

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of administration
Division of Personnel

To: Mila Cosgrove
Director

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Through: Sarah Brinkley
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Subject: Airport Operations job classes study

Introduction: The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has requested a study of job classes that provide or manage airport operations at Anchorage International Airport (AIA) and Fairbanks International Airport (FIA). The study is intended to update or create specifications that accurately describe the work involved in airport operations and to ensure that salaries are appropriately aligned within classified service.

History:

Airport Operations Officer I and II job classes were originally established in March 1972 at salary ranges 20 and 22, respectively. These single-position job classes were responsible for building, field, and equipment maintenance at the AIA and FIA. Incumbents provided direct administrative and supervisory assistance to their respective airport manager. These job classes were revised three times before they were abolished in November 1984. The classes were re-established in October 1987, and continued in use until March 1996, when the *Airport Operations Superintendent, AIA* (SR 20 – SS) was established. At that time responsibility for building maintenance was transferred to the *Building Maintenance Manager*, field and equipment maintenance responsibilities were transferred to the *Manager, Airfield Maintenance*, and all law enforcement activities were transferred to *Airport Safety Officers*, that later became known as *Airport Police and Fire Officers*. Without the encumbrance of maintenance duties, airport operations staff members were free to focus on activities in the aircraft operating area (AOA).

When, in 1996, the superintendent position was established at AIA, the work of the former *Airport Operations Officer II* job classes was redefined to create subordinate operations job class. The *Airport Operations Officer* (SR17 – GG) still in use today, allows multiple incumbents that provide around-the-clock managerial support for airport operations, with emphasis on ensuring compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations related to airport security and the airport certification program. These positions are granted considerable authority and responsibility for independent action in the absence of the superintendent and airport manager.

Fairbanks International Airport began sustained around-the-clock operations by January 2001, at which time the *Airport Operations Superintendent, FIA* job class was created. Prior to that time, the airport manager received operations support from *Equipment Operator Journey II and III* positions in the Airfield Maintenance Section. In September 2001, control of airport security was passed to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and new regulations placed tighter restrictions on how airport operations were to be conducted.

The organizational and regulatory changes, coupled with the introduction of new job classes, provided the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities with the incentive to request this study of Airport Operations positions.

Scope:

This study covers the *Airport Operations Superintendent, AIA*, the *Airport Operations Superintendent, FIA*, *Airport Operations Officers* at the Anchorage airport, and *Equipment Operator* positions at the Fairbanks airport that provide Airport Operations support.

Contacts:

Primary contacts for this study were John Parrott, *Airport Manager, Anchorage (AIA)*, and Jim Fiorenzi, *Administrative Services Manager II* (at FIA). Secondary contacts were Ric Barnett, *Airport Operations Superintendent, FIA*, and Jim Iagulli, acting *Airport Operations Superintendent, AIA*.

During the course of the study, six *Airport Operations Officers* at AIA and all *Equipment Operators Journey II and III* who perform airport operations functions at FIA were contacted to gather more complete information about the job classes involved than could be extracted from the position descriptions.

Study Methods:

Position descriptions for the 17 positions included in the Airport Operations Study provided the information on which class definitions and distinguishing characteristics were based. A series of informal telephonic interviews were arranged to ensure that the submitted descriptions accurately reflect the work as it is being performed. The four *Equipment Operator Journey II* positions at FIA Operations Section were interviewed to determine if work differed significantly from position to position, and to ensure that assigned work does fall within the distinguishing characteristics for the *Airport Operations Officer* job class. Three of the nine *Airport Operations Officer* positions at AIA were significantly different than the other six. All three of the anomalous positions were interviewed. Both *Airport Operations Superintendents* (one in acting status) were interviewed to pin down differences between them, and to gain a fuller grasp of their common aspects. Six of nine *Airport Operations Officers* at AIA have nearly identical position descriptions. Half of those six positions were interviewed to establish that the work being performed was the work described in their PDs.

Following completion of the interview process, job class definitions and distinguishing characteristics were drafted for existing job classes. A specialist class was created to describe the level of operations work being performed by the three anomalous positions in Anchorage, and the *Equipment Operator Journey III* position at FIA Operations Section. Drafts of the class definitions and distinguishing characteristics were released to classification staff for comment before drafting complete specifications for the job classes.

Class Concepts:

Airport Operations Officer

Under general supervision, *Airport Operations Officers* coordinate landside and airside activities at Anchorage International Airport or Fairbanks International Airport to ensure the day-to-day airfield operational safety and regulatory compliance by inspecting runways, fences, gates, and the activities of tenants, vendors, contractors, and air-carriers. Incumbents monitor wildlife hazards to reduce the possibility of accidents and help ensure landside safety by monitoring transit parking/loading and curbside activities at the terminal. *Airport Operations Officers* coordinate with field maintenance staff and the control tower during snow events to ensure that runways, taxiways, and aprons are maintained within required limits.

Airport Operations Officers act as the senior representative for airport management during assigned shift in absence of higher authorities. Actions include coordination of initial response during emergencies or

natural disasters. Incumbents work with a high degree of independence and are regularly required to exercise discretion to interpret complex situations and take appropriate action.

Airport Operations Specialist

Under general direction, *Airport Operations Specialists* manage a major facet of airport operations at a state-owned, commercial hub, international airport or supervise the *Airport Operations Officers* on staff. Major operations facets include, but are not limited to the overall security program controlling access to restricted areas; all landside operations, including ground transportation facilities and activities; or general aviation operations such as those at the Lake Hood aviation complex in Anchorage. An incumbent of this job class may assign work to, and supervise all *Airport Operations Officers* at a state-owned, commercial hub, international airport. These positions may also have secondary responsibility for other specialty areas, such as personal services contracts management within the airport operations section. A specialist position responsible for supervising *Airport Operations Officers* also functions as a working supervisor with responsibility for conducting regulatory compliance inspections and overseeing operational safety.

Airport Operations Superintendent

Under general direction, *Airport Operations Superintendents* are responsible for ensuring the safe and efficient airside and landside operations of a state-owned International Airport in compliance with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airport certification requirements, and regulations promulgated by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

Airport Operations Superintendents supervise and coordinate 24-hour airport monitoring through subordinate *Airport Operations Officers* and communications center support staff. Incumbents act as the senior representative of airport management to the public and other agencies and during emergencies or natural disasters, in absence of the Director and Airport Manager. These positions research operations issues, make recommendations, and implement emergency plans, as necessary. *Airport Operations Superintendents* participate in inspections as needed, or to review compliance or quality assurance issues. The incumbents' administrative review responsibility also includes issues related to more complex areas, such as how airport operations impact the business operation of the airport.

Minimum Qualifications:

Airport Operations Officer

Seven years experience in airport operations that was subject to FAA, state or military rules and regulations, and involved commercial or general aviation operations, terminal operations, airport and runway maintenance operations, or aircraft operating area (AOA) issues. A broad range of experiences if applicable and specific to airport and runway operations will be considered qualifying.

Education from an accredited college in aviation management, transportation, business administration, or public administration will substitute for up to four years of the required experience (3 semester hours or 4 quarter hours equals one month of work experience).

Qualifying military experience must reflect ground, airside and landside operations experience to be considered qualifying or equivalent.

Airport Operations Specialist

Two years experience resolving aircraft operating area (AOA) issues and experience involving commercial or general aviation operations, terminal operations, landside operations, or overseeing snow removal and airport and runway safety operations, subject to FAA, state, or military rules and regulations. The required experience includes work such as an *Airport Operations Officer* with the State of Alaska or the equivalent with another employer.

Airport Operations Superintendent

Eight years experience in aviation and airport maintenance related activities to include such areas as snow removal, aircraft operating area (AOA) issues, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), state, or military rules and regulations regarding certification requirements, commercial air carrier, and general aviation airport operations. Two years of the experience must have required journey level airport operations and regulatory compliance inspections. This requirement is met by service as an *Airport Operations Officer*, with the State of Alaska or the equivalent with another employer.

Note: Work experience equivalent to an *Airport Operations Officer* with the State of Alaska requires primary responsibility for day-to-day airfield operational safety and airport compliance, and coordinating landside activities applicable to a state-owned, international airport, operating on a 24-hour basis.

Substitution: Education from an accredited college in aviation management, transportation, business or public administration or related field will substitute for the required non-specified experience (three semester hours or four quarter hours equals one month of work experience).

Analysis:

PCNs 250855, 253003, 253519, 253520, and 253030 were proposed for reallocation during this study, because these positions no longer operate heavy equipment as do incumbents of *Equipment Operator Journey II* and *Equipment Operator Journey III* job classes, to which they are currently allocated. These positions conduct detailed inspections of the airport at least once per shift, and less inclusive inspections of the aircraft operating area (AOA) throughout their shift. The purpose of the inspections is to ensure operational safety and regulatory compliance of the airport with certification requirements and security regulations. PCN 250855 was reallocated as an *Airport Operations Officer* May 4, 2005, when it was learned that the position was vacant. PCNs 253003, 253519, and 253520 are assigned nearly identical duties, and will be allocated to the same job class.

PCN 253030 differs from the other four positions in that this position functions as a working supervisor, actively performing the same kind of inspections and making the same kinds of operational decisions, in addition to assigning and evaluating work, approving leave, and performing other supervisory tasks as necessary.

AIRPORT OPERATIONS SUPERINTENDENT

PCN 252954 (Anchorage) and PCN 252999 (Fairbanks) perform the same type of duties. The degree of complexity arising from the size of the two airports, influences, but does not control the work of the positions. Because the Fairbanks airport is smaller, the *Airport Operations Superintendent* tends to become more personally involved in day-to-day tasks through necessity. Organizational differences at the airports also contribute to differences in the work of the positions.

Anchorage International Airport (AIA) controls wildlife hazards through personal service contracts most of the year, but *Airport Operations Officers* provide wildlife hazard control during winter months. The superintendent has delegated responsibility to ensure compliance with Depredation Permits issued by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to the manager of the Lake Hood Seaplane Base and general aviation complex. Fairbanks International Airport (FIA) controls wildlife hazards through approved hazing procedures established by the USDA. The superintendent participates directly in these operations, as needed. The Fairbanks superintendent coordinates with the Department of Fish and Game and the University of Alaska / Fairbanks, to provide feed for birds at Cramer Field and insect control at FIA to help reduce wildlife hazards. In return, *Airport Operations Officers* conduct bird censuses at the float pond during the spring and fall waterfowl migrations.

The Anchorage superintendent has delegated responsibility for airside security to PCN 252818 (currently an *Airport Operations Officer*), who functions as the single point of contact for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The *Airport Police and Fire Officer V* at Fairbanks performs the same

function. Neither superintendent is directly involved in security operations, though each contributes to airport security where appropriate.

General aviation and seaplane activities at FIA are the responsibility of the *Airport Operations Superintendent* and functional responsibility is given to the *Airport Operations Officer* on duty. The *Airport Operations Superintendent*, AIA has delegated responsibility for general aviation and the management of the Lake Hood complex to PCN 253479 (currently an *Airport Operations Officer*). Once again, the smaller size of the Fairbanks airport affords the operations superintendent more direct involvement than the operations superintendent in Anchorage, though the actual work of the two positions remains much the same.

Both PCN 252954 (AIA) and PCN 252999 (FIA) ensure compliance with FAA FAR 139 (airport certification) and 49 CFR 1542 (security). Both positions oversee snow removal and ice control operations. The positions close aircraft movement surfaces as needed so that essential maintenance activities may be conducted, and both positions consult with air carriers regarding ramp changes that affect their business operations.

SINGLE JOB CLASS CRITERIA:

The Division of Personnel applies four criteria to determine if the work assigned to positions is similar enough to warrant a single specification by:

- 1) the same title can be used to clearly identify each position;
- 2) the same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions;
- 3) the same basic rate of pay can be fairly applied to all positions; and
- 4) the employees in this class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall.

Because the work performed by the two superintendents involves the same skills, decisions, regulations and work environment, the differentiation between the two job titles by including location is unnecessary.

Two differences are found in the minimum qualifications. The Anchorage position requires nine years of experience in aviation related activities, rather than the eight years required at Fairbanks. The difference seems an artificial distinction. The second difference is in the special requirement for the Fairbanks position to use a firearm, year around. This difference stems from the way wildlife hazards are handled at the two airports. Anchorage has a contract with USDA for wildlife hazard control, and assist with wildlife control only during the winter months. Airport operations staff at the Fairbanks airport is directly responsible for taking action to control wildlife hazards. Firearms are used, especially for bird harassment. The work of the subject positions is not sufficiently different to warrant different minimum qualifications.

The duties and responsibilities of the Anchorage and Fairbanks positions are insufficiently different to warrant different compensation rates. Even though some differences do exist in the work performed at these two locations, the kind and level of work is uniform.

For technical purposes, yes, the two positions could be considered to be in the same layoff pool. The layoff question is rendered irrelevant; however, because the FAA requires such a position for the airport to maintain its certification. Without certification, the airport cannot operate.

Four positions were identified during the course of the study that did not function as either *Airport Operations Officers* or *Airport Operations Superintendents*, yet their assigned work is best placed among Airport Operations job classes. PCNs 250853, 252818, 253030, and 253479 each specialize in one particular area of airport operations and all have some supervisory responsibilities. These positions lack the level of authority entrusted to *Airport Operations Superintendents*, yet exercise more authority in their

specialty area, than do Airport Operations Officers. Accordingly, the need for a new job class (*Airport Operations Specialists*) is indicated.

Internal Alignment:

The salary for the *Airport Operations Officer*, established during the 1996 study at Range 17 was achieved by comparing assigned duties and responsibilities to those of job classes performing related work in an airport environment. Those classes were *Airport Safety Officer II* (SR 75 – PSEA) and *Equipment Operator Journey II* (WG 53 – LTC) that were assigned to Field Maintenance. Salaries among the three job classes were compared using hourly rates since each bargaining unit uses a different salary schedule.

The general review of Airport Operations job classes that was requested for this study has prompted a fresh look at the assigned salary ranges. The availability of similar job classes in the same bargaining unit and job family is extremely limited, but when job classes performing similar duties are included, a reasonable baseline comparison can be made.

Historically, all Airport Operations job classes have been assigned to the 19XX (General Administrative) job family. The *Safety Officer* (P1947 - SR18) and job classes in the *Emergency Management Specialist* series (P1937-P1939 – SR 14-18) are the only job classes in the General Administrative job family that show sufficient similarity to *Airport Operations Officers* to be used for salary comparison. Some job classes in the 78XX (Fire Inspection, Protection, and Guards) job family are located at airports or are assigned duties in common with *Airport Operations Officers*. Two job classes that exercise considerable discretion while performing related duties are the *Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Specialist IV* (P7830 – SR15) and *Regional Safety and Airport Security Officer* (P7870 – SR18). *Investigator III* (P7768 – SR18) is assigned to the 77XX (Law Enforcement) job family, and compares favorably with *Airport Operations Officers* in the discretion and independent judgment they apply in performing work assignments.

Safety Officers (P1947 - SR18) most commonly work in a construction environment. An incumbent's expertise is needed to ensure proper handling and use of explosives or toxic materials around work sites. Decisions must be made quickly and independently, based on accumulated knowledge, to ensure the safety of persons on or near the site. The work of this class provides a suitable comparison to the kind and level of work performed by *Airport Operations Officers*.

Journey level *Emergency Management Specialists II* (P1938 – SR16) typically function as a part of a task force, and do not exhibit the discretion and independent judgment essential to performing work equivalent to an *Airport Operations Officer*. The Specialist II is, therefore, unsuitable for use in this comparison. Option 2, *Emergency Management Specialists III* (P1939 – SR18) apply advanced level knowledge of natural disasters and the best way to provide mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery efforts. Incumbents plan, review, develop, and implement statewide programs to deal with natural disasters. Decisions made regarding statewide programs are largely in response to theoretical circumstances that most commonly occur on a seasonal basis, whereas decisions made by *Airport Operations Officers* are immediate, practical, and recur many times on any given shift. In depth knowledge and the ability to think clearly during emergent conditions are common factors shared by this job class and *Airport Operations Officers*.

Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Specialist IV does not provide a good comparison to *Airport Operations Officers* because their work has only the narrowest area of operations in common. Specialist IV positions limit their incident command to other firefighters and rescue personnel, they do not direct personnel from other agencies. *Airport Operations Officers* must direct the efforts of personnel from multiple agencies any time higher level management is not present during an incident.

Regional Safety and Airport Security Officers deal with personnel from multiple agencies, local government, private contractors, and general public. These positions ensure that staff at certificated

airports are properly trained in aircraft rescue and fire fighting techniques, hazardous materials are appropriately stored, and airports employ appropriate security measures. Decisions made by incumbents of this job class affect operational policy, though the need for instantaneous decisions is less evident in their work. This class provides a suitable comparison to the kind and level of work performed by *Airport Operations Officers*.

Job classes such as *Passenger Services Inspector* (P1969 – SR17) and *Vessel Scheduling Coordinator* (P2140 – SR17) require considerable skill in thinking analytically, but the decisions made are unlikely to require the same immediacy as decisions made by *Airport Operations Officers*. *Passenger Services Inspectors* and *Vessel Scheduling Coordinator* do not direct the efforts of personnel from other agencies and do not have the authority to shut down ferries, while *Airport Operations Officers* exercise a greater level of discretion, and can shut down their airport if circumstances indicate such action is necessary.

Option I, *Investigators III* (P7768 – SR18) exercise a degree of discretion and independent judgment comparable to *Airport Operations Officers*. *Investigators III* rely on their considerable profession knowledge to modify their methodology as circumstances change, in a manner very similar to that employed by operations officers.

The authority exercised in making decisions and the level of independence required of *Airport Operations Officers* in performing their duties compares most favorably with General Government Bargaining Unit positions at salary range 18. Positions below range 18 may perform similar or related work, but lack the same degree of discretion and independent judgment that operations officers require. Job classes at range 19 or above provide less satisfactory comparisons because they either lacked the same kind of duties or they were primarily supervisory job classes.

Airport Operations Specialists perform duties closely aligned with *Airport Operations Officers*, but require more experience and significantly greater expertise in their specialized area of airport operations. The requirement for *Airport Operations Specialists* to possess greater programmatic knowledge than operations officers and the added responsibility of supervising or leading other positions makes a range 19 salary appropriate.

Airport Operations Superintendents function as part of the management team at their respective airports. Both positions make significant contributions to policy development for operational functions at their assigned airport, and their decisions have comparable impact. The operations superintendent in Anchorage, who serves as the coordinating member of the senior management team, perhaps best illustrates the level of responsibility involved in setting operational policy. This position develops policies and resolves problems in collaboration with the *Manager, Airfield Maintenance (SR 22)*, the *Building Maintenance Manager (SR 22)*, and the *Airport Police and Fire Officer VI (SR 21)*. The *Airport Operations Superintendent* in Fairbanks performs essentially the same function with the management team at FIA.

Responsibility for coordinating operational policy development and implementation, and responsibility for supervising professional job classes at ranges 18 and 19 positions, makes a salary assignment of range 21 appropriate for *Airport Operations Superintendents*.

Conclusions:

PCNs 253003, 253519, 253520 perform duties equivalent to *Airport Operations Officers* and are being placed in that job class at the conclusion of this study.

Specialized work performed by PCNs 250853, 252818, 253030, and 253479 clearly a part of airport operations. The level of work performed is different from that performed by *Airport Operations Officers* or *Airport Operations Superintendents*. The title *Airport Operations Specialist* is sufficiently descriptive

and broad to reflect the nature of the work, and to meet the criteria set by the Division of Personnel for positions in a single job class. The class code P1964 is available for use and can be appropriately applied to the *Airport Operations Specialist* job class

Sustaining separate job classes for *Airport Operations Superintendents* in Anchorage and Fairbanks is no longer justified. PCNs 252954 and 252999 are placed in a single *Airport Operations Superintendent* job class. Because of the class concepts retained in the consolidated *Airport Operations Superintendent* job class, it is appropriate to use the class code P1966.

Salaries set for the *Airport Operations Officer*, *Airport Operations Specialist*, and *Airport Operations Superintendent* job classes at salary ranges 18, 19, and 21 respectively are appropriate.

Impact:

Because the base salary for Airport Operations job classes is proposed to change from SR17 to SR18, the financial impact for the department will be significant. Twelve of seventeen positions included in the study will receive a one-range salary increase. Five positions will receive two-range increases. Six filled positions are recommended for changes in bargaining unit assignments.