

Department of Defense (DoD)
Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS)
Field Advisory Services - *FAS*
Classification Appeal Decision

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| DoD Decision: | Engineering Technician, GS-0802-09 |
| Initial classification: | Engineering Technician, GS-0802-09 |
| Organization: | Naval Air Station Public Works Department Maintenance Management Division |
| Date: | March 11, 1997 |

Introduction

Civilian Personnel Management Service received a position classification appeal from, who are employed at Naval Air Station,. They are currently classified as Engineering Technician's GS-802-09. The appellants believe they should be classified as Engineering Technician's GS-802-11. These positions were previously classified in the Production Facilitating Pay Plan (WD/WN).

It should be noted the former position descriptions had a parenthetical title; Planner & Estimator WD-4607-08 (Carpenter), Planner & Estimator WD-5306-08 (Air Conditioning Mechanic), and Planner & Estimator WD-2805-08 (Electrical). The positions were reclassified to the General Schedule, and the employees received grade and pay retention.

Sources of Information

In deciding this appeal, we considered information obtained from the following sources:

- a. Appellant's letter of appeal.
- b. Information submitted by the Human Resources Office.
- c. Telephone audit with appellants.
 - a. Discussion with supervisor
 - b. Phone discussion with, HRO

SERIES DETERMINATION

The appellant's do not contest the series or title of the position. This position performs duties which require engineering technician and contract administration skills and knowledge. The supervisor has stated the engineering technician skills and knowledge are imperative to perform the duties in a satisfactory manner. The appellant's perform work concerned with inspection, limited design, and estimation of the cost of labor, material, and equipment for individual maintenance and repair jobs on buildings, structures, grounds, and roads. They regularly visit work sites to determine the method or procedure on how to complete the job. The work performed by the appellant's meet the intent of the GS-802 series definition. We concur with the Human Resources Office. Therefore, the title and series are correct as Engineering Technician, GS-802.

GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION

The position classification standard for the Engineering Technician GS-802, dated June 1969, has two evaluation factors: (1) Nature of Assignment, and (2) Level of Responsibility. These factors are evaluated as follows:

NATURE OF ASSIGNMENT

This factor measures the elements of scope and technical complexity that make assignments more or less difficult to approach. The scope of assignments is influenced by the range and variety of subject matter involved. The technical complexity of assignments varies from those that involve the application of explicit and directly applicable rules, regulations, and procedures to those that present major problems in the identification and interpretation of such guidelines and precedents.

Engineering Technicians at the GS-09 level perform a variety of work relating to the area of specialization that requires the application of a considerable number of different basic but established methods, procedures, and techniques. Assignments usually involve independent responsibility for planning and conducting a block of work which is a complete conventional project of relatively limited scope, or a portion of a larger and more diverse project. Assignments require study, analysis, and consideration of several possible courses of action, techniques, general layouts, or designs, and selection of the most appropriate. They generally require consideration of numerous precedents and some adaptation of previous plans and techniques. Often changes or deviations must be made during progress of an assignment to incorporate additional factors requested after commencement of the project or to adjust findings and conclusions which could not be predicted accurately in the original plans. Technicians at this level review, analyze, and integrate details or phases of work performed

by other groups or individuals outside their organizational unit. Assignments at this level require a understanding of the effect that recommendations made or other results may have on a system or process and its end-use application. Illustrative examples include preparing plans and cost estimates for construction; or major modification of existing electrical distribution systems; or/and interior wiring for light and power in a variety of small conventional buildings, such as residences, barracks, small shops, and offices. This includes computing loads and laying out distribution systems including substations, poles, lines, and control equipment. On alteration and repair projects, the technician makes field investigations to collect data needed for design, to determine nature and condition of existing facilities, and to determine what should be done to provide, improve, or restore services underling existing conditions.

The appellant's perform work on a regular and recurring basis classifiable to the GS-9 level. For instance, the appellant's may discover subsequent to the initial inspection that, due to hidden defects such as corrosion, a plumbing repair project will involve structural systems such as walls or foundations. In addition, all drawings are not to "scale", but primarily rough sketch. Assignments with these characteristics are appropriately classified as GS-9. Similarly, an assignment to replace an outdated heating and air conditioning system with a new high efficiency installation would involve extensive interaction with other technical personnel, such as electrical, mechanical, and civil engineering disciplines to resolve unique problems.

The appellant's meet with the customer to determine the needs, writing descriptions of work, and preparing detailed cost estimates for the repair/maintenance of the project; reviewing contractor proposal for completeness, accuracy and reasonableness. They utilize Engineering Performance Standards to determine manpower/work cost and contact vendors for material and supply cost. They are required to complete rough "sketches" of their work. They provided the following work samples: repair taxiways/flight line surface); replace floor covering; install ground cable; remove drain piping; recreate power distribution lines; review construction and design projects (i.e., renovate hangar, gym, auditorium, etc.); repair runway; install water line; construct partitions; install washers; seal parking apron; repair fuels storage area; replace electrical pole; repair storm drains; repair "chillier"; install speakers, and repair swimming pool.

We find these assignments are compatible with GS-09. While the work assignments involve complete projects, often several aspects of mechanical, electrical and construction are worked with relative independence, the complexities of those projects do not exceed the GS-09 level. In contrast, the appealed position does not meet the GS-11 level which describe work of greater scope and complexity, e.g. assignments involve elaborate systems and facilities requiring a wide ranging accommodations and the added requirement for creativity in developing design adaptations and new ways of accomplishing work; demonstrated ability to interpret, select, adapt, and apply many guidelines, precedents, and engineering principles and practices which relate to an area of specialization; and some

knowledge of related scientific and engineering fields. Employees at this level are confronted with a variety of complex problems requiring considerable judgment to make sound engineering compromises and decisions and a continuing requirement for contact work. Ingenuity and creative thinking are required in devising new ways of accomplishing objectives, and in adapting existing equipment or current techniques to new uses, while lower level technicians receive assignments which are usually segments of work carried out by employees at the GS-11 level. Illustrative examples include: plan the approach and details and conduct various experimental projects to develop circuits or develop estimates for a variety of multi-use construction projects or to determine the nature and condition of existing facilities, and to determine what should be done to provide, improve, or restore service to the facility or perform technical review of contractor prepared designs and specifications for such systems.

LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY

This factor evaluates the effect of various degrees of control over the work. It includes consideration of the amount and kind of supervision received and extent to which guidelines are appropriate to and govern the conduct of the work.

At the GS-09 level, the standard indicates the supervisor outlines requirements, provides information on related work being performed, and furnishes general instructions as to the scope of objectives, time limitations, priorities, and similar aspects. The supervisor is available for consultation where significant deviations from standard engineering practices must be made and gives more detailed instructions when distinctly new criteria or new techniques are involved. Work is reviewed for progress and coordination with work performed by others and for adherence to completion and cost schedules. Standard methods are seldom reviewed but review is made for adequacy and for conformance with established policies, precedents, and sound engineering concepts and usage. Personal contacts are primarily to resolve mutual problems and coordinate work with that of personnel in related activities. Some contact may be with using agencies and contractors and architect-engineering firms. These contacts are to clear-up doubtful points, advise as to discrepancies found in contract terms, consider recommendations for acceptable substitutes, and to promote adherence to agency standards and concepts.

At the GS-11 level, technicians have considerable freedom in planning work and carrying out assignments. Supervisors make assignments in terms of major objectives, providing background information and advice on specific unusual problems which are anticipated or on matters requiring coordination with other groups. Unusual or controversial problems or policy questions that arise may be discussed with the supervisor but technical supervisory assistance is infrequently sought or required. The supervisor is informally advised of progress but there is little review during progress of typical assignments. Completed work, i.e., recommendations, plans, designs, reports, or correspondence, is reviewed for general

adequacy, conformity to purpose, and sound engineering judgment. Contacts are generally with the same groups and for the same purpose as those at lower levels. However, because of the increased scope of GS-11 assignments, contacts tend to be more extensive. The technician will generally discuss the approach to be taken with the supervisor, but contacts regarding complex engineering and administrative problems are carried out without close supervision.

The record indicates that the supervisor, a general engineer, assigns projects in general terms through work requests, inspection reports, or verbal instructions; sets general goals to be met; and handles problems to be resolved by management. The appellant's work independently on projects and are responsible for job planning, information gathering, estimating, and preparation of work products and reports as assigned. The supervisor may request status reports on projects with high interest. The supervisor indicated that he does not do an in-depth review of assigned projects. He is more concerned with the overall work to be done and its cost. The appellant's contacts include other engineering technicians, engineers, architects, base contractors, and managers. These contacts are to acquire information to determine requirements, provide technical advice, and resolve problems. Contacts with the contractor are to resolve questions as to work methods and cost.

The appellant's have considerable experience and, as a result, work with less supervision of work in process than may typical of the GS-09 level. However, the overall assignment and review of work does not significantly exceed that level. The complexity of the assignments also impacts this factor, e.g., more extensive contacts to resolve complex problems. The projects assigned do not require the application of nonstandard methods and techniques or the unusual or controversial problems typical of the GS-11 level. We find the level of responsibility meets and does not exceed the GS-09 level.

DECISION: ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN GS-802-09