

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Classification
DOPLR-07

I. The Classification System

A. Purpose

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to delineate the primary principles, policy guidelines, and the Classification Plan and system for the classified and partially exempt (PX) services in the State of Alaska.

B. Scope

This SOP explains classification principles, factors and processes used in analyzing positions and job classes; and for revising, establishing and deleting job classes applicable to the classified and PX services.

C. Authority

AS 39.25.010 - Merit principles, salary plan
AS 39.25.150(1) - Required rules on a classification plan
AS 39.25.157 - Position Descriptions
2 AAC 07.005 - Classification Plan
2 AAC 07.010 - Class Specifications
2 AAC 07.015 - Class Titles
2 AAC 07.020 - Allocation of Positions
2 AAC 07.025 - Maintenance of Positions
2 AAC 07.030 - Review of Allocations
2 AAC 07.035 - Effective Date of Allocation Action

D. Definitions

1. Classification Plan – The orderly arrangement into job classes of all positions in the classified and partially exempt services.
2. Classification Outline - The tool in which various job classes and class series are grouped into Job Families and Occupational Groups.
3. Classification System - The device by which individual positions are assigned to job classes, which are aggregated into ever larger groups based on established criteria, for purposes of personnel administration. The progression of groups, from smallest to largest, is Job Class, Class Series, Job Family, Occupational Group.
4. Classification - A job evaluation method that compares positions on a whole job basis and establishes written specifications for each group. In the classification method, positions that have similar duties and levels or complexity and responsibility, similar training and experience requirements at the time of recruitment, and are compensated at the same general levels of pay, are grouped together, and specifications for each group are established.

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

5. Salary Program - The schedule produced by integrating the applicable job classification plan with the applicable pay plan.
6. Merit Principle – As defined in Alaska Statute 39.25.010 (State Personnel Act), the merit principle of employment includes the following:
 - recruiting, selecting, and advancing employees on the basis of their relative ability, knowledge, and skills, including open consideration of qualified applicants for initial appointment;
 - regular integrated salary programs based on the nature of the work performed;
 - retention of employees with permanent status on the basis of the adequacy of their performance, reasonable efforts of temporary duration for correction in inadequate performance, and separation for cause;
 - equal treatment of applicants and employees with regard only to consideration within the merit principles of employment; and
 - selection and retention of an employee's position secure from political influences.
7. Pay Plan - The system by which a grid of salary ranges composed of incremental steps are created and assigned job classes, and pay rates are assigned to the salary ranges.
8. Class Specifications – A written guide for and description of a job class. By regulation, specifications include a title, a definition, typical duties and responsibilities, and minimum qualifications for appointment to a position in the class.

E. Components of the Classification System

The basic **components** of the **classification system**, in order from smallest to largest:

1. Position – A group of duties and responsibilities assigned by management, that are designed to be performed by an individual, and which is authorized and designated by a position control number (PCN).
2. Job Class – A group of positions sufficiently similar in duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised or required, and entrance requirements that they may be treated the same for purposes of recruitment, selection, compensation, transfer and layoff. The kind and level of work assigned to positions in a job class must be essentially the same.

Example: Administrative Assistant I (PB0151)

3. Class Series – Two or more classes sharing a common title which are similar as to type of work, but differ as to level of difficulty and responsibility.

Example: Administrative Assistant I, II, and III (PB0151, PB0152, and PB0153).

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

4. Job Family – A group of job classes and class series that are related as to the nature of the work performed. Typically, initial preparation for employment and subsequent career progression are similar for all job classes in a family.

Example: General Administrative (PB01XX)

5. Occupational Group – A group of job families that encompass relatively broad occupations, professions, or activities.

Example: Administrative and Office Support (PBXX)

F. Factors

In order to assign positions to job classes, comparisons must be made between the position and the relevant class specifications. Also, in setting salary ranges for new job classes, comparisons between classes must be made. The factors described below are the basis for analyzing positions and for making these comparisons.

1. Nature, variety and complexity of work.

“Nature” includes the kind of work performed as shown by such elements as the subject matter, profession or occupation involved. “Variety” as applied to a position includes the range of duties and the inherently different kinds of work included in the position. As applied to a class, it reflects the range of kinds of work and skills which are included in the class. “Complexity” includes the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done, and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

- What subject matter, profession, occupation or function is involved?
- What skills, knowledge and techniques are applied?
- Are the various tasks in the same or related subject matter fields?
- Are the various tasks of a ‘recurring type’ or do they present non-repetitive problems?
- Are assignments to the position selected on the basis of difficulty?

2. Nature of supervision received by the incumbent.

“Supervision received” refers to the nature and extent of deliberate, planned supervisory controls exercised over the incumbent of the position or, in relation to a job class, typically exercised over incumbents in a class of positions which limit the scope of work, the independence with which it is performed, and the nature and finality of decisions. Indications of the supervisory controls include the basis for selection of work assignments, the nature of direct instructions or advice from a supervisor the incumbent receives, and the

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

extent and degree to which actions and decisions are limited by review of all cases, by spot checks, or review of the program for effectiveness or for conformity with policy. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

- From whom does the employee receive instructions?
- What type of instructions are they and how general or detailed?
- Is supervision over the position technical, functional, or administrative?
- Is the work reviewed during the process or upon completion?
- Is the work product given a technical review or is it reviewed only for compliance with administrative matters?

3. Nature of available guidelines for performance of work.

This factor relates to the extent to which performance of the work is controlled or influenced by rules, regulations, manuals, procedures, prescribed work practices, principles, policies, or other written instruction or methods. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

- How do manuals, rules, regulations, and policies control the employee's work?
- Are policies and procedures governing work general or specific?
- How much initiative or latitude is the employee allowed to plan or execute the work?

4. Initiative and originality required.

This factor concerns the degree of inventiveness, imagination, and ability to innovate or create new approaches or previously unused methods and deviations from standard work practices. The resourcefulness or ingenuity required to solve new problems or old problems in new ways is the crux of this factor. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

- How much initiative is allowed to decide how to accomplish the assignment?
- How much and what type of review is given to the work while in process?
- Does the work require development of new methods or procedures?
- Does the work require adapting existing methods to fit the assignment?
- Does the work require developing solutions to problems for which no existing solution exists?

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

- Does the work require analysis and evaluation of the recommendations of others in relation to the above?
- How much artistic creativity is required to create new visual information or display?

5. Purposes and nature of person-to-person work relationships.

a. This factor includes what, why, how, and with whom relations are maintained with persons not in the supervisory chain based within or outside the agency. The purpose of these relationships typically include one or more of the following:

- to give or secure information,
- render personal service,
- perform administrative services,
- explain policies or methods,
- interpret programs, plans or individual actions,
- coordinate and secure cooperation, or
- resolve controversies by means of personal contact.

b. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

- What contacts does the position have with others within the agency? Outside the agency?
- What is the purpose of these contacts?
- What type of subject matter is dealt with?
- Is the subject matter simple, complex, broad, narrow, controversial?
- What conditions make it easy or difficult to accomplish these contacts?
- During these contacts, does the position have authority to make official commitments?

6. Nature and scope of recommendations, decisions, commitments, and consequence of error.

This factor reflects the questions, problems, or types of cases in which the employee makes recommendations, decisions, commitments, or conclusions which affect operations, plans, programs, methods, or policies; and the degree of finality in such judgments or actions as measured against such criteria as instructions, delegated authority, and review by supervisors, or agency policies, rules, regulations, statutes, or precedents. Also included is the likelihood of an error being made by a prudent employee and the consequence of that error to individuals, operations or programs. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

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STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

- What decisions does the position make which are not reviewed by others?
- If the position's decisions are reviewed, what is the type and extent of this review?
- What types of problems are these and how important are they?
- What is the position's responsibility for recommendations on agency programs and policy?
- How final are the position's decisions and recommendations in relation to the functions of the agency?
- What would be the consequence of errors or inadequacies in these recommendations and decisions?

7. Nature and extent of supervision exercised over the work of other employees.

“Nature of supervision exercised” includes supervisory responsibilities in areas such as setting policies; establishing objectives; planning, organizing and establishing work flow; making assignments and reviewing work; selecting, training, and rating performance of employees; coordinating production; and attending to the personnel and administrative functions of the organization. “Extent” includes the degree of independence and responsibility with which such functions are performed, the scope of performance as reflected in the difficulty of the supervisory work, the size and complexity of the organization, the variety of functions, etc. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

- What is the extent of the position's formulation of policies and the scope of these policies?
- What is the responsibility for control over the objectives and purpose of the work supervised and the form and quality of the end product?
- Does the position plan for an entire organization or plan specific techniques for given tasks?
- What is the position's responsibility for organization of work, work flow and methods of operation? Does the position determine work methods or ensure that approved methods are used?
- What latitude does the position have in making work assignments?
- What type of review does the position make of the work of others – detailed, general, technical, policy, administrative?

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

- What is the extent of the position's responsibility in selecting, promoting, transferring, evaluating and disciplining employees and settling grievances?
- What responsibilities does the position have for controlling resources and activities, such as procurement, supplies, equipment, budgeting, etc.?
- What is the number and class level of subordinates supervised? What is the complexity of the organization supervised?

8. Qualifications required.

“Qualifications required” includes the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other requirements for performance of the work. **The qualifications required should reflect the other seven factors**, as well as the tasks assigned to the position. To evaluate this factor, ask questions such as the following:

- What knowledge is required for reasonable success in the position or job class?
- What knowledge is required upon appointment to the position or entry to the job class?
- What knowledge can be gained on the job in a reasonable period?
- What skills and what level of proficiency are required for the position or job class?
- Are these skills required at appointment to the position or entry to the job class, or can they be acquired during the probationary period?
- What kinds of machines and equipment are used?
- What general abilities are required for the position?

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