25% of the time technically and administratively supervising his subordinate employees. Therefore, the GSSG cannot be applied for position titling and grade level determination. Designation of the "Supervisory" prefix in the title of the appellant's position is inappropriate.

There are no grade level criteria for positions classified in the General Engineering Series, GS-801. Since naval architecture is the discipline most closely related to the bulk of the appellant's work and represents the basic foundation of knowledges applied, the position is evaluated by application of the grading criteria in the standard for the Naval Architecture Series, GS-871, (dated June 1961 and reissued in HRCD-7, July 1999). In addition, we have supplemented the criteria in the GS-871 standard by cross reference to the General Grade Evaluation Guide for Non-supervisory Professional Engineering Positions (dated June 1971 and reissued in HRCD-7, July 1999). One of the purposes of the guide is to check or validate classification determinations arrived at through application of appropriate published standards or guides for engineering positions.

Grade determination

Application of the Naval Architecture Standard

As described beginning on page 35 of the GS-871 standard, GS-13 level assignments are concerned with solving particularly unique or controversial problems with respect to naval architectural or marine engineering activities, which directly affect important programs. GS-13 engineers correlate engineering theory and precedent applications to design, modify, or develop a variety of different types of complex or novel systems or ship plans. GS-13 engineers are generally considered as specialists for the organization, and frequently function as an advisor relative to the specialization involved. Broad technical policy and planning formulated at higher levels of engineering management serve as the basic guideline. As experts or technical specialists, engineers at the GS-13 level exercise initiative, originality, and judgment in applying and adapting their broad knowledge of engineering theories, practices, and precedents. Incumbents at the GS-13 level are under very general technical or administrative supervision. Technical problems are solved without reference to supervisors, but advisory opinions are sought as required, and discussions are held concerning the most difficult or controversial features. Review of completed work is for feasibility in relation to requirements and for conformance with overall policy. GS-13 engineers have complete responsibility for independently interpreting, organizing, executing, and coordinating assignments characteristic of this level. They give expert technical advice

concerning the area of specialization for the organization in high level conferences and meetings, and prepare technical authoritative reports and papers. Personal contacts are made with key representatives and experts of other groups for the purpose of exchanging technical information, developing objectives and limitations of assigned work, making compromises or coming to agreement on conflicts, and basic requirements, and otherwise coordinating the phases of ship design.

The nature of work described at the GS-14 level (page 41) in the GS-871 standard indicates that engineers at that level typically serve as consultants concerned with complex technical aspects of extremely important programs involving development of basic theories, techniques, or criteria for the improvement of basic ship design and operation, or the work involves the resolution of special and nonrecurring problems having agencywide significance. They function as recognized authorities in their specialization. Assignments are concerned with solution of extremely controversial or unique problems, frequently of an unprecedented nature, with respect to naval architectural and/or marine engineering activities, which directly affect nationwide programs of an agency. A high degree of technical judgment, initiative, originality, and resourcefulness is required since guidelines are often inadequate, controversial, or contain critical gaps. Supervision received is usually under general administrative control, since they typically function in a consultant capacity and are recognized as technical authorities concerning their areas of specialization. As ranking consultants, GS-14 engineers make final determinations on technical matters and are authorized to reach agreements with other groups. Recommendations, decisions, and conclusions made by them are considered as authoritative and are seldom subject to technical review. The extensive scope of the program and the effect of the high level determinations made by GS-14 engineers necessitate extensive contacts with key officials and specialists of other groups (within the agency, other government agencies, ship owners, shipbuilders, design agents, or other marine industry groups). For example, in presenting technical judgments and decisions which are generally given top consideration, occupants of these positions (1) supply information which has great weight in influencing action, (2) advise on policies and procedures, (3) discuss and influence the establishment of long range programs affecting future engineering work, (4) coordinate and conclude technical phases of established programs, and (5) render technical consulting service. They represent their employing activities in committees of national and even international importance, and participate actively in the consideration of major issues.

The difference between the GS-13 and GS-14 levels is (1) the intrinsic technical complexity of the program, (2) the maximum degree of freedom from supervisory control, and (3) the completeness of responsibility for the technical program vested in them.

The appellant's position favorably compares to the GS-13 level. As a specialist in ship maintenance and repair within the Division, he regularly functions as an advisor in his area of expertise to other elements of the [appellant's installation] and port engineers, and operates under general technical supervision. His duties entail furnishing technical advice to the port engineers regarding design coordination, naval architecture support, and planning. Similar to the GS-13 level, he reviews and evaluates new and unique designs and systems in the conversion of vessels for oceanographic research, determines their acceptability or compliance with the intent of the NOAA's missions guidelines, and confers with contractors and port engineers in order to establish acceptable design and construction procedures. The

appellant's duties are comparable to those described in illustrative work situation number four (page 37) under the GS-13 level. Similar to that situation he provides project engineering support for the alteration and maintenance of a given ship type, i.e., NOAA ships specifically constructed and equipped to perform oceanic exploration. He coordinates the maintenance and engineering support for those ships and is also responsible for support processes and programs, e.g., in maintaining the weight and moment program, coordinating environmental issues from an engineering perspective, maintaining ships' plan files and Internet documentation system, monitoring the material readiness and condition of the fleet, monitoring compliance to regulatory guidelines, and disposing hazardous material for the fleet. He also works on special projects concerning other water borne vessels such as the deployment of manned submersibles and remote operated vehicles.

The appellant's position does not meet the GS-14 level. While he operates under general supervision, unlike that level his assignments do not involve extremely important programs involving development of basic theories, techniques, or criteria for the improvement of basic ship design and operation, nor does it involve the resolution of unique or unprecedented problems having agencywide significance. Although he is the expert in the Division for technical information and advice on ship engineering support, he is not considered a recognized authority or consultant NOAA wide in his specialization. The appellant's contacts are not with key or high ranking officials and do not require active participation in conferences, meetings, hearing, or presentations involving problems or issues of considerable consequence or importance involving the technical judgments, decisions, or type of advice outlined at the GS-14 level.

By application of the grading criteria in the GS-871 standard, we find that the appellant's position best meets the GS-13 level.

*Application of the General Grade Evaluation Guide
for Non-supervisory Professional Engineering Positions*

The General Grade Evaluation Guide for Non-supervisory Professional Engineering Positions provides grade level criteria for work allocated to the General Engineering Series, GS-801. We have used the guide to check or validate the grade level determination arrived at by application of the grading criteria in the GS-871 standard.

The guide uses two factors, Nature of Assignment and Level of Responsibility, which are expressed in terms of three broad types of non-supervisory work performed by engineers, i.e., Type I, Type II, and Type III. These types of work are described throughout the guide at various grade levels.

As described on page 2 of the guide, Type I work is conventional in nature and is accomplished primarily by application, modification, or adaptation of, or compromise with standard guides, precedents, methods, and techniques. Work of this type is described in the guide at grades GS-9 through GS-13.

Type II work (page 3) includes assignments or functions with such objectives as solving novel and unusual problems, extending the boundaries of existing knowledge, or improving the state-of-the-art. Work of this type is described in the guide at grades GS-9 through GS-15.

Type III work (page 3) involves staff assignments as technical consultants and advisors and/or program coordinator-reviewers in engineering organizations engaged in Type I and/or Type II work. These positions typically occur at GS-12 and above, and the guide describes such work at GS-12 through GS-15.

The majority of the appellant's time is spent performing technical engineering advisory and support to the work efforts of all port engineers (located either on the west or east coasts), and performing special assignments/projects. He provides port engineers access to contractors for design work, initiates the design tasks, tracks design tasks through to completion of the drawing, and provides it to the port engineer for installation on the ship. He advises on, prepares and coordinates design agent and voyage repair contracts. He also provides specialized advisory guidance in areas of regulatory requirements, naval architecture support, American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) coordination, and the use and support of preventive maintenance tools such as Shipboard Automated Maintenance Management System (SAMMS), vibration analysis, and lube oil analysis. In addition, he is responsible for maintaining the configuration baseline of all NOAA ships (i.e., maintaining ships' selected records "as built"), providing ABS support to the fleet inspector for monitoring the material condition of the fleet and the fleet's compliance with regulatory policies and directives, and monitoring the material readiness and condition of the vessels. This type of work is comparable to Type III work in support of an engineering organization engaged in Type I work. Like Type I, the appellant's organization is engaged in conventional work involving testing ship systems for evaluation in terms of intended operational use, reviewing ship engineering designs for modifications, monitoring contracts, and coordinating various engineering operations and functions to accomplish a specific project. The work involves the application and adaptation of standard guides, precedents, methods and techniques.

Nature of Assignment

As discussed in the guide on page 12, Type III, GS-13 engineers perform staff advisory, consulting, and reviewing services to an organization performing a variety of Type I and/or Type II assignments of GS-12 difficulty. Some positions are in the central engineering office of an agency or bureau with responsibilities for reviewing and coordinating all field work in a narrow program area and proposing additional work in the light of the needs of the agency or bureau.

Type III, GS-14 engineers (pages 14 -15) do work in any of the following categories:

- They are expert consultants in a specialty field to a large laboratory, bureau, or agency, where the organization is engaged in work of an advanced nature, i.e., work is controversial or unknown.
- For an agency or bureau headquarters and field offices, they coordinate and review broad programs containing a large amount of Type I and/or Type II GS-11 and 12 level work being undertaken at numerous locations under diverse conditions, e.g., work characterized by many, varied complex features due to the breadth and diversity of assignments, and/or work having precedent data, criteria, methods, or techniques that are significantly inadequate, controversial or contain critical gaps. In such positions they develop standard methods to be used throughout the headquarters and field.
- They develop short and long-range research and development plans and programs for a large group of research, development, and test activities.
- They work directly for and serve as overall engineering and scientific adviser and consultant to the chief of a research, development, and evaluation organization.

The appellant's assignments favorably compare to the staff advisory, consulting, and review services characteristic of the GS-13 level. Like that level he provides staff advice and assistance to an organization performing Type I work. However, his assignments do not meet the breadth, importance, and complexity intended at the GS-14 level. Unlike that level he does not function as an agency expert in a specialty field where the organization served performs work of an advanced nature. In addition, he does not coordinate and review broad programs meeting the complex characteristics described at the GS-14 level, is not responsible for developing standard methods to be used throughout the headquarters and field, and is not engaged in research activities. The appellant's assignments appropriately match the GS-13 level.

Level of Responsibility:

Type III, GS-13 positions (page 13) receive little or no technical guidance within the specialty area. The supervisor and others accept authoritative determinations not in conflict with policies and basic standards. In addition to maintaining frequent contacts with coworkers in the organization to render advice, consultation, and assistance, GS-13 engineers have contact with engineers in field offices. Contacts involve negotiation and persuasion in obtaining the adoption of technical points and methods that are in conflict with the desires and opinions of other engineers. In addition to serving as reliable sources of information on the location, availability, applicability and adequacy of guides, GS-13 engineers are outstandingly adept in applying them to a greater variety of problems.

Type III, GS-14 positions (page 16) operate under administrative supervision only. Guidance from higher level is restricted to matters of broad policy, program objectives, and budget limitations. Decisions, commitments, and conclusions ordinarily have considerable influence on the development of the agency program and the establishment of standards and guides for extensive engineering activities. As representatives of their agency, GS-14 engineers reach agreements with groups from other agencies or organizations. GS-14 technical specialist positions are largely concerned with solving major problems for which guidelines provide little or no assistance. GS-14 coordinator-reviewers apply a broad knowledge of agency policies, laws, regulations, procedures, and methods. The extensive scope or

complicated nature of the programs or technical problems that GS-14 engineers coordinate, advise upon or review, requires extensive contacts with key officials, and top engineering and scientific personnel of the same or other establishments, other Government agencies, and private industry. Certain positions frequently represent their agencies in conferences with other agencies, State and local authorities, private industry, and public groups in efforts to obtain all viewpoints regarding proposed programs and to assure concerted action by all parties involved.

The appellant's position meets the GS-13 level of responsibility. Like that level he receives little technical guidance within his specialty area. The supervisor sets the overall objectives and resources available, and accepts the appellant's determinations as long as they are not in conflict with policies and basic standards. He is responsible for planning and carrying out his assignments, resolving most of the conflicts that arise, coordinating work with others, and interpreting policy on his own initiative in terms of established projects. The appellant keeps his supervisor informed of his progress and of any potentially controversial matters. Like the GS-13 level, he has frequent contacts with coworkers in the organization, as well as engineers in field offices (i.e., east and west coast port engineers), in order to provide advice, consultation and assistance. Other contacts include procurement representatives, contractors, and personnel from Ship's Commands. Like the GS-13 level, because his position is advisory in nature his contacts sometimes involve negotiation and persuasion to obtain adoption of various technical points.

The appellant's position does not meet the GS-14 level of responsibility. Unlike that level, he operates with more guidance than is typical of the GS-14 level. Moreover, the technical decisions and conclusions he makes do not have considerable influence on the development of the entire agency's (i.e., NOAA) engineering program or the agency's standards and guides. In addition, the limited scope and complexity of his program does not warrant extensive contacts with the key officials and top engineering personnel described at the higher level.

Summary

By application of the grading criteria in the standard for the Naval Architecture Series, GS-871, and the General Grade Evaluation Guide for Non-supervisory Professional Engineering Positions, GS-800, the appellant's duties and responsibilities equate to the GS-13 level. Therefore, the position is graded at that level.

Decision

The proper series and grade for the appellant's position is GS-801-13. Selection of an appropriate title is at the agency's discretion.