



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
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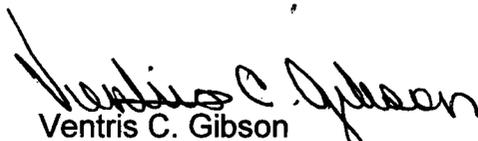
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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-01-02

POSITION CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE
FOR
CEMETERY CARETAKER/ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

- 1. Purpose.** The attached guidance supplements the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Job Grading Standard (JGS) for the Cemetery Caretaker Series, WG-4754 and the JGS for the Engineering Equipment Operator Series, WG-5716. It contains interpretive information and explanatory material to assist users in the consistent application of series and grade level criteria in the aforementioned standards to positions which dig graves for single and multiple interments and perform cemetery maintenance at field facilities in the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).
- 2. Mixed Grade.** If, in applying more than one OPM Federal Wage Survey JGS to the same position, different grade levels are assessed, the user should apply mixed-grade principles that will result in the most favorable outcome, i.e., assignment of the highest grade level creditable to the position.
- 3. Standard Position Description.** To expedite the classification of positions which perform substantially similar work, a WG-8 Standard Position Description (SPD) has been developed (refer to attachments) to cover work situations typically found at many NCA facilities. If your review determines that the work assigned to and performed by one or more incumbents at your facility substantially matches the content of the SPD, you may use the SPD as is (or with appropriate modifications) as the position description of record. Individual position descriptions should be developed where work differs significantly from that described in the SPD.
- 4. Review.** Proposed classification actions that would result in a lower grade as a result of applying of this standard must be forwarded to NCA Central Office (CO) (402D1) for review, prior to final classification by the facility, together with a revised position description, evaluation report, and current organizational and functional charts. In addition any engineering equipment operators classified at a level above the WG- 8 must be forwarded to NCA Central Office. Courtesy copies of all proposed reclassification actions affecting cemetery maintenance positions in NCA should be submitted simultaneously to the attention of Customer Advisory and Consulting Group (051A), Office of Human Resources Management.

5. **Inquiries**. Questions or comments regarding this issuance should be referred to Dorothy Walker (402D1) at (202) 273-5212, or James Halliday (051B) at (202) 273-4973.


Ventris C. Gibson
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Human Resources Management (05)

Concurred in:

Vincent Barile
Deputy Under Secretary
for Management (402)

Attachments

**POSITION CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE
FOR
CEMETERY CARETAKER/ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT OPERATOR**

For the convenience of the user, this guidance follows the format of applicable Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Job Grading Standards (JGS). Related classification information from selected OPM JGS has been included for the convenience of the user. It is believed that the attached classification guidance is consistent with all relevant OPM JGS. In the unlikely event, however, of any conflict between this guidance and the applicable OPM standard, the OPM standard shall take precedence.

Background: In 1998 OPM's Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness agreed that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) could conduct a review of the grading of engineering equipment operator jobs at VA National Cemeteries. The fact-finding conducted on-site by OPM representatives resulted from a classification advisory from the Classification Programs Division. The classification advisory stated that the subject positions should not continue to be graded by comparison with criteria in the Engineering Equipment Operator occupation, but rather should be placed in the Tractor Operator occupation and downgraded in accordance with criteria in that standard. VA requested the on-site review because we disagreed with the OPM advisory.

In our view, OPM's advisory determination did not then and does not now fully take into account the additional skill, knowledge, physical dexterity and responsibility required in using backhoes and similar heavy equipment to implement first and second interments within exceedingly close tolerances, and under widely varying weather and soil conditions where speed and safety are essential to proper performance of the work. The Department is also concerned that key grade level comparisons in the OPM advisory rest upon vague criteria in job grading standards that have not been updated for a considerable length of time: Tractor Operator, WG-5705; Cemetery Caretaker, WG-4754 (TS-39, January 1980); and Engineering Equipment Operator, WG-5716 (TS-4, January 1969). After considerable additional on-site fact-finding, clarification of the job duties and responsibilities, and careful consideration of criteria in relevant OPM JGS, the Department has concluded that most of the positions in question regularly perform significant work characteristic of the trade of Engineering Equipment Operation, WG-5716, and on that basis ought therefore be included in that occupational series.

This guidance is applicable to the unique equipment operation functions performed at large and complex national cemeteries such as Calverton, Willamette, Jefferson Barracks, as well as similar duties found in smaller cemeteries like Baltimore and Quantico. Such guidance provides a credible tool for accurate, fair, and equitable assessment of the kind and grade level of work performed by National Cemetery Administration (NCA) employees who perform similar work.

Attachment A**Series Determination:**

The WG-4754 Cemetery Caretaker Series covers nonsupervisory work in grade WG-6 and below involved in the maintenance and upkeep of cemeteries, requiring the use of a variety of trade practices associated with occupations such as motor vehicle operating, gardening, tractor operating, laboring, and fork lift operating. Such work includes digging graves, setting and aligning headstones, setting up casket-lowering devices, and maintaining the appearance of the surrounding grounds. Included in the WG-4754 Series is operation of tractors, motor vehicles, forklifts, and engineering equipment where the equipment is used primarily as a tool to perform work in the maintenance and upkeep of cemeteries. The career path to the job is characteristically from lower-graded Cemetery Caretaker positions.

The Cemetery Caretaker Series, WG-4754, does not cover cemetery maintenance work requiring skill, knowledge, and experience predominately in a single trade where knowledge of cemetery caretaking is not required. Also excluded from coverage under the Cemetery Caretaker Series are jobs above grade WG-6, the grade level of which is based upon work covered in a single different occupation, e.g., the Engineering Equipment Operator Series, WG-5716. (For additional guidance refer to JGS for Gardener, 5003; Motor Vehicle Operator, 5703; Fork Lift Operator, 5704; Tractor Operator, 5705; and Engineering Equipment Operator, 5716.)

NCA positions which perform cemetery maintenance work frequently exhibit characteristics of as many as six separate OPM occupations, such as: Gardener, WG-5003; Motor Vehicle Operator, WG-5703; Tractor Operator, WG-5705; Engineering Equipment Operator, WG-5716; Laborer, WG-3502; and Cemetery Caretaker, WG-4754. As stated in the OPM Cemetery Caretaker JGS under NOTES TO USERS: Positions involving cemetery maintenance work are often mixed jobs, therefore such work should be graded in accordance with OPM's mixed job policy.

According to that policy, if the highest skill and qualification requirements of the mixed duties are derived from a single occupation (e.g., Engineering Equipment Operating, WG-5716), the job should be titled and graded in accordance with the JGS for that occupation.

A "mixed job" is defined by OPM as a job that "involves performance on a regular and recurring basis of duties in two or more occupations at the same or different grade levels." This definition specifies that work be performed which is identifiable with two or more occupations (i.e., OPM job series). Although the series determination depends upon work being performed in two or more occupations, the grade level guidelines also apply to mixed-grade jobs that involve performance of duties in only one occupation.

The cemetery caretaker job is a mixed series job because the highest skill and qualification requirements of the position are represented by two or more occupations at the same grade level. The interpretation of the OPM policy is that above grade WG-6, if the grade level of the subject job is based on duties which are clearly covered under a single occupational JGS other than the Cemetery Caretaker Series, the job should be classified in the same series as the standard used to determine the grade level. Therefore, a job that involves cemetery caretaking duties and equipment operation at the WG-7, 8 or 9 level, as determined by direct comparison with job grading criteria in the Engineering Equipment Operator FWS Job Grading Standard, should be titled Engineering Equipment Operator and placed in the WG-5716 Series.

The **Cemetery Caretaker** standard does not cover cemetery maintenance work requiring skill, knowledge, and experience which is classifiable within **predominately a single trade**, e.g.: Gardener, WG-5003; Motor Vehicle Operator, WG-5703; Fork Lift Operator, WG-5704; Tractor Operator, WG-5705; and Engineering Equipment Operator, WG-5716.

Neither Federal Personnel Manual Supplement 512-1 nor any other OPM FWS publication provides explicit guidelines for determining the grade of mixed-grade jobs involving the performance of duties in only one occupation. OPM concluded that the above guidelines apply equally to all mixed-grade jobs, including those involving the performance of duties in only one occupation. In applying the guidelines, all the criteria should be carefully applied.

In determining the grade level of a "mixed job," there is no specified percentage-of time requirement for duties controlling the grade of the job. However, OPM states that special care should be exercised if the percentage devoted to the highest-grade duties is low (e.g., 15 percent). To ensure consistency and equity in the grading of such jobs, a mixed job should be graded in keeping with the duties that (1) involve the highest skill and qualification requirements of the job, and (2) are a regular and recurring part of the job, even if the duties involved are not performed for a majority of the time. If a job involves regular and recurring duties at the same level in two or more occupations, such a mixed job is graded to that same level. For example, see the JGS for Cemetery Caretaker, WG-4754, and Maintenance Mechanic, WG-4749.

Titles:

The **Cemetery Caretaker** standard, WG-4754 is used to grade nonsupervisory work involved in the maintenance and upkeep of cemeteries, requiring the use of a variety of trade practices associated with occupations such as motor vehicle operating, gardening, tractor operating, laboring, and fork lift operating. Such work includes digging graves, setting and aligning headstones, setting up casket-lowering devices, and maintaining

the appearance of the surrounding grounds. Jobs graded by the WG-4754 standard are titled:

Cemetery Caretaker.

Consistent with OPM guidance, since application of trade practices from different occupations is an inherent requirement of positions titled and graded as "Cemetery Caretaker," parenthetical titles such as (tractor operator) or (motor vehicle operator) will not be used. Below grade 4, cemetery maintenance jobs which primarily entail Laborer duties and are in a career ladder are titled and graded by the Cemetery Caretaker JGS, 4754. Jobs are titled and graded by the Laborer JGS, WG-3502, if the cemetery maintenance work is performed on a continuing rather than a developmental basis without leading to higher graded positions in the WG-4754 Series.

At levels of work below grade 4, cemetery maintenance jobs generally entail Laborer duties. In those situations, the following two rules apply:

- (1) The position is titled and graded by the Cemetery Caretaker JGS, 4754, if it is part of a career ladder progression structured to provide the employee with developmental experience and training in the cemetery maintenance field.
- (2) The position is titled and graded by the Laborer JGS, 3502, if the cemetery maintenance work is being performed on a continuing rather than a developmental basis. The grading criteria and the mixed work examples that are presented at the 4, 5, and 6 grade levels are intended to show some of the more common combinations of work. However, other combinations may also be found, depending on the work environment, and the skills and abilities of the employees. The examples are given to demonstrate the technique to be used in grading jobs that meet the criteria for inclusion in this occupation, as well as the technique to be used for grading jobs that do not meet the inclusion criteria. Note that while the OPM standard presents grading guidance at each of the grade levels for work in other occupations as it relates to the cemetery environment, the job grading standards covering those occupations should still be referenced thoroughly in making grade determinations.

In the case of VA cemetery maintenance nonsupervisory jobs classified above grade WG-6, it has been determined that the higher level skills which support the grade level and which represent the primary recruiting requirement are often those classified in the Engineering Equipment Operator Series, WG-5716. Although classified in the WG-5716 series, such jobs should also be assigned the parenthetical title (**Cemetery Caretaking**) to identify the important caretaking work performed and the qualification requirements needed to perform the work.

For jobs classified in the Engineering Equipment Operator Series, WG-5716, the approved official title for nonsupervisory, nonleader positions which require knowledge of and familiarity with cemetery maintenance practices and procedures to the extent that these constitute a recruiting requirement is: **Engineering Equipment Operator (Cemetery Caretaking)**. Parenthetical titles should be used only where it would be helpful or necessary to identify further the duties and responsibilities involved, and such duties and responsibilities reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work. The addition of parenthetical designations can be important for a variety of purposes, such as to indicate special skills for recruitment or to identify positions for pay purposes. In all cases where a parenthetical title is used, the position description must clearly reflect the duties that support the parenthetical designation.

Position management issues: One of the main concerns about the OPM findings was the implication that interments and related maintenance work could have been accomplished by individuals with lesser skills using lighter equipment, such as tractors with attachments. To fully address this assertion, this issue was explored in-depth by the NCA/OHRM/Union Project Team in the course of the fact-finding. What the Team found was that it is necessary to use heavy equipment (e.g., backhoes and front-end loaders) to accomplish interments because lighter duty equipment: a. wears out faster and breaks down frequently; b. is unstable and therefore dangerous to the operator and co-workers when used on varying types of soil and environmental conditions; c. is more costly to maintain in the long run; and d. is not capable of digging to the depths and tolerances required in hard and frozen ground.

Following extensive on-site observation of work in progress, discussions with management officials and equipment operators, and review of the technical specifications and capabilities of the equipment, the Team concluded unanimously that heavy equipment is needed to accomplish these tasks on a regular and recurring basis. As an aside, the only use of tractors observed by the Team was for lawn care. Likewise, operation of heavier equipment (e.g., backhoes) with more controls and levers requires skill and knowledge over and above that needed to operate lighter equipment (e.g., tractors). Therefore, the fact remains that classification of these jobs must be based on the actual equipment furnished by management to do the work and the knowledge and skill required to operate it, not on speculation by OPM or any other outside parties as to what, hypothetically, might be used to do the work.

Qualifications:

OPM job grading standards provide criteria for distinguishing different levels of work by describing the requirements of different grade levels in terms of the skill and knowledge, responsibility, physical effort, and working conditions involved. Examining guides, on the other hand, provide guidance for the requirements for filling jobs and apply to the movement of employees into and within the Federal Service. They describe the knowledge, skill, ability, and personal characteristics required to predict potential for successful performance of the duties of a job, and are a means for determining that job applicants have this potential. To ensure consistent occupational relationships in terms of kinds and levels of work, and qualifications required, job grading standards and examining guides are developed on the basis of coordinated fact-finding studies.

Statements in a job grading standard covering the specific knowledge, skill, and ability necessary for performance of work at a particular grade level are consistent with the corresponding guide for establishing the qualification requirements for positions involving that work. Nevertheless, it should be noted that since they serve different purposes, the criteria in JGSs are not completely identical with those in OPM examining guides. For example, certain personal characteristics, such as interest in the work, may be very useful in a qualification guide to predict potential for successful performance of the duties of a job. These personal characteristics at times, however, are of little use in distinguishing among different grade levels of work, and therefore may not be mentioned in the job grading standard. Care must be taken to ensure that examining guides remain basically consistent with the corresponding grade-level criteria in job grading standards. Any significant change of qualification requirements for a job may change the grade of the job. For this reason, employees who are responsible for staffing functions, and employees who are responsible for grading the jobs involved, should work closely with each other to achieve the necessary coordination.

The current examining guide for the WG-5716 occupation consists of the approved job elements for the WG-5700 Mobile Industrial Equipment Operation Family, dated August 1969 and February 1971. In response to a query, we were advised by OPM that there is no more specific examining guide for the WG-5716 Series, and that the entire guide is under revision, with publication of a new guide anticipated in FY 2002. Aside from the requirement to demonstrate safe operation of a motor vehicle over time, there appears to be no direct relationship between the OPM examining guide and the specific knowledge and skill requirements of positions classified in either the WG-5716 or WG-4754 Series.

Grade Level Guidance:

Subject positions require skill and knowledge in the operation of an eleven to twelve-thousand pound backhoe, which is used to quickly dig gravesites. Often these gravesites are between filled graves and to tolerances within two inches of caskets buried on either side. In addition, difficulty is experienced in maneuvering the backhoe between and among headstones and other markers to approach the gravesite.

OPM guidance states that while the OPM WG-4754 standard presents grading guidance at each of the grade levels for work in other occupations as it relates to the cemetery environment, the job grading standards covering those occupations should still be referenced thoroughly in making grade determinations. Guidance that follows adheres to that principle.

The WG-4754 standard does not describe all possible grades for the occupation. Actual jobs may differ substantially from the levels of skill, knowledge, and other work requirements of the grades described in the standard. Such jobs should be graded in accordance with sound job grading principles and methods.

At the higher skill and knowledge levels of the occupation, progressively heavier and more complex equipment, such as backhoes, are utilized to dig graves for first and second interments. The heavier equipment is needed to reach greater depth, for long term durability, speed and for the safety of the operator. The type of equipment furnished by management as well as the skill required of the operator are the governing elements to be considered in comparing work involving the operation of powered mobile engineering equipment for the purpose of digging graves. It is noteworthy that OPM classification and qualification standards for Engineering Equipment Operator do not make reference to specific capacities and capabilities of equipment operated, nor do such standards provide information on or examples of makes and models deemed to meet particular grade levels in the classification standard.

Many different makes and models of equipment utilized throughout VA cemeteries as tools for the purpose of digging graves. Most of the equipment falls under the generic category of backhoe, and within this category there are many different sizes and capacities of specific models. Some have separate levers for controlling the front pads and three levers for operating the bucket to dig. Some, but not all, are equipped with 4WD. Equipment typically used for this purpose includes, but is not limited to: Case Backhoe, Model 480 F; John Deere Backhoe, and Ford Backhoe. Tractors and similar types of mobile equipment are not often used for this purpose, as the equipment does not have the range of motion, depth or durability for continuous work.

Standard Position Descriptions (SPDs)

CEMETERY CARETAKER, WG-4754-5

General: In contrast to the grade 4 level, where Cemetery Caretakers operate easy-to-manuever garden tractors with few controls or perform routine, specified gardening tasks, grade 5 Cemetery Caretakers operate larger and more complex equipment such as fork lifts and pick-up trucks, requiring the workers to manipulate a greater variety of controls and to be familiar with the more numerous parts and functions of the equipment. As at the next lower grade level, grade 5 Cemetery Caretakers apply trade practices in at least two occupations at the same grade level in performing their cemetery maintenance work.

Skill and Knowledge: Grade 5 Cemetery Caretakers apply practices requiring a fuller knowledge of more than one trade technique and method, and a greater need for accuracy, than at the grade 4 level. For example, workers at this level need more skill to handle the additional operating controls of equipment such as fork lifts and pick-up trucks; they need greater skill to maneuver these larger vehicles; they must be knowledgeable of State motor vehicle regulations if they are required to drive on public highways; they know the weight capacity of fork lifts and how to lower, raise, and tilt the forks; and they use greater skill in safely distributing the larger loads hauled by their vehicles.

Responsibility: Grade 5 caretakers operate larger, more powerful, and more dangerous equipment than at the lower level. Consequently, they must exhibit greater care and judgment in performing tasks such as safely handling heavy materials with forklifts, transporting personnel and supplies with pick-up trucks, and obeying traffic regulations while on public roadways. Caretakers at this level follow oral instructions or work orders indicating the task to be performed. Assignments are completed independently, with supervisory review to ensure that job requirements are met.

Physical Effort: Moderate physical effort is needed to operate hand and foot controls of vehicles. Workers at this level occasionally lift objects weighing over 23 kilograms (50 pounds) when loading and unloading cargo.

Working Conditions: While operating vehicles, caretakers at this level drive in all types of traffic and weather and are exposed to the possibility of accidents. They work outside while loading and unloading cargo.

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Attachment B**

MIXED WORK EXAMPLES TITLE, CODE, AND GRADE

Motor Vehicle Operator, 5703-5

Fork Lift Operator, 5704-5

Cemetery Caretaker, 4754-5

Laborer, 3502-3

Gardener, 5003-4

Tractor Operator, 5705-4, 5703-5

CEMETERY CARETAKER, WG-4754-6

General: As at the next lower grade level, grade 6 Cemetery Caretakers perform a variety of cemetery maintenance tasks requiring the application of trade practices from two or more occupations at the same grade level. However, in performing duties such as operating a tractor mounted auger, planning and carrying out gardening work, and operating dump trucks, grade 6 Cemetery Caretakers apply a more intensive and specialized knowledge of trade practices and use greater judgment in applying that knowledge than workers at the grade 5 level.

Skill and Knowledge: In contrast to the grade 5 level, grade 6 Cemetery Caretakers are required to apply specialized trade techniques in performing tasks such as operating attached power equipment, and performing a full range of gardening tasks. For example, workers at this level must be able to use a power take-off, extra forward speeds, and additional driving wheels in maneuvering and operating dump trucks; they must know how to operate field-type tractors with attached equipment, such as augers and movable dozer blades, which require skill in making multiple connections with the power take-off and hydraulic power lines, and in manipulating the tractor and attachment controls at the same time; and they use a more advanced knowledge of gardening practices in adapting to soil conditions, weather changes, and other gardening variables.

Responsibility: Grade 6 Cemetery Caretakers exercise more judgment and independence in determining the procedures for accomplishing cemetery maintenance tasks than workers at lower levels. For example, in using a tractor-mounted auger to dig grave stone holes, grade 6 workers must determine whether the ground is too hard or too rocky to risk damaging the powered auger, and must judge when the hole depth meets specifications. In carrying out the installation's seasonal gardening schedule, grade 6 caretakers are responsible for observing the condition and growth of the cemetery's lawn, shrubs, flowers, and trees, and to take the action necessary to correct the problem. This includes determining how and when to transplant shrubs, to apply fertilizer, to plant grass, and to control the spread of plant disease, weeds, and other blights. Workers at this level follow established trade methods and procedures in performing assignments. Completed work is checked to see that it meets acceptable standards.

Physical Effort: Grade 6 Cemetery Caretakers exert considerable effort in maneuvering large vehicles, such as dump trucks, and in hooking up heavy equipment attachments to tractors. The work also requires frequent walking, stooping, kneeling, and pushing of wheelbarrows in performing gardening work.

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Working Conditions: Grade 6 caretakers work outside in all kinds of weather. In addition, when operating vehicles, they drive in all types of weather and traffic and are exposed to the possibility of accidents.

MIXED WORK EXAMPLES TITLE, CODE, AND GRADE

Gardener, 5003-6

Tractor Operator, 5705-6

Laborer, 3502-3

Motor Vehicle Operator, 5703-6

Tractor Operator, 5705-6

Gardener, 5003-6

Tractor Operator, 5705-4

Gardener, 5003-6

Laborer, 3502-3

**STANDARD POSITION DESCRIPTION for:
Engineering Equipment Operator (Cemetery Caretaking), WG-5716-8**

Major Duties: Operates one or more types of heavy equipment with multiple hand and foot controls, such as a backhoe, to dig, push, pull, pile, and load earth. For example, the operator uses equipment that is fitted with a front-end loader to maneuver to a specific spot to transfer material from the ground into a dump truck. The equipment is used as a tool for the purpose of digging multiple graves and preparing gravesites for first and second interments. Landscapes gravesites by clearing brush, tree stumps, and rocks and cleaning underdeveloped land. Adjusts attachments for proper level, angle, and depth, according to the work to be done and the type of equipment used. Work is generally done on flat or rolling terrain, at new or previously landscaped gravesites with simple terrain problems.

Operates backhoe in place to excavate earth composed of dirt, rock, sand and/or and clay from gravesites. Digs graves on level ground and hillsides above or below the frostline under widely varying conditions, subject to contact with mud, ice, snow, rock, hard pan clay, and tree stumps. Uses equipment to dig ditches in occupied gravesites for the placement of french drains and to backfill and tamp gravesites following burials.

May operate a variety of light mobile equipment and attachments used in cemetery and grounds maintenance such as tractors, trucks weighing less than 22,000 pounds, trailers, pumps, mowers, air compressors and turf vacuums. Uses powered equipment and attachments to dig holes for posts and headstones, and to pull, align and replace headstones and markers. Performs first echelon maintenance on all assigned equipment. Checks and as needed fills or replaces oil, water, brake fluid, batteries and tires.

Skill and Knowledge: The operator is required to know the uses of the different sets of controls and be highly skilled in operation of the equipment and attachments and in handling the controls to perform the work. Frequently, these different controls are handled at the same time, requiring good hand, foot, and eye coordination. The operator is required to have a basic knowledge of the nature of the soil and features of the terrain to determine the proper approach according to the condition of the surface and subsurface, and the depth and spacing of existing gravesites. The operator must be able to move the equipment about in confined areas and work to tolerances as close as three inches horizontally and vertically, and maneuver the equipment between headstones and markers without damaging caskets or adjacent graves. Applies knowledge of proper shoring procedures required by local codes and OSHA regulations.

Requires skill in the use of backhoe to dig multiple graves quickly (e.g., 20-30 minutes per gravesite) without disturbing remains, headstones or markers on adjacent gravesites. Also requires knowledge and skill to operate equipment without injury to self or others on slopes, and muddy and frozen ground. Requires skill and knowledge to attach, detach, replace and operate a wide variety of powered attachments and tools such as augers, dozer blades and forklifts. The operator reads and deciphers maps, blueprints, drawings and plans that show the location of past and future burial plots and remains. Work requires detailed knowledge of cemetery burial processes and protocols and sensitivity to cares and needs of family and other mourners.

Responsibilities: The operator follows oral instructions or written work orders concerning the location of the job and the nature of work to be done. Applies detailed knowledge of cemetery burial processes and protocols in deciding upon the best sequence and timing of on-site work operations. The work is performed largely without direct supervision.

Operates equipment in a safe manner according to safety rules and regulations and uses the equipment properly so that it is not damaged. Remain alert at all times and operates equipment carefully, especially when close to coworkers, mourners, etc., to prevent injury to self and others and avoid damage to the equipment and surrounding environment. Is responsible for reading and following maps and blueprints to avoid contacting underground electric, gas, water and sewer lines.

Selects routes to new and reopened graves that cause the least damage to surrounding grounds and markers. Digs graves to close tolerances, often within two inches of pre-existing adjacent gravesites and caskets. Ensures that graves dug for second interments are open to within six inches of original casket without damage to underlying and adjacent caskets and reopens previous interments without disturbing remains of the deceased. Shores walls as required and replaces earth following burials.

Physical Effort: Heavy physical effort is used by the operators in constantly reaching, bending, turning, and moving hands, arms, feet, and legs to handle different sets of controls to operate the equipment and attachments. Considerable strain is caused by the constant vibration of the equipment and the jerking and jolting from operating over rough surfaces. They also perform more exacting work such as digging with a backhoe to close tolerances, requiring considerable manipulation of controls. Because of the location of some of the controls and attachments, the operators are frequently required to work in awkward or strained positions.

Working Conditions: Work is performed in all types of weather, in unairconditioned vehicles, often in an open driver's seat or platform, on hills, slopes, grades, rolling surfaces, and forests. The operators are exposed to injury due to the possibility of the equipment overturning. They are subject to noise, vibration, dust, dirt, and fumes from the motor and exhaust.

In addition to risks posed by nearby markers and gravesites, the incumbent operates heavy equipment in close proximity to obstacles and hazards such as underground gas and electric lines, water and sewer lines, drains, curbs and trees.

EVALUATION NOTES: Major Duties and other significant characteristics of the above SPD, with the exception of motor vehicle operation and lower level cemetery maintenance tasks, substantially match the Skill and Knowledge, Responsibilities, Physical Effort and Working Conditions criteria described in the OPM JGS for Engineering Equipment Operator, WG-5716-8. The SPD does not meet evaluation criteria for classification at the WG-10 level, as work does not involve excavation of construction sites, moving earth on hilly terrain or operation close to buildings on a regular and recurring basis.