

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

Subject: Application of the New General Schedule Leader Grade-Evaluation Guide, dated March 10, 1998

The new guide to classify team leader positions has been published. Our previous test application of this guide resulted in no significant number of increases in the grades of sampled positions. Since there are no major changes in the final version as compared to the draft, we expect there will be no increase in the grades of most existing positions covered by this new guide.

Commands should ensure fiscal prudence is used in applying this guide to ensure it is not used solely to justify the establishment of team leader positions. This guide will, in all probability, produce upgrades in such cases. Overuse of the team leader concept may, therefore, significantly increase the salary costs of commands and further exacerbate the shortage of funds the Department is facing. Any application of this guide that results in additional senior grade team leader positions must be accommodated within your assigned senior grade ceilings.

The enclosed position management guidance provides a brief discussion of general issues to consider before establishing team leader positions and specific clarification of duties that are reserved to supervisors only.

If you have any questions concerning these issues, please contact Mr. Edward Liverani at 703-325-1336 or DSN 221-1336.

Carol Ashby Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary
(Civilian Personnel Policy)

Enclosure

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Guidance for the Establishment of Team Leader Positions

Purpose for Establishing the Position

The decision to establish a new team leader position should be based on the documented need for such oversight. The primary purpose of the position should be to provide leadership to the work group. If the primary purpose for the position is to lead others then these duties are expected to normally occupy significantly more than the minimum 25% of the employee's time cited in the guide. The span of control should be assessed to ensure that team leaders devote a preponderance of time (51% or more) to lead duties. The establishment of such positions should not be viewed as simply an opportunity to promote deserving employees but rather should be based on organizational need. Additional mission requirements or a significant increase in workload or other significant organizational changes should serve as the justification for a new team leader position.

Composition of the Organizational Unit

The level of experience of the employees in the organization is an important indicator of the relative merits of the decision to establish a team leader. Full performance employees in two-grade interval occupations usually function independently. These employees, having

developed expertise in the line of work, are responsible for planning and carrying out their assignments, resolving most of the conflicts that arise, coordinating the work with others as necessary, and interpreting policy on their own initiative in terms of established objectives. Situations of this nature would not usually require a team leader to devote a preponderance of time to lead duties for small groups of employees.

Organizations that experience high turnover rates or significant percentages of employees without a full knowledge of the work may require a team leader to provide on the job training and frequent checks of the work in progress. Similarly, when a substantial portion of the workload is regularly carried out at locations that are physically removed from the main unit where the supervisor is located, additional oversight provided by a team leader may be required.

Use of Project Leaders/Limited Role Team Leaders

In some cases organizations do not require full time leaders but do require special oversight of some work due to its complexity, the need for internal

or external coordination, or other factors. The temporary appointment of a project team leader may provide the oversight needed for that project without the need for a continuing role and a permanent increase in salary costs. Rotation of such team leader assignments fosters the concept of a team approach and provides the necessary temporary oversight without the constraints of assigning a permanent role to one individual.

You may also carefully construct positions that perform some of the functions of team leaders but do not perform the full range of duties sufficient to justify the permanent cost of an additional grade to the position.

Duties Reserved to Supervisors

Caution must be exercised that team leaders do not function as supervisors who simply function under a different title. In addition to the examples provided in the General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide, Part II, the following clarification is provided.

Only supervisors can serve as proposing or deciding officials in all formal disciplinary and adverse actions, i.e., letters of reprimands, suspensions, involuntary reductions in grade or pay, and removals. Only supervisors may give informal disciplinary actions (oral admonishments/reprimands, written warnings and letters of instruction). Only supervisors may issue Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs). Team Leaders can provide recommendations and input into the supervisor's decision-making process surrounding whether to take a formal or informal disciplinary action.

Only supervisors can sign as either the rater or senior rater under our performance management system, now and under the approved changes soon to be issued. Team Leaders can provide input, either formal or informal, into the setting of objectives and assessing performance.

Management may have Team Leaders approve short-term leave, but supervisors must approve long-term leave.

Only supervisors may approve incentive awards (honorary, monetary and time off). Team Leaders may serve as the Nominating Official. Team Leaders may not serve as the approving official, including Time Off Awards of one day or less.

Bargaining Unit Status

In addition to the guidance contained in the guide on determining the bargaining unit status of team leader positions, the Office of Personnel Management Labor-Management Relations Advisory #98-1, dated April 1, 1998 also contains useful information on this subject. A copy is enclosed for your information.