

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 2.04, Wis. Adm. Code, for making classification decisions relative to present and future paraprofessional positions that assist a regulatory environmental program located at agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources and University of Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. This classification specification is not intended to identify every duty that may be assigned to positions, but is intended to serve as a framework for classification decision making in this occupational area.

Classification decisions must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (more than 50%) of the work assigned to and performed by the position when compared to the class concepts and definition of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusions

The positions in this classification are paraprofessional positions that are responsible for providing complex program support functions to regulatory environmental programs such as the Drinking and Groundwater, Remediation and Redevelopment, and Waste Management within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), or regulatory and non-regulatory environmental programs such as the OSHA Consultation Program, OSHA Surveillance Program, or Private Well Water Testing within the University of Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH). The majority of the duties for these positions require extensive knowledge of the program area and decision-making with a direct impact on public health and welfare (i.e. evaluating groundwater quality data or interpreting test results, suggesting corrective actions for private well owners or relaying public health advice and recommendations).

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification are the following types of positions:

1. Positions that meet the statutory definition(s) of confidential, supervisor and/or management as defined in s. 111.81(7), (19) and (13), Wis. Stats., as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.
2. Positions that are, for a majority of the time, engaged in providing environmental program support that requires no extensive knowledge of the program area or no

decisions that have a direct impact on public health and welfare and that are more appropriately classified as Operations Program Associate.

3. Positions located within the DNR that provide program support for a majority of the time to programs other than the environmental programs of Drinking and Groundwater, Remediation and Redevelopment, and Waste Management.
4. Positions located within the WSLH that do not provide program support for a majority of the time to the environmental programs such as the OSHA Consultation Program, OSHA Surveillance Program, or Private Well Water Testing.
5. Positions that perform professional duties as defined in s. 111.81(15), Wis. Stats., for the majority of time (more than 50%) that include the full scope and accountability of a complex program area.
6. All other positions that are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance Into This Classification

Employees enter positions within this classification by competition.

E. Terminology Used in This Classification Specification

Complexity: The difficulty inherent in performing the work often measured by both the variety of worker activities (number and related or unrelated) and the type (simple, singular, recurring, predictable, non-controversial, etc. vs. intensive, multifaceted, sporadic, unpredictable, controversial, etc.). Complexity is frequently influenced by or interacts with scope.

Paraprofessional: Work that is similar to professional work but does not have the breadth and depth of true professional work. A paraprofessional employee may perform duties that are a narrow, specialized subset of the professional employee's duties. A paraprofessional employee does not perform the full range of duties assigned to professional employees, or performs duties of lesser scope, impact, and complexity than duties assigned to professional employees. Paraprofessional duties tend to support the work of professional employees. A paraprofessional employee may carry out or implement plans or projects that are developed, planned, and managed by professional employees. The paraprofessional employee carries out or implements plans or projects based on extensive experience and supplemental on-the-job training rather than on formal academic education in the discipline itself. Paraprofessional work is performed in a narrow or highly specialized area of the overall occupation and requires a high degree of practical knowledge and skill. The experienced paraprofessional employee often works with considerable independence for significant periods of time. This independence, however, does not alter the nature and character of the work, which is to support a professional discipline.

Professional: Wisconsin statute s. 111.81(15) states, "Professional employee means: (a) Any employee in the classified service who is engaged in work: 1. predominantly intellectual and varied in character as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work; 2. Involving the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment in its performance; 3. Of such a character that the output produced or the result accomplished cannot be standardized in relation to a given period of time; 4. Requiring knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction and study in an institution of higher learning or a hospital, as distinguished from a general academic

education or from an apprenticeship or from training in the performance of routine mental, manual or physical processes; or (b) Any employee in the classified service who: 1. Has completed the courses of specialized intellectual instruction and study described in par. (a)(4); and 2. Is performing related work under the supervision of a professional person to qualify to become a professional employee as defined in par. (a).”

Professional work cannot be standardized or routinized and requires independent judgment and discretion. Professional work involves many gray areas that require substantial analysis and judgment to reach the appropriate conclusion. Work classified as professional requires education and training in the principles, concepts, and theories of the occupational area. These are often gained through the completion of a four-year degree in a specified curriculum at a college or university. In a limited number of circumstances, such knowledge may be gained through on-the-job experience.

Professional work requires creativity, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation. It involves applying or interpreting natural law, principles, or theory; evaluating the research of others; and assessing the need for and validity of proposed changes and improvements in procedures and methods. Professional responsibility involves the ability to reason from existing knowledge to unexplored areas; to adapt methods to circumstances that deviate from the standards; and to stay abreast of and evaluate technical subjects, analyses, and proposals.

Professional work requires a high order of analytical ability combined with a comprehensive knowledge of (1) the functions, processes, theories, and principles of the occupational area; and (2) the methods used to gather, analyze, and evaluate information.

Scope: A quantifiable job characteristic that ascribes value to a job. The range (number and variety) of job responsibilities. Scope is most often measured by depth and breadth. Scope is frequently influenced by or interacts with complexity.

II. DEFINITIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

Positions in this classification provide a wide variety of paraprofessional program support to supervisory or professional staff in regulatory environmental programs such as the Drinking and Groundwater, Remediation and Redevelopment, and Waste Management programs in DNR, or regulatory or non-regulatory Private Well Water Testing, OSHA Consultation, and OSHA Surveillance programs in the WSLH. Work is performed under general supervision. The positions are required to possess and maintain a detailed level of expertise in an environmental program with comprehensive understanding of the specific state and federal statutes and administrative codes that regulate state environmental programs or comprehensive knowledge of public and environmental health, knowledge of testing procedure, interpretation of laboratory results and necessary corrective actions for unsafe conditions. They exercise a considerable degree of independence and latitude for decision-making along program lines that are governed by complex rules and regulations. Consequences of decisions made are important in that they directly affect public health and welfare since the positions must respond to inquiries from and provide assistance to the general public and the regulated community regarding rules, regulations, policies and guidance for the various programs, e.g., leaking underground storage tank (LUST), emergency response (ERP), spills, total coliform rule (TCR) or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The positions receive notification of contaminant releases and identify potential emergency situations, convey emergency information to the proper staff or agencies, initiate first response contacts with public or

private water system owners or operators where unsafe conditions occur; and provide information to private well owners on corrective actions for an unsafe well.

Responsibilities in the various program areas are administering the region's hazardous substance release notifications consistent with statutory authorities; evaluating, interpreting and responding to drinking water and underground storage tank health-related data; administering and coordinating the Total Coliform Rule; administering the waste management licensing program for all waste transporters and waste facilities in the region; analyzing, coordinating, and maintaining the program data system/database including quality control; reviewing test results to determine violations of contaminant levels, issuing notice of noncompliance (NON) or violation (NOV), monitoring for corrections and recommending action necessary to correct violations; participating on a statewide database team to provide input on system development and policy changes; coordinating the management of files for the program; assisting the supervisor and technical staff in overall program management; coordinating and maintaining records for fee invoicing responsibilities; providing program training, information and education; serving as the initial point of contact for outside requests and inquiries; coordinating the Drinking Water/Groundwater Program; running Public Water System Chemical/Radiological Compliance Sampling; coordinating contracted counties administration of program requirements; and providing health information and corrective actions to the general public for an unsafe well.

Representative Positions:

Drinking and Groundwater Program Associate, DNR – provide program support for the Drinking and Groundwater program in the administration of the rules and policies of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Provide first-line contact for the public requiring detailed knowledge of administrative codes and federal rules as they pertain to water supply systems. Duties include interpreting results and reports for Total Coliform Rule (bacteriological) and water chemistry monitoring; identifying violations on results or reports and the action necessary to correct violations; initiating first response to water system owners or operators when unsafe conditions occur; and directing and guiding public notification requirements.

Remediation and Redevelopment Program Associate, DNR – provide program support for the Remediation and Redevelopment program requiring detailed understanding of state statutes and administrative codes covering the leaking underground storage tank, emergency response, superfund, brownfields, spills, landfill remediation, hazardous waste remedies, and/or wastewater cleanup programs. Duties include receiving notifications from property owners, emergency responders, and environmental consulting firms and directing necessary secondary action; identifying potential emergency situations reported; prioritizing cases; ensuring that reports contain needed data to meet all EPA and program reporting requirements; providing public information and interpretation of policies, procedures, statutes, and state and federal regulations.

Waste Management Program Associate, DNR – provide program support for the Waste Management Program requiring a detailed understanding of the state and federal statutes and administrative codes relating to the Waste Program, and a comprehensive understanding of each code section pertaining to licensing of waste facilities and evaluating groundwater quality data. Duties include providing technical and interpretive assistance to applicants for licensure regarding requirements and regulations; reviewing all new license applications and expediting issuance; evaluating and interpreting complex drinking water sample analysis; functioning as the contact person for internal and external customers providing annual waste report activities; providing public information and interpretation of policies, procedures, and rules independent of professional staff.

Environmental Health Program Associate, WSLH – provide administrative support for microbiological and chemical testing for the Drinking Water Quality, Ecosystem Quality and Occupational Health Programs. Duties include acting as a key contact person with the Department of Natural Resources,

County Health Agencies, Occupational Health Agencies and the general public regarding test results; acting as contact point for professional and technical staff within the WSLH; and responding to inquiries regarding environmental health test results and interpretations as it relates to public and private water systems and beaches.

III. QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work, or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This classification was created as a result of the Administrative Support Unit Survey effective July 24, 2005 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0071-MRS-SC to describe positions which provide paraprofessional support to regulatory environmental programs. The positions were formerly classified in the Program Assistant series.

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