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CHAPTER 511 POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND POSITION MANAGEMENT

SECTION A. POSITION CLASSIFICATION UNDER THE GENERAL SCHEDULE

1. SCOPE

This section covers the classification of General Schedule positions subject to the provisions of chapter 51, title 5, United States Code. This section provides VA policies and procedures that will facilitate sound and consistent classification practices.

2. REFERENCES

- a. Title 5, United States Code, chapter 51; Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, part 511.
- b. Introduction to the Position Classification Standards.
- c. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 250, "Personnel Management in the VA."
- d. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 293, "Personnel Records and Files."
- e. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 536, "Grade and Pay Retention."
- f. MP-6, Part V, Supplement 1.5, "PAID Personnel Operating Instructions."

3. COVERAGE

a. All VA positions which are not specifically exempted from the General Schedule system by 5 U.S.C. 5102 and Office of Personnel Management Regulations are subject to the classification provisions of 5 U.S.C. ch 51. (See Chapter 512 and Chapter 534, this part, and MP-5, part II for additional information on positions excluded.) GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 positions in the Performance Management and Recognition System are covered by the provisions of this chapter.

b. The VA is authorized, using guidelines and standards issued by the Office of Personnel Management, to determine whether a position is subject to or excluded from coverage under the General Schedule. Questions of coverage or exemption of an individual position at a field location will be initially determined by the Human Resources Management Office providing personnel management Offices to the location facility concerned. For positions in Central Office, questions of coverage or exemption will be initially determined by the Team Leader, Headquarters & Executive Resources. If, in connection with a specific position, there is reasonable doubt as to coverage, the case will be referred to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051), VA Central Office for decision. In unusual circumstances the position may be submitted to the Office of Personnel Management by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management for determination in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 5103.

4. POLICY

a. The principles of the position classification system as set forth in 5 U.S.C. chapter 51 and in MP-5, Part I, chapter 511 will be observed at all organizational levels.

b. Positions will be classified in conformance with standards and guides issued by the Office of Personnel Management and not in comparison with other positions or an employee's qualifications. Where VA classification guides have been developed, they will be used in conjunction with OPM standards to facilitate the proper classification of positions.

c. The position classification program will be integrated with other elements of personnel administration to further personnel and overall management objectives.

d. The position classification program will serve management in the areas of employee utilization, position management, planning and related areas. Appropriate classification assistance will be available to management and supervisors for proposed establishment or changes of organization and function.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Secretary is responsible for assuring that all positions subject to coverage under 5 U.S.C. ch. 51 are properly classified. This responsibility is exercised by the delegation of position classification authority specified in chapter 250, this part. Generally, officials authorized to classify positions are situated at local management levels. In addition, the following officials have specific responsibilities in the position classification process:

a. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management is responsible for (1) developing Department classification policy; (2) administering the Department's standards development process including the development of VA guidelines; (3) administering the Department's classification appeal system; (4) providing technical advice and guidance to administrations, staff offices, and field facilities; and (5) developing mechanisms to ensure intra-agency classification consistency.

b. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials and field facility directors are responsible for (1) utilizing the classification process in the interest of improved management planning, employee utilization and efficiency of operations; (2) ensuring that there are sufficient trained personnel resources available to administer the classification process; and (3) personally authenticating the classification action by signing the appropriate line on the OF 8, Position Description, if they elect to exercise their delegated classification authority.

c. Human Resource Management Officers are responsible for (1) assuring that all positions are classified consistent with published OPM standards and guides or VA guidelines, supplements or directives, as appropriate; (2) providing technical guidance, advice and information to managers, supervisors, and employees; and (3) participating when requested in the standards development process.

d. Operating officials and supervisors are responsible for (1) using the classification process in the interest of improved management planning, employee utilization and efficiency of operations; (2) developing and maintaining accurate descriptions for each position under their direction; (3) ensuring that their employees understand the purpose and operation of the classification system; (4) cooperating with Department and Office of Personnel Management officials in the classification process including occupational studies; and (5) determining, before changing the duties of a position, with effect the change will have on its classification.

6. POSITION CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS AND GUIDES

a. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Standards

(1) OPM standards and guides take precedence in the classification of positions.

(2) OPM has final authority over position classification standards, and is required to keep them up to date and to insure, to the extent practicable, that existing positions are covered by current published standards. The VA will cooperate with OPM in the development of new position classification standards and the modification of existing standards. The VA will encourage the initiation of standards studies by OPM in the interest of attaining maximum coverage, uniform treatment and proper classification of VA positions.

(3) Prior to issuing a new or revised classification standard or guide, OPM conducts an occupational study. Field facilities may be asked to participate in any or all aspects of an OPM study, i.e., occupational review, data development, or on-site fact finding. Occupational studies are concerned only with information about the occupation; the studies are not a review of the classification of existing positions. Affected employees and their exclusively recognized labor organization will be made aware of the purpose and limitations of the studies, and all HRM officials, supervisors, program officials and employees should cooperate fully with the OPM representatives.

(4) The final phase of an occupational study involves the Department's review of and comment on OPM's tentative (or draft) standard. As time permits, representative groups of field facilities will be selected to participate in the review. Selected facilities will be provided a copy of the draft standard with instructions which will identify the date for submission of the facilities' comments. Selection of facilities will be based on the degree or extent to which activities covered by the draft are present at the location. Employees in occupations directly affected by the tentative standards, their supervisors, program officials and exclusively recognized labor organizations will be given the opportunity by the HRM office to review such standards and prepare written comments for consideration in facility submissions. In order that the VA may respond in a timely manner to OPM it is important that the facilities' comments be submitted to VA Central Office, Customer Advisory & Consulting Group (051) by the date specified in the Department instructions.

b. Department guidelines and supplements may be periodically developed to facilitate the proper and consistent classification of VA positions. VA guidelines and supplements will be consistent with published OPM standards and guides. Such internal guides are not reviewed and approved by the OPM. They are properly used to supplement existing OPM standards, not to

replace them. Accordingly, should any conflict arise, the OPM standards govern in accordance with the provisions of law.

c. New or revised position classification standards published by the OPM automatically supersede Department guidelines and supplements which conflict with such standards. Upon a finding of the OPM or the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management that application of any Department guide or supplement results in the erroneous classification of positions, such guides or supplements will be amended or withdrawn, as appropriate.

d. New or revised OPM standards and guides or VA guidelines and supplements must be applied to covered positions as soon as possible, but within six (6) months at maximum. Requests for extensions to this limit including specific reasons must be forwarded to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051). Normally, VA Central Office will request the necessary approval for such extensions from the Office of Personnel Management only when Department-wide considerations arise or are anticipated. Any corrective action resulting from this application must be taken in accordance with paragraph 14 of this section.

e. OPM position classification standards and guides and VA guidelines and supplements will be available for review to interested officials and employees, their representative, and their exclusively recognized labor organization, who will be informed by the Human Resources Management Office of their location and conditions of availability.

7. POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

a. An accurate and current written description must be developed and maintained for each position covered by this chapter. Accurate position descriptions are essential in the VA integrated job analysis system, which is used for the following personnel functions: selection procedures, performance appraisal, position classification, and training and development. Accurate descriptions are also necessary for a sound position management program. Wherever possible, employees will be afforded the opportunity to assist in the preparation of their position descriptions; however, supervisors and/or managers are responsible for assigning work to positions and insuring that the descriptions are accurate.

b. Position descriptions will be prepared on Optional Form 8. Appendix A-2 contains instructions for completing the OF 8. The major duties, responsibilities, supervisory relationships, and other pertinent information related to the position must be described specifically, clearly, and definitively so that descriptions will provide the information necessary for proper classification of positions. Position descriptions shall be as concise as practicable. Every effort should be made to avoid excessive length of descriptions in the interest of reducing the paperwork and time involved in their preparation and review.

c. In order to maintain uniformity throughout the agency, position descriptions for non-supervisory positions shall be prepared in either the traditional narrative or factor evaluation system (FES) format (see paras. 1 and 2 of app. A-1). The FES format must be used when the classification of the position is based on a FES standard. All first and second level supervisory

positions must be specifically described in terms of the supervisory format (par. 3 of app. A-1), which will facilitate comparison with the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG).

d. When changes occur in principal duties which are not sufficiently extensive to justify writing an entirely new description, an addendum, prepared on an OF 8, should be used. An addendum shall be processed through the appropriate supervisory channels and signed by the same authorities as would be appropriate for a new complete description. Clarity, conciseness, and ease of understanding of the position description should dictate the number of times an addendum shall be used to reflect changes in a position. The use of addenda should not defeat the primary objective of accurate and adequate position descriptions. Generally, no more than two addenda should be used before the position description is completely rewritten. Pen and ink notations to the description may be made in lieu of an addendum or redescription when the changes are incidental (e.g., a change in organizational title).

e. For positions which are in identified career ladders, a complete position description need be established only for the target, full performance position. Lower grade positions within the ladder representing developmental stages in the progression to the target position may each be covered by a statement of difference, which should clearly define only significant differences in assigned duties and supervisory relationships from the full performance position. Each statement of difference must refer to the target position and should be identified with the same basic position number; each must contain sufficient information to support a valid classification action and permit the development of relevant performance standards. Whenever substantial revisions are made to the full performance position, the statements of difference covering the other positions within the ladder must similarly be revised or abolished as appropriate.

f. Supervisors are responsible for the continuing accuracy of position descriptions under their direction. Necessary and proper modifications of position descriptions will be made to reflect significant changes in duties and responsibilities as they occur. The frequency with which position descriptions will be rewritten will depend on the individual circumstances. However, position descriptions generally must be rewritten when new classification standards covering the classification of the position are issued, and when, in the judgment of the Human Resources Management Officer, a revised position description is necessary to reflect material changes in the assignment.

g. Supervisors and managers shall review all position descriptions under their jurisdiction at least once every two years to ensure that they are current and accurate. Upon completion of the review, a written certification will be provided to the Human Resources Management Office indicating that all positions under their direction are accurate. This certification should list the title, position number, series and grade of each position reviewed. The Human Resources Management Officer shall establish local procedures to accomplish this certification.

h. The original copy of the officially classified position description shall be maintained in the Human Resources Management Office responsible for classification action. Copies of the official description shall be provided to the operating organization and to each employee assigned to the position. Supervisors are responsible for assuring that employees are given a copy of their current position description including appropriate addenda.

i. New position descriptions and addenda which reflect changes in conditions of employment of bargaining unit employees will be forwarded by the Human Resources Management Office to the labor organization.

8. POSITION TITLES AND SERIES CODES

Class titles and series listed in the OPM and VA position classification standards and supplements shall be used in the classification of positions and in all personnel action. Titles for positions for which there are no published position classification standards should be consistent with existing classification titles and reflect as nearly as possible the nature of the work performed. (See "Introduction to the Position Classification Standards.") MP-6, part V, supplement No. 1.5 contains classification titles authorized for use in the VA. Requests for additional titles and/or series use should be submitted in writing to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051) through appropriate channels. All requests should include the position description, the proposed title and/or series, an evaluation report, organizational chart and a thorough justification for the request.

9. POSITION CLASSIFICATION REVIEWS AND POST AUDITS

a. Classification reviews play a key role in ensuring that positions are properly classified. However, regularly scheduled reviews are not necessarily the most efficient or effective means of ascertaining classification accuracy. Rather, each facility should devise a classification review program which will meet its individual needs. To this end, each Human Resources Management Officer shall develop a local systematic position classification review plan to ensure that the classification accuracy requirements of 5 U.S.C. 5107 are met. The plan will include (1) the specific responsibilities of the Human Resources Management Office, supervisors and managers, and (2) the types of organizational or operational events which indicate the need for classification reviews.

b. There is a wide variety of situations which could necessitate a classification review. Some indicators of the appropriate timing for such reviews include: (1) most efficient organization (MEO) studies directed by OMB Circular A-76 privatization initiatives or Agency efficiency review programs; (2) changes in mission and functions; (3) realignment of duties and responsibilities; (4) significant changes in average grade and/or payroll costs; or (5) other appropriate circumstances.

c. Post audit reviews of the classification of individual positions or organizational components can be conducted by local personnel offices or Central Office at any time as special needs are identified by line management.

d. The scope of the classification reviews, as well as the frequency, should be tailored to the needs of the individual facility. A review could appropriately cover a section within a service/division or a group of services/divisions, or it could comprise positions in an occupational group throughout the facility, e.g., technical support positions, secretarial positions, or computer-related positions.

e. The classification of each position in the review universe shall be evaluated and certified as correct by an official with authority to classify the positions involved. Desk audits will be conducted and evaluation reports prepared as deemed necessary by the Human Resources Management Officer. In addition, line operating officials should certify to the accuracy of all positions in the review universe.

f. Adequate local records shall be maintained to reflect the completion of the classification review, to include desk audit reports, supervisory conformance checks, etc. These records will be subject to review during personnel management evaluation or other visits.

g. In addition to the above formal reviews, the classification of each position should be reviewed when it is re-described. The classification of a vacant position should also be reviewed before action is taken to fill it, since this represents the best opportunity to take any corrective action required. Identical/additional positions which are filled frequently should be reviewed often enough to ensure their accuracy.

10. EVALUATION REPORTS AND DESK AUDITS

a. An evaluation report is a written record of the rationale used to classify a position. Evaluation reports are designed to provide consistency and continuity in classification decisions. Although there is no requirement that an evaluation report be prepared for all positions, a written record, however brief, is helpful in personnel management evaluations and any subsequent review of the position classification rationale.

b. For positions described in the traditional narrative format, a written report is required when the classification judgments are not self-evident by reference to the standard(s) or when the final classification decision differs from that recommended by the program official. The length, in-depth discussion, and format of an evaluation report should be tailored to the individual classification judgment. The evaluation report should include a concise but thorough comparison of the grade-controlling duties and responsibilities with the classification standard(s) used to evaluate the position. It should show how the assignment meets, exceeds or falls short of the various classification elements and factors in the standard.

c. For positions classified by reference to a FES standard, the level and point values for each factor and the General Schedule grade must be shown on all copies of the position description. In addition, the benchmarks, factor level descriptions or primary standard factor levels used in point rating must be shown in an evaluation report summary on VA Form 5-3963a, Position Evaluation Statement Factor Evaluation System (FES). More extensive reports are required only when the evaluation of the factor is non self-evident by reference to the standard used.

d. A summary evaluation report shall also be prepared for positions classified under the GSSG. More extensive reports are required only when the evaluation of the factor is not self-evident by reference to the GSSG.

e. A desk audit does not need to be conducted for each classification action. The number and frequency of audits should depend on local classification needs. The need for a desk audit may be

indicated by a variety of reasons, e.g., recent establishment of a new position; introduction of new technology affecting position assignments; apparent accretion/erosion of grade controlling duties; or where grades above established full performance levels are recommended. Desk audits may be conducted during a classification review, for individual classification actions, or as part of an integrated job analysis which uses a job oriented method. A record of desk audit findings should be maintained with the evaluation report.

f. Since an evaluation and/or desk audit report is part of the classification records, copies should be provided by the Human Resources Management Office, if available, to employees, program officials and union representatives at their request.

11. CENTRAL OFFICE ASSISTANCE

a. A formal classification determination may be requested from Central Office when assistance is needed to determine the proper classification of a position, including the grade level, title and/or occupational series involved or basic coverage under the General Schedule. This would normally involve questions concerning the interpretation of particular portions of OPM standards or Agency guidelines, or the applicability of particular standards to specific positions, or other comparable matters. All requests will be writing and should be accompanied by an adequate position description, organizational and functional charts, evaluation report, and any other pertinent information available including comments by operating officials and the employee(s) involved. Requests should be submitted through appropriate channels, to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051). Formal written determinations rendered by VA Central Office in which a definitive classification conclusion is provided represent the Department's judgment on the correct classification and accordingly must be applied by the requesting facility to existing position(s) or future identical positions. (See par. 13, Adherence to Classification Decisions.)

b. When a definitive determination is not required, informal advice and assistance on classification matters are also available, normally by telephone, from position classification specialists in the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051). Human Resources Management Officers and their staffs are encouraged to make maximum use of this type of assistance to augment local classification expertise. Appropriate topics for informal discussion include the evaluation of particular kinds of duties, information on VA/OPM appeal decisions, classification trends, and selection of standards for cross--series comparison.

12. POSITION CLASSIFICATION APPEALS

a. Employees who are dissatisfied with the classification of their positions have the right to appeal the decision. An appeal may be filed at any time and may involve the grade, series, title, or pay system coverage under the General Schedule. Employees have the options of (a) appealing to the VA; (b) appealing to OPM through the VA; or (c) appealing directly to OPM. Employees who elect to appeal first to the VA as in (a) may subsequently appeal to OPM if they are dissatisfied with the Department's decision. However, employees may not appeal to the VA if they have previously appealed the same position to OPM. When employees file an appeal under (b), the Department must render a decision not later than 60 calendar days from receipt. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, other key officials and field facility

directors are responsible for keeping employees informed of classification appeal policies and procedures.

b. Central Office shall be notified immediately upon knowledge of an employee's classification appeal to OPM. If an employee had previously filed a similar appeal to the VA on which a decision is pending, the Department appeal will be cancelled. A duplicate copy of all material provided OPM shall be forwarded through appropriate channels to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051). Upon receipt of the OPM decision, a copy shall also be forwarded to Central Office in order to complete the case file. Local Human Resources Management Office shall maintain complete files on classification appeals decided on positions under their facility's jurisdiction.

c. If an appellant is assigned to a position that is centralized for classification to the Secretary or an Administration head, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary, or Other Key Official (in accordance with MP-5, Part I, Chapter 250 or supplements thereto), the facility will notify OPM that the position is centralized and that the Department response will be submitted by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051). The Group Leader, Customer Advisory & Consulting Group in Central Office will be notified promptly of the appeal and copies of all correspondence with the appellant and OPM on the matter will be submitted expeditiously to Central Office.

d. An appeal decision by the Department or OPM can result in the appealed position's grade being raised, lowered or sustained. The position's title and/or series may be changed or sustained. In addition, the position may remain included or become excluded from coverage under the General Schedule. Employees will be advised by an appropriate Human Resources Management Office official of the effect an appeal decision which changes the classification of the position has on other employees assigned to the same position. If an appellant desires to cancel an appeal pending within the Department, a written request must be forwarded through channels to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051).

e. Specific details concerning the classification appeals process are contained in appendix A-3.

13. ADHERENCE TO CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

a. A classification action required by certificate of the OPM or a Department appeal decision or formal determination is binding on all VA officials. A change in title, series, or grade for a position for which OPM has issued a certificate or on which a VA decision has been rendered is inappropriate unless there is a significant change in the duties and responsibilities or a change in the applicable position classification standards. A classification action directed by certificate of the OPM or the Department does not restrict management's right to assign duties and responsibilities to any job consistent with the principles of sound position management. This includes the right to add or delete grade controlling duties. If grade controlling duties are deleted from the position, adverse action or reduction-in-force procedures may be required. Any change which will affect the implementation of the OPM or Department decision or Department formal determination shall be reported to OPM or the VA, as appropriate, as soon as possible.

b. Facilities desiring to formally request reconsideration of an OPM certificate resulting from either an audit finding or an appeal decision on a centralized position or a position previously certified by VA Central Office, must submit a complete reconsideration request to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051) within 30 days of the date of the certificate. That office, after coordinating with the appropriate Central Office line elements, will determine whether the facility's justification and other considerations warrant pursuing the case with the OPM. If a Department-level reconsideration request is determined supportable, Central Office will forward the package to OPM within the 45-day time frame. If the OPM certificate raised the grade of a position for which reconsideration of the decision is being requested, the facility should consider implementing the certificate using established temporary compliance authority.

14. IMPLEMENTING CLASSIFICATION ACTIONS OR DECISIONS

a. Except as noted in subparagraphs b and c below, a personnel action implementing a change in the classification of a position will be made effective no earlier than the date of the classification action nor later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of the classification action. (The date of the classification action is the date Item 21 of the OF-8 is signed.) In unusual cases an extension or exception to this reasonable "four-pay period" time frame may be requested by the facility director, Administration head, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary, or other key official through the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051) to the appropriate Office of Personnel Management jurisdiction. A written request containing appropriate justification should be forwarded as soon as possible after the classification decision, in order to permit an OPM determination to be made within the allotted time period.

b. In cases of VA classification appeal decisions, the provisions of 5 CFR 511.702 or 511.703 will apply.

c. Classification actions directed by OPM for any reason will be made effective in accordance with 5 CFR 511.701 through 511.703.

d. An employee whose position is changed to a lower grade based on a classification decision is entitled to a prompt written notice from the facility, specifying the effective date. The notice shall also inform the employee (1) of his/her right to submit an appeal to the VA (if it has the authority to take the action) or to OPM; (2) of the information which must be provided to the VA or OPM supporting the appeal; (3) of the time limits within which the employee must file an appeal in order to establish or preserve the right to retroactive adjustment in connection with a favorable decision; and (4) of his/her entitlement to grade and/or pay retention under 5 U.S.C. 5362-5363.

15. CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS AFFECTING LARGE NUMBERS OF POSITIONS

a. Human Resources Management Officers are required to consult with the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051) in Central Office on proposed classification actions affecting 20 or more substantially similar positions, prior to effecting the decisions. For the purposes of this paragraph, the term "positions" refers to the

number of employees. Consultation is also required if fewer than 20 substantially similar positions are directly affected and it is anticipated that the decision will have a "ripple" effect on a significant number of other positions at the facility.

b. Consultation as specified in subparagraph a above is required on classification actions resulting from (1) the application of new or revised standards or guides, (2) new interpretations or applications of existing standards and guides, (3) unplanned accretion or erosion of duties to existing positions, (4) the establishment of new, higher grade positions in lieu of existing lower grade positions, and (5) classification appeal decisions. Classification actions changing the grade, series or coverage under the General Schedule are included.

c. The request for consultation will be in writing and include a position description, evaluation report, organizational and functional charts and other pertinent information.

16. CENTRALIZED POSITIONS

The original copy of the position description for all positions centralized for classification action will be maintained by Central Office. Centralized positions are identified in MP-5, Part I, chapter 250 and administration or other supplements thereto. Submission of centralized position descriptions is required (a) upon establishment, (b) when a significant change in the duties and responsibilities occurs, or (c) as requested by the appropriate Administration head, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary, or Other Key Official. Each submission should include two copies of the position description, an evaluation report justifying the grade/series recommended (if different from the existing classification), and an organizational chart. Prototype position descriptions shall not be used for centralized positions unless specifically authorized by VA Central Office (051).

17. INTERIM POSITIONS

a. Interim positions, identical to a base continuing position, may be established when it is determined that such a position is necessary. Interim positions differ from identical-additional positions in that they are temporary in nature.

b. Except for those positions for which the Secretary retains prior approval authority (see ch. 250, app. A) Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, other key officials, and field facility directors are responsible for approving the establishment of interim positions. The concurrence of the servicing human resources office exercising classification authority for the position is necessary to insure that a properly classified base position exists.

c. Interim positions may be established by personnel action (adding the suffix "I" to the position number) under the following circumstances. The list, however, is not intended to be all inclusive.

(1) For Extended Leave or Detail Replacement. An interim position may be established for duration of extended leave or detail of the regular incumbent of the continuing position, when replacement is essential and an informal detail of fewer than 30 days is not suitable.

(2) For Orientation Purposes. When an overlapping period is essential to prevent disruption of functions, and detail of a replacement for the incumbent of a one-of-a-kind position is not feasible, an interim position may be established locally for a reasonable period of time to permit orientation of the new incumbent.

(3) For Certain Restoration or Reemployment Actions. An interim position may be established for a reasonable period of time when (a) displacement of an employee is necessary to effect a restoration or reemployment action as defined in chapters 352 and 353; and (b) other types of restorations or placements are necessary because of appeals of involuntary separations, adverse actions, and complaints of discrimination.

18. IDENTICAL-ADDITIONAL POSITIONS

Additional positions may be established against base positions that are determined to be susceptible to duplication. The procedure for establishing such positions may be used only in cases where the position is (1) identical in duties and responsibilities to a base position, (2) in the same organization element, and (3) under the same kind and degree of supervision. The identical-additional status of a position should be indicated on the description. (See app. A-2.) Any limit on the number of incumbents that may be assigned to an identical-additional position should be indicated on the OF-8.

19. FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FLSA) COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS

a. An exempt or nonexempt determination shall be made for each employee assigned to a position based on a comparison of the employee's duties and responsibilities as assigned in the official position description with the exemption criteria outlined in OPM's guidelines. In general, executive, administrative and professional employees are exempt. FLSA exemptions, however, must be narrowly construed and applied only to employees who are clearly within the terms and spirit of the exemption criteria. The burden of proof as to the exempt or nonexempt status of an employee rests with the Department, rather than the employee. If the determination is not self-evident, the basis for the decision should be retained with the position description either as part of the evaluation report or as a separate document. Specific exemption criteria are set forth in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 551.

b. The Human Resources Management Office exercising classification authority is responsible for determining whether or not an employee is covered by the FLSA. The exempt or nonexempt status of the position will be identified on the employee's position description. (See app. A-2.) If the exempt or nonexempt determination of an employee is inconsistent with the duties and responsibilities assigned in the official position description, it will be necessary to either revise the position description or ensure that the employee performs the duties and responsibilities as assigned.

c. The exempt or nonexempt status of a position should be reviewed when it is established, redescribed and classified based on significant changes in assigned duties, or in connection with a classification review. (See par. 9.)

20. OPM AUDITS AND VA PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

a. The OPM and the VA Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management will conduct periodic classification audits and evaluations. Normally, these reviews will be part of a comprehensive evaluation of the personnel management program. All officials shall cooperate fully with OPM or Department representatives in the conduct of these audits and evaluations.

b. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials shall be kept fully informed of classification audit activities of OPM at VA field facilities. Normally, an advance notice of OPM's plans to visit facilities is provided to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management in VA Central Office, who in turn advises the appropriate Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials. In those instances when OPM schedules a position audit activity without a formal notice, the field facility shall inform the appropriate Central Office line elements concerned. It is not necessary to inform VA Central Office of individual desk audits conducted by OPM as part of the classification appeal process.

c. Classification reviews and evaluations conducted by the VA Central Office, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management will be coordinated through the appropriate Central Office line elements.

d. To the extent practicable, disagreements with OPM audit report findings pertaining to a specific non-centralized position or group of positions will be negotiated directly with the OPM regional office conducting the audit. Resolution of disagreements on Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management findings will be pursued through normal channels. If the OPM audit involves centralized positions, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (051) is responsible for determining the action to be taken.

e. Except as specifically advised by VA Central Office, a field facility will take necessary final corrective action on any position within its delegated classification authority which is certified by OPM.

f. The union will be notified before any action is taken to change the classification of a bargaining unit employees' position as a result of an OPM audit or VA personnel management evaluation.

APPENDIX A-1. FORMAT FOR PREPARING POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

1. TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE SYSTEM

a. Principal Duties And Responsibilities

(1) Describe the principal duties and responsibilities which characterize the position. Describe them in plain, clear language and as briefly and specifically as possible. Avoid general terms, vague expressions, repetition, and conclusions.

(2) Estimates of the percentage of time spent on different kinds of duties are not necessary in the description of many positions. However, if this information is pertinent in determining the grade or series of the position, the time spent on each should be shown.

b. Supervisory Controls Over The Position. Indicate the supervisory control, instruction, and guidance under which the employee operates, the kinds of problems or other matters he/she refers to his/her supervisor, and the purpose and extent of the review of his/her work. Indicate also any significant types of actions or decisions for which he/she is responsible which are not subject to these supervisory controls.

c. Other significant Facts. Any additional special facts regarding the position which cannot be appropriately or clearly expressed under the headings above will be recorded under this heading. This section may include information regarding unusual skills, licenses, special abilities, or any statistical information necessary for classifying the position in accordance with OPM or agency classification standards or guides.

2. FACTOR EVALUATION SYSTEM

a. Each position classified under FES must be described in terms of (1) a duties statement, and (2) the following nine factors:

Duties:

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position.

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls.

Factor 3, Guidelines.

Factor 4, Complexity.

Factor 5, Scope and Effect.

Factor 6, Personal Contacts.

Factor 7, Purpose of Contacts.

Factor 8, Physical Demands.

Factor 9, Work Environment.

b. Specific guidance concerning the content of the duties statement and each factor is included in General Introduction, Background, and Instructions to the Position Classification Standards, section VII, Instructions for the Factor Evaluation System, appendix 2.

3. SUPERVISORY POSITIONS

a. Each position covered by the General Schedule Supervisory Guide must be structured in terms of the following six factors:

I. PROGRAM SCOPE AND EFFECT

This factor assesses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including its organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher levels of management.

III. SUPERVISORY AND MANAGERIAL AUTHORITY EXERCISED

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities which are exercised on a recurring basis.

IV. PERSONAL CONTACTS

This is a two part factor which assesses the nature and the purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities. The nature of the contacts, credited under Subfactor 4A, and the purpose of those contacts, credited under Subfactor 4B, must be based on the same contacts.

V. DIFFICULTY OF TYPICAL WORK DIRECTED

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization(s) directed, as well as other line, staff, or contracted work for which the supervisor has technical or oversight responsibility, either directly or through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or others.

VI. OTHER CONDITIONS

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions contribute to the difficulty and complexity of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities.

VII. SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Supervisory and oversight work may be complicated by special situations and/or conditions.

4. MIXED POSITIONS

If the non-supervisory duties in a mixed, working supervisor type position are expected to be grade controlling the non-supervisory portion of the position description should be prepared in either the traditional narrative or FES format, as appropriate. The assigned supervisory duties should be specifically delineated in the duties (or principal duties and responsibilities) section of the position description.

**APPENDIX A-2. SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING
OPTIONAL FORM 8, (REVISED 1/85)
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

The revised form, OF-8, Position Description, dated January 1985, has been approved for use in the Department of Veterans Affairs. The following instructions for completing the revised OF-8 are to be used to supplement OPM's instruction including those printed on the reverse of the form. These supplemental instructions should be provided to all personnel responsible for writing position descriptions. Items which must be completed are marked by an asterisk(*)

***Item I. Department Position Number**

- a. The use of the facility's three- or four-digit number as a prefix to the position number is optional.
- b. Temporary positions will be identified with the letter "T" after the position number.
- c. Positions subject to duplication (identical-additional) will be identified with the letter "A" after the position number.
- d. Temporary positions subject to duplication will be identified with the letters "TA" after the position number.

***NOTE:** A permanent position is one which has been established for a period of time without limit, or for a limited period of a year or more or which, in any event, has been occupied continuously for a year or more (regardless of the intent when it was established).*

A temporary position is one which has been established for a limited period of less than 1 year, and which has been filled continuously for less than 1 year.

***Item 2. Reason for Submission.** Under "Explanation" show any position(s) re-described, replaced, amended or reactivated. Include the position classification title, series, grade, date classified, and position number.

Item 3. Service. No additional instructions necessary.

***Item 4. Employing Office Location.** No additional instructions necessary.

***Item 5. Duty Station.** No additions necessary.

Item 6. OPM Certification Number. No additional instructions necessary.

***Item 7. Fair Labor Standards Act.** To be completed by the Human Resources Management Office.

Item 8. Financial Statements Required. To be completed by originating office with advice and guidance by the Human Resources Management Office (MP-5, pt. I, ch. 735).

***Item 9. Subject to IA Action.** To be completed by the Human Resources Management Office.

Item 10. Position Status. To be completed by the Human Resources Management Office.

Item 11. Position is. To be completed by the Human Resources Management Office.

Item 12. Sensitivity. To be completed by originating office.

Item 13. Competitive Level Code. To be completed by the Human Resources Management Office.

Item 14. Agency Use.

***Item 15. Official Title of Position, Pay Plan, Occupational Code, Grade.** Lines a. through c. are not for field facility use. Central Office Human Resources components will complete line "b."

d. To be completed by the facility Human Resources Management Office. The human resources representative initialing this line must have delegated authority to classify positions (MP-5, pt. I, ch. 250).

e. Use by supervisor or initiating office is optional.

Item 16. Organizational Title of Position. Although optional, supervisors and initiating offices are encouraged to complete if different from official classification title.

Item 17. Name of Employee. For IA positions with more names than can be accommodated in the space provided, an additional sheet of bond paper listing all the incumbents may be attached to the position description.

***Item 18. Department, Agency, or Establishment.** Enter VA.

a. First Subdivision. Enter VBA, VHA, NCS, or specific Assistant Secretary, DAS, other key office.

b. through e. Enter the next and any subsequent organizational component in descending order. In field facilities, the second subdivision is medical center, regional office, cemetery, data processing center, etc., as appropriate, and the third subdivision is the specific division or service.

Item 19. Employee Review. Although optional, a note indicating that the employee has read the position description may be included if the employee declines to sign. For IA positions, the employees may sign the attached bond sheet listing the incumbents (see item 17 above).

***Item 20. Supervisory Certification.** Supervisors are reminded of their personal responsibility and liability relating to the contents of the position description and certification thereof. No classification action should be taken before the signatures of the immediate and, as appropriate, a higher-level supervisor or director are obtained.

a. Immediate Supervisor. A higher-level supervisor or manager may sign for the immediate supervisor.

b. Higher-Level Supervisor or Manager. In the field, the higher-level supervisor should be at no lower echelon than the division or service chief. If the division or service chief is also the immediate supervisor, one signature will suffice.

***Item 21. Classification/Job Grading Certification.** This certification must be completed by an appropriate official to whom position classification authority has been delegated. Generally, for non-centralized positions this certification will be made by the Human Resources Management Officer or designee. Certification for centralized positions in the field and any position GS-15 and above will be by the appropriate human resources official in VA Central Office.

Item 22. Standards Used in Classifying/Grading Position. The identification of the standards used does not negate the responsibility for preparing and attaching a position evaluation report as necessary.

Item 23. Position Review. Although optional, use of this item in conjunction with classification reviews is encouraged.

Item 24. Remarks. Facilities may use this space for any additional local requirements or controls.

Item 25. Description of Major Duties and Responsibilities. Additional information on describing duties and responsibilities is contained in the following:

MP-5, Part I, Chapter 511, Appendix A-1

Section VII, General Information, Background and Instructions, Position Classification Standards (Factor System)

APPENDIX A-3. VA CLASSIFICATION APPEAL PROCEDURES

1. An employee dissatisfied with the classification of his/her position should first discuss the problem informally with his/her supervisor. If the supervisor is unable to resolve the issue to the employee's satisfaction, the employee should discuss his/her dissatisfaction with the Human Resources Management Officer or appropriate HRM staff member. If the employee still believes there is an inequity, he/she may appeal to the VA or to OPM (either directly or through the VA). In appealing to OPM a VA decision reclassifying a position to a lower grade, an employee is responsible for filing such an appeal within 15 calendar days of either (a) receipt of written notification of the final VA administrative decision or (b) the effective date of the action taken as a result of the classification decision (whichever is later), in order to preserve the right to retroactive adjustment resulting from a favorable OPM appeal decision.

2. A classification appeal to the VA or to OPM through the VA should be in writing and submitted to the appropriate line official through established channels in VA Central Office (Attention: (051)) through the employee's supervisor(s) and local Human Resources Management office. The Human Resources Management office will forward the appeal (together with the information specified in paragraph 4 below) within 15 days of receipt. Failure to submit an appeal through local channels will usually result in a delay in the decision, since it is necessary to secure the information listed in paragraph 4 below before adjudicating the appeal.

3. The following information shall be submitted by the employees:

- a. A signed statement that the employee wishes to appeal the classification of his/her position.
- b. Name of local facility.
- c. Organization to which assigned.
- d. Current position title, series, and grade.
- e. The requested title, series, and/or grade, or other classification action.
- f. A statement that the official position description is accurate, or a statement of how the duties performed differ from the official position description.
- g. A statement with the reasons why the position should be classified differently. If the interpretation of a specific standard(s) is at issue, an analysis comparing the position with the pertinent standard(s) should be included.
- h. A written designation of third party representation, including the union, if the appellant elects such representation. The designation must include the name and address of the representative.

4. The following information shall be submitted by the Human Resources Management Office along with the material supplied by the appellant:

a. A current, accurate position description (agreed to by all levels of management) which meets standards of adequacy and which is consistent with the position evaluation report and the supervisor's comments.

b. A position evaluation report which includes an in-depth comparison of the duties and responsibilities with published classification standards. If the report was prepared prior to the appeal, it should be updated to cover salient points raised by the appellant which may not have been previously evaluated.

c. Organizational and functional charts.

d. Comments from the immediate supervisor and/or the service or division chief (or higher level official) relative to the accuracy of the position description and the merits of the appeal. Discrepancies or disagreements should be resolved before submitting the appeal for decision.

e. Copies of all position descriptions for positions directly supervised or led by the appealed position, and supporting evaluation reports, if appropriate.

f. Copy of immediate supervisor's position description and evaluation report, if appropriate.

5. Prior to a final decision on a Department classification appeal which affects more than one bargaining unit employee assigned to a position description, the union will be provided by appropriate facility HRM officials the title, series and grade of the position being appealed so they can submit information in support of the appeal.

6. For positions for which field facility directors have classification authority, the appeal decision letter will be signed by the appropriate Central Office line official or his/her designee. For field positions centralized to an Administration head, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary or Other Key Official and positions for which the Headquarters and Executive Resources Team has classification authority, the decision will be signed by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management. For positions centralized to the Secretary, the decision letter will be signed by the Deputy Secretary.

7. There is only one level of appeal in the VA. The letter of decision signed by the appropriate official or his/her designee constitutes a final decision within the VA. A classification appeal decision may be reopened and reconsidered by that official when the employee presents material facts not previously considered.

8. Department appeal decisions may be appealed to the OPM.

CHAPTER 511. POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND POSITION MANAGEMENT
SECTION B. POSITION MANAGEMENT

1. SCOPE

This section outlines the Department position management policy and program.

2. REFERENCES

- a. Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-64 (revised), dated July 30, 1980.
- b. 5 CFR Part 250
- c. FPM Chapter 312, "Position Management."
- d. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 250, "Personnel Management in the VA."

3. COVERAGE

Although position classification refers specifically to positions in the General Schedule, the principles of position management apply to all positions regardless of pay plan in all organizational elements in VA.

4. POLICY

a. Position management is an overall management responsibility which assures that work is organized and assigned among positions in a manner which will serve the organization's needs effectively and economically, providing the greatest total value to VA.

b. It is management's responsibility to (1) determine the number, types and grades of employees or positions assigned to any organizational subdivision, work project or tour of duty; (2) assign work to individual positions consistent with the principles of sound and effective position management; and (3) assure that all labor relations obligations are fulfilled as regards changes affecting bargaining unit employees.

c. Essential elements of the position management program in each Administration head, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Other Key Official's organization, and field facility must include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Reviewing the organizational structure to eliminate duplication of work and unnecessary fragmentation.

(2) Establishing the minimum number of positions essential to the accomplishment of the mission; assuring proper job design to prevent unwarranted job dilution; utilizing the most effective work processes, equipment, procedures, methods and techniques; and evaluating the need for each position and the skills and knowledges required.

(3) Determining the appropriate ratio of managerial, staff and supervisory positions to those of non-supervisory workers; and preventing the excessive layering of supervision and unwarranted use of assistant, assistant to and special assistant positions.

(4) Determining the appropriate ratio of professional, technical, clerical and wage positions consistent with the proportion of such work occurring in the organization.

(5) Providing for maximum utilization of employee's skills and effective distribution of human resources.

(6) Providing for the optimum delegation of authority.

(7) Providing for career development and promotional opportunities by establishing lower grade entry level positions with identified career ladders.

(8) Conducting systematic examination of internal position management and classification and job grading systems to restrain unwarranted grade escalation.

(9) Developing action plans to eliminate identified position management deficiencies.

d. Position management shall be used to facilitate equal employment opportunity. The Civil Service Reform Act requires the development of FEORPs (Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Programs) to eliminate the under representation of minorities and women in occupational categories and grade levels where under representation exists. Job redesign, a position management tool, can be an effective means of recruiting minorities and women and should be used as part of the FEORP in the following ways:

(1) Filling positions at "trainee" levels, especially at facilities where minorities and women are concentration in lower grade positions;

(2) Identifying public contact and patient care positions where bilingual and bicultural capabilities should be primary selection factors; and

(3) Establishing positions requiring minimal formal credentialing requirements, such as degrees, licenses, or certifications.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility is delegated to the officials listed below to devise and implement an effective position management program:

a. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials shall administer within their organizations a position management program in conformance with Department guidelines. They shall insure that training in position management is given to all supervisors with position management authority.

b. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management will provide technical advice and assistance to Central Office line officials in the discharge of their responsibilities, including training.

c. Field facility directors shall administer a position management program for their installation, shall be responsible for taking necessary corrective action on a timely basis, and shall insure that training in position management is given to all supervisors. Directors are also responsible for assuring the adequacy of position classification and job grading expertise and a continuing emphasis on a high degree of accuracy in position classification and job grading actions in support of position management objectives.

d. Supervisors and others responsible for assigning duties and responsibilities to positions are directly responsible for position management actions taken within their areas of jurisdiction. The duties and responsibilities assigned to a position control the classification or grading and, ultimately, the personnel cost of the position. Supervisors must insure that assignments reflect application of sound and economical position management principles and are reviewed periodically for accuracy and cost effectiveness. Supervisors are also responsible for ascertaining the accuracy and adequacy of position description. A position description which states the duties and responsibilities in clear, precise, definitive terms is a key factor in effective position classification/job grading and position management. Also, supervisors must insure that the duties and responsibilities assigned to a position are not performing the tasks identified in their position descriptions, public funds are paid for services not being performed, which is a violation of Federal statutes and regulations. Supervisors must continually monitor performance in relation to official job assignments to effect cost economy and promote improvements in overall productivity.

e. Human Resources Management Officers are directly responsible for insuring that all positions are classified or graded accurately. In addition they will:

(1) Provide technical advice and assistance to line officials in analyzing personnel aspects of position management and suggest alternatives to achieve improvements; these matters will be coordinated, as appropriate, with other staff elements;

(2) Insure that the requirements of the approved position management program have been met before taking position classification or other personnel action;

(3) Make required reports and analyses of trends and provide staff assistance in accomplishing corrective action, as necessary;

(4) Advise line officials of required corrective action when positions are found to be inaccurately or inadequately described.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, other key officials, and facility directors will:

a. Devise and implement a position management program which will:

(1) Be integrated with related ongoing programs such as budget formulation, review and execution; organization and procedural studies; and position classification/job grading reviews.

(2) Utilize total available management resources including budget, program and management analysts, personnel, accounting and other special staff, as necessary. The work of these staffs shall be coordinated and mutually supporting.

b. Appoint a committee or coordinator to assist in the implementation of the position management program. Appendix B describes the structure and functions of a typical committee and outlines responsibilities which may be assigned to a committee/coordinator.

c. Establish and maintain an effective position management program consistent with established policies and principles and suited to the needs of the organization.

d. Insure that all employees and their exclusively recognized labor organizations are made aware of the policy, objectives and requirements of the Department's position management program.

e. Administer a system of position control which will insure that, before any vacancy is filled, a determination has been made whether the duties of the vacant position can be eliminated, redistributed to other positions at appropriate grade levels, or modified to permit performance at a lower grade and, at the same time, provide for career development and promotional opportunities. The review of vacant positions should be accomplished in conjunction with information obtained through studies as set forth in subparagraph h, below, and must insure that continuation of a position is essential.

f. Insure that each position established or changed conforms to the objectives of effective position management.

g. Provide for a review of each proposed organization change from the standpoint of work design, occupational distribution, supervisory ratio, grade distribution and staffing requirements.

h. Initiative special studies and analyses, making full use of staff advice, leading to improved structure and better utilization of human resources.

i. Monitor average grade.

j. Take appropriate action necessary to insure that the organization meets the objectives outlined.

k. Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the position management program within the organization and report results as required.

l. Maintain records and documentation of the reviews, considerations and activities of the position management committee or coordinator for future review.

7. POSITION MANAGEMENT REVIEWS

a. Supervisory and program management officials are responsible for ensuring that recurring, planned reviews of the management of all positions within their organizations are conducted. These assessments must be scheduled on a regular basis, with the frequency at local management's discretion. Each organizational element will be reviewed to ensure that the most efficient and effective position structure and utilization of personnel are being achieved. Position management assessments may generate the need for classification reviews (as delineated in par. 9, sec. A, this chapter), which could be accomplished concurrently or scheduled for conduct at a later time.

b. The Human Resources Management Officer shall provide advice and assistance to the designated facility position management committee or coordinator in the development of a local position management review plan. The plan should include (1) the frequency of the conduct of reviews for each organizational component; and (2) the specific responsibilities of the position management committee/coordinator, supervisors and managers, and the personnel office.

c. Adequate local records shall be maintained to reflect the completion of position management/classification reviews. These records will be subject to review during personnel management evaluation or other visits. A report to Central Office of the completion of position management reviews is not required.

d. Part of a review is the requirement that positions must be examined when they become vacant to ensure that they are essential, as designed, to the efficient operation of the organization.

8. ORGANIZATIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL CHARTS

a. Along with position descriptions, organizational and functional charts provide valuable assistance for making sound position management decisions. They provide management with a clear and concise graphic of the organization as it exists. The charts enable management to conduct organizational analyses and to plan for efficient utilization of their work force.

b. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials and field facility directors are responsible for ensuring that organizational and functional charts are developed and updated for their respective organizations. The scope and format of the individual charts are local determinations based on individual needs consistent with the requirements in chapter 293, this part. Generally, however, separate charts should be established for each service and division appropriate.

c. To ensure that all levels of management agree on the approved organizational structure, the organizational and functional charts should be signed by (1) the Administration head, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Other Key Official or field facility director, (2) the head of the organization depicted in the charts, (3) the position management committee chairperson or coordinator, and (4) The Human Resources Management Officer.

d. New organizational charts are not necessary each time a change in the number of authorized positions or the grade levels of positions occurs. Pen and ink notations reflecting minor changes may be made. The number of such pen and ink changes made before a new chart is prepared

should be limited so as not to adversely affect the readability of the chart. Organizational and functional charts shall be revised as appropriate during position management reviews.

e. HRM Officers should ensure that the grade levels of positions included in the chart are proper before signing. Recommended or proposed grades in organizational charts do not affect the HRM Officer's responsibility for classifying position in accordance with published classification standards and guides.

f. The original copy of the organizational and functional charts shall be maintained in the Human Resources Management Office office with the related position descriptions. Copies should also be maintained in the program areas concerned.

9. EVALUATIONS

Compliance with agency policy and the effectiveness of the position management program including position classification and job grading activities will be evaluated during regular personnel management evaluations conducted by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Personnel and Labor Relations. Other Department program reviewing offices, the Inspector General, and administration evaluation elements will, in the normal review of programs and operations, appraise the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization, position structure, and other position management actions, except for the specific classification or grading of positions, which is the delegated responsibility of the HRM Officer. OPM representatives will also review this aspect of personnel management during their scheduled visits. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials and field facility directors are expected to take necessary action within a reasonable period of time when areas for improvement have been identified.

APPENDIX B. POSITION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/COORDINATOR

1. FUNCTIONS

a. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials and field facility directors are responsible for work organization and position management. A position management committee (PMC) or coordinator should be established to assist in carrying out this responsibility.

b. The PMC should become familiar with the present organization and position structure of each element within the office or facility. The PMC will review and concur in all proposed changes in organization from the standpoint of work design, occupational distribution, grade distribution, staffing requirements, and costs before they are affected.

c. Before any positions is reclassified or a job changed to a higher grade because of a change in duties, the PMC will thoroughly review the organizational work pattern to ascertain the necessity for assigning responsibilities at as high a level as the grade being proposed. All approved work assignments resulting in reclassification/re-gradings must be shown to enhance the economy and/or effectiveness of the organization. The origin of new duties being assigned to the position must be documented in the justification.

d. The PMC will review each vacant position and make the appropriate recommendation to eliminate it, assign all or part of the duties to other positions, modify it to permit performance at a lower grade, or fill it at the present level. This review should be made in conjunction with organizational information and the demonstrated continued need for the position.

e. The PMC will advise the budget or resources committee on matters dealing with ceiling, organization structure, and related matters.

2. STRUCTURE

a. A typical field facility committee membership would appropriately be comprised of (1) the facility Associate Director, (2) designated Division/Service Chiefs, and (3) selected staff officials or other and hoc representatives as determined by the Director.

b. The PMC will consult with and include line program managers and supervisors in specific review activities.

3. PROCEDURES

a. The following general problem areas are related to ineffective position management and insufficient assessment of work structures and organization design:

(1) supervisory ratios--the number of supervisors in relation to the number of employees supervised is inappropriate.

(2) supervisory layering--here are more levels of supervision than necessary.

(3) optimum grade levels--higher skilled occupations are employed exclusively within an organization, when a significant proportion of the available work could be performed by lesser skilled occupations.

b. These problem areas should particularly be targeted for study in connection with scheduled position management reviews. The attachments to this appendix provide more detailed information and guidance concerning the conduct of reviews involving these areas.

c. The PMC must be alert to any labor-management implications involved in the reviews of organizations and positions and so in form the Director for appropriate action under the provisions of the facility agreement, master agreement, and Chapter 71 of Title 5.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

1. In addition to position vacancy review and control and the review and approval of proposed organizational changes, it is recommended that the Position Management and/or Resources Committees systematically review current organizational structures to assure their effectiveness and to gather and have available the basic material necessary for other reviews. Line managers should regularly provide information and justification of the present structure of their organizations and plans for improvements within current ceilings. Such information would then form the source documentation from which future position management issues could be resolved.

2. There are a number of basic procedures which should be considered if effective organizational structure is to be realized:

a. Survey and review the organizational structure.

(1) Assemble organizational charts, job descriptions, policy statements and directives.

(2) Obtain current information from key personnel by utilizing:

(a) questionnaires

(b) supplementary interviews

b. Analyze the nature of the organization to determine if informal structures exist in addition to the formal plan.

(1) By a formal organizational structure management establishes lines of interaction among its members. Task specialties, their arrangement in levels of authority, and lines of communication are clearly defined.

(2) Informal organizations are based on actual behavior patterns and practices of employees. They are amplifications and modifications of formal organizational plans.

c. Define line and staff functions.

(1) Line units and positions are related to mainstream activities e.g., benefits delivery, patient care. They produce services and are responsible for end results.

(2) Staff units and positions serve by helping those who carry out mainstream activities. They help solve the problems of the line.

(3) Line services generally should not include staff functions when such functions are the responsibility of staff services such as fiscal, human resources and acquisition/material management. Otherwise, duplication of work efforts may result. A trend toward establishing fiscal, human resources and other staff positions within line services frequently indicates a breakdown of communication between line and staff services, which should be resolved.

d. Evaluate span of control

(1) There are no criteria which will cover all situations; however, there are factors which should be considered in determining how many employees may be appropriate in a supervisor's span of control. They are:

- (a) The routine or varied nature of the work
- (b) The degree of dispersion
- (c) The need for immediate decisions
- (d) The type of program administered
- (e) The expectations of the employees in terms of supervision

e. Develop an organizational or re-organizational plan. Such a plan may require:

(1) The "Radical Approach."-Changes which are put into effect at once.

(2) A short range approach.

(a) Reorganization is spread over a six month to one year period.

(b) The final plan is explained at meetings where key personnel are given an opportunity to make amendments.

(3) The long range approach.

(a) Gradual changes are made over longer periods of time.

(b) The idea is to create as little disruption as possible and to assure continued cooperation.

(4) The latter two approaches would seem more appropriate for a facility's position management program.

SUPERVISORY RATIOS/SUPERVISORY LAYERING

1. Determining the number of supervisors needed to efficiently direct the work of an organization is a matter of judgment. There is no one correct ratio of the number of supervisors to the number of employees supervised that would be appropriate in all situations. Consideration of the following factors should, however, be helpful:

a. Nature and level of work--Are work operations routine or varied; are they professional, technical or clerical?

b. Physical dispersion--Do all or most of the employees work in the immediate vicinity of the supervisor's office; or are most of the employees in work sites physically removed from the supervisor?

c. Turnover of employees--Do most employees reach journeyman level and stay on the job, with little turnover, or does frequent turnover result in supervisors spending a significant amount of time training and orienting new employees?

2. As a general rule, evaluators tend to question the effectiveness of position management when the common supervisory ratio in an organization is 1:15 or less, especially when many such small units perform identical or similar work. In order to avoid questions on supervisory positions over very small units, it is wise to include a brief justification of the position management issue in the evaluation report for the position.

3. In the Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-64 (Revised), "Position Management Systems and Employment Ceilings," dated July 30, 1980, three fundamental principles of sound organization and position management are expressed:

a. Minimize the number of deputies and assistants, with emphasis on line responsibility.

b. Minimize the number of organizational levels, with emphasis on delegation and decentralization of authority to the lowest appropriate working levels.

c. Properly classify positions in accordance with title 5, U.S.C., and make classification decisions on the basis of published standards and established classification principles and policies.

4. The first two principles refer to "layering." Establishing more than one level of supervision over work is layering. Some layering is necessary because of the nature of the work or the size of the organization. Too often, however, additional layers of supervision appear to be created solely for the purpose of establishing additional higher graded positions. Before establishing additional layers of supervision or management advisory and control type positions, answer the following questions:

a. Is there an actual need for the additional control these positions represent or is improving the skills of existing supervisors what is needed?

b. Do existing supervisors spend significant portions of their time performing the work of the unit? If so, what may be needed is additional workers, not additional supervisors.

5. Deputies and Assistants should be included when determining supervisory ratios and layers. Such positions tend to dilute the responsibility of the supervisor and are generally not justified in small units when all that is required is coverage during periods of leave. Care should be exercised so that so called "full assistants" are not established when in fact the assistance is only of an administrative or operational nature. Establishing administrative or operational assistants, however, frequently reduces the responsibility delegated to lower level supervision in the line.

OCCUPATION AND GRADE MIX

1. A careful study of the organizational design of an activity or organizational component will provide a clear indication of the mission (mainstream) functions as opposed to the support (staff) functions which are present. The determination of the number and kinds of positions necessary to properly achieve the organization's goals and objectives is, of course, a line manager's responsibility. However, the determination of the mix of the established occupations and grade levels which will most efficiently and cost-effectively perform the available work is a position management issue, which can be approached through the following means:

a. Establishing technical and assistant positions

(1) In organizations where mission functions are professional or administrative (two-grade interval) in nature, positions should be analyzed to identify tasks which do not absolutely require the application of professional/administrative knowledges, skills and abilities (KSAs). Such tasks should be assigned to lower grade technician/assistant positions which appropriately reflect the necessary KSAs for those duties. Job analysis techniques can be employed in desk audits or questionnaires for supervisors to obtain this delineation of tasks and identification of appropriate KSAs.

(2) Examples of professional/administrative occupations for which related technician/assistant occupations exist are:

Professional

Technician

Psychologist, GS-180

Psychology Technician, GS-181

Social Worker, GS-185

Social Work Associates, GS-187

Dietitian, GS-630

Dietetic Technician, GS-640

Therapist (GS-631, 633, 635, 637, 638, 639)

Therapy Assistant, GS-636
 Recreation Assistant, GS-189

Pharmacist, GS-660

Pharmacy Technician, GS-661

Medical Technologist, Medical Technician, GS-645
 GS-644

Pathology Technician, GS-646

General Engineer, GS-801

Engineering Technician, GS-802

Administrative

Personnel Management Specialist,
 GS-201

Personnel Assistant, GS-203

Management Analyst, GS-343

Management Assistant, GS-344

Budget Analyst, GS-560

Budget Assistant, GS-561

Account, GS-510

Accounting Technician, GS-525

Contract Specialist, GS-1102

Purchasing Agent, GS-1105

Procurement Assistant, GS-1106

Veterans Claims Examiner,
GS-962

Claims Clerk, GS-998

(3) Judicious use of lower grade level technician occupations to perform the routine, but substantive, aspects of the work can result in significant cost savings by reducing the number of professional/administrative employees necessary to achieve the mission. Better utilization of staff and improved morale can be realized by permitting professional/administrative employees to concentrate on the higher level duties for which they are trained and which provide the bases for their grades.

b. Establishing an appropriate grade structure

(1) In addition to determining the most efficient and effective mix of professional/administrative to technician/assistant positions, a careful review should be made of the position structure within occupations to ascertain that the most cost-effective grade mix exists. Normally, an organizational study should be carried out which includes an analysis of the nature and amount of available work (as in (1) above), the flow of work, and the work environment, among other factors.

(2) Good position management dictates that, whenever possible, employees spend the preponderance (certainly not less than the majority) of their time performing at the highest skill level (the level which is the basis for the grade of their positions) required by their assigned duties. While it is not always possible to organize work in this manner because of scheduling or other valid considerations, such situations should be exceptions rather than common occurrences. A commonly encountered example is the establishment of all (or almost all) positions at the recognized full professional level and even the advanced level of the particular occupation, with no positions at lower full performance levels. When such exceptional situations are found to be justified after completion of an organizational study, the reasons should be documented in the records of the PMC. When such situations are found not to be justified, a plan for bringing the organization "in line" should be recorded and monitored by the PMC. The plan might include an organizational chart which would be brought into effect as existing position are vacated due to reassignments, resignations, etc. It might also include a priority placement program for reassigning employees in the targeted positions.

2. An additional action which can be taken to enhance the availability of professional/administrative staffs' time for higher level activities to ensure, to the extent practicable, that adequate clerical and office support is provided. It is frequently disclosed in

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Exhibit 3**

program review, audit, etc., reports that excessive professional staff time is lost due to inadequate support for such tasks as compiling report data, typing records, providing procedural information by telephone, scheduling appointments, and "housekeeping." Shortages of professional employees, e.g., nurses, pharmacists, can be compounded by requiring the available personnel to devote significant portions of their time to support and maintenance tasks. It may even be found that fewer professional or technical positions will be necessary if adequate clerical/support is made available at all times. Judicious use of volunteers can supplement the support staff in providing needed services during hard-to-fill periods. In accordance with VA policy, volunteer services may be accepted so long as such services are not in lieu of employment of essential personnel, but rather supplement them and are accepted through a written agreement with the VA.