



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Monday, September 22, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: Human Resources Directors

FROM: Leah M. Meisel, Deputy Associate Director for Talent and Capacity Policy

Subject: Draft Position Classification Standard for Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-0081

We are releasing the Draft Position Classification Standard for Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-0081. This draft represents an updated standard rather than a complete revision of the previous standard. We request your comments by November 30, 2003.

Using the lead agency test approach, we have assigned the following agencies to be leads for review and test of the draft position classification standard:

- The Department of Defense, and
- The Department Veterans Affairs.

In addition, all other agencies should conduct a general review of the positions covered by this draft standard and provide feedback to us. So you can begin your review, we have made an advance copy of the draft standard in Word 2002 and PDF formats available through an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) FTP server. The URL for the server is <http://apps.opm.gov/pubclass>. The USERID is "pubclass," and the password is "classify." We will notify you by email when the draft is available for downloading from the OPM Web site.

We rely on agency human resource officials with positions covered by this draft position classification standard to contact subject matter experts and program management officials to ensure they are aware of the release of this draft standard and to seek their input. We depend on their input, along with yours, so that we can make appropriate adjustments to produce a final standard with information that will meet your needs.

If you have questions or would like to discuss this draft standard, please contact Suellen Mattison of my staff, at (202) 606-2950. Her email address is slmattis@opm.gov.

Attachment

cc: Agency Classification Chiefs

Request for Comments
Draft Position Classification Standard for Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-0081

Please provide your comments and suggestions to OPM by November 30, 2003

Note: Do not use the grade level criteria in the attached draft to classify positions until the Office of Personnel Management issues the standard in final form.

Information We Need from Agencies with Covered Positions

Subject matter experts and human resources officials in **both lead and non-lead agencies** should answer the following questions about this draft position classification standard (JFS).

1. Is the occupational information in each series appropriate and sufficient? If not, please suggest any additional narrative information you believe we should add.
2. Are the proposed parenthetical titles reasonable?
3. Do the proposed parenthetical titles reflect the work in your agency?
4. Should the grading criteria for the GS-03, Firefighter be retained in this standard or should the GS-04, Firefighter be the lowest grade identified in the standard? Please explain your response.
5. Do you have any changes or additions to the Definitions of Terms? Please submit additional suggested terms and definitions, along with the governing references.

Additional Information We Need from Lead Agencies

Please apply the draft position classification standard to a sufficient number of positions to determine if it meets your classification needs and supports your estimates of potential impact. Follow the instructions in the **NOTES TO USERS** section about application of the standard. The results of your test application will provide vital information we need to produce the final standard. Please report on the following:

1. The number of positions/position descriptions/standardized position descriptions by title, series, and grade level that you evaluated using the draft standard. In addition, provide the number of employees covered by each position description that you tested. For example, if you are reporting on the number of "standardized position descriptions (SPDs)" tested, we need to know how many employees are covered by each SPD.
2. The potential impact on these positions; i.e., the number of positions that would be upgraded, downgraded, or remain the same. Again, please provide the number of employees that would be impacted.
3. Copies of position descriptions that would change in grade level. Include an evaluation statement or an explanation of:
 - How the position was classified using the present standard; and
 - Why the grade changed after applying the draft criteria.

As you conduct the trial application, do not include positions if there is any question about the accuracy of the grade. However, if you have positions that have been especially difficult to classify under the existing standards, please apply the draft classification standard to these

positions and provide copies of the position descriptions. In addition, tell us if the draft standard was easier or more difficult to apply than the existing standard.

How Do You Submit Comments?

In response to the requests outlined above, we would like to have both:

- Comments representing the agency's overall feedback, and
- Representative comments from subject matter experts and subordinate locations to support your feedback.

Please submit comments in accordance with your agency's guidelines. Suggestions for change will be particularly helpful if you include the rationale and examples for the suggested change.

Please send your response to the following address:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Strategic Human Resources Policy
Center for Talent and Capacity Policy
Standards, Competencies, and Assessment Development Group
1900 E Street, NW, Room 6H31 Washington, DC 20415-8330

Individuals who wish to send personal comments should send them to the same address. If you would like to discuss the draft or obtain additional information, contact Suellen Mattison at (202) 606-2950, slmattis@opm.gov

Background

Basis for Occupational Study

We decided that it was necessary to review certain classification aspects of the standard for the GS-0081, Fire Protection and Prevention Series following Congressional pay reform for the Federal firefighting occupation. In conjunction with a working group of subject matter experts we determined that the September 1991 version of the classification standard failed to adequately address the growing role of Federal firefighters in response to hazardous materials incidents and the provision of emergency medical services.

Extent of the Occupational Study

We determined that the September 1991 version of the standard was largely appropriate as many of the basic principles, practices, and methods of the firefighting profession remain unchanged. The standard required expansion to reflect the duties and responsibilities added by emergency medical services and hazardous materials incidents. To accomplish such a revision, the Office of Personnel Management completed extensive factfinding. Reviews of the added duties and responsibilities were conducted at numerous Federal locations based on the recommendations of the working group.

During the factfinding we encountered several additional specialty rescue functions to include water, high angle, close or confined quarters, and others. These are not addressed in the draft standard as the presence and the mix of these rescue functions vary widely throughout the firefighting programs. More importantly, they rarely approximate the difficulties and expertise required by firefighters to respond to hazardous materials incidents or to provide emergency medical services.

Draft Standard

The draft represents an updated or supplemented standard rather than a complete revision of the September 1991 standard. Accordingly, we have retained the narrative format of the 1991 standard. Many portions remain unchanged. Some portions have been modified in format but without any change in content. We have identified the paragraphs where we are proposing classification changes by a "September 2003" notation. This draft represents the results of the input and efforts of many Federal firefighters as well as the working group and the Office of Personnel Management.