POSITION EVALUATION STATEMENT

Title, Series, Grade: Wildland Firefighter (Prevention), GS-0456-12

Position Number: DX04900

Background: This Standard Position Description (SPD) was developed by an Advisory Work Group made up of a team of fire subject matter experts and classification specialists and is representative of prevention work performed. The major duties listed in the SPD were identified through a thorough analysis of the 0456 Wildland Firefighter standard.

References: References: Position Classification Standard for Wildland Fire Management, June 2022; Position Classification Standard for Safety and Occupational Health Management Series, GS-0018, TS-55 August 1981; 5 U.S. Code § 5104, Basis for grading positions.

Series Determination: The GS-0456 Fire Management series includes one-grade interval positions that supervise or perform work to manage and extinguish fires and involves technical and specialized work in the planning and the execution of Wildfire management programs in fire adapted ecosystems while dealing with problems of smoke dispersion, and hazard reduction near urban areas. This includes, but is not limited to, fire prevention, pre-attack planning, wildfire suppression, post suppression, fire research, and other specialized work relating to fire management programs. Knowledge required by positions in this series vary by specialty area, however positions may require knowledge of: Wildland Firefighting and fire prevention theory and techniques; wildland Firefighting fire suppression and management techniques; fire behavior, fuels management, fire hazard and risk analysis, fuel volume and flammability assessment; skills in planning, direction, or carrying out fire protection and prevention programs and operations; the types and capabilities of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters used in suppressing and managing wildland fires; and incident Command System (ICS), command and control, and the coordination of emergency response resources, provided for within the common hierarchy of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The primary purpose of this position is to implement and promote a wildfire prevention and mitigation program, an education program and facilitates or provides support for fire investigation at the state/regional level. The position implements strategies, plans, and activities for a fire prevention program and functions in wildland fire management program. The incumbent serves in a key technical fire prevention position as a part of a state/regional level wildland fire management organization. As such, the 0456 has been determined to be the appropriate series for the position.

Title Determination: The basic title for positions that involve wildland firefighting operations is *Wildland Firefighter*. The prescribed parenthetical title of *Prevention* will also be applied, which describes work that involves the planning and implementation of strategies, plans and activities that may include fire prevention, public education, fire information, fire risk mitigation assistance and coordination, fire investigation and trespass (cost recovery). Therefore, this position is titled *Wildland Firefighter (Prevention).*

Grade Determination: The 0456 PCS is written in a narrative format describing the Nature of Work and Level of Responsibility for each grade covered by the standard. The classification factors include: (1) guidelines; (2) complexity; (3) personal contacts/purpose of contacts; and (4) supervision received. Part I, Fire Management Position Illustrations of the PCS (under Part II, Grading Information) provides illustrative grade level criteria for nonsupervisory positions in grades GS-3/4/5/6/7, 9, and 11. The grade level information provides a summary of the grade level, followed by specific illustrations of duties and

responsibilities characteristic of the grade described loosely in terms of the classification factors identified above. Illustrations vary by grade level and may be described in in terms of specialty areas such as Aviation, Fuels, or Prevention; however, at issue is determining how to evaluate work that exceeds the maximum grade level identified in the 0456 PCS.

Firefighting work generally falls under the "other" category of work; however, the 0456 PCS encompasses a range of wildland fire related jobs, including those not performing the more traditional physical/hazardous aspects of wildland firefighting duties, such as Prevention and Mitigation Work. The work of the position to be classified meets the coverage criteria for the 0456 as a Wildland Firefighter.

The nature of wildland firefighting work as described in the PCS is neither clerical/administrative support nor technical in nature, which are generally characteristic of single grade interval work. Technical work is closely allied with professional work and is normally planned and managed by professional employees. It may appear very similar to professional employees in related professional fields and is performed in a narrow or highly specialized area of the overall occupation supported, requiring a high degree of practical knowledge and skill. Support work usually involves proficiency in one or more functional areas or in certain limited phases of a specific program and usually does not require knowledge of interrelationships among functional areas or organizations. Support work requires employees to follow established methods and procedures and may allow occasional development of work plans or recommendation of new procedures, but such work is typically related to the employee's individual assignment or immediate work unit.

The grade level criteria for the 0456 PCS are divided in two parts to differentiate between program management and non-program management positions. Part 1 provides grade level criteria for Wildland Firefighting Positions. This part includes various positions and specialty areas of Wildland Fire Management, specifically the Fire Management Planning Specialist. However, there only exists grade level criteria for a Fire Management Planning Specialist up to the GS-11. In evaluating the work of the position to be classified, it exceeds the work described at the GS-11 level. Part III of the 0456 PCS specifically addresses the limited grade range of the standard and reiterates that agencies are not precluded from classifying positions at grade levels above or below the grade range described in the standard. However, the PCS curiously goes on to state that "such grades are determined by extending the criteria as needed to meet specific job situations as described in the Introduction to Position Classification Standards, Primary Standard." Because the 0456 is written in narrative format, application of the Primary Standard is prohibited in both the Introduction to Classification Standards and The Classifier's Handbook, which state that the ". . . Primary Standard may be used for supplemental guidance but only in conjunction with other FES standards". As such the Primary Standard is not an appropriate source of additional grading criteria to supplement the 0456 PCS.

Part II- Fire Management Program Elements, provides grade level criteria for Fire Management Officer positions. Fire Management Officer work involves planning, developing, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating an integrated fire management program for a segment of the organization. They provide leadership, coordination, and direction for the administration of the fire program to include but not limited to training, preparedness, detection, budget, suppression, post-fire response, fuels/vegetation management, prevention, mitigation/education, aviation, dispatching and other fire support functions, and to ensure the integration between fire and other natural resources. As Part II states "there are a number of elements common to most positions in this series which are of special significance in evaluating the complexity of individual fire management programs". The purpose of Part II is to determine the relative complexity of a program and how that impacts the difficulty of fire program management.

In defining program management responsibility, OPM Digest No. 3, dated November 1983 states that "The Office of Personnel Management has held that primary responsibility includes accountability for performance of the assigned program, e.g., planning, organizing, directing, staffing, coordinating, reviewing and evaluating the program". The work does not involve program management based on this definition and is not responsible for planning, developing, implementing, coordinating, or evaluating a fire management program for a segment of the organization. Therefore, Part II of the 0456 PCS does not provide grading criteria that is appropriate for the work of the position.

The Introduction to the Position Classification Standards directs use of an appropriate classification guide or criteria in a standard or standards for related work when there are no grade level criteria for the work. In the application of other standards, the criteria used should be for work as similar as possible to the position with respect to:

- The kind of work processes, functions, or subject matter
- The qualifications required to do the work
- The level of difficulty and responsibility; and
- The combination of classification factors which have the greatest influence on the grade level.

The Introduction goes on to state that wherever possible the position should be matched against classification criteria comparable in scope and difficulty, and which describe similar subject matter and functions. As such professional positions should be evaluated by professional standards, administrative work by administrative standards, and technical work by technical standards, etc.

The difficulty is in locating a comparable single grade interval standard that is reflective of the of wildland fire management program assessment work. As the work is neither technical nor administrative/clerical support in nature, the only truly relevant standards to cross compare fall into the administrative category. OPM Digest No. 08-04, dated April 1986, addresses the use of two grade interval standards to evaluate one grade interval work. This digest describes a specific scenario where one-grade administrative support work was evaluated using two-grade interval grading criteria at the GS-7 level that was intended for a two-grade interval developmental assignment. Application of the standard in this situation was deemed inappropriate by OPM due to the significant variance in qualifications required for one grade interval work vs. two grade interval developmental work. OPM states that use of two-grade interval criteria would require making adjustments to accommodate the differences in the nature of the work and related knowledges, skills, and abilities of the positions intended for coverage, compared to the position being evaluated.

However, in contrast to the position in the digest opinion, this position is not performing developmental work, rather it is considered a subject matter expert at a state/regional level with little technical oversight. The primary focus of the 0456 knowledge requirements is on the technical aspects of wildland fire such as fire prevention and suppression, fire behavior, firefighting equipment, weather observation, etc. This is appropriate for the assignment of the series with regard to subject matter knowledge, but presents an issue in that the PCS that does not allow the flexibility to cover both single and two-grade interval work. Based on this inconsistency, the determination has been made to apply the most reasonable classification grading criteria to the work that exceeds the highest grade of the 0456 PCS.

The wildland fire management subject matter knowledge in prevention is most closely aligned with the Safety and Occupational Health Management Series, GS-0018. The 0018 is a two-grade interval administrative series that provides a reasonable basis of comparison of related work to the fire program assessment and advisement work. The primary objective of the 0018 work is the elimination or minimization of human injury and property and productivity losses, caused by harmful contact incidents, through the design of effective management policies, programs, or practices. Similarly, the primary purpose of the position is to is to implement and promote a wildfire prevention and mitigation program

expert providing guidance, advice and support for policy interpretation and implementation to fire management agencies in order to reduce human caused ignitions and to educate stakeholders on mitigation techniques in an overall effort to promote safety within the wildland urban interface (WUI). OPM appeal decision C-0081-09-04 additionally supports the application of the 0018 grading criteria to the PCS for Fire Protection and Prevention series, GS-0081, also a single-grade interval series in the firefighting field.

Overall, consideration of the 0018 includes the administrative and safety related nature of the work, the absence of more appropriate evaluation criteria, and the absence of an explicit prohibition on application of two-grade interval evaluation criteria to a single grade interval series.

Safety and Occupational Health Management Series
The personally performed work as described by this position description is evaluated by the Position Classification Standard for Safety and Occupational Health Management Series.

Factor	Comments	Level	Points
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	Level 1-6 requires knowledge of the principles, methods, and techniques permitting the independent performance of recurring assignments that involve plans to control or eliminate unsafe conditions as well as practical knowledge of the body of relevant laws, regulations, policies, and procedures to sufficiently interpret and explain the reasons and purposes for applying such measures to minimize or abate hazards. Level 1-7 requires comprehensive, or a wide range, of knowledge and skill in a wide range of relevant processes and procedures, sufficient to serve as a technical authority. Level 1-7 is met and exceeded as the position requires advanced knowledge of wildland fire prevention sufficient to interpret Departmental policy to provide input to revise, rewrite or draft state/regional policy and a comprehensive knowledge and experience of wildland fire management, fuels management, fire behavior, fire mitigation, fire prevention risk assessment and planning, and fire effects on ecosystems to comprehend, utilize and apply these principles to mitigate the effects of unwanted fire and to convey these concepts to target audiences.. Level 1-7 is also fully met as the incumbent is responsible for the consolidation, implementation, and evaluation of the Regional/State Office Wildfire Prevention Plans, incorporating fire statistics, prevention strategies, education actions and activities, program development, including short and multi-year wildfire prevention priorities. Like the 1-7 provides strategic long-range planning, leadership, guidance, coordination, and evaluation for regional/state wildland fire prevention programs. The expert knowledge illustrated by Level 1-8 required for the development, interpretation or application of the principal agency prevention and mitigation policy is not met.	1-7	1250
2. Supervisory Controls	At level 2-3 the supervisor defines objectives, priorities and deadlines and provides assistance for unusual situations where precedents are unclear. Completed work at the 2-3 is reviewed	2-4	450

	for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and program requirements. At level 2-4 The supervisor sets the overall objectives and management resources available to achieve the expected results. The employee has responsibility for independently planning and carrying out a program or a significant assignment and resolving most conflicts. Completed work such as reports of program accomplishments are reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of compatibility with other activities, or effectiveness in meeting objectives. Level 2-3 is met and exceeded, and level 2-4 is fully met as the supervisor provides general work assignments in the form of objectives, goals, and priorities. Supervisor and incumbent confer on the development of general objectives, projects, and deadlines. Like the 2-4 the incumbent independently accomplishes assignments within the constraints of Bureau policy and regulations. Level 2-5 is not met due to the presence of technical supervision and oversight to ensure work is meeting goals accomplishing expected results.		
3. Guidelines	At level 3-3 guidelines are available but are not completely applicable. The work assignment typically requires independent interpretation, evaluation, selection, and application of guidelines to specific situations including modifications and adaptations when necessary. At level 3-4 available guidelines tend to lack specificity for many applications such as departmental or agency policies, recent developmental results, and findings and approaches of nationally recognized organizations. The incumbent must modify and extend accepted principles and practices in the development of solutions to problems where available precedents are not directly applicable. Level 3-3 is met and exceeded as guidelines are numerous and are not completely applicable to the work. Level 3-4 is fully met as existing guidelines are in the form of regulations, manuals, instruction memoranda, legislation, and standards. Many national and regional assignments in the field of wildland fire management have guidelines that tend to lack specificity for many applications such as departmental or agency policies. Guidelines are often insufficient to deal with unique or unusual situations and the incumbent must use significant judgment and ingenuity in interpreting the intent of the guides. Creativity and innovation are required due to the wide variety of physical, biological, and socioeconomic conditions that exist. Level 3-5 is not met because although guidelines may be inadequate and contain gaps, they generally do exist but require adaptation or further development; however, they do not exist on such a broad or general scale as legislation or mission statements.	3-4	450

4. Complexity	Nature of Assignment: At level 4-4 assignments cover a wide range of work operations and environmental conditions involving a substantial number and diversity of hazards; or a wide variety of independent and continuing assignments in a specialized area that have exacting technical requirements. At level 4-5 work includes broad and diverse assignments requiring innovative analysis of high safety risk activities. Level 4-4 is met and exceeded as the employee works independently and interacts with broad and diversified fire management programs throughout an interdisciplinary and interagency setting. Level 4-5 is fully met as assignments involve wildfire prevention actions necessary to address a complex human caused wildfire occurrence problem on a large-scale landscape. Advises on multiple areas of uncertainty and the complex interactions of a number of technical, resource, administrative, legal and socio-economic problems that affect the efficacy of wildland fire prevention program efforts. Unlike the 4-6 the incumbent is not required to originate extensive program and developmental efforts where prevailing wildland fire management issues are largely undefined. Decisions Regarding What Needs to be Done: At level 4-4 the incumbent evaluates a variety of complex, interrelated physical conditions, operating practices, and hazardous conditions. Assignments require analysis of unconventional problems or circumstances, inconclusive facts or data and are characterized by the uncertainty of accepted methods that are available for selection or use. At level 4-5 the incumbent evaluates diverse hazardous work processes and conditions for a field characterized by a wide variety of problems such as extreme fluctuation in workforce assigned high safety risk jobs, large number of visitors engaged in hazardous activities, or widespread geographic dispersion of operations. Level 4-4 is met and exceeded as decisions regarding what needs to be done includes analysis and evaluation of diverse issues and conditions involved in managing Agency wildfire prevention programs. Level 4-5 is fully met as the field of wildland fire and aviation management is broad and characterized by a wide variety of problems like the 4-5 describes such a seasonal workforce fluctuation in extremely high safety risk environments and geographic dispersion of operations. Decisions specifically involve managing Agency programs aimed at wildfire prevention and mitigation despite increased development in the wildland-urban interface, long duration fire seasons, climate change, frequent critical climatic conditions which contribute to the	4-5	325

	occurrence of fires and to the difficulty, variety, and intensity of fire suppression problems; extensive mechanical and biological fuels treatments and navigating differing expectations among partners and stakeholders. Although complex, unlike the 4-6 determining the appropriate course of action is not contingent upon a comprehensive, penetrating analysis that requires a variety of complex tools, with progress elusive or difficult to achieve due to the lack of defined issues. Difficulty and Originality: At level 4-4 hazards are such that generally no single approach is adequate to control or eliminate a given problem and adaptation of proven techniques is necessary. The work typically requires interpretation of a variety of circumstances to adapt known measures to eliminate or minimize hazardous situations. At level 4-5 mitigation of dangerous conditions threatening individual safety and property requires the development of new techniques for modification of accepted specialized procedures. Level 4-4 is met and exceeded as there is generally no single approach to prevent and mitigate wildfire. Level 4-5 is fully met as the incumbent must be effective in confronting and resolving conflicts and sensitive issues among individuals, organizations, and agencies. The individual deals with complex tasks required in the planning, implementation and evaluation of systems, courses, and social issues. Additionally, the work requires the development of new techniques and guidance; or the modification of current practices and operations in the areas of wildland fire prevention and mitigation and community assistance in an increasingly complex wildland/urban interface environment. Level 4-6 is not met as the work typically does not result in new concepts influencing the resolution of previously unresolved and extremely complicated wildland fire management planning issues.		
5. Scope and Effect	Scope: At level 5-3 work involves the evaluation and analysis of problems, conditions and administrative practices affecting work operations. At level 5-4 the purpose of the work is to assess the effectiveness of specific programs, projects, or functions. The incumbent plans alternative courses of specialized action to resolve issues. Level 5-3 is met and exceeded as the purpose of the position is to serve as the State/Regional lead for wildfire prevention, hazard mitigation, fire trespass coordination, and providing guidance at the planning and operational levels of the implementation of fire prevention and mitigation techniques and program oversight.	5-4	225

	Level 5-4 is fully met as a primary purpose of the work is to analyze statistical data and identify major causes of wildland fire and ensure that these causes are effectively addressed in the appropriate wildland fire prevention programs and the fire management plan. Unlike the 5-5 the primary purpose of the work does not involve resolution of critical wildland fire management problems involving serious hazards of unpredictable consequences or human and property nor does it require the development of new wildland fire management guides, approaches, and methods such as those relating to fire preparedness, fuels management and prevention, fire suppression, monitoring, etc. Effect: At level 5-3 work efforts affect the adequacy of techniques applied to control or eliminate hazards and the safety of employee or the public. At level 5-4 work products impact on a wide range of agency programs. Level 5-3 is met and exceeded as the work efforts affect State/Regional level activities. Completed reports and recommendations influence decisions by managers concerning wildfire prevention and mitigation and community assistance programs at the state/regional level. The work involves identifying problems, studying, analyzing and making decisions concerning these programs, thereby affecting the efficiency and productivity of operations in these programs. Level 5-4 is fully met as the work efforts influence implementation of complex, multiple field level wildland fire prevention and mitigation programs, and the efficient coordination with other state/regional programs, tribal programs, interagency partners, cooperators, stakeholders, partners and institutions. Like the 5-4 work efforts result in eliminating or reducing wildland fire risk and conditions throughout a large geographic region and provide employees and public visitors with a safe environment. Decisions or recommendations made by the employee directly influence the understanding wildfire prevention strategies, wildland fire behavior and the role of fire in the ecosystem when assisting communities to reduce the threat and impact of wildland fire. Level 5-5 is not met as the work does not affect fire management activities both within and outside of the agency.		
6. Personal Contacts	At level 6-2 personal contacts are with employees in the same agency, but outside the immediate organization. At level 6-3 Personal contacts of a non-routine nature are with a variety of individuals, including, contractors and consultants, university professors, State and local government officials, representatives of professional societies. Level 6-2 is met and exceeded as contacts include	6-3	60

	intra as well as inter-agency contacts with Forest Service, Office of Aircraft Services, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service. Level 6-3 is fully met as outside agency contacts include other state, county, and volunteer fire organizations. converses regularly with interagency counterparts at the National Interagency Fire Center, various Washington Offices, and national and regional training centers, to ensure bureau involvement in interagency programs. Level 6-4 is not met as contacts are not with high-ranking officials from outside the agency such as key public and corporate executives, elected representatives, or the equivalent.		
7. Purpose of Contacts	At level 7-1 contacts are for the purpose of obtaining and exchanging factual information that is directly related to the work. At level 7-2 the purpose of the personal contacts is to resolve problems by planning and coordinating activities in conjunction with supervisors and employees to control or eliminate hazards. Individuals contacted at this level are usually working toward a common goal and generally are cooperative. Level 7-1 is met and exceeded as contacts are made for the purpose of exchanging information, coordinating work efforts and planning, identifying mutual issues. Level 7-2 is fully met as contacts are for determining user needs, explaining proposed actions, gathering data and intelligence, and exchanging information, and planning, implementation, and coordination of the wildland fire prevention program. Contacts are for tempering conflicting viewpoints and require the incumbent to gain compliance and/or acceptance with fire prevention and mitigation methods and approaches through persuasion or negotiation. Level 7-3 is not met as the purpose of contacts is not to influence, motivate and encourage *unwilling, skeptical, and often uncooperative* individuals to adopt or comply with standards, practices, procedures or contractual agreements. This level involves deposing, making affidavits and testifying in a court of law where an opposing attorney may challenge the competence of a safety and occupational health manager or specialist including his/her work methods or findings. Although the incumbent may be responsible for defending, advocating, and justifying agency position and policy interpretations on training related issues that occur regularly in the interagency forum, contacts are usually working toward a common goal, the purpose of this contact does not characterize the majority of the contacts.	7-2	50

8. Physical Demands	Level 8-1 is fully met as the work is primarily sedentary. Some physical exertion related to site visitations and fire line assignments is required. Walking on rough, uneven terrain, long periods of standing, and exposure to extreme heat, smoke, and temperatures is required. Although a level of physical fitness is required, level 8-2 is not met as such work does not involve regular and recurring physical exertion.	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	Level 9-1 is fully met as work is normally performed in an office setting. During the wildland fire season, field work may involve high risk exposure to potentially dangerous situating or stress. This involves occasional exposure to moderate risks and discomforts which usually require protective equipment to be worn. A range of safety and other precautions are required; however, level 9-2 is not met as such exposure to such hazards does not occur on a regular and recurring basis.	9-1	5
	TOTAL		2820

Grade	Point Range
GS-12	2755-3150

Summary Points
1. 1-7 = 1250
2. 2-4 = 450
3. 3-4 = 450
4. 4-5 = 325
5. 5-4 = 225
6. 6-3 = 60
7. 7-2 = 50
8. 8-1 = 5
9. 9-1 = 5
= 2820

Total points (2865) fall within the range which yields a GS-12 level.

FINAL CLASSIFICATION: The recommendation for this position is to be classified as ***Wildland Firefighter (Prevention), GS-0456-12***