



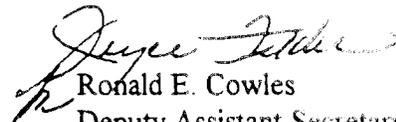
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PERSONNEL AND LABOR RELATIONS
WASHINGTON DC 20420

MAR 30 1994

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER 05-94- 9

**GUIDANCE FOR APPLICATION OF
JOB GRADING STANDARD FOR FEDERAL WAGE SYSTEM SUPERVISORS**

1. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a new job grading standard for grading the jobs of supervisors who exercise technical and administrative supervision over trades and labor workers. This is the revised Job Grading Standard for Federal Wage System Supervisors, which was issued in December 1992 under Transmittal Sheet No. 66. Due to logistical problems, the printed standards were distributed to VA facilities in February 1994. This standard supersedes the Job Grading Standard for Supervisors issued in August 1982 by Transmittal Sheet No. 49.
2. We have prepared the attached interpretations and guidance for applying this job grading standard, in the interest of ensuring consistency in the evaluation and grading process. This guidance is not to be used in lieu of the OPM Job Grading Standard for Supervisors, but rather as a supplement to that document. This guidance should be filed with the official copy of the standard.
3. We recommend that job descriptions for the jobs covered by this standard be rewritten in the format of this standard, in order to achieve job description adequacy and evaluation accuracy.
4. General advice and assistance concerning the application of this guidance may be obtained by contacting the appropriate specialist in Position Management and Classification Service who has designated advisory responsibility for your facility.


Ronald E. Cowles
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Human Resources Management

Attachment

Distribution: Per VAF 3-7225
SS (057)

JOB GRADING GUIDANCE

GENERAL

This standard should not be used to grade the work of positions responsible for supervising trades and laborers when the position does not have a "paramount requirement" of knowledge and experience in trades, crafts, or labor work. It is important to note that the larger the scope of work functions supervised or the higher the organizational location, the more likely it is that managerial knowledge and skill constitute the "paramount requirement," rather than any trade, craft, or laboring experience which may be desirable or necessary. Also excluded from coverage of this standard is supervisory work performed only: (a) in the absence of the regular supervisor; (b) to assist a supervisor in meeting emergency workloads; (c) on a rotating or part-time basis with other employees, or (d) for training purposes to gain experience for a higher grade job. The determination that this standard is to be used to grade jobs involving supervisory duties requires two determinations. The first is the selection of the appropriate pay system that the job should be placed in. The paramount requirement determines the pay system. For a supervisory job, if the paramount requirement is managerial knowledge and skill, than the position would be placed in the General Schedule. A job whose paramount requirement is trades, crafts, or laboring experience and knowledge would be placed in the Federal Wage system. The second decision which must be made involves a determination that the supervisory work performed by the job is sufficient to be covered by this standard. The percentage of time spent in the performance of supervisory duties should not be considered in determining whether working supervisory jobs meet the criteria for coverage under this standard. What has to be considered is the level of supervisory responsibility that has been officially assigned and is being performed. (This standard applies to Patient Worker Supervisors if they meet the basic coverage requirements).

A supervisory job is normally placed in the same occupational series as that for the occupation that is being supervised. When work of more than one occupation is being supervised, the supervisory job is in the same code as the code of the occupation which best reflects the overall nature of the work operations supervised and/or is the most important for recruitment, selection, placement, and other personnel purposes. This is usually the occupational code of the highest level nonsupervisory work supervised. If no single occupation predominates, the 01 code of the most appropriate job family, or a job code that includes multiple trades and crafts, is used.

All jobs covered by this standard will be titled by adding supervisor after the occupation code selected, (e.g., O.C. 4206-Plumber, would be titled - Plumber Supervisor)

GRADING PLAN

Factor I: Nature of Supervisory Responsibility

This factor considers the nature of the supervisory duties performed, and the type and degree of responsibility for control over the work supervised. The factor describes four basic supervisory situations. The supervisory situation must be **fully met in all** characteristics in order for credit to be given for that level. In determining whether a particular job meets (or exceeds) the level of responsibility represented by a specific supervisory situation, duties/responsibilities stated in the job description which are significantly different from the specified characteristics in the supervisory situation may not be considered. In other words, if work planning duties of a job do not fully meet a specific situation, other planning aspects in the job description which are clearly not reflected in the characteristic tasks for that situation in the standard cannot be credited to offset the weaknesses. A job which does not fully meet Situation #1 is not to be evaluated any further, and the job should be graded in accordance with the nonsupervisory work which the job performs. If the job significantly exceeds a supervisory situation in one or more characteristics, but does not fully meet the entire supervisory situation, the lower supervisory situation is to be credited. However, the fact that the job exceeds the supervisory situation in some aspects is to be noted for later consideration. Please note that it is possible that two supervisory jobs, one supervising the other, may both be evaluated as meeting the same supervisory situation. A supervisor is not **automatically** one level (situation) higher than the subordinate supervisors in an organization. Also, it is possible that two supervisors at the same organizational level may be evaluated at different supervisory situations.

We anticipate that very rarely, if ever, will any wage system supervisors in the Department of Veterans Affairs fully meet (in its entirety) Supervisory Situation #4. Situation #4 substantially exceeds the "Work Direction" and "Administration" functions, and to a lesser extent exceeds the "Planning" function, described in the "General Foreman" range of responsibility in the superseded (1982) Job Grading Standard for Supervisors. Some of the responsibilities described in situation #4 are typical of General Schedule supervisory, managerial and staff positions in certain medical center organizations. In order to be able to credit situation #4, the supervisor must control an organization through two or more levels of supervision and fully meet all duty statements in each of the three areas of responsibility.

Please note that supervisors in situation #3 differ **primarily** from supervisors in situations #1 and #2 in the scope, volume, and complexity of work operations, which are (1) carried out by subordinate supervisors in at least two separate units, and (2) controlled through one or more subordinate levels of supervisors. This does not mean that

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supervisors who have two subordinate unit supervisors always meet situation #3. It should be noted that the described "Work Direction" and "Administration" functions are closely comparable to the "General Foreman" range of responsibility characterized in the previous standard, while the "Planning" function of Situation #3 falls somewhat short of that range (with respect to scope of planning responsibility).

As a general guideline, a supervisor which did not at least minimally meet the "General Foreman" in the old standard would not likely match Situation #3. This would imply that this situation involves supervision of an organization of considerable size, in contrast to Situation #2, which envisions an organization of small to moderate size.

Factor II: Level of Work Supervised

This factor concerns the level and complexity of the work operations supervised, and their effect on the difficulty and responsibility of the supervisor's job. This determination is performed in exactly the same manner as the base level determination in the previous job grading standard for Supervisors. Care must be taken so that only jobs for which the supervisor is technically accountable are considered. Jobs for which the supervisor is technically accountable include jobs for which the supervisor is the second level supervisor. In rare cases a supervisor might directly supervise some employees and also be a second level supervisor to others. In such a case the supervisor is still considered to be technically accountable for the jobs for which second level supervision is exercised, and those jobs would be also considered in determining level of work supervised. Determining the level of work supervised is a two step process. Step 1 is to identify the occupations which are directly involved in accomplishing the main purpose of the work unit for which the supervisor is held accountable. The number of subordinates in an occupation is not the major consideration; e.g., the fact that a Plumbing and Pipefitting Unit consists of ten plumbers grade 9 versus two pipefitters grade 10 does not remove pipefitting from consideration for level of work identification. Step 2 is to determine the grade of the highest level nonsupervisory work performed under normal supervision in one of the occupations determined in step 1. Once more, number of employees at a grade level is not the major consideration. In determining this grade level, remember that a grade given for shift responsibilities cannot be considered for the level of work. Jobs awarded extra grades for accomplishing work under less than normal supervision cannot be used to determine level of work supervised. While the number of employees is not a major consideration, seldom (if ever) should a single job serve as a basis for a base level grade determination. If there is a situation where there is only one job at a higher grade level, and it is deemed not to reflect the level and complexity of work operations supervised, this should be noted for later consideration. We would anticipate that there would be few occasions where a constructed level of work would typically be required.

Factor III: Scope of Work Operations Supervised

This factor considers the scope of the job's supervisory responsibility in terms of three areas: (1) the scope of the assigned work function and organizational authority; (2) the variety of functions the job is required to supervise; and (3) the physical dispersion, work coordination, and location of subordinate employees. This factor is divided into three subfactors to correspond to those three areas; each subfactor in turn is subdivided into levels with points assigned to each level. The total points for all three subfactors are then converted to specific levels for Factor III.

Subfactor A. Scope of Assigned Work Function and Organizational Authority

This subfactor measures the scope, purpose, authority, and importance of the jobs' decisions. Care must be used to only consider supervisory authorities that are officially assigned and performed.

A first level supervisor may only be evaluated at levels A-1 or A-2. A second level or higher supervisor would not be evaluated at level A-1. In most cases the principle distinction between levels A-1 and A-2 involves determining whether the supervisor is responsible for a single work function or an organizational segment. Examples of single work functions at VA medical centers (VAMC) are: paint shop; carpentry shop; plumbing shop; boiler plant operations; linen distribution unit; transportation unit; or food service unit. An organizational segment, as characterized in Level A-2, consists of more than one work function. An organizational segment that comprises a few work functions at a VAMC would typically be organizations such as: plumbing and pipefitting unit; grounds maintenance unit; heating and air conditioning unit, food processing and service section; and laundry and linen unit. It should be understood that, in Level A-3, the utilization of several subordinate supervisors and leaders is interpreted to mean three or more. In order to credit level A-4, it is required that the incumbent supervise a large group of subordinate supervisors and leaders (through two or more levels), have planning and programming decision authority, and have the opportunity and ability to improve operational effectiveness of the organization. This level of authority is not normally assigned to FWS Supervisors at most VA facilities, as these authorities are usually performed by General Schedule supervisors or managers in such organizations.

Subfactor B. Variety of Function

This subfactor evaluates the difficulties of the technical supervision which is required by the supervisory job. It is based on the premise that supervision of dissimilar or unrelated work functions requires broader technical knowledge and skills than does supervision of similar work functions. For purposes of evaluation of this subfactor, if any jobs supervised represent work which consists of more than one occupation, (even if they are graded in a series such as Utility Systems Operating), these varied occupations should be

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considered if they are part of the primary function of the unit. Care must be exercised in evaluating jobs which have been graded using the "mixed jobs principle", so that only occupations which are the primary function of the organization are counted. For example, a warehouse unit supervisor would only get credit for materials handler, even if one of the employees was in a mixed job which was graded as a forklift operator. This is because the forklift operation is in support of the warehouse function and is not a primary function.

Similar occupations would be those that are in the same occupational family in the Index of Trades and Labor Job Families and Occupations. Please note that in order to credit Level B-4, the supervisor must technically supervise two or more dissimilar occupations which are at least at the grade 8 level. Levels B-5 and B-6 would not normally be possible, as there are presently no nonsupervisory wage grade 14 or 15 employees in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Subfactor C. Workforce Dispersion

This subfactor evaluates the varying levels of difficulty associated with problems encountered when the employees are physically dispersed, and generally is applicable to only first level (immediate) supervisors. Many supervisory jobs will receive no credit under this subfactor. Jobs such as supervising the transportation unit (in view of the inherent nature of the work that is typically performed in the absence of direct supervision), would not receive any credit under this subfactor. Jobs such as a cook supervisor, where the work is performed in the main kitchen and satellite kitchens, would also not receive credit under this subfactor. At level C-1, subordinate employees are located in several buildings or within a large Federal complex consisting of many multifloor buildings and support facilities. We find that level C-1 encompasses the typical dispersion associated with the medical centers (including two-division facilities).

The total number of points credited for Factor III is then compared to the Point Conversion Chart to determine the level for Factor III. The grading tables are then used to determine the initial grade level. This initial grade level is usually the final grade, but some grade adjustments have to be considered. No grade adjustment of more than one grade, up or down, is authorized no matter how many adjustment factors apply to the job. If more upward adjustment factors apply to a job than downward factors, the job should be increased by one grade level. If more downward adjustment factors apply to a job than upward factors, the job should be decreased by one grade. An equal number of upward versus downward adjustment factors requires no adjustment to the initial grade level.

The only downward adjustment factor described in the standard is when a supervisory job is evaluated and its initial grade level is the same grade level as the job which supervises it. There are two upward adjustment factors described in the standard. The two are as follows: (1) when a job substantially exceeds a supervisory situation in

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Factor I and the level of work credited in Factor II is exceeded by one or more jobs for which the supervisor has full technical accountability. Please note that **both** conditions must be met before credit can be given. (2) special staffing requirements may impose on a supervisor a substantially greater responsibility for job design, job engineering, work scheduling, training, counseling, motivating, and maintaining security than what is normally envisioned in a typical supervisory job. Examples such as work-study, upward mobility, or incentive therapy programs may occasionally be found in VA facilities. An upward grade adjustment may be credited when it is determined that the **majority** of the subordinate workforce is affected by the presence of **all** of the following: the special staffing employees are assigned on a permanent and continuing basis; the supervisory actions must be tailored to fit these special workers' situations; and counseling and motivational activities are essential in the direction of these employees.

When it is determined that a job is performing as a full assistant (i.e., the job is singular and has direct day-to-day line authority over **all** the personnel and work operations for which the superior is responsible), the job is graded one grade below the final grade of the superior's job.

No additional grade should be added for serving in absence of the superior, as this is not a regular and recurring duty.

