



United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
December 2001
Article No. 27-04

Standard: [Safety and Occupational Health Management, GS-018 \(August 1981\)](#)
Factor: N/A
Issue: Position title

Identification of the Classification Issue

The appellant's position was classified to the Safety and Occupational Health Management Series, GS-018, and was titled Safety and Occupational Health Manager. The appellant requested an upgrade, but OPM found no evidence to support it. During our review, however, we determined that the agency had incorrectly titled the position.

Resolution

The appellant served as a regional occupational safety and health officer. Her responsibilities involved developing and administering the total safety and occupational health program, including those elements unique to the installation and other serviced commands and activities. She exercised full supervisory responsibilities for professional, technical, and administrative employees.

OPM found that the title of the appellant's position was incorrect. The title *Safety and Occupational Health Manager* is appropriate for positions responsible for planning, organizing, directing, operating, and evaluating a safety and occupational health program for an entire agency or subordinate level. The title *Supervisory Safety and Occupational Health Specialist* is the correct title for positions which meet the criteria of the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) for evaluation as a supervisor. Although the appellant had regional program responsibility, she also had full supervisory responsibilities for a staff. Because the grade level of her position was determined by reference to the GSSG, OPM found that the title prescribed in the standard for supervisory positions, *Supervisory Safety and Occupational Health Specialist*, was the appropriate title.

“Back to the Basics”

Official position titles are assigned in accordance with titling instructions prescribed in the governing position classification standard. These titles are used to properly identify positions for various administrative and recordkeeping purposes (e.g., the maintenance of governmentwide statistics on categories of positions.) However, this does not preclude agencies from constructing organizational titles that they believe are more descriptive or appropriate for local circumstances. These organizational titles can be used both internally and for official program business in lieu of the official position title. The distinction between official position titles and organizational titles should be explained to employees who perceive that the official position title implies a lesser stature than the organizational title.

Link to [C-0018-12-03](#)