

**Forest Service Manual
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**Forest Service Manual 6100 – Personnel Management
Chapter 6150 - Classification and Pay Administration**

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Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

6152.3: Removes code and caption, and direction for “Determining Pay Rate at Time of Appointment, Reinstatement, or Change to Lower Grade” and recodes direction to FSH 6109.11, chapter 50, section 50.1, Maximum Payable Rate Rule.

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6151 - Position Classification and Job Evaluation

6151.01 - Authority

The Department Personnel Manual (FSH 6109.41 - DPM 511, subch. 4-5) sets forth the requirements for position classification reviews.

6151.03 - Policy

1. Regions, Stations, and the Area shall consult with the Washington Office, Human Capital Management Staff, Classification and Pay Branch, on proposed classification actions that would set a precedent, represent an extrapolation of standards, or would otherwise have a direct impact on grade levels of related, comparable positions.
2. Supervisors and personnel specialists shall use standard position descriptions, correction notices, and other position classification shortcuts as much as possible. Standard position descriptions are mandatory when an adequate description exists. Position descriptions are adequate when they describe 80 percent of the work, include all major duties and responsibilities, and have the proper title, series, and grade. Obtain electronic copies of standard position descriptions through the Standard Position Description - Information Center Service. (For instructions on use of this information center service, see FSH 6109.15, Position Classification Handbook, zero code and ch. 40.)
3. Personnel specialists shall classify positions as interdisciplinary among two or more series whenever possible within published classification guidance.
4. Any employee may appeal the classification of the position to which the employee is assigned at any time (FSH 6109.15, Position Classification Handbook, ch. 10.)
5. Line officers and unit managers shall review their units annually to ensure soundness of organizational structure and accuracy of position descriptions and to plan for timely accomplishment of needed adjustments.

Integrate this responsibility with the accomplishment of other managerial functions, including work planning and budgeting (FSM 1930), organization and position management reviews (FSM 1220), and work force management and planning (FSM 1311). Forest Service unit managers must meet requirements to review and ensure classification accuracy through:

- a. A plan established to ensure that all positions are reviewed once within a 4-year cycle;
- b. Desk audits of 10 percent of the positions reviewed annually;
- c. Normal day-to-day operations; that is, those management and staff reviews and decisions made as positions are established and filled or vacant positions are refilled; and
- d. Annual reviews (FSM 6151.04).

6151.04 - Responsibility

1. Line officers and unit managers are responsible for the effective and efficient management and direction of the position classification program. Line officers are responsible for the delegation of classification authority (FSM 6104.1, ex. 01, and FSM 6151.2). When a position is found to be over-graded or under-graded, the line officer shall take the necessary steps to put the position into the proper grade.
2. Personnel officers at all levels are responsible for providing line officers and unit managers with professional advice and support in operating the classification system.
3. The Washington Office Human Capital Management Staff Director retains the authority to classify GS/GM-14 and GS/GM-15 level positions with the following exception: Station Directors are delegated authority and responsibility for panel evaluations and classification of positions of GS/GM-14 scientists using the Research Grade-Evaluation Guide or the Equipment Development Grade-Evaluation Guide.
4. Regional Foresters, Station Directors, and the Area Director are delegated the authority to classify positions through GS/GM-13 and all wage-grade positions, except for GM-201-13 Personnel Officer positions and precedent positions that affect related positions.
5. Regional Foresters may delegate to Forest Supervisors the authority to classify positions through GS-12 and all wage-grade positions.

6151.1 - Administering the Position Classification Program

(FSH 6109.15, Position Classification Handbook).

6151.2 - Minimum Standards for Delegating Classification Authority

Paragraphs 1 through 3 set forth the Service-wide standards for delegating classification authority. Field units shall not modify these standards.

1. Before delegating classification authority, the Regional, Station, or Washington Office Personnel Officer must certify that the candidate has adequately demonstrated the appropriate skills, knowledge, and abilities to successfully exercise classification authority. In making this determination, the Personnel Officer should consider the following:
 - a. The employee must be a GS-9 or higher in a 2-grade-interval series.
 - b. The employee must have received training in:
 - (1) Forest Service programs, policies, and organization, and
 - (2) The principles, policies, and techniques of personnel management, position management, and position classification. This should include the Office of Personnel Management basic 2-weeks training course in position classification or equivalent.

- c. The employee must have performed classification work (that is, preparing and documenting analysis of organizations and of individual positions) which provided experience in applying classification principles, policies, and standards to positions in a variety of occupations.
2. The work supervisor recommends that the employee be delegated classification authority when the supervisor is satisfied with the employee's training, development, and work performance.
3. The line officer delegates the authority when the line officer is satisfied that the individual possesses the appropriate technical and professional skills.
 - a. The delegation of authority must be in writing.
 - b. A copy must be filed in the employee's Official Personnel Folder.
4. Once an employee has qualified for delegation of classification authority and has satisfactorily exercised that authority, the employee shall not be required to requalify for the delegation of authority upon reassignment to another unit. However, there may be a period of post-review of the employee's work to ensure the individual understands the organization, programs, policies, and procedures of the new unit.

6151.3 - Classification of Scientists

Classification of scientists' positions must conform to the procedures of the Scientist Career Plan contained in FSH 6109.15, Position Classification Handbook, chapter 30. In determining a scientist's grade, consider the individual's scientific accomplishments and competence as well as traditional classification factors.

Classification that recognizes the impact of the qualifications, accomplishments, and stature of the individual on the scope, breadth, and complexity of the assignment may result in a scientist being placed in the same grade or higher grade than the work supervisor.

Reassignments and promotions above GS-11, including changes from scientist to Project Leader positions, may be noncompetitive when the grade level and/or potential for promotion are clearly based on the increased impact of the scientist's qualifications and contributions on the position (FSH 6109.15, sec. 31.3).

6151.31 - Cyclic Review

Conduct periodic panel reviews of all positions covered by the Scientist Career Plan to maintain classification accuracy.

Cyclic review of all such positions is mandatory:

1. Within 36 months of the scientists' being hired.
2. Within 48 months of the most recent previous panel for scientists at grades GS-11, GS-12, and GS-13.
3. Every 60 months for scientists at grade GS-14 or higher.

The Station Director may request reevaluation prior to the mandatory cyclic review when the provisions in FSH 6109.15, section 32.4, on reevaluation are met.

6152 - Pay Administration

6152.04 - Responsibility

6152.04a - Line Officers and Unit Managers

All line officers and unit managers shall:

1. Ensure accurate and timely pay to employees.
2. Effectively link pay and performance by fully utilizing all existing pay systems and provisions.
3. Determine pay rates at the time of appointment, reinstatement, or voluntary demotion in accordance with FSM 6152.5.
4. Not accept the benefits of a nonexempt employee's work without compensating the employee for that work. (See FSH 6109.11 for "suffer and permit.")
5. Pay all employees premium pay for working unusual hours or under unusual working conditions in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
6. Manage overtime and holiday work to ensure full benefit to the Government and fair treatment of employees.
7. Identify duties, other than those described in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, section 550.904 that may warrant payment of hazard pay differential. When identified, submit an evaluation of the duty with justification to the Washington Office (FSH 6109.11, sections 12.92 and 12.93).
8. Identify categories of duties, other than those in FSH 6109.11, section 14, exhibit 02, which may warrant payment of environmental pay differential (FSH 6109.11, sec. 14.8).
9. Ensure that travel is by the most expeditious means of transportation and is commensurate with the nature and purpose of the traveler's duties. See FSH 6109.11 for additional detail, as well as FSH 6509.33, Federal Travel Regulations.

6152.04b - Forest Supervisors

Forest Supervisors shall:

1. Identify remote worksites where there are employees potentially eligible to receive an allowance. Prepare requests, where warranted, and submit requests for approval.
2. Administer the remote worksite commuting allowance program for designated worksites.
3. Review approved worksites at least annually for any changes in commuting conditions. Report those changes, which could affect the allowance rate. See FSH 6109.11, sec. 17.02, for the objectives of remote worksite allowances.

6152.1 - Administering Pay Rates and Systems

See exhibit 01 for a brief description of the pay rates used by the Forest Service. See FSH 6109.11, Pay Administration, Attendance and Leave Handbook, for a fuller discussion of the General Schedule and wage systems, and for details on the Fair Labor Standards Act. See exhibit 02 for a summary of compensation guidelines for overtime and other types of premium pay. Exhibit 02 is a summary only and must be used in context with the detailed guidance found in FSH 6109.11.

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6152.1 - Exhibit 01

PAY SYSTEMS

| System | Description/Purpose | Eligibility | Conditions |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| General Schedule (GS) | To pay the majority of Forest Service employees (often called classification Act employees) paid under Title 5 U.S.C. | Most professional, technical, administrative and clerical positions. | May also be covered by provisions of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or Performance Management and Recognition System (PMRS) for GM employees. See FSH 6109.11 |
| Wage System (WG) (WL) (WS) | Pay employees on hourly basis (including Wage Grade (WG), Wage Leader (WL), Wage Supervisor (WS)). | Those who work in trades, skills, crafts, and manual labor. | Generally covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act unless position has supervisory responsibilities. |
| Emergency Firefighters (AD) | To pay employees who are recruited for the sole purpose of dealing with an immediate fire emergency or extreme fire potential. | Those fighting fires, on standby to fight fire, and to temporarily replace firefighters currently on fires. Forest Service employees are specifically excluded. | See FSH 5109.34, Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, sec. 422.2. Do not use this pay plan to fill positions identified by fire control organization and financial plan. |
| Senior Executive (SES) | Pay designated employees in policy-making positions. | Those in Senior Executive Service. | |

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6152.1 - Exhibit 02

OVERTIME AND PREMIUM PAY

| System | Description/Purpose | Eligibility | Conditions |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Overtime | Premium pay differential for hours worked in excess of employee's scheduled basic obligation. | All employees (except Emergency Firefighters) who work in excess of 8 hours or 40-hour weeks under AWS, 1st 40 tour, etc. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Must be ordered or approved in writing.2. Use FS-6100-30.3. Employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act may be entitled to additional overtime benefits. See FSH 6109.11, section 13.4. See FSH 6109.11 for detail. |
| Compensatory Time | Time off from work in lieu of overtime pay for irregular or occasional hours. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All GM and exempt GS employees, subject to approval.2. Nonexempt GS employees and wage system employees in specified instances. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cannot be granted in lieu of overtime pay for regularly scheduled overtime.2. Must be ordered and approved in writing.3. Employees whose rate of pay is below the GS-10 may not be required to earn compensatory time off in lieu of payment for overtime.4. See FSH 6109.11, section 12.4, for details on other covered employees and conditions. |
| Night Pay | Premium differential for scheduled work between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. | GM and GS Employees who perform scheduled work between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. | See FSH 6109.11, section 12.5, for specifics. |

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6152.1 - Exhibit 02--Continued

OVERTIME AND PREMIUM PAY

| System | Description/Purpose | Eligibility | Conditions |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Shift Differential | Premium differential paid for shifts worked between 3:00 p.m.--12 a.m. or 11:00 p.m.--8:00 a.m. | Wage System employees | See FSH 6109.11, section 14.5 for percentage rates and provisions. |
| Sunday | Premium differential paid for Sunday work. | Full-time employees, both GS and Wage System | See FSH 6109.11. |
| Holiday | Premium differential for work on established holidays. | See FSH 6109.11. | See FSH 6109.11. |
| Hazard Pay or Physical Hardship | Compensation for exposure to certain hazards or physical hardships. | 1. Full-time part-time, intermittent GS employee. 2. No one hired under pay plan for emergency firefighters. | See FSH 6109.11 for details on exposure to hazards and hardship. |
| Environmental Differential | Compensation for exposure to certain hazards, physical hardships, and unusual working conditions. | Wage System employees. | 1. See FSH 6109.11, section 14. |

6152.2 - Allotments and Assignment of Pay

6152.21 - Overpayments and Waivers

1. Overpayments of \$100 or More. Collections of overpayments of \$100 or more are covered by the due process procedures of Public Law 97-365. Procedures to follow are in FSH 6109.11, sec. 16.22. Requirements include employee notification by the agency head, designee, or NFC and the opportunity for a review hearing using Department hearing procedures.
2. Waiver of Minimum Deduction. A waiver of the 15 percent of disposable pay deduction based on extreme hardship to the employee may be granted at the Deputy Regional Forester and Assistant Station Director levels.
3. Waiver of Overpayments. Claims against employees or former employees arising from erroneous payments or pay or allowances may be waived in whole or in part. Only the Comptroller General can waive claims of more than \$1,500. Regional Foresters and Directors may submit waiver cases in excess of \$1,500, which meet the requirements of section 16.5, FSH 6109.11 direct to the General Accounting Office (GAO). The authority to submit waivers direct to GAO may be re-delegated to Forest Supervisors. Approval of waivers for overpayments to casual employees requires the concurrence of the Director, Fiscal and Accounting Services Staff, prior to final decision.

6152.22 - Backpay

Regional Foresters, Station Directors, and the Area Director are delegated authority to approve backpay claims and cases. Cases which are in doubt or where no clear precedent or Comptroller General decision exists shall be sent to the Director, Human Capital Management Staff, Washington Office, for decision or for transmittal to the USDA Office of Personnel or the General Accounting Office (GAO).

6153 - Pay under the Performance Management and Recognition System (PMRS)

6153.02 - Objective

The PMRS system is designed to recognize and reward quality performance of supervisors and management officials in grades GM-13, GM-14, and GM-15.

6153.04 - Responsibility

Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, and Deputy Chiefs shall make coverage determinations within their jurisdictions and shall ensure the consistency of performance standards, completion of performance ratings, and the accuracy of data submitted to the National Finance Center (NFC) for payment.

6153.1 - PMRS Processing Instructions

(FSH 6109.41, FPM/DPM chapter 540.)

6153.2 - Multiple Performance Appraisals

See FSH 6109.13 and FSH 6109.41, FPM/DPM chapter 430 for instructions.

6153.3 - Review of Performance Appraisals

See FSH 6109.13 and FSH 6109.41, FPM/DPM chapter 430 for procedures.

6153.4 - PMRS Performance Awards

FSH 6109.41, DPM chapter 540 and FSH 6109.13 contain direction on administration of PMRS performance awards.