POSITION EVALUATION STATEMENT

Title, Series, Grade: Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper), GS-0456-05

Position Number: DX06200

Background: This Standard Position Description (SPD) was developed by an Advisory Work Group made up of a team of fire subject matter expert and classification specialist 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. The position description is to be used in the wildland fire smokejumper program for one of four fire bureaus within the Department of the Interior. The purpose of the position is to serve in a developmental trainee capacity as a Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper). This position may be assigned work on interagency crews where the crew leader is from a different bureau or agency.

References: Position Classification Standard for Wildland Fire Management, June 2022

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 Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) at this level is a trained and experienced member of a wildland fire smokejumper program executing fire management activities in fire preparedness, fuels management and prevention, and fire suppression, monitoring, and post-fire. Work may also include all hazard and emergency response activities. The primary mission is to provide users with highly qualified firefighter whom quickly and effectively respond to initial attack, extended attack, and point protection missions via specialized aircraft and parachutes. Secondary missions include the delivery of equipment and supplies via paracargo, providing qualified individuals to incident management teams, remote area fire monitoring, prescribed fire/fuels management and other fire management support. 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 a parenthetical title of *Smokejumper* will also be applied, which describes work performing wildfire related work involving fixed wing aircraft such as but

not limited to parachuting from airplanes to provide attack on wildland fires in remote areas and/or as flight crew member on aircraft with flight duties assigned involving navigation, agency communications and flight checklist responsibilities, selecting a safe jump spot and evaluating jump criteria for minimizing possible injuries. Therefore, this position is appropriately assigned to the 0456 series and titled as a ***Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper)***.

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 Smokejumpers.

Nature of Work

At the GS-05, Wildland Firefighters receive intensive and standardized training in the principles and techniques of suppressing forest and range fires and in parachute jumping. Wildland Firefighters (Smokejumper) make parachute jumps to forested and mountainous terrain to suppress fires that require attention before ground crews can reach them. Wildland Firefighters (Smokejumper) are responsible for suppressing fires in mountainous country. As dispatched, they go to fires and jump from airplanes over mountainous terrain which may require landing in open areas, in timber, on mountainous slopes, or in rough terrain. After landing, they assemble firefighting equipment and supplies dropped by parachute and signal the plane that the landing has been successful. Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) are frequently required to read maps and find their way back from fires through rugged inaccessible country with heavy packs of supplies and equipment to reach roads, trails, or helicopter landing spots.

Like the GS-05, the position functions as an experienced member of and/or leader within a smokejumper program, parachutes into mountainous, remote, and/or rugged terrain and performs as a wildland firefighter (smokejumper) applying an understanding of firefighter safety, fire behavior, topography of the area, weather, fuels, and training in fire management work to implement tactical directions on attacking, controlling, or mopping up fires, building or patrolling firelines, performing burnouts, cleaning up burned areas within firelines, suppressing spot fires, felling snags or trees, and cutting brush. Coordinates actions with aerial resources, to include helicopter bucket and sling operations, air tanker retardant drops, and air cargo operations. Places caches of equipment and supplies at strategic points. Serves as a parachute rigger to pack, repair, and maintain parachutes and related smokejumper parachute equipment adhering to agency smokejumper rigger policies and guidelines. The smokejumper at this level is expected to employ flexibility and judgment in the approach to problems and in the practices applied after selecting from many possible courses of action. Processes and methods are technical and can have catastrophic consequences, thus requiring the smokejumper to properly execute and quickly adjust techniques with changing conditions or circumstances.

This position meets, but does not exceed, the GS-05 for Nature of Work.

Level of Responsibility

At the GS-05, wildland firefighters (Smokejumper) receive close supervision from senior staff and leaders because of the hazardous nature of their assignments. They receive detailed instructions regarding terrain, routes to follow, and pick-up points while enroute to fires and specific instructions regarding spots, jumping conditions, wind velocity, and other conditions prior to making actual jumps. They receive help and assistance from leaders in parachute jumping techniques, in methods of suppressing and managing fires, and in maintaining their equipment. Instructions are usually complete and are rarely deviated from. Their work performance is frequently observed and reviewed for overall adequacy work under the general supervision of Fire Management Officers who periodically check the readiness of equipment, review their work performance on fires, and ensure that fire plans, safety rules, and equipment maintenance procedures are being followed. At the GS-05, level personal work contacts include extensive and varied person-to-person work contacts such as with personnel and officials of State and local governments, cooperators, and the general public. The purpose of contacts is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts or to resolve operating problems by influencing those who are working toward mutual goals.

Like the GS-05, Wildland Firefighters at this level work under a supervisor who provides general work assignments, instructions, and work schedules. The supervisor periodically checks the readiness of equipment, reviews work performance on fires, and ensures that fire plans, safety rules, and equipment maintenance procedures are being followed. Supervisors furnish advice, assistance, and help in determining action to take on hazardous conditions encountered or unusual work problems that occur; however, during emergency or fire situations, firefighters at this level may be in situations where they have limited opportunity to contact their supervisors for help, assistance, or guidance and must use experienced judgment. The supervisor or smokejumper spotter assigns work in broad terms, advises of changes in procedures, and is available for assistance when required.

Like the GS-05, contacts include smokejumper crew members, supervisors, managers, and support staff, agency and contract pilots and flight crews, interagency duty officers, Fire Management Officers, land managers, aviation managers, fire dispatch centers, fire suppression cooperators, the full spectrum of agency management personnel through radio, telephone, government email, and in person. Essential and routine contacts also a wide variety of federal personnel and the public to provide information regarding fire prevention, fire hazards, restricted areas and routes of travel and to secure cooperation and participation in the fire prevention program.

Like the GS-05, the purpose of personal contacts with agency land and fire management officials or cooperators is to provide technical guidance, respond to questions, assist in problem resolution, and facilitate mission objectives.

This position meets, but does not exceed, the GS-05 for Level of Responsibility.

FINAL CLASSIFICATION: The position is properly classified as ***Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper), GS-0456-05.***

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Determination: This position does not meet exemption criteria found in 5 CFR 551 and is determined to be Non-Exempt from the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Act.