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Standard: [Job Grading Standard for Supervisors \(WS\)](#)
Factor: Nature of Supervisory Responsibility
Issue: Credit for positions that exceed Foreman level

Although there have been several revisions of the Job Grading Standard for Federal Wage System Supervisors, the discussion in this article is still valid.

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in the adjudication of an appeal from a wage grade supervisor. The position exceeded the Foreman level of supervisory responsibility as described in Factor 1 of the Job Grading Standard for Supervisors. The question was whether the General Foreman level could be credited.

A Foreman typically supervises nonsupervisory workers, and has substantially full supervisory responsibility for control over work operations and the subordinate workforce. At the Foreman level, supervisors are accountable to higher-level supervisors for quantity and quality of work produced by the unit. Acting within general policies and work schedules set by higher management, they are charged with assuring the efficient and economical accomplishment of work assignments. They usually plan weekly or monthly work schedules and sequence of operations. They perform administrative tasks such as promoting management programs, recommending personnel actions, and maintaining production reports and records.

A General Foreman, by contrast, typically is a second-level or higher-level supervisor. Supervisors at this level are responsible for planning, coordinating, and directing a variety of related work operations, usually through one or more subordinate levels of supervision. They

direct work operations within the policies and production schedules set by higher management. They typically plan and schedule work on a long-range basis, e.g., 3 to 6 months in advance. They have greater administrative responsibility than a Foreman; for instance, they provide advice to higher management on matters such as budget estimates, changes in operating procedures, and needed facilities.

The appealed position met all of the criteria for a Foreman, and in some respects exceeded that level. The appellant received assignments in the form of a work schedule that normally was a one-year projection of major overhauls. By contrast, a Foreman's work planning is typically done on a weekly or monthly basis. In addition, the appellant prepared an annual budget for the maintenance and repair of equipment. This budget reflected all planned shop work, material procurements, and anticipated contractual work. Such administrative duties are not typical of a Foreman, but may be found at the General Foreman level.

Resolution

The appealed position was found to be properly classified at the Foreman level. While in a few respects it exceeded the criteria of a Foreman, it clearly fell short of the responsibility of a General Foreman. The essence of the higher level is not the performance of particular tasks (such as long-term planning and budget preparation), but rather is the existence of an overall work situation. This work situation presumes broad managerial authority over extensive operations and a sizable and diverse workforce. Typically, a General Foreman does not directly supervise the work of a unit. Rather, the General Foreman's focus is on creating a positive working climate, organizing and coordinating assigned functions, and making decisions on significant management and personnel matters. The General Foreman must of necessity relinquish substantial control over day-to-day operations by delegating substantial supervisory and technical authority to subordinates.

The appellant supervised a workforce of 10-15 employees; he had neither subordinate units nor subordinate supervisors reporting to him. All subordinates performed the same kind of work. The position description clearly stated that he *personally* supervised and directed the assigned crew. Thus, while the position exceeded the Foreman level in some respects, it did not meet the work situation required for General Foreman solely because of long-range planning and budgeting duties.