

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

Atlanta Oversight Division
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code**

Appellant: [Appellant]

Agency classification: Electronics Mechanic
WG-2604-11

Organization: [Installation]
Department of the Navy
[Location]

OPM decision: Electronics Mechanic
WG-2604-11

OPM decision number: C-2604-11-05

/s/
Timothy P. Heath
Classification Appeals Officer

4/27/01
Date

As provided in section S7-8 of the *Operating Manual: Federal Wage System*, 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 and time limits specified in 532.750 (f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in the Introduction to the Classification Standards, appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[Appellants]

Director – Code 303
[Installation]
[Location]

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary
of the Navy (Civilian Personnel and
Equal
Employment Opportunity)
Nebraska Avenue Complex
321 Somer Court, NW., Suite 40101
Washington, DC 20393-5451

Chief, Classification Appeals
Adjudication Section
Department of Defense
Civilian Personnel Management Service
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

Introduction

On February 6, 2001, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), received a group job grading appeal from appellants assigned to Federal Wage System (FWS) jobs as Electronics Mechanics, WG-2604-11, [Installation], Department of the Navy, [Location]. The appellants request that their jobs be classified as Electronics Mechanics, WG-2604-12.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the jobs subject to discretionary review only under limited conditions and time outlined in part 532, subpart G, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

General issues

The appellants believe that the agency's grade level determination does not properly recognize the complexity of the systems being repaired, or the level of technical expertise they exercise in carrying out their repair assignments. They appealed to the Department of Defense (DoD) Civilian Personnel Management Service which sustained the agency classification.

An Atlanta Oversight Division representative conducted telephone interviews with two of the appellants representing the group and their first line supervisors. This appeal was decided by considering the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellants, their supervisors, and the agency.

Position information

The appellants are assigned to job description numbers [Number], [Number], and [Number]. These job descriptions contain only minor variations describing typical repair assignments. They will be considered as identical for classification purposes and will be discussed as one in the appeal decision. The appellants, the supervisor, and the agency have certified the accuracy of the position descriptions.

The mission of the [Branch] is to provide depot level repair support for a full range of test equipment and calibration standards. The Branch operates a certified test equipment depot for the Naval Inventory Control Point and Naval Sea Systems Command, and provides specialized test equipment repair support for installation production efforts. The Branch has two sections, each employing two of the appellants. The [Section] provides depot level electronic repair, overhaul, and calibration services for Ordnance Command and fleet systems, equipment, and their components. The [Section] provides DoD-wide depot level repair, rework, and calibration services for precision test equipment.

The appellants exercise independent judgment in using precision measuring equipment and electronic instrumentation to repair, refurbish, calibrate, and certify items as meeting the operational standards established by the Navy in order to return fully serviceable items to the fleet as Code "A," or to dispose of them through established procedures. They analyze items and relevant

technical information to effect repairs and alignment; develop test and measurement methods to verify established performance parameters; and ensure that operational performance is within design specifications. The appellants perform research to obtain manufacturers' technical information such as diagrams, procedures, requirements, specifications, and performance parameters. The information collected is used in determining whether repair or refurbishment can be accomplished economically, or if product improvement will extend the lifecycle of the particular item. This information is also used in the development of effective methods of testing and evaluating the equipment; repair criteria; recommendations for product improvement or modification; and documentation of procedures to be followed by others who may work on the equipment in the future.

The supervisor generally assigns work in terms of overall scope, objectives, and priorities. The incumbents are independently responsible for planning and carrying out assigned work, determining the tests and techniques necessary for the analysis of technical data and the methods to accomplish the assigned work. The supervisor observes the work for progress and reviews it for effectiveness, adequacy, and conformance with established policies, precedents, and sound engineering concepts.

Standard determination

FWS Job Grading Standard (JGS) for Electronics Mechanic, 2604, dated December 1997.

Occupation and title determination

The agency determined that the appellants' jobs were properly placed in the WG-2604 series and titled Electronics Mechanic. The appellants agree with the occupational code and title determination.

The JGS for the WG-2604 series covers nonsupervisory work involved in fabricating, overhauling, modifying, installing, troubleshooting, repairing, and maintaining ground, airborne, and marine electronic equipment such as: radar; sonar; cryptographic; satellite; microwave; micro computers and peripherals; laser; infrared; industrial x-ray; marine, aeronautical, and space navigation aid; TV receiver; surveillance; and similar devices. The work requires knowledge of electronic principles; the ability to recognize improper operation, locate the cause, and determine the best method to correct the defect; and the skill to disassemble, assemble, and adjust electronic equipment. The work includes using both manual and automated test equipment. The work may require the use of a personal computer and numerous software packages to program or realign various components or systems, download information, and detect equipment deficiencies.

Grade determination

The JGS for the WG-2604 occupation describes work in terms of four factors: *Skill and Knowledge, Responsibility, Physical Effort, and Working Conditions.*

Skill and Knowledge

This factor covers the nature and level of skill, knowledge, and mental application required in performing assigned work. Positions vary in such ways as the kind, amount, and depth of skill and knowledge needed, as well as in the manner, frequency, and extent to which they are used.

Grade 11 electronics mechanics install, modify, overhaul, maintain, troubleshoot, and repair complex electronics equipment and complete operational systems consisting of numerous complex integral components which require a knowledge of a wide range of electronics principles and practices. They apply a comprehensive knowledge of operating electronic principles to troubleshoot, install, and repair malfunctions in complex electronic systems where circuit theory must be used to understand the operation of individual circuits, and the possible interaction of other circuits. Electronics mechanics at this level have skill in interpreting complex drawings, specifications, and schematics of complete systems to recognize the function and interconnections of the various assemblies. They troubleshoot the system from the schematic, following signal paths through a complex path of interconnections of components, assemblies, subassemblies and connecting cable harnesses. They have the skill to modify systems by adding, altering, or removing components in order to standardize or alter the purpose of the equipment, or to incorporate new features developed since the equipment was manufactured.

The appellants meet the grade 11 level. They are responsible for repairing, refurbishing and recalibrating complex operational systems and components such as fire control systems, speed-indicating systems, communications systems, display gauges, and mine test sets. They apply a comprehensive knowledge of operating electronic principles to diagnose and correct problems to bring the item into compliance with the manufacturer's and the Navy's operational parameters. To do this, the appellants must be able to read and interpret complex drawings and schematics and understand the interrelationships of the various circuits in the system or component.

Grade 12 electronics mechanics apply advanced electronic theory to maintain ongoing prototype systems; implement maintenance and repair procedures on major modifications of systems previously assigned to the activity; and maintain unusually complex systems that have frequent engineering changes such as in design, construction, operating and servicing procedures. They have skill troubleshooting complex electronic systems that lack documentation and assisting engineers in the development of technical orders using reverse engineering procedures. They may be required to interact with engineers, manufacturers' representatives, engineering personnel and field unit personnel in troubleshooting and developing modifications, substitutions, or corrections to equipment to reduce breakdowns and/or simplify repairs, servicing, or operation.

The appellants do not meet the grade 12 level. They are not required to improvise alignment, repair, or operating procedures for prototype or new systems that have frequent engineering changes. The appellants work on operational systems that normally have documentation and established repair procedures and protocols. For those items without such documentation, the appellants develop proposed repair protocols for approval by the cognizant engineering group. The appellants are not free to implement their proposed repair protocols until they are approved by the appropriate engineering office. This work situation is more limited than the interaction described at grade 12. In addition, grade 12 electronics mechanics are often asked to conduct formal training

regarding the proper use of a component or system, and continually provide advice and assistance to users. The

appellants rarely have contact with the end users. Their limited contacts are to provide technical advice on troubleshooting a repair problem on an operational system or component. This degree of user contact does not meet that described in the JGS as grade 12 level work.

This factor is evaluated as WG-11.

Responsibility

This factor covers the nature and degree of responsibility involved in performing work. Positions vary in responsibility in such ways as the complexity and scope of work assigned, the difficulty and frequency of judgments and decisions made, the kind of supervisory controls, and the nature of work instructions and technical guides used.

Grade 11 electronics mechanics receive work assignments from the supervisor in the form of work orders and inspection reports or oral instructions. Since the repair work is performed on operational systems and components, guidelines such as drawings, technical orders, manufacturers' specifications, schematics, and block diagrams are usually available. However, they are often vague or incomplete, and the mechanics may be required to identify and calculate the missing information. The supervisor spot checks work for compliance with acceptable trade practices and specifications and is available to provide advice and assistance on unusual or very difficult problems.

The appellants' work situation meets the grade 11 level. The appellants repair, refurbish, and calibrate operation systems or components which typically have necessary documentation available. This documentation includes specifications, schematics, diagrams, and Navy protocols and guidelines on repairing various operational systems and components. In those situations where documentation, Navy protocols, and guidelines are not available, the appellants conduct research in the onsite technical library using the Internet. In addition, it may be necessary for the appellants to contact the manufacturer to obtain sufficient information to perform the repairs. Before beginning repairs on systems or components that do not have Navy protocols and guidance, the appellants must submit their repair plan to the responsible engineering group for approval. The engineers also provide technical support and assistance to the appellants in the repair of unique items. The supervisor spot checks the appellants' work in progress to ensure that they are following accepted methods and techniques, and spot checks the finished product.

Grade 12 electronics mechanics exercise significant judgment and independence in determining the methods and techniques required to solve unusually complex maintenance and repair problems. They often coordinate with technical and professional personnel on matters affecting the operation specifications or modifications to equipment or systems. The supervisor seldom reviews work in

progress and relies on grade 12 electronics mechanics to take independent action in solving unusual maintenance and repair problems.

The appellants do not meet the grade 12 level. They do not exercise the independence in determining the methods and techniques required to solve unusually complex maintenance and repair problems described at this level. The appellants may not deviate from established Navy protocols and repair guidelines without obtaining approval from the responsible engineering group.

The appellants exercise a thorough knowledge of electronic systems and components in developing repair plans for undocumented items; however, they are not involved in developing operating specifications for, or modifications to, equipment or systems. They repair the items in accordance with established protocols and guidelines to operate within pre-established parameters established by the Navy's primary lab. The requirements to follow established Navy protocols and guidelines, and to obtain pre-approval from the engineers limit the level of the appellants' responsibility to that characteristic of the grade 11.

This factor is evaluated as WG-11.

Physical Effort and **Working Conditions** are the same at all grade levels. Because they do not have grade level impact, and the appellants' work meets the levels described in the JGS, we will credit both factors as being met and will not address them further.

Decision

These positions are properly graded as Electronics Mechanics, WG-2604-11.