



225 FW 1

Position Classification

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Allowances

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1.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter provides:

- A. The authorities and responsibilities for position classification in the Service, and
- B. Policies and procedures for position classification.

1.2 What is the scope of this chapter? This chapter applies to all positions in the Service.

1.3 What are the authorities for this chapter?

- A. Classification ([5 U.S.C. 51](#)).
- B. Classification Under the General Schedule ([5 CFR 511](#)).
- C. Job Grading System ([5 CFR 532, Subpart F](#)).
- D. [370 DM 311](#), The Power of Appointment and Removal.
- E. [370 DM 312](#), Position Management.
- F. [370 DM 511](#), Position Classification Under the Classification Act System.

1.4 What is the Service's policy on position classification? Our policy is to ensure that:

- A. Position descriptions adequately reflect the work employees perform, and
- B. We classify positions in accordance with [5 U.S.C. 51](#), related statutes, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations, and the Department of the Interior (Department) policies.

1.5 What is the objective of the Service's position classification program? Our objective is to establish a classification program that:

- A. Implements the principle of equal pay for substantially equal work;
- B. Recognizes that variations in ranges of basic pay for different employees should be proportionate to substantial differences in the difficulty, responsibility, and qualification requirements of the work they perform; and
- C. Facilitates human resource management in areas such as compensation, recruitment, selection, promotion, and training of employees.

1.6 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?

A. Accretion of Duties Promotion. An accretion of duties promotion is an exception to merit promotion rules. We give this type of promotion when we reclassify a position at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities (see [section 1.16](#)). We may make such a non-competitive promotion if the initial position has been absorbed into the new position and the promotion does not directly affect other employees in the organization (duplication of work efforts or dilution of higher-graded positions). The additional duties and responsibilities frequently represent an outgrowth, over a significant period of time, of the initial position.

B. Career Ladder or Developmental Positions. Career ladder or developmental positions are positions that we establish below the full performance level to give us more recruitment options. For these positions, we select the employee at a lower grade and provide additional training and experience that will allow us to promote the employee non-competitively to the full performance level. Also see [223 FW 6](#), Merit Promotion and Placement.

C. Classification Standards. OPM issues classification standards. The standards are the basis for assigning the appropriate title, series, and grade to each position.

D. Desk Audits. A desk audit is the process of gathering information about the duties an employee performs to ensure the accurate classification of the position. We may conduct desk audits when we need to establish or re-describe a position. The audit involves:

- (1) Interviewing both the incumbent of the position and the immediate supervisor, and
- (2) Reviewing examples of the employee’s work products.

E. Official Title. An official title is what we assign a position in accordance with OPM classification standards.

F. Organizational Title. We may assign an organizational title to better reflect the position’s responsibility within the organizational unit.

G. Standard Position Descriptions. Standard position descriptions (SPDs):

- (1) Describe the work for a number of positions whose duties are basically the same and are suitable for establishment at various locations within the Service, and
- (2) Ensure that we consistently classify title, series, and grade level of a position based on the work described.

1.7 Who is responsible for classification in the Service? Table 1-1 describes responsibilities for classification.

Table 1-1: Responsibilities	
These employees...	Are responsible for...
A. The Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Ensuring we have an effective position classification program, and (2) Reviewing and approving classification of positions at the GS-14 and GS-15 levels.
B. The Assistant Director –	Developing, implementing, and controlling an effective position

Budget, Planning and Human Capital (AD-BPHC)	classification program throughout the Service.
C. Regional Directors (RDs)	<p>Administering an effective position classification program through their Assistant Regional Directors - Budget and Administration. This includes:</p> <p>(1) Ensuring that we classify positions through the GS-14 level in accordance with OPM standards;</p> <p>(2) Ensuring that all subordinate managers and supervisors understand their classification responsibility, including the appropriate use of SPDs; and</p> <p>(3) Approving organizational charts at the beginning of each fiscal year. These charts identify all occupied positions and all vacant positions that we plan to fill within the next 12 months.</p>
D. The Chief, Division of Human Capital:	<p>(1) Representing the AD-BPHC in technical classification matters and consulting with the AD-BPHC on classification policy matters;</p> <p>(2) Reviewing positions at the GS-14 and GS-15 levels for adequacy and organizational consistency;</p> <p>(3) Classifying positions at the GS-15 level;</p> <p>(4) Advising managers and other Human Resources (HR) personnel on position management for classification actions;</p> <p>(5) Working with the Department, OPM, and the Regional HR offices on position classification matters;</p> <p>(6) Interpreting position classification guidance;</p> <p>(7) Developing procedures and instructions governing position classification;</p> <p>(8) Promoting understanding of the classification program by:</p> <p>(a) Explaining the objectives and principles of classification to managers and employees,</p> <p>(b) Developing and disseminating relevant information to managers and employees, and</p> <p>(c) Interpreting policies and procedures governing position classification; and</p> <p>(9) Maintaining Servicewide SPDs.</p>
E. Regional HR Officers	(1) Administering an effective position classification program;

	<p>(2) Promoting employee understanding of classification policies and standards and the role of supervisors and employees in position classification;</p> <p>(3) Applying specific classification standards, guides, and procedures to positions within their areas of responsibility;</p> <p>(4) Advising managers on proposed realignment or reorganization of duties and responsibilities and how those changes affect the classification of positions;</p> <p>(5) Advising managers of the need for accurate and current position descriptions (PDs);</p> <p>(6) Reviewing, verifying, and evaluating proposed PDs;</p> <p>(7) Making final classification decisions on positions within the scope of their responsibility;</p> <p>(8) Preparing evaluation statements or other supporting documents for GS-15 level positions and sending these to the Headquarters Division of Human Capital;</p> <p>(9) Periodically reviewing positions and organizations to ensure accuracy and consistency of classification and position management;</p> <p>(10) Counseling employees, supervisors, and managers on the operations and objectives of the position classification system and on the appropriate laws, regulations, and standards governing the operations of the system; and</p> <p>(11) Advising managers and supervisors on the selection and applicability of SPDs to the organizational level, program affiliation, and type of work assigned.</p>
<p>F. Managers and supervisors</p>	<p>(1) Assigning valid duties and responsibilities to all positions under their direction to ensure economical and efficient work distribution commensurate with the skills and abilities of employees and overall mission objectives;</p> <p>(2) Preparing and revising PDs or using SPDs to ensure that they adequately reflect the major duties and responsibilities assigned to employees (see section 1.8);</p> <p>(3) Certifying on Optional Form (OF) 8 the accuracy of new or revised PDs and reviewing existing PDs when requesting recruitment, reassignment, or other actions to fill a position;</p> <p>(4) Giving employees a copy their PD and explaining the duties, responsibilities, and other requirements;</p> <p>(5) Informing employees about how their positions are classified so they have a better understanding of their performance evaluations and career development plans;</p>

	<p>(6) Initiating requests for personnel actions when the work that employees perform needs reclassification;</p> <p>(7) Cooperating in administrative reviews of PDs, periodic maintenance reviews, and other position classification initiatives;</p> <p>(8) Ensuring that positions under their supervision are strategically aligned with the mission of the organization and meet the strategic objectives and goals of the program and the Service; and</p> <p>(9) Ensuring that their subordinate positions are on an approved organization chart.</p>
G. Employees	<p>(1) Performing the major duties and responsibilities of their positions, and</p> <p>(2) Bringing to their supervisor's attention any major change or inaccuracies in duties or responsibilities that are not in their PDs.</p>

1.8 Why are accurately classified positions important and how do supervisors make sure they are correct?

A. PDs are the basis for establishing what duties and responsibilities employees must fulfill to earn their salaries and to be eligible for any additional compensation. They are the legal basis for:

- (1)** Appointment of an employee,
- (2)** Payment of salary or wages,
- (3)** Establishment of job qualifications and selection criteria to fill a position,
- (4)** Development of performance plans and objectives,
- (5)** Preparation of Individual Development Plans,
- (6)** Review and evaluation of the employee's work, and
- (7)** The determination of the rights and responsibilities of an employee.

B. Because supervisors have the sole responsibility and authority to assign work, they must ensure that PDs are current and accurately describe the major duties and responsibilities of the employees occupying the positions. Supervisors and other managers use PDs to:

- (1)** Detect duplication of work or overlapping responsibilities between different employees;
- (2)** Identify competencies to establish selection criteria for evaluating applicants for positions;
- (3)** Inform applicants or appointees about duties, responsibilities, qualifications, and working

conditions;

(4) Improve work methods and design organizations;

(5) Review job content to establish performance standards;

(6) Analyze recommendations for incentive awards;

(7) Evaluate training needs;

(8) Establish competitive levels for reduction-in-force; and

(9) Serve as the official record of assigned duties and responsibilities in classification appeal cases (see [225 FW 2](#)).

C. Supervisors must certify the accuracy of the duties and responsibilities that they assign to each position under their supervision. We may only use a PD after both the supervisor and the classification official certify it.

1.9 When should supervisors and the HR office review existing PDs?

A. The supervisor and servicing HR office should review the PD, when vacant, before filling the position to ensure that the PD is still accurate and appropriately classified. If the duties have not changed since the original classification and the classification is accurate, an HR specialist and the supervisor should recertify the PD using the position review section on the [OF-8](#).

B. When a position undergoes major changes (e.g., changes in the mission and functions, job responsibilities, work assignments, legislation, or standards), the supervisor, with assistance from HR, must prepare a new PD or amend the existing one. The immediate supervisor and HR specialist must certify (i.e., sign and date) the new or amended description.

1.10 When and how should a supervisor use a Standard Position Description?

A. You should use an SPD when the major duties described represent at least 80% of the assigned work.

B. To use an SPD:

(1) The Division of Human Capital classifies SPDs. No additional classification review is required prior to use.

(2) The first and second level supervisors certify, by signing blocks 20a and 20b on the [OF-8](#), that the selected SPD is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of the work and its organizational relationship.

(3) The Regional HR office completes a position management review of the selected SPD to ensure organizational suitability. Regional HR offices:

(a) Use the SPD Checklist (see [Exhibit 1](#)) to complete the review;

(b) File the completed checklist with the SPD in the office's PD Books; and

(c) Initial Block 23c on the [OF-8](#) to show completion of the position management review and SPD Checklist. Initialing Block 23c indicates completion of a position management review and

does not require reclassification of the SPD.

C. Supervisors may amend an SPD so that the person in the position may successfully perform work not originally described in the SPD (e.g., motor boat operator, collateral duty safety officer, supervision of one or two employees). We frequently use SPD amendments to document a requirement for a special license or certification. You may not amend SPDs to change title, series, or grade level of a position.

(1) Use [Form DI-625](#), Position Classification Amendment, to document the amendment. The supervisor signs Block 5, and then sends the form to the Regional HR office. The HR office reviews all non-standard SPD amendments and certifies by signing Block 6 that the amended duties have no impact on title, series, and grade of the position.

(2) You can find standard SPD amendments in the [SPD Library](#).

D. You may use SPDs when requesting an upgrade to an encumbered position if the described major duties represent at least 80% of the assigned work. Although using the SPD eliminates the need to classify the PD, you still must follow Merit Promotion Principles (see [223 FW 6](#)) to determine if you can promote the employee non-competitively through an accretion of duties promotion. For this type of promotion, the Regional HR office must perform a desk audit (see [section 1.16](#)).

1.11 What guidelines are available for developing and managing PDs?

A. OPM maintains guidelines for developing and classifying positions, including:

(1) “Position Classification and Job Grading Standards,”

(2) “Introduction to the Position Classification Standards,”

(3) “Introduction to the Federal Wage System Job Grading System,” and

(4) The “Classifier’s Handbook.”

B. Basic guidelines for HR specialists and supervisors to consider when establishing and maintaining positions include:

(1) If you need more than one employee to do essentially the same work at the same title, series, and grade, we can establish an Identical Additional PD.

(2) We can use a “Statement of Difference” to distinguish between multiple grade levels of work in an established career ladder or developmental progression. Each grade in the career ladder should have a unique PD number and certified [OF-8](#).

(a) We can use Statements of Difference for one or two grade levels between full PDs. For example, a full performance GS-9 PD may have a Statement of Difference at the GS-7 level and another fully described position at the GS-5 level. On the other hand, a full performance GS-8 PD may have a Statement of Difference at both the GS-7 and GS-6 level.

(b) When determining whether to use one or two Statements of Difference, HR specialists will work with supervisors to consider how significantly the position duties are changing between each grade level.

(3) When the duties and responsibilities could be equally well performed by individuals from different academic disciplines, we can use an interdisciplinary professional position. _

(a) Interdisciplinary professional positions involve duties and responsibilities closely related to more than one professional occupation, and where people from two or more professions could perform the work equally well. As a result, we can classify the position to two or more professional occupational series. We use interdisciplinary classification primarily for positions in mathematical, scientific, or engineering disciplines.

(b) Do not use the interdisciplinary approach for administrative or nonprofessional positions.

(c) The PD must clearly show that the position is interdisciplinary and indicate the various series in which the position may be classified by including such language as, "This is an interdisciplinary position classifiable in any one of the following series: General Biological Science Series, GS-401; Fishery Biology Series, GS-482; and Physiology Series, GS-413."

(4) A PD covers the major and grade controlling duties and responsibilities of a position. Grade controlling duties determine the job qualifications and constitute the primary reason for establishing the position. Employees may also perform minor tasks on a regular day-to-day or on an "as needed" basis that are not included in the PD. We do not use PDs to restrict the duties a supervisor may assign to an employee. When duties outside the current PD are significant and the incumbent performs them on a regular and recurring basis, the supervisor should revise the PD to ensure the employee is receiving adequate compensation for the work.

1.12 How can supervisors make minor changes to PDs?

A. You should write PDs in a way that minimizes the need for revisions due to minor changes in the position. You should describe factors that vary, such as the size of workforce, monetary values, specific projects, or automated systems, as approximations or ranges.

B. You may:

(1) Make a minor change to the PD by writing the change on the original PD if the change does not have an impact on a major function or the grade level. The supervisor must initial and date the changes and send the revised PD to the servicing HR office to ensure that the classification has not been affected.

(2) Use a form [DI-625](#) to amend a PD to reflect changes to a position (up to GS-14) that are of an organizational nature, e.g., the position moved in the organization or the supervisory chain has changed. Both the supervisor and the HR specialist must certify the amendment.

(3) You must not:

(a) Amend a PD more than twice. After a PD is amended twice, you must prepare a new PD to reflect additional changes.

(b) Use an amendment to change the position classification.

C. You may assign collateral duties by either incorporating the duties into the PD or, later, amending the PD.

(1) Collateral duties (e.g., rotational committee member) is work that may occupy a large amount of time and falls outside the employee's stated duties and responsibilities. Collateral duties are most often limited to a specific time (e.g., 3 months, 1 year, etc).

(2) When describing collateral duties in a PD or an amendment, the language must include:

- (a) The percentage of the employee's official duty time to be spent performing collateral duties;
- (b) Scope of responsibilities;
- (c) Who will assign the collateral duties; and
- (d) Who will evaluate the employee's collateral duty performance for inclusion in the employee's annual performance review.

D. When the major duties of a position undergo considerable changes, you must revise and reclassify the PD or amend it.

1.13 What is the format for writing PDs?

A. All PDs should contain three basic sections. See Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Sections in a PD	
SECTIONS	Content
(1) INTRODUCTION or BACKGROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A brief summary of the primary purpose(s) for the position, (b) Its placement within the organization, (c) A short organizational mission statement and the position's relationship in fulfilling the mission of the organization, and (d) The physical location of the position.
(2) MAJOR DUTIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Describes the responsibilities of the incumbent. Limit the description to the duties that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Affect the classification, (ii) Occupy a substantial part of the employee's time, (iii) Justify specialized job qualifications needed when recruiting, and (iv) Require specialized certification or licenses. (b) Must include a statement of any required specific qualification (e.g., qualified typist) or professional background (e.g., professional engineer). (c) When deciding if you should include a task as a major duty, consider what abilities you will measure when preparing assessment tools for recruitment and what work you will evaluate in an employee's performance plan. If you will use a task to help you select the best qualified applicant, or if you will evaluate the work in a performance plan, you <u>must</u> include it in the duties.
(3) EVALUATION FACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Varies in format according to the position. (b) Addresses the components of the position that the HR specialist will use to determine the appropriate position classification.

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B. All supervisory and managerial PDs must contain a statement addressing the responsibilities and commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity.

1.14 What is the purpose of an evaluation statement? The evaluation statement establishes the rationale for the classification determinations of the pay plan, title, series, and grade as well as credit for each grading factor.

A. A Human Resources specialist evaluates the PD and classifies the position, signing and dating the evaluation statement.

B. All positions must have an evaluation statement for the full performance level.

C. We require evaluation statements with a comparative analysis between various factor levels for the following positions:

(1) Key positions as [370 DM 311](#), [370 DM 511](#), and [223 FW 2](#) define;

(2) Supervisory positions as OPM's classification guide defines;

(3) Mixed series positions;

(4) Mixed grade positions;

(5) Downgraded positions;

(6) Existing positions being upgraded to a higher grade than the current full performance level;

(7) Positions classified to a grade above the highest grade level(s) or factor level described in the appropriate Classification/Job Grading Standard(s);

(8) Positions allocated to series for which no grading criteria are published;

(9) Positions in which the "Impact of the Person on the Job" concept has been applied. This means that although a position has not changed over time, the employee assigned to the position has brought such unique capabilities, experience, or knowledge to the job that it affects the work performed and the classification of the position. For these positions, the Human Resources specialist:

(a) Identifies it by noting "Incumbent Only" on the [OF-8](#), PD, and evaluation statement, and

(b) May only use the classification for the incumbent. Once vacant, the position reverts to the previous position classification;

(10) Interdisciplinary positions;

(11) Corrections to classification errors; and

(12) Evaluations that someone in the Service or a higher authority (e.g., Department) requests to clarify a classification decision.

D. Evaluation statements must contain certain basic information. Although the format is

discretionary, you must include the following information:

- (1) Position number(s) (see [section 1.15](#));
- (2) Current title, series, and grade;
- (3) Proposed title, series, and grade;
- (4) Name of incumbent, if any;
- (5) Location of position (organizational title and geographic location);
- (6) References used (i.e., classification standards or guides used to evaluate the position), including audit data, if available;
- (7) Background information (information pertinent to the classification of the position that justifies the establishment of the position);
- (8) Title and series determination (basis for the pay plan, title, and series; series selection rationale; and any other supplementary references used);
- (9) Grade level determination:
 - (a) Must include basis for the grade assigned and rationale and analysis for crediting each grading factor with examples provided that demonstrate why credit is warranted.
 - (b) Classification determinations must be in the same format as the OPM Position Classification Standard you are using; and
- (10) Final Classification. This is a summation of the final allocation and title, series, and grade, including other considerations (i.e., Fair Labor Standards Act determination, full performance level, position sensitivity designation, drug testing, financial disclosure, and functional code assignment, if applicable).

1.15 How does the Service assign PD numbers? Each Regional HR office is responsible for developing and maintaining a PD numbering system that they use consistently for all positions within the Region. The Headquarters Division of Human Capital numbers SPDs.

1.16 How does a supervisor upgrade an encumbered position?

A. Send accretion requests to your servicing HR office with an updated PD and additional documentation describing:

- (1) The circumstances under which you assigned the additional responsibilities to the employee, and
- (2) The length of time that the employee has performed the higher level duties,

B. In your request, you must certify that:

(1) The employee will continue to perform the new duties in addition to those assigned in the initial PD, and

(2) You are not denying another qualified employee an opportunity to compete for the same promotion. If more than one employee in the same office is eligible to apply for the new position, the HR office

may not consider an accretion of duty request. Selection for the new position must be competitive in accordance with Merit Systems Principles.

C. HR staff will:

(1) Review the organizational structure, the proposed PD, and supporting documentation to determine:

(a) The occupational series, title, and grade of the new position based on the additional responsibilities, and

(b) Whether we can exempt the proposed promotion action from competitive procedures.

(2) Perform a desk audit to classify the position.

D. Accretion of duties promotions are rare because we review positions prior to recruitment to ensure that all major and essential duties required of a position are included during the classification process.

E. The servicing HR office must send requests for an accretion of duties to the GS-14 and GS-15 level to the Chief, Division of Human Capital in Headquarters for approval. The Chief, Division of Human Capital may approve or decline to approve the promotion.

1.17 How does the Service maintain classification files and records?

A. The Regional HR office maintains official PD files that include the original PD with supporting documentation (i.e., evaluation statements, desk audit material, etc.) and abolished PDs.

B. The Headquarters Division of Human Capital maintains PDs for GS-15 and Senior Executive Service (SES) positions and SPDs.

C. HR offices must retain obsolete PDs in compliance with National Archives and Records Administration and Service file disposition schedules (see [283 FW 2](#)). Retain:

(1) PDs for 2 years after the position is abolished or the description is superseded.

(2) PDs for positions covered under special retirement rules for law enforcement and firefighters indefinitely.

D. HR offices may retain the PDs electronically in a file system in lieu of original, paper PDs.

1.18 What is the effective date of personnel actions affected by classification decision(s)?

A. Personnel actions affected by classification decision(s) should be effective as early as the first pay period following the action and no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period following the date of the classification decision.

B. We must not make a classification decision effective retroactively, except when authorized by law, regulation, or if OPM approves it.

For information on the content of this chapter, contact the Division of Human Capital. For more information about this Web site, contact [Krista Holloway](#) in the Division of Policy and Directives Management.

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