

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

Atlanta Oversight Division  
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**Classification Appeal Decision**  
**Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [appellant]

**Agency classification:** Supervisory Physical Security Specialist  
GS-080-09

**Organization:** [organization] Division  
[organization] Department  
Naval Air Station [location]  
Department of the Navy  
[location]

**OPM decision:** Supervisory Physical Security Specialist  
GS-080-9

**OPM decision number:** C-0080-09-02

/s/ Virginia L. Magnuson

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Virginia L. Magnuson  
Classification Appeals Officer

November 6, 2003

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Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

**Decision sent to:**

[appellant]  
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## **Introduction**

On August 13, 2003, the Atlanta Field Services Group, of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant] who is employed as a Supervisory Physical Security Specialist, GS-080-9. He works at the [organization] Division, [organization] Department, Naval Air Station (NAS) [location], Department of the Navy, [location]. The appellant requests that his position be reclassified to Supervisory Physical Security Specialist, GS-080-10. We received the complete appeal administrative report from the agency on August 11, 2003. The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

On January 24, 2003, the appellant submitted an appeal to his agency requesting that his job be reclassified as Supervisory Physical Security Specialist, GS-080-10. On May 1, 2003, his agency issued a decision sustaining the existing classification. The appellant subsequently appealed to OPM.

## **General issues**

The appellant states that he is the only physical security specialist and is considered the expert at NAS [location]. He also states that additional duties have doubled his work assignments and requires a higher level of knowledge which warrants a higher grade for the position. In adjudicating this appeal, by law, we must make an independent decision on the proper classification of the appellant's position solely by comparing his current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Volume of work cannot be considered in determining the grade of a position (*The Classifier's Handbook*, chapter 5).

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including information obtained from telephone interviews with the appellant and his immediate supervisor.

## **Position information**

The appellant is assigned to position description number [#]. The supervisor and the appellant certified the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant spends approximately 70 percent of his time performing physical security program duties. These include physical protection of sensitive or classified information, personnel, facilities, installations, or other sensitive materials, resources, or processes against criminal, terrorist, or hostile intelligence activities for NAS. NAS is a major complex supporting aviation and technical training and a number of tenant activities. It has an average daily population of approximately 5,000 people. There are 460 buildings, 29 departments and 12 tenant commands. The NAS hosts Training Wing One and training squadrons; the Navy Technical Training Center with approximately 1,200 students; a Naval Reserve Center; a Regional Counterdrug Training Academy, a Marine Aviation Training Support unit; a Branch Medical Clinic; a Navy College; and a Navy Exchange and Commissary. The main base of the NAS occupies more than 8,000 acres, with an additional 4,000 noncontiguous acres that consist of air fields and other sites.

The appellant insures that sensitive information, equipment, and other material is not compromised, sabotaged, stolen, misused, or subjected to terrorist, malicious mischief, or other acts of willful interference. He reviews designs of and implements the installation of security systems for new facilities. He inspects facilities where sensitive material will be located to ensure security programs are operating effectively and ascertains the use to be made of material in the organization, i.e., who is to use it and how it should be protected. The appellant evaluates the effectiveness of existing security practices to determine if the system is providing adequate protection; recommends the type of control requirements, procedures, and facilities needed for security preventive measures; and assures that organizational personnel are adhering to established policy and practices. He trains the command and control centers on protective forces and crime prevention procedures. The appellant reviews law enforcement and security guard procedures and functions to assure that required personnel are available and material controls are being properly enforced. He recommends appropriate action to correct violations and deficiencies. The appellant observes the physical conditions and related activities concerned with locks, fences, lights, and gates regarding violations and compromises for vulnerabilities and safety measures. He conducts surveys and analyses to identify how critical and vulnerable facilities or sites are and threats against them.

In addition to the appellant's physical security duties he serves as the Pass and Identification Office Supervisor, the Loss Prevention Officer, the Arms, Ammunition, and Explosives Key Custodian, and the Key Control Officer for the base. The appellant supervises five positions in the Pass and Identification Office consisting of two civilian Security Clerks, GS-086-4; two military E-5 Master-at-Arms (MA3) positions equivalent to GS-4 Security Clerks; and one military E-8 Master-at-Arms (MAC) position equivalent to a GS-5 Lead Security Clerk. He performs these supervisory duties for 30 percent of the time.

The appellant receives general supervision from the Security Officer who is responsible for overall security services. The appellant works independently and resolves most problems that arise. Work is periodically checked for conformance with established physical security requirements.

The appellant's position description and other material of record furnish much more information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are performed and are incorporated by reference into this decision.

### **Series, title, and standard determination**

The agency determined that the appellant's position is properly placed in the Security Administration Series, GS-080, and titled as Supervisory Physical Security Specialist which the appellant does not contest. We concur. The GS-080 standard is used to evaluate physical security work personally performed by the appellant. Since the appellant's position meets the supervisory coverage criteria of the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG), that guide is used to evaluate his supervisory responsibilities.

## Grade determination

### *Evaluation using the GSSG*

The GSSG is used to determine the grade of General Schedule (GS) supervisory positions in grades GS-5 through GS-15. The GSSG employs a factor-point evaluation method that assesses six factors common to all supervisory positions. To grade a position, each factor is evaluated by comparing the position to the factor-level descriptions for that factor and crediting the points designated for the highest factor-level which is fully met, in accordance with the instructions specific to the factor being evaluated. The total points accumulated under all factors are then converted to a grade by using the point-to-grade conversion table in the guide. The appellant did not contest the agency's factor level determinations for his supervisory responsibilities. After careful review of the record, we concur with the crediting of Levels 2-1, 3-2, 4-A2, 4-B2, and 6-1. Our analysis of Factors 1 and 5 follows.

#### *Factor 1 -Program scope and effect*

This factor assesses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including its organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization. To credit a particular factor-level, the criteria for both scope and effect must be met.

#### *Scope*

The element *Scope* addresses the general complexity and breadth of the program directed, the work directed, or the services delivered. The geographic and organizational coverage of the program within the agency structure is included under this element.

At Level 1-1, the work directed is procedural, routine, and typically provides services or products to specific persons or small, local organizations. Work illustrated at this level includes direction of messenger, guard, clerical, or laboratory support work below grade GS-5 or equivalent.

At Level 1-2, the program segment or work directed is administrative, technical, complex clerical, or comparable in nature. The functions, activities, or services provided have limited geographic coverage and support most of the activities comprising a typical agency field office, an area office, a small to medium military installation, or comparable activities within agency program segments.

At Level 1-3, the work directed is technical, administrative, protective, investigative, or professional. Providing complex administrative, technical or professional services directly affecting a large or complex multi-mission military installation falls at this level.

The first aspect *Scope*, size of the organization served, meets Level 1-3. The installation has a population of approximately 5,000 including military, civilians, and dependents, all requiring identification cards, and supports aviation and technical training and a number of tenant

activities. It is comparable to a large military installation which is defined in the GSSG as one having a supported population exceeding 4,000 personnel and with a variety of serviced technical functions.

The second aspect of *Scope*, the nature of the services provided, meets Level 1-1. The appellant supervises employees who prepare identification cards, issues visitor and vehicle entrance passes, maintain records of entrance and departures of visitors, deny entrance to those not authorized entrance, and other related functions. Comparable to Level 1-1, the work directed is at or equivalent to the GS-4 level, is procedural and routine, and provides services and products. The work directed is not complex clerical as identified at Level 1-2. Complex clerical work typically requires considerable training to perform the work, a broad working knowledge of a special subject matter or office procedure and practice, and the exercise of independent judgment.

Level 1-1 is credited for *Scope*.

#### *Effect*

The element *Effect* addresses the impact of the work on the mission and programs of the customers, the activity, the agency, other agencies, the general public, or others.

At Level 1-1, the work directed facilitates the work of others in the immediate organizational unit, responds to specific requests or needs of individuals, or affects only localized functions.

At Level 1-2, the services or products support and significantly affect installation level, area office level, or field office operations and objectives, or comparable program segments.

Level 1-1 is met. The appellant directs pass and identification activities which support the ability of NAS to effectively track all authorized persons on the installation or deny access to others. Level 1-2 is not met since the work does not significantly affect installation operations and objectives as would higher graded technical security work.

Level 1-1 is credited for *Effect*.

Both *Scope* and *Effect* are evaluated at Level 1-1. This factor is credited at Level 1-1 for 175 points

#### *Factor 5, Difficulty of typical work directed*

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization directed, as well as other line, staff, or contracted work for which the supervisor has technical or oversight responsibility, directly or through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or others. It involves determining the highest grade of basic (mission-oriented) nonsupervisory work performed that constitutes 25 percent or more of the workload of the organization. Among the types of work excluded from consideration is work for which the supervisor does not have the minimum supervisory and managerial authorities defined under Factor 3 (including such

technical supervisory functions as assigning and reviewing work and assuring that production and accuracy requirements are met).

According to the agency, the appellant's subordinate staff includes two Security Clerks, GS-086-4, two military E-5 (MA3) positions equivalent to GS-4 Security Clerks, and one military E-8 (MAC) position equivalent to a GS-5 Lead Security Clerk. The highest level of base work performed is GS-4 and it constitutes 25 percent or more of the workload of the organization.

Level 5-2 is credited for 205 points.

### *Summary applying the GSSG*

#### *Summary*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
Program Scope and Effect	1-1	175
Organizational Setting	2-1	100
Supervisory/ Managerial Authority	3-2	450
Personal Contacts		
Nature of Contacts	4A-2	50
Purpose of contacts	4B-2	75
Difficulty of Work Directed	5-2	205
Other Conditions	6-1	310
<i>Total</i>		1,365

A total of 1,365 points is in the 1,355 to 1,600 point range and converts to GS-7 according to the point-to-grade conversion chart in the GSSG.

### *Evaluation using the GS-080 Standard*

The GS-080 standard uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES), which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

The appellant disputes the agency's assignment of levels and points for Factors 1, 2, and 4. After careful review of the record, we concur with the crediting of Levels 3-3, 5-3, 6-2, 7-2, and 8-1. This decision will, therefore, address only Factors 1, 2, and 4, contested by the appellant, and Factor 9 with which we disagree.

*Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position*

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that an employee must understand to do acceptable work, such as the steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts; and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge. The agency has credited the appellant's required knowledge with Level 1-6, but the appellant believes that Level 1-7 is warranted.

At Level 1-6, employees apply a practical knowledge of commonly applied security principles, concepts, and methodologies in carrying out assignments and developing skills by performing limited independent work. The nature of the assignments requires some application of judgment in the use of security knowledge and the employee must develop skill in weighing the impact of variables such as cost; critical personnel qualifications; variations in building construction characteristics; access and entry restrictions; equipment availability; and other issues that influence the course of actions taken in resolving security questions or issues.

Employees use knowledge of criteria, equipment, or techniques for at least one area of security specialization (personnel, physical, etc.) to resolve well-defined questions or conditions. At this level, the employee uses knowledge of standardized applications or established variations in security criteria. The variations may involve considerations such as clearance level required, adjudication of security clearances when clear-cut derogatory information is present in the investigative information, nature of materials or information to be protected, cost-benefit relationships for security devices or equipment systems, and similar considerations.

Level 1-6 is met. The appellant utilizes knowledge of common physical security concepts, principles, and practices for well-defined projects. The work requires knowledge of the Navy's physical security requirements for tenant commands, geographical areas on base, alarm equipment, and other security control devices for the day-to-day hazards concerning the protection of the base. As at Level 1-6, the appellant must be knowledgeable of security waiver requests to analyze and recommend effective solutions for security requirements. He must also be knowledgeable of potential security problems such as gate access, alarm equipment, proper lock systems, fence repairs, and other security enforcement measures. The appellant must be able to read, understand, and evaluate site/facility engineering drawings for potential security deficiencies and vulnerabilities. He weighs common factors to identify validity, cost, and required actions to meet identified physical security needs. He applies his security knowledge and skills to advise management on physical security procedures and to recommend effective solutions for preventive measures. For example, the appellant inspects commands on the base to advise personnel on security matters, observes physical conditions and security procedure violations, and determines eligibility access to classified and sensitive information. Such actions are comparable to Level 1-6.

At Level 1-7 employees use knowledge, in a wide range of security concepts, principles, and practices to review independently, analyze, and resolve difficult and complex security problems. Employees often use knowledge of security program interrelationships to coordinate the objectives and plans of two or more specialized programs; make accommodations in study or survey recommendations to allow for differing program requirements; develop and/or implement



procedures and practices to cover multiple security objectives; serve on inter-agency or inter-organization committees and groups to identify and resolve, or to assign responsibilities for resolving, security issues; or to perform similar work. The work at this level requires knowledge of a broad range of security program relationships, or significant expertise and depth in one of the highly specialized areas of security. Many employees use knowledge of a great variety of state-of-the-art security equipment and devices in planning and implementing protective methods and security procedures.

This level of knowledge is used also in security program planning at a major organizational level when such work involves applying policy direction to specific operating requirements and developing guidance for applying security policy, procedures, techniques, equipment, and methods to a variety of work situations and various degrees or levels of security controls. This knowledge is used further in responding to problems or questions involving implementation of security guidelines at lower levels and in inspecting operating security programs for adequacy, efficiency, and need for improvement. The employee at this level is commonly considered the major authoritative source of security program knowledge for organizations supported by the local security office and for interpreting policy originating from higher organizational levels (or national policy), developing local policy and implementing instructions, providing authoritative interpretations and guidance to management officials and other security specialists at the same and lower levels, and for resolving issues involving conflicting security requirements.

Level 1-7 is not met. The appellant's work consists of procedures, practices, and steps for one specialty program, physical security, for NAS. The appellant's work does not extend beyond the physical security program and does not require the broad security knowledge or in-depth specialized knowledge described at Level 1-7 to resolve difficult and complex security problems. While the appellant is sufficiently knowledgeable of physical security requirements and has the ability to analyze problems and develop effective solutions, the work does not require interpreting new policy for application, adjudicating complex personnel security clearances, developing guidance for a major organizational level, or routinely working with state of the art equipment. Although the appellant may develop local physical security guidelines he is not the major authoritative source for security program knowledge. The appellant's supervisor has overall responsibility for NAS law enforcement and physical security matters. The Chief of Naval Installations, a higher organizational level, is responsible for security policy and interpretation. (The Commander of Naval Education and Training held this responsibility prior to October 2003.) Level 1-7 may not be credited.

Level 1-6 is credited for 950 points.

#### *Factor 2, Supervisory controls*

This factor covers how the work is assigned, the extent to which the employee is responsible for carrying it out, and how the work is reviewed. The agency has credited the appellant's supervisory controls with Level 2-3, but the appellant believes that Level 2-4 is warranted.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor defines the employee's scope of responsibilities and the objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee is provided with more detailed assistance in unusual situations which do not have clear precedents. The employee, having developed competence in

the assignment, plans and carries out the steps involved, handles deviations from established procedures, and resolves problems that arise in accordance with agency or local standards, previous training and experience, established practices, or other security controls appropriate to each assignment. Projects typically involve conflicting interrelationships between security and subject-matter requirements requiring investigation and solution by the employee to determine the methods and procedures to use in the assignment. Completed work is usually evaluated for technical soundness and appropriateness in relation to the nature and level of security required by the controlled materials, information, or facility involved. Techniques used by the employee during the course of the assignment are not usually reviewed in detail.

Level 2-3 is met. The appellant plans and carries out the steps of routine assignments, performing them within defined goals, priorities, and deadlines. He works independently with very little supervision, but consults with the supervisor, if needed, on projects with unusual situations, those not having clear precedents, or when he must deviate from standard practices. The supervisor reviews the appellant's work for appropriateness and conformity to policy and requirements. The methods used by the appellant in arriving at end results are not usually reviewed.

At Level 2-4, the supervisor sets the overall objectives and decides on the resources available. The employee consults with the supervisor in determining which projects to initiate, develops deadlines, and identifies staff and other resources required to carry out an assignment. The employee, having developed expertise in the particular security specialty area, is responsible for planning and carrying out the work, resolving most of the conflicts that arise, integrating and coordinating the work of others as necessary and interpreting policy in terms of established objectives. The employee keeps the supervisor informed about progress, potentially controversial matters, or developing security conditions or requirements with far-reaching implications. Completed work is reviewed from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other security program requirements, or effectiveness in meeting objectives and achieving expected results.

Level 2-4 is not fully met. The appellant provides limited input on resources required and timeframes. His work assignments do not typically include difficult or complex problems that would require consulting with the supervisor as indicated at this level. The appellant has a continuing assignment that does not typically involve new projects. He has developed proficiency in the security systems and equipment used at NAS. While the appellant has proficiency and functions independently in performing assignments, he does not independently plan and carry out tasks to the degree envisioned at Level 2-4. Unlike Level 2-4, the appellant does not interpret policy on his own initiative in terms of the established program objectives. He follows standard security equipment and system requirements, procedures, and policies established at higher agency levels. Additionally, the appellant's supervisor has security expertise and is available to resolve difficult and complex security matters with far-reaching implications.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

#### *Factor 4, Complexity*

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work. The agency has credited complexity with Level 4-3, but the appellant believes that Level 4-4 is warranted.

At Level 4-3, employees perform various duties requiring the application of different and unrelated methods, practices, techniques, or criteria. Assignments characteristic of this level include: developing alternate security plans for a facility describing options in levels of protection and the costs involved for a Federal or private sector facility where the minimum protection requirement is well defined and accepted techniques are appropriate. Employees compile, analyze, and summarize information relating to designated security requirements; develop plans for approaches that may be taken; define the level of risk involved for each plan; develop the costs for implementing each of several options; and recommend a course of action to meet assignment objectives.

Comparable to Level 4-3, the appellant is responsible for performing various physical security duties that require the application of different and unrelated criteria for the physical security division. He is primarily responsible for maintaining and updating the physical security plan for NAS. The appellant oversees control access points to secured areas, safeguards keys, monitors and tests alarm systems, conducts annual physical surveys and security inspections, and prepares waiver requests. The work requires the appellant to be familiar with a variety of processes and methods to identify what needs to be done to prevent theft, compromise, and sabotage of government and private property for NAS. He makes decisions that require him to select, adapt, and apply the most suitable practices, procedures, methods, and precedents to reduce anticipated problems or excess cost. For example, he decides if keys should be remade, what type of locks are needed, and, as Traffic Judge, he decides the number of points to assign violators. The appellant works out funding arrangements and schedules for providing required services using well defined and acceptable techniques.

At Level 4-4, employees perform assignments consisting of a variety of security duties involving many different and unrelated processes and methods relating to well-established areas of security planning and administration. Typically, such assignments concern several broad security program areas or, in a specialty area, require analysis and testing of a variety of established techniques and methods to evaluate alternatives and arrive at decisions, conclusions, or recommendations. Programs and projects may be funded by, or under the cognizance of, different organizations with differing security requirements or variations in ability to fund system implementation. The employee typically assesses situations complicated by conflicting or insufficient data, evidence, or testimony which must be analyzed to determine the applicability of established methods, the need to digress from normal methods and techniques, the need to waive security and investigative standards, or whether specific kinds of waivers can be justified. Employees make many decisions involving the interpretation of considerable data; application of established security methods, equipment, techniques, and objectives to a variety of situations with variations in the level of security required; and ability to meet or exceed minimal acceptable levels. The employee plans the work, develops recommendations, and refines the methods and

techniques to be used. The type of work that would be assigned at this level typically includes projects that require developing designs, plans, and specifications beyond a local level or activity, i.e., a regional level involving organizations with differing physical security requirements or variations in ability to fund systems implementation.

Level 4-4 is not met. The appellant's work consists of a limited variety of physical security duties that do not have the degree of difficulty envisioned at Level 4-4. The appellant's assignments do not typically require analysis and testing of techniques. His assignments require him to correct discrepancies, secure access control, and keep all commands aware of program changes and security procedures. His decisions regarding what needs to be done depend upon the analysis of the subject or issues involved, but do not normally involve the conflicting or insufficient data, digression from normal methods, or routine need for waiver of standards typical of this level. Unlike Level 4-4, the appellant's assignments relate to the NAS operations with a variety of conventional security concerns, questions, or situations rather than to organizational complexity due to broader program scope and varying security requirements. The appellant's work does not meet the intent of Level 4-4.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 points.

#### *Factor 9, Work Environment*

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. The agency credited the appellant's position with Level 9-2 and the appellant does not contest it.

At Level 9-1, the work is primarily performed in an office-like setting involving everyday risks or discomforts which require normal safety precautions typical of such places as offices, meeting and training rooms, libraries, residences, and private or commercial vehicles, using safe work practices with office equipment, avoiding trips or falls, observing fire regulations and traffic signals, etc. The work area is adequately lighted, heated and ventilated.

Level 9-1 is met. The appellant's work is performed in a normal office setting with appropriate heating, lighting, etc. Some outdoor activities are required during surveys or inspections of the property and the appellant operates a commercial vehicle when doing field inspections.

At Level 9-2, the work is performed in settings in which there is regular and recurring exposure to moderate discomforts and unpleasantness, such as high levels of noise in contractors' plants, high temperatures in confined spaces, or adverse weather conditions at construction sites. The employee may be required to use protective clothing or gear such as masks, gowns, coats, boots, goggles, gloves, or shields.

Level 9-2 is not met. Although the appellant travels to fields, through woods and marshy terrain, he only occasionally performs duties outdoors in adverse weather. The appellant's work does not require special safety precautions or protective clothing gear as indicated at this level. The full intent of Level 9-2, work involving moderate safety risks or discomforts that require special precautions, is not met.

Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

*Summary applying GS-080 standard*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-6	950
2. Supervisory controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. Personal contacts	6-2	25
7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	5
<i>Total</i>		1,885

The nonsupervisory work performed by the appellant is credited with 1,885 total points, which falls within the GS-9 range (1,855-2,100) and equates to the GS-080-9 level

**Decision**

Because the appellant's non-supervisory work occupies more than 25 percent of the appellant's work time, it is grade-controlling. Therefore, the position is properly classified as Supervisory Physical Security Specialist, GS-080-9.