

**U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Job Grading Appeal Decision  
Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [Name]

**Agency classification:** Tools and Parts Attendant  
WG-6904-5

**Organization:** [Agency Component]  
United States Marine Corps  
[City, State]

**OPM decision:** Tools and Parts Attendant (Forklift  
Operator)  
WG-6904-5

**OPM decision number:** C-6904-05-01

//Judith A. Davis for

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Robert D. Hendler  
Classification and Pay Claims  
Program Manager  
Merit System Audit and Compliance

3/12/2013

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Date

As provided in section S7-8 of the *Operating Manual: Federal Wage System*, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing and accounting officials of the government. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section H).

Since this decision changes the title of the appealed job, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the first pay period that begins after the 60th day from the date the appellant filed an appeal with the agency (5 CFR 532.705(d)). The servicing human resources office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected job description and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the date of this decision to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) office that adjudicated the appeal.

## **Introduction**

On April 12, 2012, the Atlanta Field Office of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [Appellant]. The appeal was subsequently transferred to OPM's Washington, D.C., office for adjudication due to workload considerations. The appellant's job is presently graded as Tools and Parts Attendant, WG-6904-5. He believes his job should be graded as Tools & Parts Attendant (Equipment Operator), WG-6904-7 or 8. We have accepted and decided this appeal under the provisions of section 5346 of title 5, United States Code.

## **General Issues**

The appellant filed this job grading appeal with OPM since he was dissatisfied with the appeal decision issued by the Department of Defense (DoD) on his job. This decision upgraded the appellant's job from Buildings and Grounds Support Worker, WG-3501-4, to Tools and Parts Attendant, WG-6904-5. The appellant believes that "several things were inexplicably overlooked or minimized in reaching the decision," specifically that the equipment operating function of his job was not taken into account.

To support his belief that his job exceeds the grade 5 level, the appellant states his job description and corresponding annual evaluations describe his responsibility for performing the duties of supervisor in the absence of the Staff Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (SNCOIC). However, section II.C.3(b) of the *Introduction to the Federal Wage System Job Grading System*, (*Introduction*) indicates that duties performed in another employee's absence cannot be considered "regular and recurring" in grading a job. Therefore, the appellant's duties as supervisor in the absence of the SNCOIC cannot control the grade of his job and will not be addressed further in this decision.

## **Job information**

The primary purpose of the appellant's job is to provide administrative and trades support to the [agency component] in the execution of its mission to ensure buildings and grounds support and equipment are provided to the tenant units. The Buildings and Grounds Branch staff is comprised of three Laborers, WG-3502-4, and one Tools and Parts Attendant, WG-6904-5 (the appellant), under the supervision of a Staff Sergeant.

The three major components of the appellant's job are providing administrative support, tending to the tools and parts shop, and operating equipment. The appellant's primary responsibility, as stated by the immediate supervisor, is to provide support to the units stationed at [agency component] by tending to the tools and parts shop. The main tools and parts shop is approximately 2,880 square feet and houses equipment such as carpenter squares, hammers, mallets, tape measures, utility knives, framing nailers, drill repair machine, cordless hand vacuums, wrenches, sockets, and other frequently used self-help items. The shop is utilized by all of the units on the base to make corrective repairs and/or additions to their existing facilities. To this end, the appellant approves all self-help projects, picks up and arranges for the delivery of supplies to the requesting units, and ensures that the requests from station units coincide with

their approved project(s). He ensures that all requests are proper and in accordance with the Base Maintenance Manual, BO P11014.1J. The appellant maintains the tool inventory and log records of tools and equipment issued to the units. He repairs malfunctioning and/or broken tools. If he is unable to repair a tool, he sends the tool to higher maintenance for repair or recommends replacement. Specifically, he has sent a Massey-Ferguson 573 tractor to the Modern Tractor Company in Richlands, North Carolina, and a CAT skid steer to Gregory Poole in Leland, North Carolina, for repair. He conducts instructional classes for station personnel regarding the proper use of tools and equipment.

The appellant provides administrative support by ensuring the proper usage of Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office (DRMO) services and the landfill functions. He maintains scrap dumpsters for proper segregation of metal and ensures that certain dumpsters are only used for their intended purpose and arranges for them to be emptied in a timely manner. The appellant acts as a liaison between air station units and the landfill on dumpster issues such as improper dumping and dumpster scheduling. The appellant attends S-4 (logistics) meetings and provides reports that assist with planning for the Buildings and Grounds Program. He provides vendor contract support from businesses such as EMI Services, who provide base operations and support services and ONWASA (Onslow Water & Sewer Authority). The appellant arranges for quotes, conducts pre-bid site surveys, and collects estimates for parts and supplies in a continued effort to provide support to the division in the performance of its mission of buildings and grounds support. He manages section funds, answers questions from units, and provides guidance in the accomplishment of their tasks.

The appellant also operates motor vehicles to pull equipment, visit vendors, and move dirt, brush, and concrete. He operates tractors to backfill, level, clear, mow, and dig. He operates fork lift trucks to move, stack, and load materials in and around the tools and parts shop and on and off vehicles.

The appellant's objectives are generally set by the S-4 Operations Manager and/or the Deputy S-4 Officer, but he receives day-to-day supervision from the Staff Sergeant responsible for the Buildings and Grounds Branch. The appellant identifies what needs to be done and independently plans and carries out assignments.

The appellant's position description is accurate and adequate for job grading purposes, has been certified as accurate by the appellant, supervisor, and agency, and is hereby incorporated by reference into this decision. To help decide this appeal, we conducted a telephone interview with the appellant on August 10, 2012, and with his immediate supervisor on September 7, 2012. In reaching our decision, we have carefully reviewed all the information in the written record provided by the appellant and the agency, as well as the information from our interviews.

### **Series, title, and standard determination**

The appellant's job involves work in several wage grade occupations. Guidance in Section III of the *Introduction* states that jobs requiring the performance of work in two or more occupations are coded to the occupation that is most important for recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, or reduction-in-force purposes. The agency assigned the appellant's job to the 6904

occupation and the appellant does not contest this. The 6904 Tools and Parts Attending Job Grading Standard (JGS) covers work requiring knowledge of the kinds of tools, parts, and equipment in stock and how to locate them. The work typically involves duties such as receiving, storing, issuing, signing out, and checking in various tools, equipment shop supplies, and repair parts. We agree the appellant's job is properly assigned to the 6904 occupation as this work represents the primary purpose of his job and was the basis for recruitment and selection for the job.

The appellant believes his job should be titled Tools and Parts Attendant (Equipment Operator). When authorized, a parenthetical designation should be used only when it would add materially to the understanding and identification of the job, where it would be helpful or necessary to identify further the duties and responsibilities involved, and when such duties and responsibilities reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work. Our fact-finding revealed that the appellant's work does not involve equipment operating as that term is defined in the 5716 Engineering Equipment Operating JGS and, therefore the "Equipment Operator" parenthetical is not warranted. However, since operating a fork lift is necessary to the performance of the appellant's primary function, a "Fork Lift Operator" parenthetical is warranted. Therefore, the appellant's job is properly titled and coded as Tools and Parts Attendant (Fork Lift Operator), WG-6904.

The appellant operates a Massey-Ferguson 573 tractor, a John Deere 310 tractor, and a Caterpillar Skid Steer Loader. The appellant believes the operation of this equipment should be evaluated using the 5716 Engineering Equipment Operating JGS. Our fact finding revealed, however, that the appellant's use of what he considers engineering equipment is limited substantially in scope and complexity. The WG-5716 JGS is used to evaluate heavy tracked equipment and large industrial tractors which are used in heavy construction and excavation projects and is therefore not applicable to the appellant's job.

Normally, the appellant's tractor operating duties would be evaluated by application of the 5705 Tractor Operating JGS, which is used to grade nonsupervisory work involving the operation of wheel-mounted tractors and towed or attached equipment. The work the appellant performs with the tractor equipment typically includes backfilling, leveling, clearing, mowing grounds, and digging. These tractors have attached equipment including a cart, sweeper, backhoe, and front-end loading devices. The appellant occasionally uses the loader to load dump trucks with gravel and/or dirt and the backhoe for loading scrap metal, digging, and drainage. However, although the appellant occasionally uses this equipment, our audits with the appellant and the immediate supervisor revealed that another employee, a laborer, is assigned most of the work involving tractor operation. The grade of a job may only be based on the performance of regular and recurring work. Therefore, we will not evaluate the appellant's irregular tractor operation duties in this decision.

The appellant states his "administrative" work should be considered a separate; i.e., "single," occupation and should be credited at the grade 6 level. Section 5102 of 5 U.S.C. requires a pay category determination be made as the first step in the position classification process. Section 5102(c)(7) exempts from coverage under the General Schedule (GS) those employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts, or in unskilled, semiskilled, or

skilled manual-labor occupations, and other employees including foremen and supervisors in positions having trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge as the paramount requirement. This is in contrast to the office, business, fiscal, technical, scientific, professional, and administrative work covered by the GS. See 5 U.S.C. 5104. Thus, the appellant's "administrative" work may not be treated as a separate occupation and, since it is excluded from the FWS, may not control the grading of the appellant's job. However, we have considered it to the extent such work is integral to the FWS functions the appellant performs, e.g., record keeping, ordering, and similar support functions typical of many trades and crafts.

We have used the 6904 JGS for grade-level determination. In addition we have considered and referenced the 5703 and 5704 JGS to evaluate the appellant's motor vehicle and fork lift operating duties.

### **Grade determination**

The grade of a mixed job in the Federal Wage System (FWS), such as the appellant's, is based on duties that involve the highest skill and qualifications of the job and are regular and recurring even if the duties are not performed a 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.

JGS's contain job grading criteria expressed in terms of four factors: *Skill and Knowledge, Responsibility, Physical Effort, and Working Conditions*. These factors provide a framework within which the occupation is structured as well as specifically applicable criteria for evaluating the level of work. In order to warrant evaluation to a grade level, the job must meet the level described fully; i.e., it must meet the full intent of the whole job.

### **6904 Tools and Parts Attending**

The appellant's tools and parts attending duties are evaluated by application of the 6904 JGS. This JGS covers nonsupervisory work which involves receiving, storing, issuing, signing out, and checking in various tools, equipment, shop supplies, and repair parts to and from such using maintenance, construction, and shop personnel as machinists, carpenters, and automotive and aircraft mechanics. Such work requires knowledge of the kinds of tools, parts, and equipment in stock and how to locate them, and an ability to identify and issue specific items requested by user personnel.

#### *Skill and Knowledge*

This factor covers the nature and level of skill, knowledge and mental application required in performing assigned work. Jobs vary in such ways as the kind, amount, and depth of skill and knowledge needed, as well as in the manner, frequency, and extent to which they are used.

At grade 5, attendants demonstrate skill in verifying short, over, and damaged conditions of incoming stock by such means as opening, counting and visually checking the contents of containers. Grade 5 attendants know the procedures for reporting short, over, and damaged

conditions of incoming stock, and make reports on these conditions to the supervisor or other responsible personnel when required.

In addition to placing items in established locations, grade 5 attendants are skilled in selecting and setting up specific locations for items within the framework of the general storage plan. This involves considering such factors as the use, size, shape, weight, and similar nomenclature of items. Grade 5 attendants are skilled in marking and tagging locations, and in making entries on locator records to show the names, quantities, and locations of stock.

Grade 5 attendants obtain items from stock by matching specific item names, models, and stock or part numbers with similar specific information at stock locations. In addition, grade 5 attendants are skilled in identifying specific items from the trade and shop names used by requesters. They usually use such references as locator files, issue and turn-in records, and stock and part number change lists for this purpose.

During inventories, grade 5 attendants count stock on hand and give such information to the supervisor or other responsible supply personnel. Additionally, grade 5 attendants are skilled in searching likely locations and taking recounts of items in the tools and parts room to help supply personnel responsible for the inventory to determine the basis for over, short, or misplaced items. The attendant at this grade may also repair tools and equipment requiring skill in the use of pliers, screwdrivers, and other simple hand tools.

At grade 6, attendants apply the same receiving skill and knowledge as that described at grade 5. In addition to the identification and issuing skill and knowledge described at grade 5, grade 6 attendants have sufficient knowledge of the range of items in stock to identify specific items requested by users from descriptions of their intended usage and to suggest, in the absence of requested items, other items that might fit users' requirements. Grade 6 attendants are skilled in determining substitute and interchangeable items. For this purpose, they usually use such references as manufacturers' specifications, stock catalogs, manuals, and bulletins.

Grade 6 attendants help supply personnel responsible for the inventory to determine the basis for over, short, or misplaced items by checking such references as out-for-repair and issue and turn-in records maintained in the tools and parts room, in addition to using the inventory methods described at grade 5. Grade 6 attendants have skill in determining from these records such errors as improper item issue and turn-in credit, and the failure of records to show that items have been sent out for repair.

Grade 6 attendants are skilled in determining when tools and equipment should be sent to test, repair, and calibration shops, in addition to making minor repair to tools and equipment as described at grade 5. They make these determinations by performing visual and operating checks, making measurements with such devices as calipers, and receiving reports from users on the nature and extent of damage to tools and equipment.

In contrast to grade 5 attendants who note and report obviously damaged and inoperative items to the supervisor, grade 6 attendants are able to determine when many damaged and inoperative items appear beyond or too costly to repair. Whenever required, they make these determinations

and provide their evaluations to stock disposal personnel to aid them in determining whether or not items should be salvaged, repaired, and returned to stock.

Grade 6 attendants are able to provide information on the status of stock useful to the supervisor or responsible supply personnel for determining and keeping adequate numbers and types of items on hand. Whenever required, grade 6 attendants watch and report, for example, items that are in short supply because of unusual breakage or because they are frequently out for repair. In many tools and parts rooms, grade 6 attendants pass on to the supervisor requests for items not kept in stock but which users indicate are needed for their work.

Grade 6 attendants are able to keep track of project-assigned items when required. For example, based on information from the supervisor about incoming, project-assigned items and the in-process or planned projects to which they are assigned, grade 6 attendants are skilled in identifying and insuring that project-assigned items are separated from regular items when they arrive. They have skill in setting up special storage locations for such items, and in keeping them separated from regularly stocked items during their storage. They are also skilled in selecting and issuing the proper items for the proper project, and in marking issue records to show projects against which these items are charged. They usually report to the supervisor any project-assigned items that are left over when projects are completed.

The appellant's job fully meets the intent of the skill and knowledge requirements for the grade 5 level. As at this level, the appellant is responsible for reviewing incoming stock and maintaining accurate inventory information. The appellant marks all incoming items, either by engraving or stamping. He assigns incoming items serial numbers and records the items in the inventory. If necessary, the appellant makes a record jacket for items. He maintains the stock control of existing and ordered parts and supplies, and notifies the facility manager/supervisor of any item discrepancies. He drafts deficiency requests for equipment and/or supplies.

The appellant performs minor maintenance on tools and equipment requiring skill similar to the grade 5 level. He routinely repairs, or has repaired, lawnmowers, weed eaters, tractors, mules, and tires. He changes the oil on the tractors and performs other regular operator maintenance. He repairs various hand tools like screw drivers, shovel handles, sledge hammer handles, ax handles, and saws. He has replaced the cord on drills, cleaned out the fuel system on lawnmowers and weed eaters, and replaced hydraulic pistons on the skid steer. The appellant is skilled in the use of pliers, screwdrivers, and other simple hand tools. If he is unable to repair an item, he recommends it be sent out for repair. During our telephone interview with the appellant's immediate supervisor, he confirmed that the appellant performs minor maintenance on equipment used.

The appellant states that, as at the grade 6 level, he possesses and applies sufficient knowledge of the range of items in stock to identify specific items requested by users from descriptions of their intended usage, and to suggest, in the absence of requested items, other items that might fit users' requirements. For example, the appellant cited a time when a unit was trying to hang some boards on walls that involved drilling the boards into concrete. The appellant had sufficient knowledge to suggest and issue appropriate anchors that were needed to complete the job. Another time clients requested weed eaters to complete a landscaping job. The appellant



stated he knew the job would actually require lawn mowers, so he suggested and issued appropriate mowers to the unit to fit the users' requirements. Finally, he cited a time when a unit wanted to build some shelves and requested a jig saw to cut wood. The appellant instead recommended a table saw, which was far more appropriate for the job. He then showed them how to operate the saw.

The appellant is not determining substitute and interchangeable items in the manner and intent described at the grade 6 level in the JGS. At this level, the tools and equipment being maintained are so varied and specialized that attendants must typically use such references as manufacturers' specifications, stock catalogs, manuals, and bulletins to determine substitute and interchangeable items. For example, at this level attendants perform tasks using special purpose tools and specialized equipment, including measuring devices and electronic test equipment, as might be found in a large, specialized weapons or equipment production or maintenance facility. In contrast, the appellant maintains standard, common items the appropriate usage of which is self-evident or learned through experience, and which are used by installation staff for self-help projects. Grade 6 attendants are skilled in determining when tools and equipment should be sent to test, repair, and calibration shops, whereas the items maintained by the appellant are not of the level of complexity or sophistication to require specialized testing or calibration. In short, the appellant does not work within an organizational setting that could require the level of skill and knowledge expected at the grade 6 level in terms of the range and complexity of the tools and equipment maintained. Therefore, we find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

### *Responsibility*

This factor covers the nature and degree of responsibility involved in performing work. Positions vary in responsibility in such ways as the complexity and scope of work assigned, the difficulty and frequency of judgments and decisions made, the kind of supervisory controls, and the nature of work instructions and technical guides used.

At grade 5, the attendant's supervisor assigns work through oral and written instructions that indicate the work to be done and the requirements of the general storage plan. Grade 5 attendants complete their work by accepted stockroom methods, techniques, and procedures, and within the framework of the general storage plan. Although in-process work is usually not reviewed at this grade, grade 5 attendants are expected to bring to the attention of the supervisor any unusual problems encountered during the work. The supervisor may check to see that the work has been completed by accepted methods and procedures. Grade 5 attendants independently determine the sequences, methods, techniques, and procedures appropriate for accomplishing their assignments, and carry their work through to completion with little advice from the supervisor.

Grade 6 level work is assigned in a similar fashion, but such work as setting up and maintaining storage locations, identifying users' tools, parts, and equipment requirements, recommending possible substitute or interchangeable items, and insuring that tools and equipment are maintained in good condition involve a wider and more complex range of work processes than the work described at grade 5. This requires more difficult decisions and judgments in the determination and selection of work sequences, methods, procedures, and techniques than at

grade 5. The supervisor judges the quantity and quality of the overall work at this grade on the basis of reports from customers.

As at the grade 5 level, the appellant's supervisor assigns work through oral and written instructions that indicate the work to be done. The appellant independently determines the sequences, methods, techniques, and procedures appropriate for accomplishing his assignments, and carries his work through to completion with little advice from the supervisor. As described in the appellant's position description, work is checked upon completion for adherence to instructions and safe equipment operation practices.

Because the appellant works within the parameters of an established storage plan and has limited occasion to identify users' item requirements or recommend substitute items, his work does not involve making the more difficult decisions and judgments in the determination and selection of work sequences, methods, and techniques typical of the grade 6 level. In order to warrant evaluation to a grade level, the position must fully meet the level described. Therefore, we find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

#### *Physical effort*

This factor covers the physical effort exerted in performing assigned work. Positions vary in such ways as the nature, degree, frequency, and duration of muscular effort or physical strain experienced in work performance.

At the grade 4 level, attendants perform work on hard surfaces and in work areas that require them to stand, stoop, bend, and work in tiring and uncomfortable positions. They frequently lift and carry tools, parts, supplies, and equipment that weigh up to 5 kilograms (10 pounds). The attendants may occasionally handle items that weigh up to 18 kilograms (40 pounds). Handtrucks, dollies, and other workers are available for assistance with heavier items.

The appellant's work requires considerable standing, walking, bending, stooping, and working in other awkward and uncomfortable positions. Frequently he lifts, moves, and carries items. The appellant is required to operate a variety of equipment on all types of terrains and must have knowledge of how to backfill, grade, and clear various types of grounds.

The physical effort requirements for grade 5 and 6 are the same as described at grade 4. Therefore, this factor is not grade-determining.

#### *Working conditions*

This factor covers hazards, physical hardships, and working conditions to which workers are exposed in performing assigned work. Positions vary in such ways as the nature of the work environment; the extent to which it includes unpleasant, disagreeable, or hazardous conditions; the degree to which such conditions are experienced; the frequency and duration of the exposure; the adequacy of protective clothing and gear, safety devices, and safe trade practices; and the possible effects on the workers.

At grade 4, the work is generally done in areas that are well lighted, heated, and ventilated. The attendants may occasionally work inside in areas that are drafty. The work is sometimes dirty, dusty, and greasy. The attendants are frequently exposed to the possibility of cuts, scrapes, and bruises.

The working conditions for grades 5 and 6 are the same as described at grade 4. Therefore, this factor is not grade-determining.

In summary, the appellant's tools and parts attending work is credited at the grade 5 level.

### **Motor Vehicle Operating, WG-5703**

The appellant's motor vehicle operator duties are properly evaluated by application of the 5703 JGS, which covers nonsupervisory work involved in the operation of gasoline, diesel, or electric powered wheeled vehicles to haul cargo and fuel, transport passengers, or tow or recover equipment. These vehicles are driven in restricted traffic environments on Government installations, over public roads and highways, or under cross-country conditions. Also included are motor vehicles which have special-purpose or auxiliary devices where knowledge of such devices does not exceed the level of knowledge and skill required to operate the vehicle safely.

#### *Skill and Knowledge*

At grade 5, drivers operate vehicles including pickup trucks, panel trucks, flatbed trucks, carryalls, sedans, crew cab pickup trucks, jeeps, and station wagons which typically have an approximate gross vehicle weight (GVW) up to 4,500 kilograms (10,000 pounds). Vehicles are driven on the basis of specific trip assignments or regularly established schedules over public roads (or the equivalent) at highway speeds to transport personnel, supplies, materials, or equipment and tools or to tow equipment through rural areas. Drivers at this grade operate vehicles over Federal, State, and county roads and city streets in all traffic conditions. They load and unload the vehicles by hand, sometimes receiving help from other coworkers.

Drivers at this level have skill in manipulating controls for starting, stopping, backing, and driving the vehicle in all types of traffic and road conditions. They have knowledge of the height, width, length, and weight of the vehicle in order to judge overhead and side clearances, the turning radius, braking distance, and the safest distance to be maintained from other vehicles. They have skill to read and understand a road map, and to determine the shortest and safest route for both short and long runs. They have knowledge of defensive driving techniques, including skill to recognize developing hazardous road and traffic conditions and the judgment to select alternate routes to avoid potential problems. Drivers at this grade level have knowledge and skill to adjust their driving methods to the practices of the surrounding traffic in order to avoid accidents and to transport cargo and passenger safely. Also, they have knowledge of State and local safety rules and regulations, and the rules of other jurisdictions (e.g., surrounding States) for operating vehicles. The drivers have knowledge and skill to load cargo properly onto the vehicle, using appropriate tie-downs such as chains, binders, or straps for transit on public roads at highway speeds or under similar driving circumstances. They have knowledge of the operator's manual for their assigned vehicle and skill to apply such knowledge to particular

driving situations. They have the knowledge to recognize developing maintenance problems when conducting an operator's inspection of their assigned vehicles, and to report technical problems to the supervisor.

At grade 6, drivers may operate platform, van or stake trucks and cargo vans to pick up and deliver materials and equipment or tow equipment to various locations and work sites. Other drivers at this level operate dump trucks to haul earth, gravel, sand, and similar construction materials or debris such as logs, stumps, and stone over roads, streets, and through open field areas and over difficult terrain around construction sites or similar operating environments. They also operate a hydraulic dumping mechanism to unload or spread the material in the dump bed. Vehicles operated typically have a GVW of more than 10,000 pounds and up to 26,000 pounds.

The appellant operates a Dodge 4x4 pickup truck, gross vehicle weight (GVW) approximately 8,650 pounds, and a Ford F-250 Stake bed, GVW approximately 9,600 pounds. He typically drives the trucks 2-3 days a week. He drives the trucks on-station to pull equipment and off-station to get repair equipment and/or visit vendors. He also occasionally operates a dump truck, GVW approximately 46,000 pounds, to move dirt, brush, and concrete. However, our fact-finding revealed that the appellant's operation of this borrowed dump truck is severely limited and restricted in use. The dump truck is used sporadically to haul material and brush. For example, the appellant stated that last summer he had to use the dump truck to haul 90 tons of asphalt when a parking lot was demolished. Such work cannot be considered regular and recurring and thus may not be considered in the grading of the appellant's job.

The grade level of a job in the FWS is not based solely on the equipment operated, but on all the features of the job which affect the four grade-determining factors involved in performing the work. That is to say, we do not grade equipment; we grade the difficulty and complexity entailed in the operations the employee performs in using that equipment.

The appellant's motor vehicle operation duties meet the skill and knowledge requirements for the grade 5 level. Similar to grade 5, the appellant operates pickup trucks and stake trucks under 10,000 pounds GVW over public roads at highway speeds to transport supplies, materials, equipment and tools through rural areas. He is skilled in driving the pickup trucks in various types of traffic and road conditions and loading cargo properly onto the vehicle, using appropriate tie-downs.

However, the appellant's operation of the pickup trucks and stake trucks does not meet the grade 6 level. The appellant does not operate the higher, wider, longer and heavier vehicles described at the grade 6 level as these vehicles do not exceed the GVW typical of the grade 5 level. Thus, his work does not entail applying the higher level skill and knowledge required to make the more difficult judgments concerning loading and arranging cargo, overhead and side clearances, turning radius, braking distance, etc., required to operate these vehicles. Unlike the grade 6 level, the appellant is not required to be selective in determining which routes to use because of the size and weight of the vehicles and the laws restricting the use of some roads by such vehicles. Operating motor vehicles at this level often entails the use of skill necessary to drive through open field areas and over difficult terrain, around construction sites or similar operating

environments. Thus, the record shows the appellant does not operate vehicles with the skill and knowledge demands found at the grade 6 level.

We find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

### *Responsibility*

At grade 5, drivers receive instructions from supervisors as to the type of vehicle to be operated, destination, cargo to be transported, purpose of the trip, deadlines to be met and any special information important to the mission. Grade 5 drivers are responsible for safely transporting the cargo to their destinations throughout rural or urban areas on public roads in a full range of traffic conditions. The driver's work is regularly checked and evaluated for timeliness, the safe delivery of cargo, and for following instructions. Trip tickets are examined for compliance with regulations and for completeness.

At grade 6, drivers receive instructions from supervisors as found at the grade 5 level. In addition the driving proficiency at the grade 6 level is assessed in terms of safe and expeditious completion of the assigned job. The driver is responsible for selecting routes and obeying all traffic laws and safety regulations, as well as the safe loading and unloading of the vehicle typical of those operated at the grade 6 level. Performance of preventative maintenance tasks and preparation of trip tickets are reviewed for adequacy and compliance with instructions.

The appellant's less demanding pickup and stake truck operation responsibility compares closely to the grade 5 level. He is responsible for safely transporting cargo on and off station and his work is checked for compliance and completeness.

The nature of the appellant's work and degree of responsibility involved in performing his work does not meet the intent of the grade 6 level. Unlike the 6 level, the appellant is not responsible for determining which routes to use because of the size and weight of the vehicles and the laws restricting the use of some roads by such vehicles. Further, he is not responsible for maneuvering the larger vehicles operating at the grade 6 level under such conditions as ground which is uneven into areas difficult to access safely.

We find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

### *Physical Effort*

At grade 5, moderate to considerable physical effort may be required when performing tasks such as making couplings between the vehicle and towed equipment, or changing tires and making light emergency repairs, such as installing an emergency fan belt or replacing an electrical fuse on open highways.

The appellant's physical effort meets the intent of physical effort exerted at grade 5 as he regularly operates vehicles off-station and would be required to change tires or make emergency repairs. Since he does not, on a regular and recurring basis within the meaning of the FWS,

operate the longer and heavier vehicles typical of the grade 6 level, his work does not entail the greater physical effort required to maneuver such vehicles, especially when backing up.

We find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

#### *Working Conditions*

At grade 4, drivers mostly work outside and operate vehicles in all kinds of weather in a controlled traffic environment throughout a Government installation or establishment. Drivers are exposed to dirt and fumes, and to the possibility of cuts, bruises, and broken bones as a result of accidents while driving or from falling objects when loading and unloading the vehicle.

At grade 5, in addition to the working conditions described at grade 4, drivers are exposed to the danger of serious accidents. They drive in heavy traffic and at highway speeds over complicated road and interchange systems. Working conditions at the grade 6 level are the same as at the grade 5 level.

The appellant's working conditions meet the intent of conditions found at grade 5 since he is exposed to the danger of serious accidents and is subject to the full range of conditions described at that level when he operates vehicles off post at highway speeds.

We find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

In summary, the appellant's motor vehicle operating work is credited at the grade 5 level.

#### **Fork Lift Operating, WG-5704**

The appellant's fork lift operator duties are evaluated by application of the 5704 JGS, which is used to grade nonsupervisory jobs which involve the operation of electric, diesel, or gasoline powered fork lift trucks to move, stack and unstack, and load and unload materials in and about warehouses, storage areas, loading docks, and on and off vehicles, etc.

#### *Skill and Knowledge*

At grade 5, workers operate electric, gasoline, or diesel powered fork lift trucks which are capable of lifting loads weighing less than 4,500 kilograms (10,000 pounds). They drive fork lift trucks over wood, concrete, or similar type floors through narrow aisles in buildings and in such confined places as railroad cars and trucks. They occasionally drive outside over rough surfaces. The operators are skilled in handling controls for starting, stopping, backing, and driving fork lift trucks through narrow aisles in buildings, up and down ramps, and in and out of railroad cars, trucks, planes, etc.; and for lifting, lowering, and tilting forks by moving hands, arms, feet, and legs to operate controls. The operators must know the layout of the storage area to be able to find and place items without need for detailed instructions. They must also be skilled in moving fork lift trucks about in places where there is very little room to stack or remove loads. They must know how high, wide, and long the fork lift truck and its load are, how much the fork lift truck can lift and, based on this knowledge, must be able to tell such things as whether the fork

lift truck and items can fit through a doorway and/or aisle, how high and wide the shelf, bin, etc., must be to place the load, how high the load must be lifted to reach its intended storage area, and tell whether the truck lift truck is able to lift the load and whether the load is properly balanced.

At grade 6, workers operate fork lift trucks which are capable of lifting loads weighing 4,500 kilograms (10,000 pounds) or more that are higher than 420 centimeters (168 inches). The operators are more skilled in the handling of controls for driving fork lift trucks and for lifting, lowering, and tilting forks since the forklifts are able to lift more weight to greater heights. In addition, the work is usually performed outside over rough terrain which sometimes is muddy. Since items in an outside storage area are not usually arranged in neat rows and stacks as they are in a warehouse, the layout is more difficult to learn. Because of the larger size of the fork lift truck and load, moving about in places where there is very little room to stack and remove loads is more difficult.

The appellant operates a fork lift truck numerous times daily to move, stack, and load materials in and around the tools and parts shop and on and off vehicles. However, our fact finding did not reveal that the fork lift which he operates is capable of lifting loads weighing 4,500 kilograms (10,000 pounds) or more that are higher than 420 centimeters (168 inches). Rough terrain fork lift trucks, as described at the grade 6 level, are generally fitted with large flotation type tires for outdoor use on difficult surfaces. They are often used at construction sites to transport and lift building materials to various job site locations and are also common in lumber yards and auto recyclers.

The appellant does not drive the larger forklift truck over rough terrain requiring the application of knowledge and skill as described at the grade 6 level. Therefore, we find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

### *Responsibility*

At grade 5, operators follow oral instructions or written work orders concerning when and where loads are to be moved and placed. Operators safely handle materials; see that the fork lift truck is not used to lift any more of a load than it is able to lift; and place heavy and bulky items at the bottom of stacks to prevent tipping, making sure that the forks are put into the pallets as far as possible to give the most support to the load. They drive carefully to avoid injuring others or damaging equipment and property.

At grade 6, the responsibility for safe handling of materials is greater than at grade 5 as the fork lift trucks are usually operated over rough terrain, requiring the operator to exercise greater care to make sure the load does not tip.

The appellant does not drive fork lift trucks over rough or muddy terrain in outside storage areas as described at the grade 6 level. Therefore, we find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

*Physical Effort*

At grade 5, moderate physical effort is used in operating the fork lift truck. Some strain may be caused by the vibration of the fork lift truck.

In addition to the physical effort described at the grade 5 level, drivers at the grade 6 level exert more effort to operate the fork lift truck since it is heavier and is usually driven over rough terrain. The rough terrain causes a greater vibration of the fork lift trucks which requires greater physical endurance to withstand the strain.

The appellant's job fully meets the requirements of the grade 5 level in that he uses moderate physical effort to operate the fork lift truck. The appellant does not exert the type of physical effort found at the grade 6 level in driving the fork lift trucks. He does not drive over rough terrain which causes great vibration. Therefore, we find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

*Working Conditions*

At grade 5, operators normally work inside in areas that are sometimes damp and drafty. They occasionally work outside in all kinds of weather.

At grade 6, operators work in the same conditions as described at the grade 5 level except that the operator usually works outside in all kinds of weather and is exposed to dust and dirt.

The appellant's job fully meets the requirements of the grade 5 level as he characteristically operates the fork lift truck inside and around the tools and parts shop. He occasionally operates it outside to load and unload trucks, and to pick scrap off trucks and put them in dumpsters. The appellant's working conditions do not meet the grade 6 level in driving the fork lift trucks in that he normally works indoors. Therefore, we find this factor is properly evaluated at the grade 5 level.

In summary, the appellant's fork lift operating work is credited at the grade 5 level.

*Summary*

The grade of a mixed job such as the appellant's is based on the duties that involve the highest skill and qualifications and are a regular and recurring part of the job. The highest level of the appellant's work equates to the WG-5 level.

*Decision*

The appellant's job is properly classified as Tools and Parts Attendant (Forklift Operator), WG-6904-5.