

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



Philadelphia Oversight Division
600 Arch Street, Room 3400
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1596

**Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under Section 5346 of Title 5, United States Code**

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Aircraft Electrician
WG-2892-11

Organization: Electro/Environmental Shop
Accessories Flight
Maintenance Squadron
[number] Airlift Wing
Air Force Reserve
[location]

OPM decision: Aircraft Electrician
WG-2892-11

OPM decision number: C-2892-11-03

Robert D. Hendler
Classification Appeals Officer

/s/ 8/26/99

Date

As provided in section S7-8 of the Operating Manual, Federal Wage System (FWS), this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions specified in section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

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Introduction

*On June 29, 1999, the Philadelphia Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [appellant's name]. [appellant's name] occupies a job currently graded as Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11. The appellant believes his job (Position Number 79650) should be evaluated as Aircraft Electrician Supervisor, WS-2892-8. In an appeal decision issued by the U.S. Department of Defense, Civilian Personnel Management Service, on February 24, 1999, the agency concluded the job was properly graded as Aircraft Electrician, **WG-2892-11**. He works in the Accessories Flight Section, Electro/Environmental Shop, Maintenance Squadron, [number] Airlift Wing, [location]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).*

General issues

In a decision issued by his agency on July 15, 1998, the appellant's job was upgraded from Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11 to Aircraft Electrician Supervisor, WS-2892-8. In a subsequent decision issued by his agency on February 24, 1999, the job grading decision of July 15, 1998 was reversed and the appellant's job was regraded as Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11. This was made effective on May 23, 1999.

In his appeal letter to OPM, the appellant said his job should be upgraded to Aircraft Electrician Supervisor, WS-2892-8. The record shows the appellant does not disagree with the accuracy of his official position description (PD) but claims that the supervisory duties and responsibilities he performs have not been evaluated correctly. In particular, he stressed his responsibility for the planning, directing, and administering the day-to-day work of his two Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-10, subordinates. He believes that his job is covered by the Job Grading Standard (JGS) for FWS Supervisors because, as stated in the agency decision of July 15, 1998, which applied the JGS for FWS Supervisors, he "performs the full range of supervisory duties described in Situation #1 on a regular/recurring, continuing and substantially full-time basis."

By law, we must grade jobs solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM JGS's, guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5346), and instructions. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. The job grading appeal process is a de novo review that includes a determination as to the duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the appellant, and constitutes the proper application of JGS's to those duties and responsibilities. We have evaluated the work assigned by management and performed by the appellant according to these job grading requirements. In reaching our decision, we carefully reviewed the information provided by the appellant and his agency, including the appellant's PD of record. In addition, we conducted a telephone audit with the appellant on August 16, 1999, and with his supervisor, [name], on August 17, 1999. We find the PD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the appellant and is hereby incorporated by reference into this decision.

Job information

The purpose of the appellant's job is to serve as Small Shop Chief (SSC) of the Electro/Environmental Shop, exercising technical and administrative supervisory responsibility over two employees who occupy identical additional Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-10 jobs (Position Number 79985), and who service eight C-130H cargo transport aircraft assigned to the unit. The appellant receives his assignments from his supervisor, the Aircraft Overhaul Supervisor, WS-8801-10. Work also is assigned through inspections scheduled in advance or through flight line work dispatched through the Maintenance Operations Center. The appellant then assigns the daily work on a job or project basis to the subordinates. He reviews work in progress and upon completion, ensuring the adequacy of the work performed. The SSC keeps the Aircraft Overhaul Supervisor informed of work status.

The appellant operates under the general supervision of the Aircraft Overhaul Supervisor, WS-3801-10, who exercises general supervision over the three shops comprising the Accessories Flight. The Aircraft Overhaul Supervisor sets overall Flight and shop priorities. Under his authority, priorities can be changed due to new mission or flight time requirements. The appellant has authority to approve routine leave, but the Aircraft Overhaul Supervisor has final authority over leave, awards, discipline, and all administrative matters.

The appellant takes time and attendance and notifies the Aircraft Overhaul Supervisor of personnel available for duty. He establishes performance standards and conducts formal appraisals of subordinates. He has signatory authority on those appraisals and for ordering necessary equipment and supplies. The appellant counsels employees and, when possible, adjusts complaints before they become formal. He maintains time and attendance records, prepares and coordinates leave schedules with his supervisor and approves routine leave. The appellant resolves minor disciplinary problems and enforces safety rules and regulations. He maintains the supervisor's record of employee training, time and leave schedules, and other records as required.

Occupation, title, and standards determination

The agency has allocated the appellant's job as Aircraft Electrician, while the appellant states it should be allocated as Aircraft Electrician Supervisor.

All aspects of the job grading criteria (i.e., coverage, percentage of time, grading factors, as well as the full intent of the JGS) must be fully met for jobs to be evaluated under the FWS JGS for Supervisors. Appropriate application of the JGS requires full and careful analysis of all relevant factors. The central coverage criteria in the JGS, i.e., the ongoing requirement that supervisors perform supervisory duties on a substantially full-time and continuing basis, are stringent. Substantially full-time means performing supervisory duties to such an extent that, for all intents and purposes, it is considered to be comparable to full-time or 100 percent. Consequently, positions that perform supervisory functions on less than a substantially full-time basis (i.e., less than 85 percent) do not meet the basic criteria for coverage and cannot be evaluated under the

FWS JGS for Supervisors. Although such employees have supervisory responsibilities as a regular and recurring part of their jobs, the supervisory responsibility is not exercised on a substantially full-time basis as required under the supervisory JGS. When such a situation occurs, the job is graded under the regular nonsupervisory grading structure and not under the FWS JGS for Supervisors.

According to the official PD, which the appellant has stated is accurate and complete, the journey level duties comprise approximately 75 percent of the work time and the supervisory duties occupy approximately 25 percent of the work time. Both appellant and his supervisor agree it is difficult to determine the percentage of time spent on SSC duties. The appellant states that he spends about 25 percent of his time working alone doing journey work and about 50 percent of his time doing journey level work in association with one or more of his subordinates. He states, however, that he is responsible 100 percent of the time for overseeing the work of his two subordinates and, when he is not performing team work or working alone, he spot-checks work in progress. The appellant's supervisor estimates he spends somewhat more time, between 30 and 40 percent, working alone and doing journey work, and about 25 percent of his time working with others. The supervisor stated that the appellant, when working with the two WG-2892-10 employees, does the same work as they do.

Duties and responsibilities assigned to a job flow from the mission assigned to the organization in which they are found. The jobs created to perform that assigned mission must be considered in relation to one another; i.e., each job reflects a part of the work assigned to the organization. Therefore, the duties and responsibilities assigned to the appellant's job and performed by him may not be considered in a vacuum.

The PD occupied by the appellant's subordinates contains duties and responsibilities typical of journey level jobs in the Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892 trade. As at the grade10 level, detailed technical instructions or supervision is not necessary. The subordinates do their own planning and work independently. They receive their assignments with a minimum of accompanying instructions concerning the work methods or the materials to be used. The SSC, i.e., the appellant, is available for advice or assistance on very difficult problems.

Our discussions with the appellant and the Aircraft Overhaul Supervisor confirmed that the subordinates' identical additional PD's are current and accurate, reflecting the need for very little supervision. The journey level concept within the FWS presumes that occupants of such jobs are delegated significant work planning responsibilities. For example, WG-2892-10 workers make decisions and judgments regarding troubleshooting techniques, modification and repair procedures; plan the sequence of work, and select the tools needed; determine the nature of repairs necessary to correct electrical faults; and exercise primary responsibility for checking out the complete aircraft wiring system and connections. If the appellant were to exercise the breadth and depth of supervision necessary to occupy the amount of time claimed in his appeal rationale, the subordinate jobs could not sustain their grading at the journey level. While the appellant may spend a significant amount of time on administrative functions to support the Aircraft Overhaul

Supervisor, e.g., providing for shop facility and other support needs, his technical supervision over journey level work should be minimal. Furthermore, with only two journey level subordinates, no turnover for more than ten years, and no disciplinary problems, very little time would be spent on such activities as counseling employees on performance issues, handling disciplinary problems, recruiting, and investigating complaints.

While the appellant works side-by-side with his subordinates on two - or three - person team assignments, the FWS permits only one of those people to be credited with performing the journey level work of the assignment. For example, while two or three journey level carpenters may be sent out on a project, only one of them may be credited as exercising the work planning and control functions inherent in journey level work. The appellant's supervisor confirmed that most of the time the senior person on the team is responsible for writing up and signing off on the work orders. If the appellant is out on a team as the senior shop person, he would be the final authority on all forms. Thus, when the appellant functions as the team lead, we find the supporting subordinate(s) may not be construed as performing the same kind and level of work as the appellant. As a result, the appellant is not functioning as a working supervisor within the meaning of the JGS.

Based on the foregoing, we are persuaded that the appellant's job clearly falls short of coverage by the FWS JGS for Supervisors.

Grade determination

In the FWS, grade levels of jobs are not determined by accumulation of grade levels of work performed, but by the highest grade of work that is regular and recurring as defined by established OPM job grading guidance. To be credited, a level in a JGS must be met fully. The Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892 JGS uses four factors for grade determination: *Skill and Knowledge*, *Responsibility*, *Physical Effort*, and *Working Conditions*. The agency has evaluated the appellant's non-supervisory WG-2892 work at the grade 10 level, with which the appellant has not disagreed. Based on our review of the record, we agree and have so credited the job. Our evaluation of his SSC duties follows:

Skill and Knowledge

The appellant's SSC functions reflect the exercise of skill and knowledge that exceed the grade 10 level entailed in planning, accomplishing and maintaining the shop technical program. To perform that work, the appellant must be able to plan and schedule work for himself and his two subordinates; determine the best way to accomplish shop workload; make sure adequate tools, equipment, and materials are available; and provide input to the supervisor on the full range of shop needs. OPM job grading guidance on SSC jobs refers to the Pest Controller, WG-5026 JGS. That JGS provides grading criteria for jobs that are responsible for a complete facility pest control program requiring a complete pest management program. The program is large enough to typically require the assistance of up to two other pest controllers, but is not large enough to

require direction by a full time FWS supervisor. The WG-5026 JGS recognizes that the skill and knowledge demands required to perform this range of program management warrants the addition of one grade above the level of work led. We find the appellant exercises similar skill and knowledge in performing his SSC functions, resulting in evaluation of this factor at the grade 11 level.

Responsibility

The WG-5026 JGS recognizes that pest controllers who plan, organize, direct and perform pest complete facility pest control programs; determine the approaches, methods, and courses of action in dealing with program issues; assure program methods and results adhere to regulatory requirements; and advise management on program needs exercise responsibility graded one level above the full performance level. The appellant exercises similar responsibilities in his SSC functions, resulting in the evaluation of this factor at the grade 11 level.

Physical Effort and Working Conditions described in the WG-2892 JGS are the same at all defined grade levels.

Summary

Based on the preceding analysis, and applying the whole job grade criteria of the FWS, we find the appellant's personally performed work is evaluated properly at the grade 10 level and his SSC work is evaluated properly at the grade 11 level.

Decision

In applying the established FWS and grading principles, we find the appellant's job is graded properly as Aircraft Electrician, WG-2892-11.