



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT  
WASHINGTON DC 20420

OCT 11 1995

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-95- 18

**POSITION CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE -**  
**MAIL PROCESSOR POSITIONS**

1. **Purpose:** To provide classification guidance in relation to expanded duties of mail clerk positions at VA health care facilities.
  
2. **Background:** A recent study conducted by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Mail Management Office disclosed significant changes in the duties and responsibilities performed by mail processing employees at VA health care facilities. These additional assignments were generated by technological advancements and the conversion from franked mail to direct accountability mail (completed in 1994), which have substantially affected VHA mail processing operations. This issuance contains a standard position description (SPD), developed by VHA Mail Management staff, reflecting the duties which are now being required in most mail processor positions (Attachment A). An evaluation report in Factor Evaluation System format (Attachment B) for the SPD has been prepared by Position Management and Classification Service.
  
3. **Process:**
  - a. The SPD is provided for the guidance of supervisors in preparing an adequate and accurate position description for mail processor positions. Facilities may use the SPD as written if it is determined that positions substantially match the duties and responsibilities assigned, or the SPD may be modified to meet local mail management operating needs. The SPD is not intended to be prescriptive of the way in which duties are to be assigned to individual positions. Sound classification judgment should be applied in identifying differences, as well as similarities, between the duties and responsibilities of the mail processor positions at your facility and the work situation depicted in the SPD. In instances where assigned duties vary significantly from those contained in the SPD, the extent to which the classification guidance in Attachment B is applicable will have to be determined up front.
  
  - b. The organizational title of "Mail Processor" has been adopted by Mail Management officials, as it best reflects the nature of the tasks now being performed in these positions; it may be entered in item #16 of the form OF 8. The official classification title of "Mail Clerk" must continue to be used (in item #15), as prescribed by the Office of Personnel Management standard for the Mail and File Series, GS-305, May 1977.

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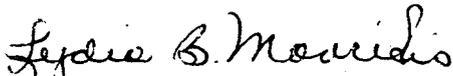
c. This issuance rescinds Veterans Administration Position Classification Guide, "Classification of Mail Clerk and File Clerk Positions at Health Care Facilities", pages 4 through 6 (published in 1979).

**4. Questions:** Questions concerning the classification guidelines should be referred to James Halliday, Position Management and Classification Service (057) on (202) 273-4973, or (in the case of specific actions) to the classification specialist servicing your facility. Questions regarding mail processing program operations and/or assignment of specific duties should be referred to Terry Sprague, Mail Manager Office, on (303) 331-7675.



Ronald E. Cowles

**CONCURRED IN:**



Lydia B. Mavridis  
Associate Chief Medical Director  
for Administration (16)

Attachments

Distribution: Per VAF 3-7225  
SS (057)

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Attachment A**

**MAIL PROCESSOR  
Position Description**

This position is located in (Section) (Service). The (facility name) is a (facility profile - give complete description of facility size, complexity and program offices).

**I. PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The principal duties and responsibilities of the position have five main components: Internal Distribution; Mail Analysis; Process Outgoing Mail; Controlled Mail; and Facility Education.

**1. Internal Distribution -**

Receives all facility mail from external sources; e.g., US Postal Service (USPS); United Parcel Service (UPS)- Federal Express (FedEx)- etc. Receiving and handling of hazardous and/or perishable materials, urgent and sensitive documents (e.g., Express Mail, Priority Mail, etc.) varies among the different carriers but generally requires employee signature acknowledging receipt. Signed receipt for these materials places personal responsibility upon the incumbent for the control, safety, timely and accurate delivery of the mail piece(s) within the facility.

Incumbent exercises personal judgment for refusing delivery of materials inaccurately addressed, for materials which would place a financial liability upon the Government simply by acceptance of delivery or, for legal documents which must be personally delivered to the addressee.

Receives and separates facility internal mail for redistribution within the facility from mail to be delivered externally.

Sorts mail for internal distribution by mail routing symbol and/or mail delivery point (MDP).

Picks up and delivers mail to all [#MDP's] of this facility. During the delivery round the incumbent assesses picked up mail for delivery to remaining MDP's on the delivery route. Delivery at this facility includes buildings and residences, necessitating the incumbent to travel outside. Mail must be protected from inclement weather elements.

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Makes special messenger deliveries as required. Messenger service may be required from, to and between any office of the facility and may, on occasion, require pick up/delivery to points external to the facility (e.g., post office, airport, etc.).

Delivers personal mail to employees residing in official quarters at the facility.

Maintains publications control and suspense for the distribution and delivery of official VA, VHA, (VBA, OAA, DC, NCS, etc.) publications to the appropriate offices.

**2. Mail Analysis -**

Mail not addressed to a specific office or MDP is opened and analyzed to determine the intended recipient.

Mail pieces are assessed to determine the necessity for control and/or date stamping. Certain non controlled mail requires date/time stamping to document receipt of the mail piece by the facility (e.g., bills, PA/FOIA requests, etc.).

Mail addressed to former employees and patients must be assessed for proper action. Certain mail may be forwarded while other mail may not.

Reviews official publications to determine proper routing to affected, implementing and/or operational facility elements.

Assesses urgency and sensitivity of incoming Express Mail, Priority Mail, overnight deliveries, hazardous and perishable materials for proper handling and delivery.

Assesses all incoming mail for potentially harmful or dangerous situations (e.g., incendiary or explosive materials).

**3. Process Outgoing Mail -**

Assesses all outgoing mail for proper and complete addressing, proper labeling and packaging. Incumbent will on own authority refuse mail pieces where packaging, labeling, endorsements or addressing is so insufficient as to hinder or delay delivery.

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Assesses all outgoing mail pieces to establish the proper class of mail (1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th class mail), application of special services or use of an alternate carrier (e.g., FedEx, UPS, Roadway, DHL, etc.). Selection of class of service and carrier will normally be made independently by the incumbent.

Requests for expedited or special mail services (e.g., registered, return receipt, BRM, Express Mail, Priority Mail, insurance, etc.) shall be assessed, approved or denied by the incumbent based upon professional knowledge and experience, published guidelines, availability of funds and personal knowledge of the immediate situation. Incumbent is expected to exercise sound personal judgment in the approval and disapproval of these services. Such decisions are normally made independently and are subject to review only upon appeal.

Prepares outgoing mail for processing by sorting into accounting groups, sub grouping by class of service and further sorting by machinability. Only after completion of these sortings may mail then be metered.

Letter and flat mail are grouped, fanned and faced for processing through the mail processing and metering equipment.

Incumbent sets the meter functionality to result in proper postage payment for each mail piece (e.g., class of service, carrier, special service, etc.). This function results in the incumbent's determining payment entitlement and disbursement of funds without further review or controls upon the process.

Incumbent identifies and separates all mail generated by offices/programs which are to be charged for the costs of postage. Workload and costs for all such mail must be accumulated separately for monthly billing.

Incumbent generates daily, weekly and monthly workload reports from automated mail processing equipment. Workload reports, those manually maintained and electronically generated, are assembled from the metering sites for this facility and satellite offices. Incumbent completes in its entirety the VA Form 10-20945, Mail Activity Report, every month for submission to the Office of the VHA Mail Manager. Data from page two of the report are presented to those organizational elements responsible for paying the costs of their mail.

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Replenishes the postage meter(s). Incumbent takes the postage meter to the servicing post office for resetting.

Payment to USPS for meter resetting is by check or draft(s) issued through the Agent Cashier in amounts up to (\$99,999.99). The incumbent is responsible for the safe transport and deposit of this payment to the post office. Incumbent is personally responsible for assuring that the meter resetting(s) plus the value of stamps, if any, equal the cash value of the check and/or draft(s) entrusted to the employee.

Incumbent monitors postage level of (#) meters and timely initiates action for issuance of a check in sufficient amount to pay the estimated postage costs for the next (monthly/quarterly) period.

**4. Controlled Mail** - certain mail, because of pecuniary liabilities, sensitivity of other reasons must be "controlled". Such mail is analogous to registered mail service through USPS.

Incumbent logs mail piece identification and date/time mail piece was received or identified through mail analysis.

Signs receipt for mail piece when required by carrier delivering to the facility.

Delivers mail piece to addressee within time frame appropriate to the time sensitivity of the mail piece (i.e., does the piece require immediate messenger service or may it be delivered during the next regularly scheduled mail delivery).

Upon delivery incumbent enters date/time of delivery and obtains signature of addressee or designee. Incumbent ensures that the person signing for and receiving the mail piece is authorized to accept such deliveries on behalf of the addressee.

**5. Facility Education -**

Incumbent provides one-on-one education as needed to facility employees on the acceptability of mail pieces, classes of mail, special mail services and proper addressing and packaging. Such education is provided to all levels of facility staff including clerical, technical, secretarial, Service Chiefs and clinicians.

Incumbent conducts classroom presentations on all facets of mail preparation, classes of mail and uses of special services.

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Incumbent organizes, structures and hosts facility mail classes presented by industry experts.

Incumbent provides new employee orientation to facility mail services.

**Factor I - Knowledge Required by Position**

Incumbent must possess detailed knowledge about the functionality and organizational alignment of the facility and all satellite offices. Knowledge must be in sufficient detail to permit identification of the proper delivery point by the functionality addressed within the mail piece. For example, if the correspondence inquires about medical care entitlement, is it for inpatient [hospital (VA or private), nursing home (VA or private), domiciliary], outpatient (staff or fee)?

Must possess detailed VA, (VHA, VBA, DC, OAA, NCS, etc.) program knowledge and be able to apply that knowledge to the facility functional and organizational offices. For example, which facility office(s) receives a circular addressing issuance, ordering and stock replenishment of hearing aids? Employment counseling?

Complete and thorough knowledge of VA and VHA policy on processing mail at VHA facilities,

Incumbent must have a basic understanding of the tenets stated in the Federal Express Statutes.

Incumbent must have a thorough understanding of all GSA and facility contracts for the carriage of mail.

A complete and thorough understanding of mail classes and special mail services. This knowledge must extend to the uses and applications of various classes of mail used independently or in conjunction with special services and their comparative economics. For example, what are the benefits and contraindications for the use of first class mail versus third class mail with special handling; or, when is it more cost effective to use premetered reply mail versus business reply mail.

Detailed knowledge regarding proper address formatting.

Basic understanding of Federal and State regulations governing shipment of hazardous material not mailable through USPS. The incumbent must recognize those materials considered hazardous by USPS.

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Knowledge of safety and efficient use of the (equipment name and model#) mail processing system. Must be sufficiently ADP-competent to use DHCP equipment to look up employee and patient address information.

A basic understanding of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act requirements as they apply to employee and patient name and address information.

Basic security requirements of the facility mail center including the identification and reporting requirements for misappropriated postage funds and the handling and reporting requirements for potentially explosive mail pieces.

Processing requirements of the alternate carriers used by this facility including but not limited to FedEx, UPS (names of other carriers routinely used by facility).

Ability to operate (vehicle name) for the delivery of mail between buildings on the facility campus. Must maintain valid state and US Government driver's licenses to perform messenger duties off facility grounds. Messenger trips may be (#) miles round trip.

**Factor II - Supervisory Controls**

Work is performed under the general guidance of (supervisory title) who is available to assist with difficult problems. Assignments are performed independently according to established procedures and previous experience. Incumbent is expected to first use own initiative to resolve problems. During irregular tours, incumbent works totally independently. The supervisor is consulted for problems for which there are no precedents. Work is retrospectively evaluated by spot check and through daily observation.

Supervisor must be absent frequently during the normal workday. The incumbent functions within general guidance of the supervisor, adjusting mail flow, delivery and pick ups to meet the exigencies of the moment. Completed work is reviewed in terms of results and impact upon facility operations.

**Factor III - Guidelines**

Guidelines exist in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), International Mail Manual (IMM), Federal Express Statutes and VA Manual MP-1, Part II, Chap. 6. The DMM specifically states USPS policy and responsibilities for the use of USPS services. It is not, however, industry specific, leaving considerable room for

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interpretation and application by local post offices and VHA personnel. Specific office procedures exist for routine applications. Incumbent is expected to research policy guidance prior to contacting the supervisor.

Detailed office guidance at the facility level does not exist. The incumbent is expected to exercise judgment and common sense when applying DMM & IMM guidance to facility operations. Incumbent works closely with facility offices to modify internal mail operations to meet changing local needs.

**Factor IV - Complexity**

The position requires the incumbent to exercise judgment in the selection of a carrier between several available with like services and the selection of the most appropriate mail service (registered, overnight, Priority and class of service). Position involves selecting the proper class of mail and the most economical service(s), and operating several different, unrelated types of equipment. Mail received and analyzed covers a wide variety of complex and technical subjects, including medical care entitlement, medical specialty treatment, engineering, fiscal/accounting, and personnel management.

**Factor V - Scope and Effect**

Position has an indirect impact upon all programs and offices throughout the facility. Mail which is not timely delivered, or misdirected entirely, severely inhibits program offices from timely (if at all) responding to their program responsibilities. Further, program offices cannot adequately complete their official responsibilities when official VA publications are not accurately delivered. Public relations of the facility, and the VA overall, are adversely impacted by the lack of timely and accurate distribution of mail within the facility.

Position has a very direct and immediate impact upon the financial well being of the facility. Incumbent, upon his/her own authority approves or denies services and then disburses the funds for that service. The incumbent maintains sole disbursement authority for services costing approximately (\$) daily, which represents approximately 1% of this facility's total operating budget.

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Inaccurate postage application or inappropriate use of special mail services may result in delayed delivery of, or even refusal to deliver, official VA mail. Continued inaccurate postage application could result in the facility being charged with defrauding USPS.

**Factor VI - Personal Contacts**

Incumbent has daily contacts with facility staff of all levels from clerical to management. Daily contacts exist with USPS and other carrier delivery staff. Telephonic contacts are made with VACO and USPS staff.

**Factor VII - Purpose of Contacts**

Facility contacts are for the purpose of explaining and, when necessary, denying mail services. Formal public presentations to clerical and administrative staff are conducted.

External facility contacts are for the purpose of discussing mail services and requirements. Incumbent contacts USPS personnel for the purpose of resetting the meter(s) and payment of postage accounts.

**Factor VIII - Physical Demands**

The position places several physical demands upon the incumbent. Delivery routes require walking and traveling outside between buildings in all types of weather. The incumbent is required to move wheeled postal hampers weighing up to 80 pounds. Incumbent is required to individually lift and place parcels weighing up to 50 pounds and, with assistance, parcels weighing up to 70 pounds. Work requires standing and walking for extended periods.

**Factor IX - Work Environment**

Work is generally performed in lighted, heated and air conditioned facilities, but the incumbent may have limited exposure to inclement weather conditions.

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ATTACHMENT B**

Evaluation for: Standard Position Description for Mail Processor

Location: VAMC or VAMROC \_\_\_\_\_

**FES EVALUATION REPORT**

Reference: Position Classification Standard for Mail and File Series, GS-305

	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>POINTS</b>	<b>EVALUATION REPORT</b>
<b>1 Knowledge</b>	FL 1-3	350	Thorough knowledge of uses/applications of various classes of mail/special services and their comparative economics, in order to make cost
<b>2 Supv. Controls</b>	FL 2-2	125	Work is performed under general guidance; assignments are done independently in accordance with established procedures. Work is reviewed retrospectively by spot check.
<b>3 Guidelines</b>	FL 3-2	125	Judgment is required in applying DMM & IMM guidance to facility operations, as they leave considerable room for interpretation/application by local offices (and detailed local guidance does not exist).
<b>4 Complexity</b>	FL 4-2	75	Judgment is exercised in selecting a carrier between several available with like services, and selecting the most appropriate mail service (registered, overnight, Priority, and class of service). Duties include rate shopping, which involves determining the best method by which mail is to be sent from a cost and timeliness standpoint.
<b>5 Scope &amp; Effect</b>	FL 5-2	75	Employee (upon his/her own authority) approves or denies services and disburses funds for those services. Position has direct/immediate impact upon financial well being of facility (@ 1% of total operating budget).
<b>6 Contacts</b>	FL 6-2	25	Contacts are maintained with personnel outside the organization, such as USPS and other carriers.
<b>7 Purpose of Contacts</b>	FL 7-2	50	Substantial contacts are to explain to customers the rationale involved in denial of requests for expedited or special mail services. Conducts formal training to facility staff.
<b>8 Physical Demands</b>	FL 8-2	20	Duties involve moving wheeled postal hampers weighing up to 80 lbs. several times daily. Employee individually lifts/places parcels weighing up to 50 lbs (and with assistance up to 70 lbs).

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<b>9 Work Environment</b>	<b>FL 9-1</b>	<b>5</b>	Work is performed mostly within adequately lighted, heated/air conditioned facilities.
	<b>TOTAL =</b>	<b>850</b>	
	<b>GRADE =</b>	<b>GS-4</b>	(655 - 850 points = GS-4)

**Factor 1 cont'd - benefit determinations and offer options for cost/time effectiveness, e.g. when is it more cost effective to use premetered reply mail versus business reply mail.**