



United States
Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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Standard: N/A
Factor: N/A
Issue: Use of Production Facilitating Pay System

Identification of the Classification Issue

The issue of pay system determination arises periodically (see Digest 7, August 1985). This particular issue arose when an appellant sought to have his position classified in the Production Facilitating Pay System (WD) rather than the General Schedule. The appellant's argument was that key Level Definition #9 for Maintenance Scheduler contains narrative which is the same as the wording in his position description.

Resolution

The Office of Personnel Management could not agree with the appellant's appeal for inclusion in the Production Facilitating Pay System for the following reasons:

- a. Key Level Definitions are not classification or grading standards. A classification determination should not be made to change a position from the Classification Act (General Schedule) to the "special production facilitating pay plan," until it is first determined that the position is subject to the Federal Wage System. If it is decided that the position is not subject to the Federal Wage System, the position cannot be subject to a sub-pay plan of that system, e.g., the "production facilitating pay plan."
- b. In making a pay system determination such as this one, it is necessary to make the distinction between General Schedule "production knowledge" versus wage grade "trades and crafts" skills and knowledge. General Schedule production knowledge, (e.g., involving work flow, materials needed, and amount of time needed to accomplish work) is distinct from wage grade

"trade knowledge" which requires the ability to perform trades and craft work. General Schedule production knowledge requires a practical knowledge of a variety of shop operations and the ability to translate that knowledge into plans, estimates, and work sequence applications to the services needed. This type of knowledge can be gained on the job in such General Schedule occupations as engineering technician, production controller, industrial engineering technician, and construction inspector as well as from wage grade occupations.

- c. A position is exempt from the General Schedule pay system only if (a) its primary duty or responsibility requires trades or crafts experience and knowledge, and (b) that requirement is paramount. These criteria are not met in this case because: (1) while the agency typically limited recruitment from among journeyman-level carpenters, plumbers, or electricians, the position also required scheduling journeyman-level trade and craft work involving the sheet metal, welding, air conditioning, and masonry trades. Journeyman-level experience in one trade does not qualify someone to perform work in another trade. The capability of scheduling work in trades in which the incumbent had little experience or training showed that a person occupying the position could accomplish the scheduling work without craft experience but with a practical knowledge of shop operations (an appropriate requirement for a General Schedule position); (2) the availability of such guidelines as engineered performance standards and historical data was such that an employee without trade experience could perform the assigned duties and responsibilities; (3) the skill and ability to bring together a number of people (i.e., shop foremen, planner/estimators, and material coordinators) to schedule jobs were more indicative of General Schedule work than Federal Wage System work.

Based on the above rationale, it was concluded that this position was not subject to the Federal Wage System and could not be subject to the "production facilitating pay plan." The position was correctly classified in the General Schedule.