

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Delegation of Position Classification Authority  
19 February 1997

1. Introduction.

1-1. Purpose. This document provides guidelines and instructions for the delegation and exercise of position classification authority within the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

1-2. Applicability. This guidance is applicable to all USACE elements, major subordinate commands (MSC), districts, and field operating activities (FOA). While the guidance is written in the CPAC/CPOC environment, it is applicable where civilian personnel regionalization has not yet occurred and Human Resource Offices still provide classification services.

1-3. Exclusions.

a. This guidance does not apply to USACE laboratories covered by the Reinvention Laboratory Personnel Demonstration Project.

b. The Department of Defense Wage Setting Division is delegated the authority to establish, change, or delete positions paid from regional power rate schedules. The guidelines contained in this regulation do not apply to power rate schedule positions.

c. This guidance does not apply to the classification of civilian personnel officer or SES positions. Guidelines for the classification of these positions is contained under paragraph 6a., Prior Approval Requirements, page 4, of this regulation.

1-4. References:

- a. Classification Under the General Schedule, 5 CFR 511
- b. Prevailing Rate Systems, 5 CFR 532
- c. Reduction in Force, Competitive Level, 5 CFR 351.403
- d. U. S. Office of Personnel Management, Introduction to the Position Classification Standards
- e. Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Manual, Chapter 5, Classification and Human Resources Cost Management Program

- f. AR 690-300, Ch. 312, Position Management
- g. AR 690-500, Ch 511, Classification Under the General Schedule
- h. ER 690-1-500, Position Management and Classification
- i. ER 37-1-24, Financial Administration, Operating Budget

1-5. Accountability. Delegation and exercise of the authorities discussed below, must be consistent with any statutes, regulatory responsibilities imposed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Department of the Army, executive orders, and Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (HQUSACE) policies, regulations, and procedures. Commanders and supervisors are expected to execute authorities responsibly and within the intent of the law, regulation or executive order. This expectation will be reflected in civilian performance objectives and appraisals and military evaluation reports and support forms. Personnel specialists and other management advisors will be responsible for providing accurate advice and assistance to commanders and supervisors in their respective areas.

1-6. Equal Employment Opportunity. Position classification authority will be exercised in accordance with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and procedures established by HQDA and HQUSACE. Commanders must assure that affirmative action programs and Affirmative Employment Program (AEP) plans are in compliance with HQDA and HQUSACE guidance. Commanders must be aware that significant increases in complaint activity may be indicators of serious problems. The above will be incorporated into the periodic reviews and analyses conducted for this program.

1-7. Labor- Management Relations. Managers, supervisors and human resources specialists must assure that obligations to recognized labor organizations, as required by 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71, are fully met.

1-8. Training. Supervisors, including directors and senior managers, must be trained and oriented on all position classification authorities and responsibilities prior to delegation of authority. Training comparable to the HQDA program of instruction for position management skills and principles (basic position classification) must be provided. Training will be scheduled and conducted on a periodic basis to assure that all supervisors have the opportunity to attend. Under no circumstances will supervisors be delegated position classification authority until they have completed appropriate training.

1-9. Lowest Practical Level. Commanders/activity directors will delegate classification authority to the lowest organizational level where: budget authority is delegated and skills, experience, knowledge, and flexibility exist for supervisors to make significant decisions affecting expenditure of civilian personnel resources. At a minimum, authority will be delegated to the first level below the command group. Delegations must follow the chain-of-command and should be reviewed annually. Commanders/activity directors retain the discretion to subsequently withdraw authorities and redelegate to higher levels than previously delegated, consistent with changing mission requirements and availability of funds. Authorities must be delegated in writing.

## 1-10. Evaluation.

a. HQUSACE. In the exercise of its staff responsibility, the Directorate of Human Resources will monitor implementation progress and conduct periodic evaluation of the position management and classification program. Evaluation measures will include an assessment of position classification, position management, performance management, and the impact on EEO and labor/management-employee relations. To the maximum extent possible, evaluation will be integrated with other program evaluation processes.

b. Major Subordinate Commanders (MSC)/Field Activity Directors. MSC commanders/field activity directors will exercise command and control, regional interface, program management, and quality assurance responsibility for district/field activity level position management and classification programs. In carrying out these responsibilities, the exercise of classification authority will be periodically evaluated.

c. District Commanders/field activity directors will periodically assess trends and progress in the position management and classification program. Procedures must be established to ensure that the commander/activity director is kept informed of classification actions that (a) affect alignment, (b) are inconsistent with correctly classified positions, and/or are precedent setting.

## 2. Authorities.

2-1. Position Classification. In accordance with controlling HQDA regulations, authority for the conduct of civilian personnel matters, including position management and classification, has been delegated to MSC and District commanders and directors of field operating activities. This includes the authority to classify civilian positions in accordance with controlling statutory and regulatory guidelines.

a. Redlegation of Authority. MSC and District commanders and directors of field operating activities may redelegate this authority to managers and supervisors under their direct supervision who meet the requirements set forth below:

(1) Have successfully completed formal classroom training which provides knowledge of the basic principles, theories, concepts, processes and procedures of position management and classification. As a minimum this training must include:

- (a) characteristics of the work of positions which impact its classification;
- (b) the basic structure of the General Schedule and Federal Wage systems;
- (c) occupational groups and series;

- (d) classification standards and guides;
- (e) writing position descriptions;
- (f) position analysis and evaluation;
- (g) writing evaluation statements;
- (h) classifying and evaluating supervisory and leader positions;

(2) Exercise authority for developing, executing, and enforcing limitations over an organizational unit's operating budget which includes travel, administrative expenses, overtime, personnel salaries, FTE, and other expenses.

(a) The exercise of position classification authority by managers and supervisors must be in accordance with controlling statutory and regulatory guidelines. Should commanders/directors choose not to delegate position classification authority, the authority to classify civilian positions may be redelegated to the appropriate servicing civilian personnel operations center or retained by the commander/director.

(b) **Withdrawal of Authority.** When an internal or external review reveals serious deficiencies in position classification, all or any part of the authority may be withdrawn. During the period of withdrawal of authority, the higher headquarters will take such measures as are necessary to remedy the deficiencies noted. Redelegation of authority will be made when the higher headquarters commander is satisfied that the responsible official of the activity has developed and implemented corrective measures for the proper exercise of job evaluation authority.

2-2. **Budget.** Corps supervisors at varying levels and at the discretion of the commander are charged with the responsibility for formulating and executing operating budgets for their organization or office. The major part of these budgets is personnel compensation, the financing requirements for which are governed by the number and type of positions and the pay grades of employees they supervise. Therefore, the level at which accountability and responsibility for position classification is delegated should be the same as the level of accountability and responsibility for controlling the operating budget of that supervisor 's organization.

### 3. Responsibilities.

3-1. **HQUSACE.** The Director of Human Resources serves as the proponent and senior staff advisor for the position management and classification program. In this capacity, the Director will:

a. Ensure adequate systems and procedures exist to assure compliance with statutory requirements for accurate description and grading of positions and recommend corrective action as required.

b. Determine the organizational level or specific functions for which program indicators will be developed, and approve all program indicators. Monitor performance measures to evaluate position classification accuracy.

c. Coordinate all required interface with other programs, internally and externally.

### 3-2. MSCs/District/Field Operating Activities.

a. Commanders/activity directors will:

(1) Delegate and exercise position classification authority in accordance with the guidelines contained in this document.

(2) Assure accountability is properly established for position classification.

(3) Take appropriate action to correct any abuse or misapplication of position classification.

(4) Assure obligations to recognized labor organizations, as required by 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71, are fully met.

b. The Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC)/Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) will:

(1) Provide continuing advice and guidance to the commander and supervisors consistent with OPM, DOD, HQDA, and HQUSACE requirements, regarding execution of the position management and classification program.

(2) Coordinate training and orientation for the commander and supervisors on position management and classification.

(3) Provide CPOC advisories to assist supervisors in the application of OPM position classification standards and job grading standards, and on efficient and cost effective position structures/issues needing further consideration by commanders or managers.

(4) Provide CPOC periodic feedback to the commander/activity director, or the commander/activity director 's designee, on trends in position classification. Feedback will include recommendations for corrective action, as required.

(5) Provide advice and assistance on modifying supervisory performance standards/Officer Evaluation Report duty descriptions and performance objectives to reflect accountability for position classification authorities.

c. Managers/supervisors will:

(1) Consider classification advisories provided by the CPOC, and approve the CPOC advisory or provide position classification evaluation analysis, as appropriate. Position evaluations must be consistent with Title 5, U.S.C., OPM classification standards, appeal decisions and other guidance of OPM, DOD, HQDA, and HQUSACE. In no case will supervisors' authority exceed that delegated to the commander.

(2) Assure that organizations are structured efficiently and economically, consistent with HQDA and HQUSACE position management objectives.

(3) Fulfill responsibilities to recognized labor organizations under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71 and appropriate negotiated agreements.

4. Position Management and Classification.

4-1. General.

a. Delegation of position classification enhances the personnel management authority and accountability of line supervisors by providing maximum control over the grades and position structure of their organizations consistent with classification policies and standards. In addition, this delegation increases supervisors' knowledge of the classification system and, with the assistance of the CPAC/CPOC staff, makes the system more responsive to the needs of management.

b. A key principle of delegation of position classification authority is that the supervisor's authority does not exceed that of the commander/activity director. This means that classification standards still govern and that prior decisions by OPM, DOD, HQDA, and HQUSACE on substantially identical, similar or related positions may not be overruled. These decisions are binding.

c. Classification standards, regulations, and other guidance must be made available to supervisors and employees. Commanders/activity directors should determine the most effective method to meet this requirement.

4-2. Accountability.

a. The commander/activity director is ultimately responsible for the integrity of the position classification program. Commanders/activity directors are expected to ensure procedures are in place which will keep them aware of trends and special circumstances associated with classification decisions by subordinate supervisors, particularly those cases which may (1) be precedent setting in nature, (2) result in inconsistent grading when compared to substantially identical positions in the organization, or (3) disrupt sound alignment of grades. The commander/activity director is expected to ensure through these procedures that binding evaluation decisions (by OPM, DOD, HQDA, and HQUSACE) are observed and that errant situations are corrected, to include, as warranted, revocation of classification authority from supervisors. Failure to conform with legal and regulatory requirements may result in withdrawal of the commander/activity directors position classification authority.

b. Performance objectives of civilian and military supervisors will reflect the accountability which is inherent in the delegation of classification authority. For civilian supervisors, classification authority will be included in the performance objectives. For military supervisors, classification authority will be included in the duty description in the OER and the OER Support Form. In rendering performance appraisals and OERs, raters will give full consideration to the performance of supervisors in exercising classification authority.

#### 4-3. Requirements.

a. Supervisors will complete appropriate training for position classification and position management comparable to the HQDA program of instruction for position management skills and principles (basic position classification), prior to being delegated position classification authority.

b. Under no circumstances will supervisors be delegated position classification authority without concurrent budget authority. Where circumstances require withdrawal of budget authority to a higher management level, position classification authority will also be withdrawn.

c. Supervisors may not classify their own position. Classification of subordinate positions which will result in an upgrade of the supervisor's position must be approved by the chief of the major organizational unit (i.e., division or office chief) or the commander/activity director.

d. Classification authority will be delegated to each supervisor by letter which identifies the supervisor by name, and outlines specific budget, classification, statutory and regulatory responsibilities. A sample is included as an attachment.

e. IAW AR 690-500, Chapter 511, and ER 690-1-500, positions will be reviewed to ensure job description and evaluation accuracy.

4-4. Procedures. Supervisors are encouraged to consult informally with CPAC/CPOC specialists to discuss organization and position structures and other position management, classification, and personnel issues prior to submission of requests for personnel action and throughout the entire process.

a. Supervisors with delegated classification authority should follow procedures established locally or by the servicing CPOC when submitting requests for position classification actions. The CPOC will provide advisory position classification determinations which gives the title, series, and grade for the position in situations where further consideration by commanders or managers is needed. If the supervisor accepts the advisory classification, he/she signs in Blocks #11 and 12a on the job description and returns it to the appropriate office. The signature in Block 11 certifies that the title, pay schedule, occupational code, and grade of the job have been fixed in accordance with official policy and grade level standards. Signature in Block 12a certifies that the job description accurately describes the major duties and responsibilities of the position and that the position is necessary. Where the

supervisor does not accept the advisory classification, the supervisor will classify the position, attach an evaluation statement , and return to the appropriate office for processing.

b. Disagreements on the content of proposed job descriptions will be resolved within the management chain of the district/field activity. Commanders/activity directors retain final decision-making authority for actions which cannot be resolved between the CPOC and managers/supervisors. This authority may be re-delegated to one principal assistant with full line authority to discharge their functions on a district/field activity wide basis.

c. Significant disagreements on position classification between the CPOC staff and managers/supervisors will be elevated to the commander/activity director for final allocation. Significant disagreements include, but are not limited to, grade differences and type of work -- professional versus nonprofessional, supervisory versus nonsupervisory. If requested under these circumstances, evaluation decisions by external organizations, i.e., MSC HR staff, HQUSACE, HQDA, or DOD will be binding.

d. For all classification actions, the CPAC will recommend eligibility for environmental differential, hazard pay differential and other premium pay; the CPOC will make final determination of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) designation, assign competitive levels and maintain registers, and accomplish other administrative tasks associated with the processing of classification actions.

4-5. New Position Classification Standards. Local training must be provided for managers and supervisors on the interpretation and application of new position classification standards prior to implementation. CPOC assistance will be obtained in identifying and applying new standards to affected positions.

4-6. Position Classification Appeals. An employee may appeal directly to OPM or DOD; however, they are encouraged to ask their supervisor for an explanation of the classification decision prior to filing the appeal. Appeals will be processed by the supervisor with procedural information provided by the CPAC. The supervisor may also request that the CPOC assist in explaining classification decisions. Where the supervisor has not accepted a CPOC advisory opinion, the supervisor will be responsible for developing all documentation to support his/her determination, with advice and assistance from the CPOC. In all other cases, documentation will be accomplished by the CPAC/CPOC in consultation with the supervisor.

4-7. Position Management. Guidance and controlling policies for position management contained in HQDA and HQUSACE regulations and policies must be followed in exercising delegated position classification authority.

4-8. Evaluation.

a. Responsibilities.

(1) HQUSACE. HQUSACE will assess the elements below to ensure proper exercise of classification authority. Activities choosing to delegate position classification authority to managers and supervisors must meet the HQDA goals for job description and job evaluation accuracy.

(a) Evaluation of local procedures for job description review for currency and accuracy; application of new standards; mechanisms for review of job evaluation accuracy; commander/activity director allocated positions; number of reclassification actions; number of promotions based on accretion of duties; significant changes in numbers of high grade positions, supervisors, or change in the ratio of administrative/clerical/technician versus specialist/professional positions; results of the application of new position classification standards; and results of position classification appeal decisions.

(b) Commander/activity director reports on deficiencies and corrective measures.

(2) MSCs. In the exercise of their staff supervision, oversight and quality assurance responsibilities, MSC commanders will:

(a) Review and approve district implementation, training, evaluation plans and procedures for the delegation of position classification authority to managers and supervisors.

(b) Review selected district work products to insure proper exercise of position classification authority.

(c) Participate in command inspections, program reviews and similar activities to evaluate and advise on the exercise of position classification authority within the MSC.

(d) Advise and assist districts with the development and implementation of appropriate evaluation procedures and mechanisms.

(e) Withdraw all or any part of authority from districts where serious program deficiencies are revealed.

(f) Review and approve district reports of findings and corrective action.

(g) Provide immediate notice to HQUSACE on withdrawal of position classification authority for each district.

(h) Furnish HQUSACE copies of district reports on deficiencies and corrective measures.

(3) Districts/Field Activities. Commanders/field activity directors are responsible for the proper exercise of position classification authority within their organization. A fundamental principle of the legal requirements is that all employees are paid equitably and that pay rates shall bear a direct relationship to the level of skill and responsibility of the work performed. District/field activities must establish adequate procedures, controls and evaluation measures to fulfill these

requirements. Periodic assessments of the exercise of position classification authority must be conducted and report of findings submitted to MSCs/HQUSACE identifying deficiencies and corrective measures taken.

b. Withdrawal of authority.

(1) Classification authority may be withdrawn where serious program deficiencies are identified and remain uncorrected. A corrective plan of action must be approved by MSCs for districts, and HQUSACE for MSCs and field activities. If authority is withdrawn, the corrective plan of action must be implemented prior to having authority restored. The plan of action must require re-training of supervisors prior to restoration of classification authority. Restoration of authority will be granted upon receipt of findings which indicate deficiencies have been corrected. The servicing CPOC will be immediately notified if classification authority is withdrawn from a command or activity and when it is restored.

(2) Any major organization within an MSC/district/field activity having serious program deficiencies may have its classification authority withdrawn by the commander/activity director if deficiencies remain uncorrected. The commander/activity director must require the development and implementation of a corrective plan of action. This plan must require re-training of supervisors. Restoration of authority will be granted upon receipt of findings which indicate deficiencies have been corrected.

c. MSC/District/Field Operating Activities. At least 30 days prior to delegation of authority and upon completion of training, each local organization will gather baseline program data to establish trend lines for future program assessment in position management and classification. Where deviations are not a result of mission changes or efforts to improve the quality or effectiveness of work operations, Commanders/activity directors should include an explanation of changes and their impact on position classification. Trends and statistical data should be periodically updated. It is expected that trends will show a regular pattern of fluctuation due to the nature of the mission of the Corps. As such, these fluctuations should not require further investigation. Only marked or sharp increases and decreases warrant further study but are not absolute indicators of program deficiencies. As with the evaluation of any program, the objective for the evaluation of delegated authorities is to determine that work and job design meet mission needs and are in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

OFFICE SYMBOL

DATE

MEMORANDUM FOR (Division or Office Chief, etc.)

SUBJECT: Delegation of Position Classification Authority

1. Consistent with the provisions of ER 690-1-500, Position Management and Classification, you are hereby delegated the following authorities:

a. Position Classification. You are authorized to classify civilian positions under your supervisory control to the appropriate pay plan, title, series, and grade. This delegation carries with it the responsibility to assure that all such classification made by you are in accordance with Title 5, U.S. Code, governing Office of Personnel Management (OPM) position classification standards, Department of the Army (DA) and HQUSACE classification guidance, and OPM, DA or higher echelon decisions resulting from appeals and advisories. This authority does not extend to your own position. In addition, classification of subordinate positions that would result in an increase to your own grade must be approved by your supervisor.

b. Budget Authority.

2. Your performance evaluation will reflect your responsibility for executing position classification and budget authority.

3. This delegation of authorities is effective . It will be terminated if you leave your position, if you fail to execute this authority properly, or as required by the annual funding situation, or other extenuating circumstances.

COMMANDERS SIGNATURE BLOCK