

U.S. Office of Merit Systems
Classification



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Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [Appellant]

Agency classification: Hazardous Waste Disposer
WG-6913-6

Organization: [Department of the Navy]

OPM decision: Hazardous Waste Disposer
WG-6913-6

OPM decision number: C-6913 -06-01

_____/s/_____

Kathy Day
Classification Appeals Officer

4/20/00_____

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 section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[Representative]

[Director
Human Resources Office]

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Introduction

On December 28, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted a job grading appeal from [appellant] for the position of Hazardous Waste Disposer, WG-6913-6, [organizational location], Department of the Navy, [geographic location]. The appellant is requesting that his job be classified as Hazardous Waste Disposer, WG-6913-7.

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 job subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 532, subpart G, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

General issues

This job was initially classified as a Hazardous Waste Handler, WG-6510-5/7, in June 1996. In May 1999, the agency applied the Hazardous Waste Disposer, WG-6913, Job Grading Standard (JGS) issued by OPM in October 1997, and classified the appellant's job as Hazardous Waste Disposer, WG-6913-6. The appellant believes that the agency improperly graded his job at the WG-6 level on the basis that his job description was not an identical match for the WG-7 level described in the WG-6913 JGS. He appealed to the Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service who sustained the agency classification. The appellant subsequently appealed to OPM.

Job information

The appellant is assigned to job description number MCNWCG0001. The appellant, his supervisor and the agency certified the accuracy of the job description.

The appellant's primary responsibilities involve collecting and transporting hazardous waste from installation sites generating these materials to onsite temporary storage facilities. The appellant maintains custody of these materials until contractor personnel pick them up for disposal. He ensures that waste containers are appropriate for their contents, structurally sound, and properly packed and labeled prior to transport; provides technical guidance to personnel at the generating sites on proper handling, packaging, and labeling of these substances; and provides detailed instructions on the proper completion of release/receipt documents. The appellant transports waste containers to the permitted storage facilities, weighs them, and ensures that they are placed in designated bays according to content and segregated to prevent the accidental mixing of incompatible chemicals. He completes and maintains inventory and operating logs, inspection sheets and other documents used to account for and identify materials brought into the storage facilities; reviews turn-in documents completed by generating site personnel for completeness and accuracy; and, when required, cleans and decontaminates equipment used to handle and transport hazardous waste. The appellant conducts inspections of the storage facility and waste generating sites; consolidates smaller containers into larger containers to conserve storage space, control or prevent breakage or leakage, or to reduce contractor fees; and, when necessary, assists the hazardous waste program manager in collecting samples.

The appellant works under the direction of the installation environmental director and receives technical guidance from the hazardous waste program manager. He independently carries out routine day-to-day assignments in accordance with established, standardized procedures and written or oral instructions. Assignments involving matters or problems that are new, unusual, or non-routine in nature are brought to the attention of the hazardous waste program manager or his immediate supervisor. Completed work is reviewed for compliance with oral or written instructions, accepted procedures, and established waste management program guidelines.

Standard determination

FWS Job Grading Standard for Hazardous Waste Disposing, 6913, dated December 1997.

Occupation and title determination

The agency determined that the appellant's job was properly placed in the Hazardous Waste Disposer occupation, WG-6913. The appellant agrees with the occupational code and title determination.

The JGS for the WG-6913 occupation covers nonsupervisory work involved in identifying, collecting, processing, stabilizing, neutralizing, consolidating, and/or separating hazardous waste in preparation for disposal. The work requires knowledge of hazardous waste identification techniques and safe processing and packaging procedures. Also required is an understanding and practical application of environmental rules and practices regarding the full range of hazardous waste material treatment and disposal procedures. Most work requires regular or incidental use of motor vehicles, fork lifts, and in some cases, warehouse tugs. We agree that the job is properly placed in the WG-6913 occupation.

The JGS authorizes the title *Hazardous Waste Disposer* for these jobs.

Grade determination

The JGS for the WG-6913 occupation describes work at grades WG-6 and WG-7. Jobs which differ substantially from the skill, knowledge, or other work requirements described in the standard may be graded above or below these grade levels. Four factors, *Skill and Knowledge*, *Responsibility*, *Physical Effort*, and *Working Conditions* are used to differentiate between grade levels for positions in the occupation.

Skill and Knowledge

Hazardous waste disposers at the WG-6 grade level have a thorough knowledge of safe handling, temporary storage, identification, and labeling procedures for hazardous waste. They also have sufficient knowledge to process routine hazardous substances at their facility under the guidance of a supervisor or higher grade disposer. They operate equipment such as tugs, forklifts, and motor vehicles used to load, transport, and store hazardous waste; and they use computers to access agency/facility databases for information on hazardous waste and inventory data. They

perform limited repairs on the equipment they use. They also have sufficient knowledge of hazardous materials to work as part of a hazardous material response team involved in emergency and non-emergency containments and clean up of hazardous spills.

WG-7 hazardous waste disposers have detailed knowledge of stabilizing and neutralizing procedures, as well as skill in separating, combining and transporting hazardous chemicals and substances. They operate specialized reclamation equipment and have working knowledge of the chemical characteristics of hazardous waste to ensure safe processing and containment. They also have knowledge of specialized container requirements and shipping and labeling requirements to store and ship a wide variety of hazardous waste.

The appellant's activities primarily involve the collection, transport, and storage of common hazardous waste. He makes scheduled and on call collections of waste from generator sites and transports the containers to one of two storage areas on the installation. He inspects hazardous waste containers for soundness and compares labeling information with that of documents prepared by the hazardous waste program manager. Containers are transported, depending on contents, to one of two onsite storage facilities and placed in designated storage bays (corrosives, acids, solvents, etc.). He conducts routine, periodic, scheduled inspections of containers using a checklist to note compliance with applicable storage requirements and maintain accountability. He makes physical inspections of the storage facilities to note the condition of the storage bays; ensures that building and fence warning signs are in place; ensures that doors are in good condition and can be secured; and ensures that an adequate number of fire extinguishers are in place.

The work performed by the appellant does not typically involve the kind of specialized duties described at the WG-7 grade level. He does not have to determine how to stabilize, neutralize, or separate hazardous waste, including chemical waste; nor does he use specialized equipment to process acids, caustics, chromium or other similar substances. He is not responsible for making the initial identification of unknown substances. The immediate supervisor stated that their facility permit does not allow any treatment or processing of hazardous waste. The appellant does not normally have any contact with the contents of hazardous waste containers since they are not routinely opened. Hazardous waste collected and placed in storage by the appellant typically consists of paints, adhesives, solvents, thinners, batteries, etc. The supervisor also stated that all waste collected and placed in storage is already known, and unidentified substances are not accepted because they do not have the equipment to handle them properly. The appellant does consolidate small containers of identical waste into larger containers (e.g., gallon cans of paint or glass containers subject to breaking are placed in a 55 gallon barrel) to avoid the contractor charging to perform this function. The appellant will occasionally assist the hazardous waste program manager when samples are taken to characterize the waste (i.e., flammability, toxicity, etc.) for shipping purposes.

This factor is evaluated at WG-6.

Responsibility

At the WG-6 grade level, hazardous waste disposers receive oral and written instructions from their supervisor. They are required to comply with all regulatory and safety requirements relating to hazardous material processing. WG-6 disposers are responsible for visually examining storage containers for proper labeling and for gross defects such as cracks, dents, and/or rust. Their work is reviewed in process and upon completion. They are also responsible for referring unknown samples of substances to appropriate offices for identification, treatment and processing. New or unusual work situations are referred to a supervisor or a higher graded hazardous waste disposer.

WG-7 hazardous waste disposers receive assignments from their immediate supervisor. Disposers at this level are responsible for determining the sequence of work operations and the processing and storing methods to be used. They complete their assignments with little or no technical supervision, making independent decisions in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations and agency requirements. They are responsible for performing all neutralizing and stabilizing operations in accordance with guidelines. The supervisor is available to provide technical direction on new and/or complex processes. Their work is subject to spot checks by the supervisor for conformance with regulations and safety procedures.

The regular and recurring work performed by the appellant most closely resembles that described for WG-6 level disposers. He independently makes decisions regarding routine assignments involving his regularly scheduled hazardous waste pick-up routes. He checks with the hazardous waste program manger each day to determine if there are any calls for unscheduled pick-ups and any information and instructions involving new or unusual assignments. The information and instructions are received either orally or in writing. The appellant works under relatively rigid standardized procedures that do not allow him the flexibility to determine appropriate work methods as found at the WG-7 level. For example, the hazardous waste program manager completes the DD Form 1348-1, Single Line Item Release/Receipt, used by the appellant each day. This document specifies what hazardous waste is to be picked up at the generator site; what information should be on the container labels; and which bays it should be placed in at the storage facility. Any discrepancies in the labeling of containers or other issues of a non-routine nature are brought to the attention of the hazardous waste program manager for resolution.

This factor is evaluated at WG-6.

Physical Effort and Working Conditions

Physical Effort and Working Conditions are identical for all grade levels defined in the WG-6913 JGS.

Decision

This position is properly graded as Hazardous Waste Disposer, WG-6913-6.