

**U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and
Effectiveness
Classification Appeal and FLSA Programs**

Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242-9968

**Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Forestry Technician
GS-462-11

Organization: [appellant's organization]
Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
[geographic location]

OPM decision: Forestry Technician
GS-462-11

OPM decision number: C-0462-11-01

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon

Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

March 22, 2001

Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name and address]

[appellant's servicing personnel office]

[appellant's regional office]

USDA-OHRM-OD
U.S. Department of Agriculture
J.L. Whitten Building, Room 402W
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Washington, DC 20250

Introduction

On December 1, 2000, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [the appellant]. The appellant is employed as a Forestry Technician, GS-462-11, at the [appellant's organization and installation], Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, in [geographic location]. The agency uses the organizational title *Fire Management Officer-Operations* for the appellant's position. The appellant believes his position should be graded at the GS-12 level. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

The appellant appealed the classification of his position previously to the [appellant's regional office] of the Forest Service and then to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. On August 21, 1998, the [appellant's regional office] issued its appeal decision confirming the position's classification as GS-462-11. On May 16, 2000, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued its decision which found the appellant's position to be properly classified as Forestry Technician, GS- 462-11. The appellant and his supervisor agree that the appellant's current position description is accurate. However, the appellant questions the appropriateness of the assigned series and disagrees with the grade level determination.

To help decide the appeal, we conducted telephone interviews with the appellant and his immediate supervisor. In reaching our decision, we reviewed all information of record furnished by the appellant and his agency as well as materials provided in conjunction with our telephone interviews.

General issues

The appellant compares his position to other Fire Management Officer positions in the [appellant's region] that are classified at the GS-12 level. He points out that, in the last 10 years, all but two of the Fire Management Officer positions have been reclassified as Forester, GS-460-12. The appellant says his position is the only one still classified as GS-462-11.

By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's current duties and responsibilities to others as a basis for deciding his appeal.

Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. However, the agency also has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant's position is so similar to other positions that they all warrant the same classification, the agency must correct the classification of those positions to be consistent with this appeal decision.

Position information

The appellant's position is part of the fire management team that serves [three national forests]. The fire management team provides fire protection for 2.91 million acres of national forestlands

within 19 ranger districts in [two states]. Each year, about 200 fires burn approximately 3,000 acres in mountainous terrain. Through the prescribed fire program, more than 100,000 acres are burned annually. Protected forest resources are valued at well over a billion dollars. The three forests generate about 450 million dollars annually for the area's economy.

There is significant diversity between [two of the three forests]. The mountains of [one of those two forests] run east and west instead of north and south as in most forests. The result is different fire behavior. Shortleaf pine trees and shortleaf pine-oak mix are predominant on the southern slopes, and northern slopes have a mixture of hardwoods and pines. Pine covered areas present a more volatile environment for fire than hardwood timbered locations. Access roads are located at the bottom of canyons, so fires must be fought from the bottom up. The western edge of the [this national forest] stretches into [a specific area of a state] where the terrain includes high plains and prairies. Western winds exert a significant influence on fire suppression activities in this area. The [other of the two national forests] in [a specific area of a state] includes a different range of mountains. Hardwood trees are predominant, but there is also a pine-oak mix. Because farms cover the plateaus on the mountains in [this national forest], fire fighting access is opposite from what it is in the [other national forest previously mentioned]. That is, fires are from the top down in [this national forest]. The [third national forest] is a small area of 20,000 to 25,000 acres along [a large river near a city]. Fire activity in that forest is not significant.

The primary purpose of the appellant's position is to provide technical support in the management and protection of forest resources for the area's national forests. To carry out this mission, the appellant devotes most of his time to work relating to fire management activities such as fire suppression and presuppression, prescribed burning, and fuels management. The appellant works very independently and involves his supervisor, a GS-13 Fire Management Staff Officer, only in the most unusual situations.

The appellant works closely with [one state's] Forestry Commission and [another state's] Division of Forestry to prevent and control fires throughout the area. He meets with State foresters to work out cooperative annual fire protection plan agreements. The appellant deals regularly with representatives from the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Weather Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, and military installations at [two cities] about fire management tactical plans. The appellant coordinates and communicates with [a number of] Native American tribes in [one state] to develop and modify memoranda of understanding concerning the exchange of resources and fire detection activities.

The appellant is principally responsible for ensuring fire readiness. He is required to develop the Fire Management Action Plan to describe staffing levels for initial suppression of fires and provide specific action guides. The appellant conducts readiness reviews semiannually at 19 field unit locations to provide guidance and to determine conformance with established policies and procedures. He reviews local fire plans, monitors local conditions, ascertains fuel loading, and determines the adequacy and readiness of fire equipment and personnel. The appellant is responsible for prescribed burn tactics. Based on National Fire Danger Rating System models, the appellant provides guidance to the ranger districts about when to initiate prescribed burns and what fire behavior to expect.

Series, title, and guide determination

The pivotal issue in deciding the appropriate series of the appealed position is determining whether the work *requires* the application of professional knowledge and ability. Unless it does, the position cannot be classified in a professional series such as the GS-460 Forestry Series.

Positions in the GS-460 series are characterized by the professional application of specialized knowledge of the objectives and principles of forestry and of sciences basic to forestry. The work includes, among other things, the management and protection of forestlands and properties; the protection of resources against fire, insects, disease, floods, erosion, and other depredations; and the development of new, improved, or more economic scientific methods, practices, or techniques necessary to perform such work. The GS-460 series specifically excludes positions that involve similar but *nonprofessional* work in forestry, such as Forestry Technician positions.

The GS-462 Forestry Technician Series includes positions that primarily require a *practical* knowledge of the methods and techniques of forestry and other biologically based resource management fields. Forestry Technicians provide practical technical support in the scientific management, protection, and development of forest resources.

The Grade Evaluation Guide for Aid and Technical Work in the Biological Sciences, GS-400, says that technician work requires a practical knowledge of terminology, procedures, methods, and practices of one or more biological sciences. At higher grade levels, technicians must be familiar with the concepts and principles of the science and understand the mission and operational requirements of the organization. Technicians implement plans or projects based on their extensive experience and supplemental on-the-job training rather than formal academic education in the discipline itself. Technical work requires a high degree of practical knowledge and skill and is often carried out with considerable independence. The extent of knowledge, skill, and independence does not alter the nature and character of the work, which is to support a professional discipline.

Like positions in the GS-462 series, the basic objective of the appellant's position is to provide technical support in the protection of forest resources. Although some aspects of the appellant's position may be similar to GS-460 forestry positions, the nature and character of the appellant's work does not require the application of professional knowledge and ability in order to protect forest resources against fire. The most appropriate series for the appealed position is GS-462. The proper title for the position is *Forestry Technician*.

Criteria for determining the grade level of work classified in the GS-462 Forestry Technician Series are contained in the GS-400 Grade Evaluation Guide for Aid and Technical Work in the Biological Sciences. That Guide is written in Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. In instances where the appellant's position exceeds the highest level described in the Guide, we used the Primary Standard for the FES and the standard for the GS-1371 Cartographic Technician Series for comparative purposes. The GS-1371 standard is also written in FES format. The Primary Standard is the "standard for standards" that are written in FES format. Similar to the appellant's position, positions in the GS-1371 series perform nonprofessional work that involves the solution of technical problems that require primarily application of a practical

knowledge of methods and techniques. As explained in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards* and *The Classifier's Handbook*, the Primary Standard and other standards that apply directly or indirectly to the work may be used when evaluating an individual FES factor which falls below the lowest or above the highest factor level described in the applicable FES standard. Even though the nature of the work in the GS-1371 standard is not directly related to the appellant's work, we find it appropriate to use that standard for cross-reference when the highest level in the Guide is exceeded.

Grade determination

The FES places positions in grades by comparing their duties and responsibilities with nine grade-influencing factors, each of which is evaluated separately and assigned a point value consistent with factor level descriptions. For a duty or responsibility to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected description. If the responsibility fails to meet a particular factor level description in any significant aspect, the lower point value must be assigned. When all the factors have been evaluated, the total points are converted to a grade by using the grade conversion table in the guide or standard. The following is a factor-by-factor analysis of the appellant's position.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts the individual must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, concepts) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply the knowledge.

Level 1-6 in the Guide applies to work that requires knowledge of technical methods and procedures, management practices, and agency policies and programs and extensive familiarity with the methods and practices of the discipline supported in order to:

- (1) design, coordinate, and execute complete conventional projects when the projects are well preceded;
- (2) assume full technical and operational responsibility for at least three specific phases of a research process (e.g., developing a study plan; developing data through field processes; refining, organizing, and verifying data; analyzing and evaluating data; preparing reports that summarize progress and results); or
- (3) administratively maintain a significant function or area of responsibility on an ongoing basis.

As illustrated in the Guide, a technician at Level 1-6 manages a function concerned with maintaining and improving a wildlife habitat for a limited area or unit of a forest. The technician uses established prescriptions and management plans for implementing projects to enhance the environment. The technician determines the need for and develops a timetable for such activity as prescribed fires, vegetative treatments, and other standard practices to improve habitat conditions. Subsequently, the technician is responsible for monitoring and administering habitat conditions and making adjustments as necessary.

The appellant's position exceeds Level 1-6, which is the highest level described in the Guide. Therefore, we used the Primary Standard and the GS-1371 standard to ensure that the appellant's position is equivalent to the overall intent of Level 1-7 as described in those standards. The Primary Standard states that positions at Level 1-7 require a comprehensive, intensive, practical knowledge of a technical field and skill in applying this knowledge to the development of new methods, approaches, or procedures. In the GS-1371 standard, positions at Level 1-7 require the technicians to have knowledge and skill sufficient to adapt or modify existing work practices and procedures or make significant departures from previous approaches or projects when they are working on projects with complex or complicating features. Technicians at this level must have knowledge and skill sufficient to set up and implement new procedures or techniques.

The GS-13 Fire Management Staff Officer relies on the appellant to independently orchestrate and coordinate fire operation plans. The appellant uses knowledge of fire behavior and fire suppression techniques to prepare and coordinate the Fire Management Action Plan that all ranger districts in the three forests use to determine their presuppression/suppression work plans. He uses information from the National Fire Management Analysis System, the National Fire Danger Rating System, and the Fuels Management Analysis Process to determine the "Most Efficient Level" of resources for the Fire Management Action Plan. Similar to positions at Level 1-7, the appellant's position requires sufficient knowledge to apply the latest developments to solutions of novel or controversial natural resource management conflicts for which accepted or proven methods are not applicable. As the Fire Management Officer for the prescribed burn program, the appellant must adjust and revise procedures when making decisions about fireline placement, ignition methods, firing patterns, and patrol procedures. The appellant interacts with [two states'] cooperators to negotiate reciprocal fire containment and control agreements. Such activities require knowledge of fire management principles, concepts, and practices sufficient to assess short- and long-range resources and needs and to resolve diverse and complex technical or administrative problems relating to fire operations. Resolution of these problems may require deviation from traditional methods and procedures. The appellant's position fully meets the intent of Level 1-7.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1-7 (1,250 points).

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor considers how work is assigned, the individual's responsibility, and the review of completed work. Supervisors exercise control by the way they give instructions to the employee, set priorities and deadlines, and define objectives and boundaries. Employee responsibility depends on the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives. The review of completed work depends on the nature and extent of the review.

At Level 2-3 of the Guide, the supervisor or other designated authority initially provides direction on the priorities, objectives, and deadlines for types of work usually performed by the unit. The technician independently coordinates work efforts with outside parties and usually

submits only completed work. The technician exercises initiative in developing solutions to common problems. However, the technician seeks administrative direction or decision from higher authority when significant technical or procedural problems are encountered. Review of the work emphasizes the quality of judgment used by the technician in resolving technical and administrative problems.

The appellant's position exceeds Level 2-3, which is the highest level described by the Guide. Level 2-4 in the Primary Standard states that supervisors set the overall objectives and resources available, and the employee and supervisor consult with one another to develop deadlines, projects, and the work to be done. Having developed expertise in the line of work, the employee is expected to plan and carry out assignments, resolve most of the conflicts that arise, coordinate the work with others as necessary, and interpret policy in terms of overall objectives. The supervisor reviews overall completed work for effectiveness in achieving expected results. At Level 2-4 in the GS-1371 standard, the technician and the supervisor consult to develop deadlines, projects, and work to be done. The technician plans and carries out the work, resolves most of the technical conflicts that arise, coordinates with others as necessary, and interprets policy in terms of established objectives. The technician keeps the supervisor informed of potentially controversial matters or far-reaching implications. Completed work is reviewed in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, or effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results.

The appellant's position fully meets Level 2-4. The appellant reports to the Fire Management Staff Officer who is located at the [same installation as the appellant]. The Fire Management Staff Officer makes broad assignments, and the appellant works very independently to carry them out. For example, the appellant annually develops and coordinates the Fire Management Action Plan for the three forests. He reviews district-level action plans and ensures that districts are well prepared for the fall and spring fire seasons. He initiates reports and provides guidance to the ranger districts about fire behavior and when conditions favor prescribed burn activities. The appellant determines the methods to be used to accomplish the work. Like technicians at Level 2-4, the appellant interprets policies and resolves technical and administrative problems, involving his supervisor only when issues or situations are highly unusual. The supervisor relies on the appellant to carry out all operational aspects of the fire program and reviews the appellant's work in terms of meeting program objectives.

This factor is evaluated at Level 2-4 (450 points).

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. Guidelines refer to standard guides, precedents, methods, and techniques such as governing statutes, agency manual of standard procedures and techniques, and annual work plans.

At Level 3-3 of the Guide, the technician works with new requirements or applications for which only general guidelines are available or where applicable guidelines do not always directly relate to the core problem of the assignment. The employee exercises independent judgment in extending the applicability of guidelines to situations not specifically covered. Employees at this

level adapt guidelines based on their understanding of the intent of the guidelines and react accordingly.

The appellant's position fully meets Level 3-3. The appellant relies on broadly stated, agency-specific manuals for guidance in performing his duties. Forest Service manuals and handbooks establish a framework for fire management program operations. The appellant is responsible for tailoring operational plans to characteristics and conditions that exist on the [three national forests]. He incorporates different fire scenarios into "pre-attack" fire plans, coordinates with and gathers pertinent information from other technical specialists, and considers historical records about fire containment and control activities. The appellant uses various technical publications and circulars to enhance his knowledge and understanding of fire behavior and the impact of wind, flora, and fauna on wildfire activity. The appellant follows U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards on air quality and particulate matter in managing smoke generated by fires. State Pollution Control Board requirements for [two states] also affect the appellant's oversight responsibility for fire management operations.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 3-4. The Primary Standard states that guidelines at this level are scarce or of limited use, and employees must use initiative and resourcefulness to develop new methods, criteria, or proposed new policies. Similarly, the GS-1371 standard describes positions at Level 3-4 as those where guidelines are often inadequate in dealing with the more complex or unusual assignments. At this level, technicians are required to use resourcefulness, initiative, and judgment based on experience to deviate from or extend traditional methods, practices, and techniques in resolving problems where precedents are not applicable. Conversely, there are numerous guidelines for the appellant's position, and the appellant is not required to develop new methods or vastly modify techniques as envisioned at Level 3-4.

This factor is evaluated at Level 3-3 (275 points).

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-3 of the Guide, technical duties involve differing and unrelated processes and methods. The technician frequently shifts between responsible technical assignments that are substantially different in terms of equipment, techniques, and methods used. At this level, the technician has long-term responsibility for a limited program or operating function. The technician independently executes defined portions of more comprehensive long-range projects. Possible courses of action exist for planning and executing the work, and technicians are expected to use discretion in choosing from among them.

The appealed position exceeds Level 4-3, the highest level described by the Guide. The Primary Standard states that work at Level 4-4 typically includes varied duties requiring many different and unrelated processes and methods. Decisions about what needs to be done include assessing unusual circumstances, variations in approach, and incomplete or conflicting data. The work

involves making many decisions that involve the interpretation of considerable data, planning the work, or refining the methods and techniques to be used. As described in the GS-1371 standard, technicians at Level 4-4 independently carry out assignments that consist of diverse and complex technical or administrative problems. Their work requires compromise with or adaptation of methods, techniques, or procedures. Problems at this level involve coordinating the work and implementing new procedures or techniques.

The appellant's position fully meets Level 4-4. The appellant is responsible for orchestrating and coordinating diverse, complex fire and smoke containment, fuels management, and control activities on 2.91 million acres of national forest lands in [two states]. The land area presents a number of complex features. The terrain varies in elevation from 450 feet to 2,730 feet and requires separate fire suppression responses and prescribed fire objectives. Variables in geography, ground cover, and rates of ignition and spread significantly affect plans, methods, and procedures for all fire control activities. Numerous towns and communities within smoke impact distances complicate the appellant's smoke management challenges. The appellant works closely with district fire personnel to ensure that necessary resources are available to fight wildfires and that site-specific plans are in place for prescribed burns. Plans for prescribed burns must consider and address burn objectives, specific firing patterns, ignition methods, fuel moisture conditions in the treatment area, and provide initial suppression tactics in case the burn turns into a wildfire. The appellant works closely with [one state's] Forestry Commission, [a state's] Division of Forestry, and Native American tribes in [one state] to negotiate agreements concerning the exchange of resources and fire detection to prevent and control fires on private, state, and other Federal agency lands interspersed with national forest acreage. Similar to technician positions at Level 4-4, the appellant's position requires the refinement of methods and techniques used for fire operations. Further, the appellant's work involving coordination of fire management activities with others and the evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of procedures and programs fully meets the intent of Level 4-4.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-4 (225 points).

Factor 5, Scope and effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

As described in the Guide, work at Level 5-3 involves applying conventional technical solutions and practices to a variety of problems. A major consideration for performing the work is to ensure that established operations criteria, rules, or methods are followed. Work products directly affect program operations and the adequacy of long-range work plans.

The appellant's position exceeds Level 5-3, the highest level described by the Guide. The Primary Standard states that work at Level 5-4 involves establishing criteria, formulating projects, assessing program effectiveness, or analyzing a variety of unusual conditions. The work affects a wide range of *agency* activities or the operation of other agencies. As described at Level 5-4 in the GS-1371 standard, the work is characterized by responsibility for scheduling, coordinating, and executing complete projects requiring compromise with or adaptation of

methods, techniques, or procedures. The work requires an intensive knowledge of the practical aspects of technical principles and practices and a limited range of specific theoretical concepts. The technician's work efforts at this level affect the use of local resources, the efficiency of processes, or the timely and efficient completion of projects.

The primary purpose of the appellant's position is to plan and implement fire containment and control activities for national forest lands located in [two states]. The appellant assesses program effectiveness throughout the two-state area, formulates projects such as initial suppression tactics and prescribed burn site plans, and analyzes a variety of conditions affecting fire behavior. He must coordinate fire presuppression, suppression, and fire management activities with many related resources. Actual and potential fire activity covers a broad geographical area located on 2.91 million acres of national forest lands and contiguous private, state, and other Federal lands. The *scope* of the appellant's work meets Level 5-4. However, the effect of the appellant's work falls short of Level 5-4 in that the work does not affect a wide range of *agency* activities or the operation of other agencies to the extent envisioned at this level. Because Level 5-4 is not fully met, Level 5-3 must be credited for this factor.

This factor is evaluated at Level 5-3 (150 points).

Factors 6 and 7, Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts

Factor 6 includes face-to-face and telephone contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain. This factor considers what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty in communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contacts take place. Factor 7 relates to Factor 6 in that it considers the reasons for the contacts, e.g., whether the purpose is to exchange factual information or debate controversial issues. The Guide combines the point values for the two factors into a matrix. For this reason, the factors are addressed jointly.

Level 2 in the Guide states that personal contacts are with employees in the agency, inside and outside of the immediate organization. Personnel from higher organizational units or resource people from State or local governments and other Federal agencies are included in this description. Personal contacts may be with the general public or special users such as private landowners and cooperators. Contacts are usually established on a routine basis, though the employee's authority may not be initially clear to the person contacted. Level 3 covers contacts made on a nonroutine basis in a variety of settings. Contacts are regularly established with noted subject matter experts from other Federal agencies, influential local community leaders, or representatives of organized special interest groups.

The appellant's contacts fully meet Level 2. Contacts are routinely with individuals inside and outside the immediate organization. The appellant deals with fire representatives from ranger districts and the [the appellant's region] of the Forest Service, various State and local fire management organizations, and cooperators. The appellant does not have *regular* contacts with the types of individuals described at Level 3.

Level b in the Guide covers contacts made to plan and coordinate work efforts; explain the need to adhere to laws, rules, and regulations; resolve problems concerning the work or peculiar needs of the organization; interpret data obtained and explain its purpose and significance; or reach

agreement on operating problems. The persons contacted are usually working toward a common goal and generally are reasonably cooperative. Level c covers contacts made for the purpose of influencing or controlling persons or groups. For example, the purpose of the contact is to persuade suspicious and reluctant landowners to participate in organizational objectives when there is no requirement for them to do so. The persons contacted are usually fearful, skeptical, or uncooperative and require skill in the approach made to obtain the desired results.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts meets Level b. Most of the appellant's contacts involve planning and coordinating work efforts and resolving problems concerning the particular needs of the organization. Individuals share the common objective of containing and controlling the destruction caused by fires. The appellant's position does not require the skills for persuasion or negotiation as envisioned at Level c.

The appropriate combination for the appellant's position is Level 2b (75 points).

Factor 8, Physical demands

This factor covers the physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. Level 8-1 of the Guide covers work that is principally sedentary. Some walking and bending may be involved. At Level 8-2, the work requires some physical exertion such as regular running or walking or climbing over mountainous terrain.

The appellant usually works in an office setting. However, the work involves visits to ranger districts to determine fire attack readiness. Regularly assigned duties do not include walking or climbing over rocky areas or mountainous terrain. The appealed position fully meets Level 8-1. It does not meet Level 8-2.

This factor is evaluated at Level 8-1 (5 points).

Factor 9, Work environment

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings. At Level 9-1, the Guide describes the work environment as involving everyday risks or discomforts that require normal safety precautions. Typical of this environment are offices, meeting rooms, libraries, and commercial vehicles. At Level 9-2, regular and recurring moderate risks or discomforts require special safety precautions. Typical of the environment is work around moving parts or machines, with contagious diseases, or at construction sites.

The appellant usually works in an office setting. However, his work involves visits to ranger districts to determine fire attack readiness. The appealed position fully meets Level 9-1. It does not meet Level 9-2.

This factor is evaluated at Level 9-1 (5 points).

Summary

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-7	1,250
2. Supervisory controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. and 7. Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts	2b	75
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	5
Total		2,435

A total of 2,435 points falls within the GS-11 range of 2,355 to 2,750 points on the Grade Conversion Table of the Primary Standard.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Forestry Technician, GS-462-11.