

DESK AUDITS (POSITION REVIEWS)

A GUIDELINE FOR EMPLOYEES

WHAT IS A DESK AUDIT (Position Review)?

Position reviews or job audits are a way of getting up-to-date facts about a position. Usually, the review/interview is conducted directly with the employee by a representative of the Human Resources Office or the National Guard Bureau.

IS IT IMPORTANT?

The position review is one of the most critical steps in the position classification process. Positions are classified accurately only when the information about duties and responsibilities is correct and well understood.

WHY AND WHEN IS A DESK AUDIT CONDUCTED?

Positions in the National Guard are constantly changing. New programs, new tools, different procedures, organizational changes, and increased employee skill and knowledge are only a few ways that duties and responsibilities are affected. So, positions are reviewed from time-to-time to assure equal pay for substantially equal work. Other examples of when this is accomplished are:

(1) Your position is identified for audit during routine classification survey. As required by Public Law, technician positions are reviewed periodically. Most jobs are found to be correctly classified even though some position descriptions are updated to show changes in the work that is performed.

(2) New classification standards are to be applied to your position. There is a continuing program to revise position classification standards to reflect changes in work that is performed by the government. These new standards help keep the classification system current, and are applied as soon as possible after they are received by your human resources office; or

(3) A position review is recommended by a supervisor. In between the periodic reviews, your supervisor may decide there have been major changes to your job and request a review to determine if revisions are in order.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN A DESK AUDIT?

Be prepared for the audit. The job review is as important to you as almost any other kind of interview you may have in your career. Please do not treat it lightly. In most cases, the position review will not take more than an hour or two of your time. You should make arrangements so you will not be interrupted. Some privacy can be helpful if it is possible. Be ready to demonstrate the factualness of the duties and responsibilities you are going to discuss with examples and illustrations.

This is the time to put your best foot forward. The position interview is not a time for modesty (or for exaggeration).

Here are some ways you can help yourself and the interviewer to have complete and accurate information about your job.

You need some idea of what the interviewer wants. The important parts or "factors" of jobs are listed below to give you some general ideas. Some jobs, however, may require very specific information for that kind of work.

Eight basic job factors are still used in classifying most professional, technical, administrative, and clerical positions. They are:

- (1) Nature and variety of the work
- (2) Kind and extent of available guides
- (3) Supervision received by the worker
- (4) Person to person work relationship
- (5) Nature and extent of supervision exercised over the work of other employees
- (6) Originality
- (7) Nature and scope of recommendations, decisions, commitments and conclusions
- (8) Qualifications required

If a position has been classified using the Factor Evaluation System (FES) you will need information on the nine factors that comprise the FES for your position. The factors are:

Factor 1 - Knowledge required by the position

Factor 2 - Supervisory controls

Factor 3 - Guidelines

Factor 4 - Complexity

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts

Factor 8 - Physical demands

Factor 9 - Work environment

For classifying trade, craft, or manual labor jobs, four basic factors are considered:

- (1) Skill and knowledge
- (2) Physical effort
- (3) Responsibilities
- (4) Working conditions

Think about your position. How does it relate to the basic elements shown above? Do you find your present position description is a good reflection of your job? Is it accurate? What kind of assignments have you had in the last year? Can you group these into several categories so you can talk about the different kinds of work you do? What are the major duties, those that take most of your time and are related to the reason for your job? What are the minor duties? Have you had one-time only assignments? What were they? Can you determine rough percentages of time for the major categories of work you do? What kind of responsibilities do you have? What written guidelines do you refer to? How does your supervisor review completed work?

Organize the information about your job. Don't worry about the way a position description may be written. What is important is the way you want to tell someone about your job. What do you think is really important about the work you do, or what is critical about responsibilities? Where you start is not too important. But, be sure that you don't miss telling about some part of your job that is important. To avoid this pitfall, it is sometimes helpful to make some notes before the interview, or to outline how you want to tell the story. It might be helpful to write down reference numbers to the kinds of written guides you use. Having samples of your work at hand is sometimes useful.

Remember it's your job that will be classified, not you as a person. Over the years there has been some "mystery" about job classification, and there are many misunderstandings about what is important. There are several issues that come up frequently; factors that cannot be considered when positions are classified. Some examples are:

The qualifications of the person on the job:

The work is classified, not the abilities of people.

Accuracy required on the job:

Every employee is expected to do accurate work.

The amount or volume of work done:

Your supervisor sets the standard for performance that is expected. It's the kind and level of work that is important in classifying jobs.

Length of government service: Within grade step pay increases compensate for your long and loyal service.

Organizational titles of positions:

Titles are based on the duties and responsibilities of jobs and are specified in classification standards.

Other matters unrelated to the job. The Federal government is committed to equal employment/opportunity practices. An employee's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin has no bearing on the way a position is classified.

Be prepared for the audit. The position review is almost as important to you as any other kind of interview you may have had in your work life. Please don't treat lightly. In most cases, the position review will not take more than an hour of your time. You should make arrangements so you are not be interrupted. Some privacy can be helpful if it is possible. Be ready to demonstrate the factualness of the duties and responsibilities you are going to discuss and be prepared to show examples and illustrations.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A DESK AUDIT?

The facts you have provided about your job will be discussed first with your supervisor. Following this, the grade controlling characteristics of your duties and responsibilities will be examined in relation to your work and the position description. If there is a problem rest assured the HRO and your supervisor will be given an opportunity to correct it. Likely your present description will be adequate.

One final point: Please remember the desk audit objective is two-fold: to assure jobs are (1) correctly functioning and (2) correctly classified. Your participation can help meet this objective.