Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know

Participant Guide

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Welcome to this TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) training event. We are excited that you will be joining us today for *Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know*, and we look forward to helping you to get as much out of this time as possible.

Your classroom today is not very large, 125 or fewer students from as many as 40 different locations across the NPS. We purposely keep the class size small to assure that if you have a question, there is time to get it answered. Don't hesitate to ask—if you have a question, there are probably several others in the class who have the same question—you might as well be the one to ask! It is our goal that you leave class today with no unanswered questions.

How To Interact with the Instructor

We encourage you to ask questions and share your comments with the instructors throughout this TELNPS course.

If you were physically in the classroom with the instructor, you would raise your hand to let her/him know you had a question or comment. Then you would wait for the instructor to recognize you and ask for your question. We are all familiar with that "protocol" for asking questions or making comments.

With TELNPS courses there is also a "protocol" to follow to ensure that you can easily ask questions and others can participate as well. It may seem a little strange at first asking a question of a TV monitor. Remember, it is the instructor you are interacting with and not the

monitor. As you ask more questions and participate in more TELNPS courses, you will soon be focusing only on the content of your question and not the equipment you are using to ask it.

As part of the TEL station equipment at your location, there are several push-to-talk microphones. Depending on the number of students at your location, you may have one directly in front of you or you may be sharing one with other students at your table.

When you have a question, press and hold down the push-to-talk button, maintaining a distance of 12-18 inches, and say,

"Excuse me [instructor's first name], this is [your first name]

at [your location]. I have a question (or I have a comment)."

Then release the push-to-talk button. This is important.

Until you release the button, you will not be able to hear the instructor.

The instructor will acknowledge you and then ask for your question or comment. Stating your name and location not only helps the instructor, but also helps other students who are participating at different locations to get to know their classmates.



Why a Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know program?

Position descriptions are more than just a list of duties. They are used for many purposes: first to review prior to applying for a position and throughout an employee's tenure; second, to define the employee's duties in the workplace and justify his or her salary; and third, to determine awards, and even promotions. It's not hard to see that how a PD describes the nature of the job will have a great impact on each of these elements. We're here today to talk about some of the basic legal requirements, and to show how YOU can write PDs that accurately reflect your present needs and prepare for the future growth of your park and offices.

Target Audience

NPS employees with supervisory responsibilities, or who serves as an advisor to supervisors, such as an HR Specialist. This course has been approved to count 2.5 hours toward the mandated NPS annual 40-hour supervisory training requirement.

Program Timing

Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know is a 2-hour TEL course.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and legality of a position description (PD)
- Know how to develop a PD
- Understand the role of position management in developing PDs
- Write a PD
- Explain the purpose of the OF-8
- Use established PDs correctly
- Explain procedures to your employees for filing appeals

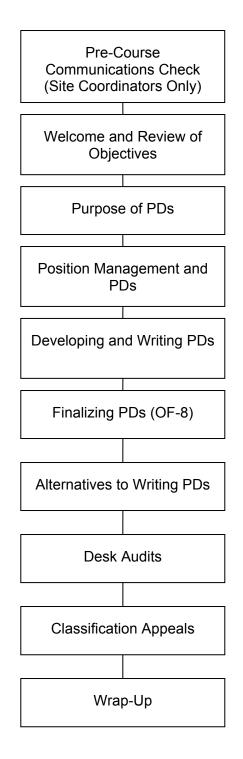
Leadership Competencies

- Results Driven: Accountability, Problem-Solving, Technical Credibility
- Business Acumen: Human Resources Management
- Leading People: Vision
- Leading Change: Strategic Thinking

Site Point-of-Contact Responsibilities

The TEL Station Site Point-of-Contact must reserve the training room, notify employees that the park will be participating in this TEL training event, make sure the Participant Guide is available to students, set up the TEL Station on the day of the training, make sure students sign in on the Student Roster form, and finalize the roster in My Learning Manager.

Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know Course Map



Purpose of a Position Description

Exercise: Top 10 Questions

What do you think are some of the most common questions supervisors ask about PDs?
What is a "Position Description"?
A position description is the official record of duties and responsibilities assigned to a position or group of positions by management in order to accomplish a specific job.
Exercise: Why Are PDs Important?
At your site, come up with at least 2 reasons why you think PDs are important.

Reasons We Have PDs (Office of Personnel Management)

1.	Creating	of duties and responsibilities.
2.	Serving as	for paying incumbent.
3.	Providing information (KSAs).	
4.	performance standards.	
5.	Setting requirements.	
6.	Documenting duties for	
7.	Determining costs for person	nel.
8.	Improving methods.	
9.	Organizing and assigning	

Position Management and PDs

When Should You Write a New PD?

1			
2.			
3			

3 Key Players in Developing a PD

Supervisors/Managers

- Decide what the duties and responsibilities of each position shall be
- Write the position description
- Add, remove, or change assignments
- Ensure PD is current, adequate, accurate
- · Initiate classification actions generally

Employees

- Perform the duties as assigned
- Notify Supervisor when duties change and become regular and recurring
- Provide information about the position
- May write or help write an updated description

Classifiers

- Provide technical advice on assigning duties and developing PDs
- Validate position descriptions
- Help managers carry out legal and personnel responsibilities

Questions To Ask Yourself Before Writing a PD

- 1. Is the position necessary?
- 2. Is the FTE authorized? If not, how will I fund the position?
- 3. Can the position be structured differently?
- 4. Does the position fit into the work area or park?
- 5. Does the position serve employee needs?

GS and WG

Position Descriptions are based upon the 2 types of pay systems:

<u>General Schedule (GS):</u> Involves professional (requiring a college degree), administrative, technician, clerical, or other similar types.

Federal Wage System (WG, WS, WL): Involves crafts, trades, and labor

Differences between the GS and WG positions:

1. They are established under different laws & are designed for different workforces.

GS positions are professional (require college degree), administrative, technical, clerical or other similar types. WG positions involve crafts, trades and labor.

The type of position you are seeking to fill dictates the format of the PD. Each system is designed for different workforce.

2. Grade is based upon differing percentages of major duties.

GS grade is based on substantial duties performed at least 25% of the time. WG is based on regular and recurring duties, regardless of percent of time involved, though classifiers usually look for 10% of duty hours performing the responsibilities.

3. Pay determinations differ.

GS salaries are generally nationwide in scope while WG/WS/WL are locally determined through wage surveys.

Developing & Writing PDs

Key Terms To Consider When Writing PDs

<u>MAJOR DUTY</u> - A primary duty that is the reason for the existence of the position; or the duty is sufficiently different from other major duties so as to require additional entrance qualifications or extensive post-assignment training.

<u>TASK</u> - A distinct, identifiable activity that constitutes one of the logical and necessary steps an employee performs in the position.

<u>DUTY</u> - A series of closely related tasks, usually performed in a given sequence, requiring the same, or closely-related, knowledge, skills, and abilities; responsibilities required by the position but not the primary reason(s) for the position's existence.

Exercise: Major Duty Case Study

Review the case study in Appendix A.

•	Identify the major duty(ies)						
•	List the tasks that make up the duty(ies)						

Steps in Writing a PD

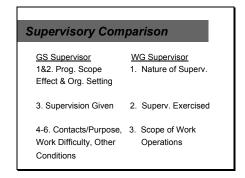
Per OPM, a description must state the principal duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships of a position clearly and definitively to provide information necessary to its proper classification.

- 1. Determine tasks and responsibilities (duties) required in the position to meet mission needs.
- 2. Make logical outline of major duties (reason for position).
- 3. Assess position's relation to other positions.
- 4. Set supervisory chain of command.
- 5. Determine performance requirements (Knowledge, skill, ability, etc).

Tips for Writing PDs

- 1. **Use active, expressive verbs to describe duties and responsibilities**, e.g., Manages, Performs, Directs, Develops, Writes, Creates, Recommends, etc.
- 2. Say it in clear, picture-creating terms. Instead of "processes mail," explain duties such as, "Sorts incoming mail, including packages and special messages. Selects and time-stamps designated mail items. Sorts mail into the designated mail slots. Picks up outgoing mail, checks for attachments and calls attention of sender to obvious discrepancies. " Also, tell how often duty is performed, especially if it is incidental (e.g., once a month, as requested, etc.).
- 3. **Avoid clichés.** "Responsible for ensuring..." when the incumbent actually performs the duties. "Performs extremely complex and demanding duties" when the incumbent develops and analyzes reports to determine if the project is in compliance with NEPA or the Park Ranger patrols isolated areas in back country wooded lands.
- **4. Avoid vague terms.** Instead of listing abilities/skills, explain such as: "Ability to apply basic arithmetic sufficient to make routine calculations of staff hours" or "Skill in applying basic data gathering methods, such as standard interviewing techniques, to collect various types of factual information relating to [job]."
- **5. Don't write grade justifications (slant toward a grade).** Write the duties of the position without thought of the grade. That will come with classification.
- **6. Avoid copying material** from a standard attempting to guarantee a grade. The desk audit may not substantiate the duties and the grade you want may not be found.
- **7. Avoid ponderous phraseology.** "Serves in a unique position performing complex work in a professional manner". Show uniqueness and complexity.

Formats for Writing PDs



General Schedule (GS)

PDs may be either narrative or factor format. It is determined by the format of the classification standard, but OPM is changing all formats to the factor evaluation system (FES) format as they update GS standards. It is recommended that all GS positions be written in FES format.

Factor Evaluation System (FES)

- I. Introduction or background information (sets the stage for the duties and describes where work will be performed, e.g. park setting)
 - II. Major Duties (all regular and recurring duties that must be performed)

III. Factors

- 1. Knowledge Required by the Position
- 2. Supervisory Controls (how the position will be supervised, e.g. chain of command and attention provided position)
 - 3. Guidelines (for the work)
 - 4. Complexity (of the work)
 - 5. Scope and Effect (of the work)
 - 6. Personal Contacts
 - 7. Purpose of Contacts
 - 8. Physical Demands
 - 9. Work Environment

GS Supervisory Positions

You are strongly encouraged to write supervisory PDs in the regular FES format showing all the technical responsibilities for lower level supervisors and then adding the GSSG factor format. A PD is graded based upon the highest level of work performed whether technical or supervisory.

Same as the normal FES format except has 3 additional sections under Major Duties:

- 1. Supervisory Duties and Responsibilities (incumbent performs)
- 2. Equal Employment Opportunity Responsibilities
- 3. Safety Program Duties

and includes supervisory/managerial factors for positions supervising 25% of duty hours.

PLUS: Write factors in the following format.

- 1. Program Scope and Effect
- 2. Organizational Setting (reporting chain of command)
- 3. Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised (hire, fire, disciplinary action, leave approval, setting performance plans and giving performance appraisals, etc.)
- 4. Personal Contacts:
 - a. Nature of Contacts
 - b. Purpose of Contacts
- 5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed
- 6. Other Conditions as appropriate (Variety of work, shifts, fluctuating work force & constantly changing deadlines, dispersion, special staffing, specialized programs, and hazard/safety considerations)

Federal Wage System (WG)

PD is a narrative with the following sections:

- A. Introduction
- 1. Job Summary
- 2. Skill and Knowledge
- 3. Responsibility
- 4. Physical Effort
- 5. Working Conditions

Wage Grade Supervisors (WS)

Introduction:

Factor 1: Nature of Supervisory Responsibility

Factor 2. Level of Work Supervised

Factor 3. Scope of Work Operations Supervised

If this is a working supervisor, include duties and responsibilities of the position in separate paragraphs as if it was a WG position.

Alternatives to Writing Position Descriptions

- 1. Benchmark Position Descriptions: Generic PDs developed by subject-matter-experts and classified at the WASO level. Requires classification certification by the WASO Chief of Classification, or equivalent, in block 21. These are valid PDs for use throughout DOI and the Bureaus. Incumbent <u>must</u> perform at lest 80% of the duties in the PD.
- 2. Identical Additional PDs: These are PDs written generally for a park's use to fill several positions that perform the same type duties. They may <u>only</u> be used within the park where the original PD is classified. One park may not use another park's PD without reclassifying it.
- 3. Amendments to PDs: A supervisor may use a DI-625 form to amend a PD twice before the PD must be rewritten as a new PD. Each amendment must be certified by classifier as to its affect on the position.

Desk Audits

Desk Audit Procedures:

A desk audit is an in-depth review of the duties performed by an individual

- May be conducted on-site
- May be completed telephonically
- Requires updated PD with OF-8 signed by supervisor(s)

Employee should review current PD

- Make list of changes in duties
- Be prepared to explain duties and show examples of work

Human Resources Specialist will:

- Telephone Supervisor to inform date of audit and make appointment with incumbent
- Review related positions and supervisor PD
- Clarify duties with supervisor after audit, check to ensure nothing was missed

Classification Appeals

When an employee thinks his or her position is miss-classified, he or she may appeal the classification; however, both GS and WG employees may <u>only appeal title</u>, <u>series</u>, and <u>grade</u>.

GS Procedure

Appeals may be sent to the Regional HR Office as point of first review, then to either NPS or DOI, and thirdly to OPM. GS employees have the option of appealing to any level within the appeal process the first time. OPM is the final authority and no further address is authorized.

Wage Grade Procedure

Again, the appeal may be sent to the Regional HR Office if the PD was classified by a park or other Servicing Personnel Office within the Region first. Wage Grade employees <u>must</u> appeal through the NPS channels or DOI first. They do not have the option of going directly to OPM.

References

Helpful Web Sites

Classification Standards: http://www.opm.gov/fedclass

http://165.83.62.205/ahr/classification/classify2.htm

Forms: http://www.nps.gov/renew/forms.htm

Appeals: http://www.opm.gov/classapp/main.asp

Resource Careers Benchmarks: http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/careers/

FLERT http://flert.nifc.gov/

Regulations

Position Descriptions: 5 CFR part 511

370 DM 511

5 USC Chapters 51 & 53

OPM Classification Standards

Pay Setting and Equity: 5 CFR parts 531, 532, 536

5 USC 53

Classification Appeals: 5 CFR part 511, Subpart F

To Receive Credit for this Course

1. PRINT your name on the attendance roster.

2. UPON RECEIPT OF E-MAIL NOTIFICATION, complete the online course evaluation.

For More Information Contact:

Floy Westermeier

Human Resources Specialist Midwest Region floy_westermeier@nps.gov 402-661-1652

Appendix A: Language for 6c Position Descriptions.

The following sample language must be included within a non-benchmark PD if you are seeking 6c retirement coverage for the position. This is per FLERT.

1. Introduction:

NOTE: (for Supervisory PDs) Prior law enforcement experience, as gained by substantial service in a primary law enforcement position in the Federal government, or equivalent experience outside the Federal government, is a mandatory prerequisite/selective factor of this position. Candidates without this prior law enforcement experience do not qualify for this position.

(All PDs) Incumbent must be able to obtain and maintain a Type 1 Law Enforcement commission and meet the physical and medical qualification requirements for a law enforcement ranger. Uniformed position. Requires Background Investigation. Subject to drug testing

2. Major Duties:

The requirement for possession of an NPS Type 1 Law Enforcement Commission must be contained in the duties section, along with the duties that require this commission;

3. Knowledge and Skills Required (Factor 1):

Knowledge of law enforcement and experience, as gained by substantial service in a primary law enforcement position in the Federal government, or equivalent experience outside the Federal government, *is mandatory*. A currently valid NPS Law Enforcement Commission must be maintained.

4. Guidelines:

Principal guidelines for this position are found in Federal statutes, laws and regulations, judicial regulatory proceedings, case law, Federal Code for Criminal Procedures, applicable state policies

6. Complexity:

The work involves a variety of broad and diverse duties to develop and implement technical investigative and law enforcement programs and policies, provide law enforcement training, maintain employee records and participate in criminal investigations. Investigations typically involve other agencies and/or jurisdictions, as well as private organizations and, businesses that require coordination to avoid/resolve conflict and jurisdictional dispute. Investigations and other law enforcement activities may involve individuals and/or organizations that are well known and politically influential.

7. Scope and Effect:

The purpose of this position is two-fold: 1) to serve as the resident expert for conducting criminal investigations and protecting NPS' responsibilities/ rights; and 2) to investigate known or suspected violations of Federal laws and regulations and to provide coordination, logistical support, communications and NPS expertise statutes, laws and regulations, judicial regulatory proceedings, case law, Federal Code for Criminal procedures, applicable state policies and operating budget constraints.

8. Contacts and Purpose of Contacts:

Contacts are with ... law enforcement personnel from other Federal and international law enforcement agencies; state, foreign country, and city law enforcement administrators and their field officers; the U.S. Attorney, U.S. Department of Interior Solicitor, State Attorney General, and District Attorneys and their staff; judges and court personnel; witnesses, informant, operatives and suspects, and the public at large.

Investigative contacts are for the purpose of developing information, evidence patterns and sources, apprehensions, arrests, and detainments. Contacts are to detain, control, or interrogate suspected violators of resource and related laws. Suspects (and some informants) are sometimes convicted felons and frequently are fearful, uncooperative, evasive, uncommunicative, hostile, or dangerous.

6. Physical Demands:

Position is required to meet and continuously maintain the physical/medical standards as set forth in the requirements by D.O. #57.

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Appendix B: Major Duty Case Study

The incumbent has occupied this position for 9 years and has performed a variety of duties related to the current work over the years. The following focuses on the current duties of the position. It is expected that these duties will remain as described for some time.

The incumbent says his primary duties include the collection, conservation, and restoration of artifacts and the research of the history of the Historic Site.

More specifically, he acquires artifacts; catalogs and inventories artifacts; maintains a system for indexing and cross-referencing fields for the collection; and updates historical property catalog cards, property jacket donor files, and reports. This responsibility requires knowledge of collection techniques and procedures including identifying and cataloguing artifacts. He conducts research for the Historic Site throughout history that serves as a reference source for exhibits, for expansion of the collection, and for individuals engaged in historical research. In this regard, he prepares brief bibliographic data, summarizes extracts and studies, conducts personal interviews, and relates objects to record. To research, the incumbent indicates he must have an extensive knowledge of the history of the Historic Site, the president's family in general, American History, and other related subjects to establish historical information.

He performs limited conservation/restoration of artifacts when necessary; maintains environmental controls to preserve the artifacts; and monitors the collection for conservation problems. For example, clothing is restored using a special tape to prevent additional tears, artifacts are wrapped to preserve the conditions and prevent overexposure to ultraviolet rays, and temperature and humidity are adjusted to known standards to conserve exhibits. He must have knowledge of conservation and preservation methods to prevent damage to artifacts. The incumbent claims he is responsible for valuable and rare collection material.

The incumbent states that accuracy and carefulness is of utmost importance. He pointed out that he cannot make errors in his research or label exhibits

incorrectly since this action would misinform those individuals visiting the homes.

The incumbent indicates he also assists his supervisor in the development of military history collections, policies, the historic site master plan, training plans, exhibit plans, and story line plans. He develops and maintains applicable regulations and files and assists in the preparation of the budget including forecasting requirements for temporary assignments, travel, exhibit materials, and contracts for construction and services, e.g., air conditioning system, security and fire systems, lighting, exhibits, supplies, etc. He composes tour information and conducts guided tours and orientations for individuals and groups including trainees, students, visitors and their families, as well as various civic and educational groups. He must have good speaking abilities to relay historical information during tours and to respond to numerous inquiries. Also, he claims he must have good written communications skills to prepare bibliographies and scripts and to document historical information.

During an average week, 1,000 individuals visit the Historic Site. That number may run as high as 5,000, especially during the summer months. The Historic Site operates on a 10-day basis, 12 months out of the year. The Site employs 10 individuals to maintain the homes. Five or six temporary employees are added during peak times to assist with the heavy workload.

The incumbent receives directions from the Site Curator. The Curator provides overall objectives when making assignments and advises the incumbent on changes in policies and precedents. The incumbent then independently plans and carries out assignments resolving problems as they occur within established methods, procedures, oral and written instructions, and Site practices and regulations. However, unusual problems, controversial issues, or questions of policy are referred to the supervisory. Completed work is evaluated in terms of effectiveness of results and compliance and adherence to local policy, regulations and procedures.

Appendix C: Position Description Optional Form 8

POSITION DESCRIPTION (Please Read Instructions on the Back)						1. Ag	1. Agency Position No.			
2. Reason for Submission 3. Service			4. Employing Office Location 5. Duty Station			6. OPM Certification				
Redescription	New [Field	4. Employing Office Location		5. Duty Station			0. 01	w certification
_ · _			1 iciu	7. Fair Labor S	Standards Act	8. Financi	al Statements Req	uired	9. Su	bject to IA Action
Reestablishment	_ Other			 	¬N	Exec	utive 🗂 Em	nployment	l —	_
Explanation (Show any positi	tions replacea)				Nonexempt	Personal Per	12. Sensitivity	d Financial		es No
				10. Position Status		<u>-</u>		3-	13. Competitive Level Code	
				Competit		Sensitiv Critical			14. Agency Use	
				Excepted (Specify in Remarks)		<u> </u>			14. Agency Osc	
				SES (Gen.	SES (CR)	Neither 2- 4- Special		4- Special		
15. Classified/Graded by		Officia	al Title of	Position		Pay Plan	Occupational	Gra	Initial	Date
a. U.S. Office of Per- sonnel Management										
b. Department, Agency or Establishment										
c. Second Level Review										
d. First Level Review										
e. Recommended by Supervisor or Initiating Office										
16. Organization Title of Po	sition (If different	from the official	! title)		17. Name of Employee (if vacant, spec				cify)	
18. Department, Agency, or U.S. Department of the					c. Third Subdivision Park or Office					
a. First Subdivision National Park Service					d. Fourth Subdivision Division					
b. Second Subdivision Midwest Region					e. Fifth Subdivision					
					Signature of Employee (antique!)					
 Employee Review — This is an accurate description of the major duties and responsibilities of my position. 				Signature of Employee (optional)						
20. Supervisory Certification. I certify that this is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of this position and its organizational relationships, and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions for which I am responsible. This certification is made with the				ganizational Government	 knowledge that this information is to be used for statutory purposes relating to appointment and payment of public funds, and that false or misleading statements may constitute violations of such statues or their implementing reg-ulations. b. Typed Name and Title of Higher-Level Supervisor or Manager (optional) 					
a. Type Name and Title of I	immediate Superv	isor			b. Typed Name	and little of	Higher-Level Sup	ervisor or	Manage	er (optional)
Signature			Date	;	Signature					Date
 Classification/Job Grading Certification. I certify that this position has been classified/graded as required by Title 5, U.S. Code in conformance with standards published by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or, if no published standards apply directly, consistently with the most applicable published standards. Typed Name and Title of Official Taking Action 										
,	3									n their application,
Signature Date				are available in the personnel office. The classification of and corrected by the agency or the U.S. Office of Personnel mation on classification/job grading appeals, and complaints FLSA, is available from the personnel office or the U.S.			onnel M aints on	anagement. Infor- exemption from		
23. Position Review	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Management. Initials	Date	Initial	Date	In	itial Date
a. Employee (optional)										
b. Supervisor										
c. Classifier										
24. Remarks										
25. Description of Major Du	ities and Responsi	bilities (See Atta	ched							