

	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	NOAA Administrative Order 202-1113	
	NOAA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SERIES	DATE OF ISSUANCE 2/10/2023	EFFECTIVE DATE 4/11/2024
	SUBJECT: POSITION CLASSIFICATION		

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

.01 This NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) formally documents the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) policy for position classification under the General Schedule (GS), Federal Wage System (FWS), and Commerce Alternative Personnel System (CAPS). It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities under each of these pay systems.

.02 Where provisions of this policy conflict with provisions in applicable negotiated collective bargaining agreements, the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement will apply subject to 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) 7121(c)(5). This NAO is applicable until canceled or superseded.

SECTION 2. SCOPE.

.01 For GS positions, this Order supplements the requirements of Chapter 51 of Title 5, U.S.C. (except section 5108); part 511 of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR); and Department Administrative Order (DAO) 202-511, Position Classification¹ (dated March 2, 2022).

.02 For FWS positions, this Order supplements the requirements of 5 U.S.C., chapter 53; 5 CFR, part 532, subparts F – G; and DAO 202-511².

.03 For CAPS positions, NOAA follows the provisions set forth in the Department of Commerce CAPS Operating Procedures Manual³ (dated May 28, 2010). This Order reiterates the position classification requirements of the Manual.

¹ https://www.commerce.gov/opog/directives/DAO_202-511

² https://www.commerce.gov/opog/directives/DAO_202-511

³ <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/Commerce-alternative-personel-system-operating-procedure-manual.pdf>

.04 NOAA wage mariner positions within the Wage Mariner (WM) pay system are not covered under this Order. They are exempt from the title 5 position classification system by 5 U.S.C. § 5102(c)(8) as “officers and members of crews of vessels.”

.05 NOAA Commissioned Corps positions are not covered under this Order. NOAA Commissioned Corps Directives, Chapter 5 provides guidance regarding NOAA Corps Officer Billet Descriptions.

.06 Senior Executive Service (SES), Scientific and Professional (ST), and Senior Level (SL) positions are not covered under this Order. Contact the NOAA Office of Human Capital Services (OHCS), Executive Resources Division for current Department of Commerce (DOC) guidance for SES, ST, and SL positions.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

.01 Accretion of Duties Promotion. An accretion of duties promotion is a non-competitive promotion of an employee whose position is reclassified at a higher grade/band level because of the addition of substantive new and higher-level duties and responsibilities requiring a higher level of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

.02 Classification Appeal. A classification appeal is a written request by an employee or group of employees occupying identical positions for a change in the official pay plan, title, series, and/or grade/band of the position occupied by the employee or group of employees.

.03 Classification Review Panel (CRP). Under CAPS, CRPs are ad hoc advisory panels that may be established by Operating Personnel Management Boards (OPMBs) to review classification actions referred by OHCS.

.04 DOC CAPS Board. The DOC CAPS Board manages and oversees CAPS at the Departmental level as authorized through the CAPS plan under Federal Register Notice, Vol. 62, No. 247⁴ (dated December 24, 1997) and the CAPS Board Charter⁵ (dated October 21, 2014). It delegates a number of human resources management authorities, including classification authority, to the OPMBs.

.05 Operating Personnel Management Board (OPMB). Through delegations of authority from the DOC CAPS Board, OPMBs are responsible for establishing and implementing operational guidelines in accordance with CAPS policies, CAPS operating procedures, and DOC Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) policies. A list of NOAA’s OPMBs and their charters are located on the CAPS webpage⁶ on the OHCS intranet.

.06 Position Classification. The process through which federal jobs (i.e., positions) are assigned to a pay system, occupational series, title, and grade or band level based on the consistent application of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) position classification standards for

⁴ <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/final-federal-register-notice-dec-24-1997.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.commerce.gov/hr/practitioners/caps/resources/caps-board>

⁶ <https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/ohcs/policy-procedures/caps>

GS and FWS positions and Department-wide pay band standards in the Automated Classification System (ACS) ⁷ for CAPS positions.

.07 Position Description. The official record of management's assignment of duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships to a position.

.08 Position Management. Position management is the systematic process that managers and supervisors apply when designing an efficient and economical organization. Through this process, a determination is made on how many positions are needed, how jobs should be designed, and the organizational structure needed to accomplish the mission and functional assignments of the organization.

SECTION 4. POLICY.

.01 General

a. It is the policy of NOAA to classify positions in accordance with OPM position classification standards for GS and FWS positions, and in accordance with DOC's broad pay band standards in ACS for CAPS positions.

b. Supervisors must ensure at all times that an accurate and certified position description (PD) provides a clear and definitive description of the major duties of each position that is adequate for proper classification.

i. The supervisor's signature on the CD-516 – Classification and Performance Management Record certifies that the PD is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of the position and its organizational relationships and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions.

ii. Common factors requiring PDs to be revised include, but are not limited to:

1. An increase or decrease in the scope and/or level of general duties and responsibilities;
2. An increase or decrease in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties of the position;
3. The addition or deletion of major duties; and
4. A change in the degree of supervision received.

iii. Factors that would not require a revision to an existing PD may include, but are not limited to:

1. Quantity/volume of work produced;

⁷ <https://hr.eas.commerce.gov/acs>

2. Quality of work produced;
3. A temporary change (i.e., non-permanent, for a limited period, that does not become part of the regular job) in assignments for training, or to meet an emergency situation;
4. Work performed in the temporary absence of another employee; and
5. Change in methods/procedures.

c. Final, classified PDs must include:

- i. A CD-516 – Classification and Performance Management Record with all required signatures.
- ii. A position designation record signed by the supervisor; this record is generated using the Position Designation Tool available at <https://pdt.nbis.mil/>⁸.

d. All classified and complete PD packages will be stored in HR Connect and USA Staffing.

e. The position management principles in NAO 200-7A, Initiating and Processing Organizational Changes and Supplemental Handbook⁹, (dated February 1, 2023) must be followed when establishing or revising positions. Managers and supervisors should refer to DOC HR Bulletin #252, FY21, Reorganization Requests¹⁰ (dated March 26, 2021) and the current iteration of the OHCS Position Management Handbook¹¹ for guidance to design effective and efficient organizational structures.

.02 Delegation of Classification Authority

a. GS and FWS Positions

i. DOC PD Library Positions. Management officials in NOAA’s Line and Staff Offices are delegated the authority to classify GS and FWS positions covered by DOC’s online PD Library¹², per NAO 202-250, NOAA Management Review Process for Human Resources (HR) - Related Delegated Authorities¹³ (dated April 7, 1998). Management officials must receive training prior to exercising this authority.

⁸ <https://pdt.nbis.mil/>

⁹ <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-200-7A-initiating-and-processing-organizational-changes>

¹⁰ <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/hr-bulletin-FY21-252.pdf>

¹¹ <https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/ohcs/policy-procedures/classification/position-management>

¹² <https://www.commerce.gov/hr/practitioners/position-management/descriptions>

¹³ <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-202-250-noaa-management-review-process-for-human-resources-hr>

ii. Non-PD Library Positions. OHCS Human Resources Business Advisors and Consulting Services Division (CSD) Talent Acquisition Branch Classification Specialists are delegated the authority to classify GS and FWS positions not covered by DOC's online PD Library¹⁴ as authorized by NOAA Delegation of Authorities and Responsibilities, Transmittal Number #97¹⁵ (dated May 4, 2022). Precedent setting or controversial classification determinations will be made by the OHCS Chief Classifier.

b. CAPS Positions. Under CAPS, classification authority is delegated from the Department's CAPS Board to the Line or Staff Office OPMB. Managers and supervisors must refer to their respective OPMB to determine the management official who is delegated classification authority within their Line or Staff Office. OHCS recommends that each OPMB establish and mandate completion of CAPS classification training¹⁶ prior to management officials exercising this authority.

.03 PD Recertification

a. Under GS and FWS, managers and supervisors must review and recertify PDs that are 5 years old or older when filling a vacant position, for all personnel actions involving a change in position (e.g., when an employee is appointed, promoted, reassigned, demoted, detailed for more than 120 days, or transferred into the position), and for realignments or PDs impacted by a reorganization. This is to ensure currency and accuracy of the PD. This recertification will be accomplished by the manager or supervisor completing a new CD-516, Classification and Performance Management Record¹⁷.

b. Under CAPS, OPMBs have the authority to establish their own classification guidelines within CAPS Board policies. As such, managers and supervisors should consult their OPMB to determine if any requirements exist regarding PD recertification. As a best practice, offices should consider requiring review and recertification for PDs that are 5 years old or older when filling a vacant position, for all personnel actions involving a change in position, and for realignments or PDs impacted by a reorganization.

.04 Accretion of Duties Promotions. Non-Competitive promotions due to reclassification based upon accretion of duties are subject to the specific provisions of the current iteration of NOAA Human Resources Guidance Bulletin (HRGB) 1002, Non-Competitive Promotions Based Upon Reclassification Due to Accretion of Duties¹⁸.

.05 Classification Appeals. Employees should first work with their supervisor and OHCS to resolve any questions they have regarding their PD or, when applicable, follow the procedures in

¹⁴ <https://www.commerce.gov/hr/practitioners/position-management/descriptions>

¹⁵ <https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/document/2020/Mar/tm97.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/ohcs/policy-procedures/classification/caps-classification-training>

¹⁷ https://www.commerce.gov/opog/directives/DAO_202-511

¹⁸ <https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/ohcs/policy-procedures/hiring-resources/noaa-hr-bulletins>

their collective bargaining agreements. If these efforts do not satisfy the employee's concerns, appeal rights depend on the employee's assigned pay plan.

- a. Classification appeals for GS and FWS positions are subject to the provisions of Sections 9 and 10 of DAO 202-511¹⁹. For positions classified under the DOC's PD library, the procedures outlined in NAO 202-250, Appendix A²⁰ must be followed.
- b. Classification appeals for CAPS positions are subject to the provisions of the DOC CAPS Operating Procedures Manual²¹ and must comply with any additional procedures established by the respective OPMB.
- c. OHCS provides recommended procedures for OPMB adoption in HRGB 1013, Commerce Alternative Personnel System Classification Appeals Template for Operating Personnel Management Board Adoption²² (dated March 2, 2023).

SECTION 5. RESPONSIBILITIES.

.01 Office of Human Capital Services must:

- a. Advise managers, supervisors, and OPMB members on the proper execution of their position classification and position management authorities and responsibilities.
- b. Develop and provide training to serviced clients on position classification and position management principles and policies.
- c. Execute delegated classification authority for GS and FWS non-PD library positions in accordance with established directives. For GS and FWS PD library positions, OHCS shall ensure managers and supervisors are aware of this resource and understand the parameters for proper use of Library PDs.
- d. Ensure the timely implementation of new OPM classification standards and guides for positions under their purview (i.e., non-PD library GS and FWS positions).
- e. Review CAPS classification actions for completeness; certify that all required classification decisions are made within prescribed CAPS policies, procedures and OPMB guidelines; ensure the position classification action contains the required fields for entry into the automated payroll/personnel system (i.e., HRConnect); and validate PDs within ACS. Validation is accomplished by reviewing the PD to ensure that the content (i.e., principal objective, specialty descriptors, and key phrases) is consistent with the classification and by signing and dating item #30 on the second page of the CD-516,

¹⁹ https://www.commerce.gov/opog/directives/DAO_202-511

²⁰ <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-202-250-noaa-management-review-process-for-human-resources-hr>

²¹ <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/Commerce-alternative-personel-system-operating-procedure-manual.pdf>

²² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zch4tfwRwO68BMUgy2HSKQxy0XQbLCWm/view>

Classification and Performance Management Record. Once verified, OHCS must validate the position description in ACS using the validation feature. This process requires OHCS to determine whether the position is covered or not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

f. Provide information and guidance to employees on filing classification appeals for GS, FWS, and CAPS positions.

g. For GS and FWS PDs, accept classification appeals and render classification decisions through preparation of Position Evaluation Statements as required under Section 7.02 of DAO 202-511²³.

.02 OPMBs, as delegated in each OPMB charter under CAPS, must:

a. Establish classification guidelines within the CAPS plan, CAPS operating procedures, CAPS Board, and OHRM policies.

b. Delegate classification authority to managers.

c. Establish career ladders of positions.

d. Ensure proper classification of positions.

e. Resolve classification issues and authorize establishment of a classification review panel (CRP) when appropriate to address classification issues between human resources and managers.

f. Recommend approval of new ACS Specialty Descriptors to the Department's CAPS Program Manager.

.03 Classification Review Panel. If the OPMB chooses to establish a CRP, the CRP shall be responsible for:

a. Reviewing classification actions in which, on rare circumstances, OHCS and the manager/supervisor cannot reach agreement on the proper classification of the position (i.e., career path, occupational series, and/or pay band level of the position).

b. Developing solutions and/or recommendations for resolving classification issues and forwarding them to OHCS and the manager/supervisor for resolution. If resolution still cannot be met, the CRP will forward the classification recommendation to the OPMB Chair, or designee, for a classification decision.

.04 Managers and Supervisors must:

²³ https://osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao202_511.html

- a. Comply with OPM, DOC, DOC CAPS Board, OPMB, and NOAA classification policies and guidelines, as applicable.
- b. Ensure that, at all times, there is an accurate and certified PD that provides a definitive description of the major duties of each subordinate position that is adequate for proper classification.
- c. Ensure that all supporting PD documentation, including the CD-516 and Position Designation Record, is up-to-date and maintained.
- d. Ensure subordinate employees are provided a copy of their PD and that the employees understand the duties, responsibilities, and other requirements contained in their PD.
- e. Be responsible for ensuring that an economical and effective position structure exists in the organizations they lead by applying sound position management principles and practices.
- f. Follow NAO 200-7A²⁴ when initiating organizational changes and submitting requests for a reorganization.
- g. Execute delegated classification authority, as applicable, in accordance with established directives.
- h. Ensure employees are provided information and guidance on filing classification appeals when exercising their right to appeal the classification of their position.
- i. For those with GS and FWS employees, participate in and complete position classification and position management training as required by OHCS. For those with CAPS employees, participate in and complete position classification and position management training as required by the OPMB.

SECTION 6. REFERENCES.

- 5 U.S.C. 51
- 5 U.S.C. 53
- 5 CFR § 511
- 5 CFR § 532
- DAO 202-511, Position Classification
- DOC HR Bulletin #252, FY21
- NAO 202-250, NOAA Management Review Process for Human Resources-Related Delegated Authorities
- NOAA Delegation of Authorities and Responsibilities, Transmittal Number #97
- NAO 200-7A, Initiating and Processing Organizational Changes
- CAPS Operating Procedures Manual

²⁴ <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-200-7A-initiating-and-processing-organizational-changes>

- OPMB Charters

SECTION 7. EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES.

An electronic copy of this Order will be posted on the NOAA Office of the Chief Administrative Officer website under the NOAA Administrative Issuances Section:
<https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/noaa-administrative-orders>²⁵.



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²⁵ <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/noaa-administrative-orders>