

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DEPARTMENTAL MANUAL

Personnel

Part 370 DM Addition to FPM

Chapter 532 Federal Wage System

370 DM 532-1,S 1.1

Subchapter 1 Basic Authorities.

1.1 Policy. It is the policy of this Department to pay prevailing rate employees in accordance with wage schedules developed by designated lead agencies on a locality basis. Pay will be adjusted promptly when changes are made by the lead agencies in accordance with local prevailing rates.

1.2 Pay Fixing Authority. The Office of Personnel will issue wage schedules to bureaus for Federal Wage System (FWS) wage areas as the wage schedules are received from the lead agency. Bureaus shall use these rates in fixing the pay of eligible employees.

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Subchapter 3 Organizational and Functional Responsibilities.

3.1 Organizational Responsibilities.

A. Office of Personnel. The Office of Personnel under the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Budget and Administration is responsible for administering the Department's wage administration program within the regulations and guidelines established by the Office of Personnel Management.

B. Bureaus and Independent Offices. Bureaus and independent offices are responsible for administering the wage administration program within their organization.

3.2 Departmental Wage Boards. Most wage positions in the Department are subject to wage rates established under the Federal Wage System (FWS) or to rates negotiated under formal labor agreements. For those positions whose wage rates are determined under neither of these systems (e.g. special schedule positions) wage boards may be established to recommend appropriate wage rates. Heads of bureaus, or their designees, may establish wage boards and designate wage board members to conduct wage board operations. These operations essentially consist of conducting locality wage surveys, determining the prevailing rates paid to various classes of employees in the localities, and recommending wage rates to appropriate approving authorities.

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Subchapter 4 Wage Schedules.

4.1 Regular Wage Schedules.

A. Wage schedules received from lead agencies will be issued to bureaus by the Office of Personnel as an attachment to a Federal Wage System Memorandum. Normally, wage schedules will be received on a timely basis and can be processed in the pay period in which they are due. When this does not occur, pay for eligible employees will be made on a retroactive basis.

B. Each wage area has been assigned a three-digit code. This code number will appear on each Department of the Interior wage schedule. A list of coded wage areas is contained in FPM Supplement 532-1, Appendix D.

4.2 Special Schedules and Rates.

A. Special schedules and rates are occasionally required under unusual circumstances where regular wage schedules are not appropriate. A list of the special schedules used by this Department is included in FPM Supplement 532-1, Appendix V.

B. Wage rates for special schedules are usually based upon the FWS schedule or negotiated rates in the particular locality.

4.3 Pay Plan for Emergency Firefighters. Firefighters employed during emergencies to fight forest fires and other fires on or near lands administered by the Department are paid according to a pay plan for emergency firefighters. Rates for these positions are determined pursuant to a formal agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, dated February 1, 1950. Copies of the updated pay schedule are transmitted annually to those bureaus which employ emergency firefighters.

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Subchapter 5 Prevailing Rate Determination.

5.1 Bureau Responsibilities. Bureaus are responsible for: ensuring that their regional and field activities cooperate with lead agencies by providing the information necessary for wage surveys; providing members for the local wage survey committee as requested; and providing data collectors and clerical assistance for the local wage survey committee as requested.

5.2 Changes in Wage or Survey Areas. Requests for changes in wage or survey areas, survey jobs, or pay-fixing positions will be prepared for the Director of Personnel's signature and addressed to the Office of Personnel Management.

5.3 Quarterly Report on Wage Schedules Adopted. Bureaus shall submit a quarterly report on adopted special wage schedules to the Office of Personnel Management. Instructions for completing this report are contained in FPM Supplement 532-1, Appendix U. Reports are due in the Office of Personnel no later than the tenth of the month following the close of the quarter. Two copies of each wage schedule shall accompany the report. Negative reports are required. (This report has been assigned Report Control Symbol 1045-OPM-QU.)

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Subchapter 6 Job Grading System.

6.1 General. Information on the coding, titling, and grading of trades and labor occupations is contained in FPM Supplement 512-1.

6.2 Titling of Trades and Labor Jobs. Official job titles are those listed in the job grading standards developed by OPM. These titles will be used when grading jobs and processing all personnel actions. Bureaus may approve titles for jobs not covered by published standards, consistent with the titling instructions contained in FPM Supplement 512-1, Part I.

6.3 Titling and Grading of Supervisory Positions Excluded from the Federal Wage System. Instructions for titling and grading of supervisory positions which are excluded from the Federal Wage System are contained in Appendix A to this Supplement.

6.4 Establishment of New Occupations. Bureaus wishing to establish new occupations or revise the definitions of established occupations will address their request to the Office of Personnel Management through the Office of Personnel.

6.5 Job Grading Standards.

A. Development of Job Grading Standards. Under the Federal Wage System, OPM is responsible for the development and publication of job grading standards and the modification of existing standards. The Department will cooperate with OPM in the development and modification of standards. The Department will also encourage the initiation of standards studies by OPM in the interest of uniform treatment and equitable grading of jobs in the Department.

B. Review of Job Grading Standards. OPM will distribute tentative drafts of job grading standards to using agencies for review and comment. Bureaus will ensure that employees in their regional and field offices are given an opportunity to participate in this review. Field comments will be considered by the bureau headquarters in preparing its consolidated response to the Office of Personnel.

C. Availability of Standards. OPM job grading standards and guides developed by the Department and bureaus shall be made available for review by employees and interested officials. Employees will be informed of the location of the standards and conditions of availability.

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Subchapter 7 Job Grading Appeals.

7.1 Purpose. The purpose of this subchapter is to establish the Department's system and procedures for processing job-grading appeals. These procedures extend to employees in trade, craft and labor occupations who are subject to 5 U.S.C. 5343(a) as well as to negotiated wage employees (unless there is a negotiated appeal procedure).

7.2 Bureau Responsibility. Each bureau and equivalent organization will establish internal procedures which will permit a wage grade employee to appeal to an appropriate decision level above the level of authority which graded the individual's job. Such an appeal, or written application for review, may be made within the bureau or directly to the Office of Personnel. The bureau's procedures will be published and made available to all concerned employees. Negotiated wage employees will use procedures written into their labor agreements when applicable.

7.3 Filing an Appeal or Application for Review.

A. A wage grade employee may appeal the grade, title, and/or series assigned to his or her job to an appropriate administrative level within the Department. An appeal must be in writing and must state the reasons the job is believed to be erroneously graded, including references to applicable OPM job grading standards. The employee should provide any additional facts as requested by the reviewing office.

B. When filing an appeal or application for review within the bureau, the employee's correspondence should be addressed to the Personnel Officer at the level of authority above that which graded the position, e.g., Personnel Officer, Region II, or Personnel Officer, Bureau Headquarters. Appeals to the Department should be addressed to the Director of Personnel, Department of the Interior, Room 5201, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.

C. The employee also has the right of appeal to the Office of Personnel Management but he or she may apply to OPM only after the bureau or the Department has issued a final job-grading appeal decision.

7.4 Position Audits.

A. Normally, the Department will base its appeal decisions on the official records established at the bureau level, as does OPM. The Department may, however, conduct an on-site or telephone audit, if the official records are found to be insufficient. If an audit is conducted, only the classifier and the incumbent may be present during the audit. Although an employee has the right to choose a representative for advice and assistance in presenting an appeal, that right does not extend to the presence of the representative at an audit.

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B. Employees, including those who act as representatives in appeals, must be afforded a reasonable amount of official time in which to present their appeals and to meet with the personnel management staff as necessary and pertinent to the appeal.

7.5 Disposition of Appeals. Every effort will be made to issue job-grading decisions within 60 days of receipt of an employee's appeal. When a final decision has not been issued by the review level authority within a 60-day period, the employee may request the next higher level with job-grading authority, i.e., as defined in bureau guidelines, to assume jurisdiction of the application.

7.6 Effective Date. When a decision grants the employee's request for a change to a higher grade, the effective date may not be later than the beginning of the first pay period after the 60th day from filing date.

7.7 Retroactive Corrective Action.

A. When an employee wishes to appeal a downgrading or loss of pay, the application must be submitted under the provisions of this Subchapter within 15 calendar days of the effective date of the change to the lower grade in order to be entitled to retroactive corrective action. This provision is applicable only to employees who are eligible for or who have received grade retention rights under the CSRA provisions outlined in 370 DM 536, Grade and Pay Retention.

B. An employee who is not covered by the provisions of 370 DM 536, Grade and Pay Retention, and wishes to appeal a change to a lower grade or pay, must do so under the provisions of 370 DM 752, Adverse Actions. An appeal or grievance that has been filed under the provisions of 370 DM 752, Adverse Actions, precludes an employee from utilizing the review system established by this subchapter.

7.8 Notice of Appeal Rights. The bureau will promptly notify an affected employee, in writing, of a job-grading decision resulting in a loss of grade or pay. The notice must advise the employee as to the appeal procedures of the Department and OPM, and specify the time limits for filing an appeal in order to establish or preserve his or her rights to a retroactive adjustment.

7.9 Notification of Appeal Decision. Employees will be notified of appeal decisions in writing. The bureau will also assure that the Department receives copies of all appeal decisions made by the bureau or the Office of Personnel Management.

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Subchapter 8 Pay Administration.

8.1 General. The instructions contained in Subchapter 8 of FPM Supplement 532-1 govern the application of basic pay and premium pay to FWS employees in the Department.

8.2 Supervisory Wage Rates - Special Schedules. Special schedule supervisory employees who supervise negotiated wage employees have their wage rates established as a percentage of the nonsupervisory rates. These supervisory schedules and the appropriate percentages are listed in FPM Supplement 532-1, Appendix V, Category J.

8.3 Environmental Differentials. Bureaus may request additions, changes or deletions to the schedule of environmental pay differentials in Appendix J of FPM Supplement 532-1. Requests should be addressed to the Office of Personnel Management and prepared for the signature of the Director of Personnel. Bureau requests should include the information described in FPM Supplement 532-1, Subchapter 8-7.

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Subchapter 9 Grade and Pay Retention Under the Federal Wage System.

9.1 Purpose. This subchapter provides Departmental policy and guidance on grade and pay retention benefits for prevailing rate employees covered by the Federal Wage System (including those paid under special schedules). It does not apply to negotiated wage employees covered under Section 9(b) of Public Law 92-392.

9.2 Grade Retention.

A. Mandatory.

(1) Mandatory grade retention is required in the circumstances described in FPM Supplement 532-1, S9.

(2) Employees who transfer to this Department while in receipt of grade retention from another agency are entitled to continue grade retention for the balance of the original two-year period. This entitlement ceases when an employee: (a) has a break in service of one work day or more; (b) is demoted for personal cause or at his or her own request (i.e., to a position at a lower grade than the position to which the employee is reduced); (c) is placed in a position the grade of which is equal to or higher than the retained grade; or (d) elects in writing to waive entitlement to grade retention.

B. Optional.

(1) Bureaus can determine circumstances in a reorganization or reclassification which can be considered for an extension of grade retention beyond the mandatory requirements covered in FPM Supplement 532-1. In any extension of grade retention to employees not entitled to mandatory grade retention the employee must meet the basic eligibility requirements in FPM Supplement 532-1, S9-3.

(2) Optional grade retention benefits may be extended to an eligible employee who declines to transfer with his or her function and, prior to separation for declining to transfer, is placed in a lower graded position provided that the transfer of function is to a location outside the employee's commuting area, and provided that the employee is not subject to a mobility agreement. This provision is intended to cover instances where employees are moved prior to receiving specific RIF notices or notices that their positions are being reduced.

(3) The decision as to whether grade retention will be granted to eligible employees is at the discretion of the bureau director concerned. In the Office of the Secretary the decision is at the discretion of the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Budget and Administration, based upon the recommendation of the management officials concerned.

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9.3 Pay Retention.

A. Mandatory.

(1) Mandatory pay retention is required in the circumstances described in FPM Supplement 532-1, S9-4.

(2) Employees who transfer to this Department while in receipt of pay retention from another agency are entitled to continue pay retention. This entitlement ceases when an employee: (a) has a break in service of one work day or more; (b) is entitled to a rate of basic pay that is equal to or greater than the rate to which he or she is entitled under pay retention; or (c) is demoted for personal cause or at his or her own request.

B. Optional.

(1) Bureaus may grant pay retention to eligible employees whose rate of basic pay would otherwise be reduced as the result of a management action.

(2) The decision as to whether pay retention will be granted to eligible employees is at the discretion of the bureau director concerned. In the Office of the Secretary, the decision is at the discretion of the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Budget and Administration, based upon the recommendation of the management officials concerned.

Titling and Grading of Supervisory Positions Excluded from the Federal Wage System.

This Appendix includes instructions for titling and grading of supervisory positions which are excluded from the Federal Wage System. Basically this includes negotiated wage employees. These instructions may also be used to title and grade special schedule employees.

A. Titling. Supervisory positions shall be designated as "Foreman" with a numeral indicating the appropriate level of supervision. (See paragraph B for a description of supervisory levels). Supervisory titles shall include an appropriate description of the trade, craft, or type of work involved, such as: Foreman I - Carpenter, Foreman II -Automotive Mechanic, Foreman III - Machinist, Foreman IV - Construction and Maintenance. Ordinarily the descriptive titles shall conform to the titling of journeyman or trade, craft, or manual labor jobs as covered in the standard definitions for nonsupervisory positions. Where program identification is desirable to distinguish jobs with the same general titles, parenthetical suffixes may be included in the titles; e.g. Foreman IV -Construction and Maintenance (Roads), Foreman IV - Construction and Maintenance (Buildings).

B. Grading. Levels for non FWS supervisory wage grade positions shall be determined in accordance with the following standards. Four levels of wage grade supervisors are recognized in the Department: Foreman I, Foreman II, Foreman III and Foreman IV. Supervisory wage grade jobs shall be analyzed in accordance with these standards, allocated to the appropriate level, and titled accordingly. The following standards shall be used for supervisory positions:

(1) Foreman I.

(a) Provides leadership with immediate accountability and responsibility for the productive work of a small crew (three or more workers).

(b) Is the pace-setter on whom other workers in the crew depend for instructions on tasks to be performed and methods to be used. Maintains discipline among the crew and instructs subordinates on safety techniques, reporting to the next level of supervision any rule infractions which are beyond the incumbent's control. Performs non-supervisory work similar to that performed by the crew for a major portion of the time.

(2) Foreman II.

(a) Supervises three or more employees in accomplishing trades and labor work. Directs completion of work orders in accordance with standard procedures and with established trade practices. Depending on the nature of the work and the size of the crew supervised, may perform nonsupervisory work for up to 50 percent of the time.

(b) Participates in the development of plans for assigned segments by contributing workload data, obtains suggestions from subordinates, and makes recommendations to superior.

(c) Makes assignments and reassignments to employees to maintain even flow of work. Reads blueprints, trains apprentices as assigned, instructs employees on how tasks are to be performed and helps journeymen accomplish assigned tasks when problems are encountered. Instructs subordinates on safety techniques and reports failures to observe safety regulations.

(d) Makes minor adjustments in methods of day-to-day operations within the scope of objectives determined by higher level supervision. Reviews and inspects the work to assure proper performance.

(e) Appraises crew and takes action as needed to improve conduct, to resolve employee work-related problems and to develop team spirit. Recommends personnel actions and official commendations or disciplinary action, as appropriate. Requisitions materials as needed.

(f) Develops performance standards and elements and periodically evaluates performance.

(g) May supervise a subordinate working leader designated as Foreman I.

(3) Foreman III.

(a) Supervises three or more employees in accomplishing trades and labor work.

(b) Is responsible for accomplishment of work of a designated type utilizing the organization, equipment, personnel and overall methods and processes provided by management.

(c) Determines exact priorities of work orders on hand taking into consideration urgency indicated by superiors. Explains overall nature of work to be performed and each employee's part in it. Instructs subordinates in work methods and specific work steps to be taken on each work order. Decides what material and equipment will be used on each project. Determines from personnel available which employees will be used on each project and plans necessary on-the-job training to secure needed abilities and flexibilities. Plans for the development of the crew in terms of reserve abilities, group spirit and job satisfaction. Orients new employees. Instructs employees on safety techniques and is responsible for the enforcement of safety regulations or reporting violations.

(d) Discusses work problems and possible work improvements with the crew. Determines whether improvements can be made in the work and takes action to insure accomplishment of the workload by revision of methods, changing assignments or use of equipment and material.

(e) Makes recommendations to supervisor regarding supervisor's overall responsibilities which are related to the duties described at the Foreman II level.

(f) Develops performance standards and elements and periodically evaluates performance of subordinate employees.

(g) May also supervise full-time subordinate foremen or temporary foremen designated for a specific job.

(4) Foreman IV.

(a) Supervises three or more employees in accomplishing trades and labor work.

(b) Is responsible for the accomplishment of a group of functions or a single function, exclusive of full managerial authorities and responsibilities. Is responsible for day-to-day and week-to-week achievement of specified goals in accordance with predetermined organizational structures, program plans and production and supply requirement schedules. Has important responsibilities in initial planning and participates with supervisor in quarterly, annual, or long-term work scheduling. Has substantial responsibility for personnel management and participates in management improvement including analysis and improvement of work procedures and use of equipment. Is responsible for the enforcement of safety regulations.

(c) Superior relies on incumbent for advice on personnel, equipment and organizational planning within incumbent's organization. The Foreman IV does not have responsibility for final decisions on these matters.

(d) Determines and recommends the total number of personnel needed and number of positions in each craft or skill. Plans with subordinate supervisors the development of effective work crews and for full use of skills.

(e) Takes corrective action to insure accomplishment of the work by changing assignments and methods of using equipment and material. May perform some duties described in Foreman III and Foreman II levels.

(f) Develops performance standards and elements and periodically evaluates performance of subordinate employees.

(g) May also supervise full-time subordinate foremen or temporary foremen designated for a specific job.