

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Personnel

To: Dianne Corso
Director, Division of Personnel
Department of Administration

Date: January 30, 2004

Through: Lee Powelson
Classification Manager
Department of Administration

From: Diane Larocque
Human Resource Specialist

Phone: 465-3837

Fax: 465-2576

Email: Diane_Larocque@admin.state.ak.us

Subject: Public Safety Technician Study (formerly Fish and Wildlife Aide)

Introduction

The Department of Public Safety, Division of Alaska State Troopers requested a study of the Fish and Wildlife Aide (P6210 SR9) job class for the purpose of creating a series with two distinct levels of work, developing class specifications which describe two bodies of work, creating new job titles and reviewing salary placement.

History

The Fish and Wildlife Aide job class has an extensive history of job title and duty changes. Originally established before statehood as stream guards within Fish and Game, the Protection Assistants I (P6223) job class was created in 1968. Incumbents worked under the supervision of a Protection Officer patrolling assigned areas for fish and game law and regulation violations. Enforcement authority for these positions was limited to the issuance of fish and wildlife violation citations. In May 1972 the Protection Division was transferred to the Department of Public Safety. At that time, the job title and minimum qualifications for Protection Assistants were revised and the Protection Assistant job class was replaced with the Fish and Wildlife Aide job class (P6210 SR 9). Because there was considerable confusion in the field between the seasonal, non-commissioned Fish and Wildlife Aide and another permanent special commissioned job class, Protection Aides (P7724 SR12), there were further requests to change the job titles, those requests however, were denied by the Division of Personnel.

In 1983, the Department of Public Safety was given delegated authority to enforce state fish and game laws and regulations, and requested that revisions be made to the Fish and Wildlife Aide job title and duties. As a result, the Fish and Wildlife Aide job class was retitled to Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Aide (P6210 SR9). Created concurrently was the Fish and Wildlife

Enforcement Officer (P6212 SR12), a quasi-professional job class in which incumbents had peace officer status and minimal training. Incumbents were issued uniforms, carried handguns and were given limited enforcement authority.

In April 1986 the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Aide job class was abolished because all remaining Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Aide positions were reclassified to Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officers. Citing recruitment difficulties, the Department of Public Safety requested consideration be given to re-establishing an entry level class to increase the potential for a larger applicant pool. In January 1988, the job class was re-established with changes to the title and minimum qualifications. Fish and Wildlife Aide (SR9) was re-established with "enforcement" removed from the title. All subsequent changes to this job class have been to the minimum qualifications.

Because of liability issues, labor relation concerns over working out job class, and management realignment of duties, the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officer job class was abolished. Since that time reductions in trooper resources and an increasing workload has resulted in departmental realignment. The Department of Public Safety continued to review the duties of its non-commissioned technical aides and as a result, the department has identified several areas where this workforce could be utilized more efficiently in the newly combined division of Alaska State Troopers. Since the Fish and Wildlife Aide job class was created, numerous revisions to job title and duties have occurred, often times resulting in confusion between similar job titles in the Department of Fish and Game and recruitment difficulties for the Department of Public Safety. A comprehensive study which examined clearly defined levels of work in support of fully commissioned officers and their relationship of work to actual practices had never been completed up to this point.

In July of 2003 the department of Public Safety once again submitted a study request to consider creating a series in which entry and journey technical level work is identified. This request is supported by the need to expand responsibility to fully encompass the Department of Public Safety's mission. Included in this study request is the department's request to change the job title from Fish and Wildlife Aide to Public Safety Technician I and II. This would eliminate confusion between the Department of Fish and Game Technicians and the Fish and Wildlife Aides and the history associated with each job class.

Scope

The scope of this study includes all positions currently allocated to the Fish and Wildlife Aide job class.

Method

A study request with draft class specifications describing the work of an entry and journey level technician was received from the Department of Public Safety. The department was given the opportunity to assign an Occupational Consultant to give a presentation on the work and duties assigned to both proposed levels of the Public Safety Technicians. A presentation describing the history the job class and the duties, functions, and tasks of each level was given to the classifier and Department of Public Safety representatives. Identical position descriptions (PDs) describing both entry or journey level work were submitted for allocation review. The Division of Personnel analyst worked with the Department of Public Safety staff to revise standardized position

descriptions and class specifications. The Division of Personnel classifier revised and finalized class specifications, allocated positions to the appropriate job class, conducted an internal alignment for range assignment, and finalized the study.

Class Concepts

Public Safety Technician I

Under the immediate supervision of an Alaska State Trooper or Public Safety Technician II, Public Safety Technicians I perform entry level technical tasks to assist with surveillance and patrol duties, evidence handling and preservation, basic equipment maintenance, data collection, and record keeping.

Public Safety Technician I is the entry level of the series. These are noncommissioned positions having no enforcement authority, and are assistive in nature. Incumbent's primary purpose is to perform assigned duties and report any violations to Alaska State Troopers. Positions at this level have limited public contact.

Public Safety Technician II

Under general supervision of an Alaska State Trooper, Public Safety Technicians II independently perform the full range of assignments in dockside inspections, surveillance and patrol duties, evidence handling and preservation, equipment maintenance, data collection and record keeping procedures. Positions in this class may lead, train, and direct the work of Public Safety Technicians I.

The Public Safety Technician II is the journey level in the Public Safety Technician series. These are noncommissioned paraprofessional positions requiring knowledge of Fish and Wildlife regulations to accurately dispense hunting and fishing information to the public and to recognize violations. Work situations often necessitate the use of discretionary judgment to prioritize and make decisions, and to determine correct course of action.

Analysis

The current Fish and Wildlife Aide job class has been responsible for performing routine field, maintenance, and patrol duties to assist Alaska State Troopers in the prevention of violations and the enforcement of laws and regulations concerning fish and wildlife prevention. Recently, the role of the Fish and Wildlife Aide has been expanded to include assisting Alaska State Troopers in the prevention of violations in all aspects of law enforcement, not just fish and wildlife related law. This work requires a broader knowledge of rules, laws, and regulations. Consequently a greater degree of discretion is necessary to carry out duties. As a result of this expansion of duties, the Department of Public Safety submitted a request to create two levels of work and change the job title from Fish and Wildlife Aide to Public Safety Technician I and II. Additionally, class specifications were revised, minimum qualifications broadened and salary ranges reviewed and assigned.

The Department of Public Safety submitted identical position descriptions describing two distinct levels of work performed by the Fish and Wildlife Aides. The entry level work is described in terms of learning, assisting with and performing duties under the restriction of close supervision, exercising little or no independence, and having limited contact with the public. The journey level work is defined not only by additional duties, but also by the level of independence and discretion necessary to perform duties. Class controlling aspects of the journey level work rests in the full range of performance of duties and the limited supervision received. An example of

class controlling work includes working with the National Marine Fisheries Service in the Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA), a federally funded program. The purpose of this program is to collect fisheries data and perform dockside inspections while supervising offloads, and to conduct interviews with commercial fishermen. Currently the Department of Public Safety hires Fish and Wildlife Technicians III from the Department of Fish and Game to perform this work. Under the proposed changes, this work would be assigned to the Public Safety Technicians II. Other journey level class controlling work includes dispensing and explaining hunting and fishing information and regulations to commercial, sport, and subsistence hunters and fishers, and submitting written case reports regarding patrol or surveillance observations and findings. There is no enforcement authority delegated to either level, rather, violations are reported directly to the Alaska State Troopers for action. Additionally, incumbents at the journey level are expected to train and may lead lower level positions. Public Safety Technicians II are required to perform work with limited guidance and/or instruction and with a greater degree of independence. Only positions at the journey level are assigned work that requires substantive contact with the public. Minimum requirements for the Public Assistant Technician II reflect experience needed at the Public Safety Technician I level in order to perform the work at the journey level.

Also reviewed was the examination for appropriate placement within job class listings since the scope and nature of the work had expanded. Initially the scope of work was limited to Fish and Wildlife related law enforcement. Because the scope of the work now includes all areas of law enforcement support, the current placement of this job class within the Biological Group (6XXX) is no longer appropriate. Since the nature of the work performed by the Public Safety Technicians is in support of law enforcement, placement within the Law Enforcement Family (77XX) more accurately represents the work being done.

Internal Alignment

The state's pay plan, as mandated by the state constitution and statutes, is governed by the merit principle and includes "integrated salary programs based on the nature of the work performed." The pay plan is based upon the state's classification plan, provides for fair and reasonable compensation for services rendered, and reflects the principle of "like pay for like work." In achieving this principle, internal consistency is the primary consideration when setting the salary range of a job class. This internal consistency reflects the difficulty, responsibility, knowledge, skills and other characteristics of a job. Job classes in the same family and group are typically used during classification and internal alignment studies.

Because the (formerly) Fish and Wildlife Aide job class comprises its own family within the Biological Sciences Group (P6XXX), for purposes of internal alignment, the review of job classes was expanded to include those in other families within the Biological Sciences group. Job classes from the Forest Technician series have been scheduled for a class study and are therefore precluded from this comparison. Since the newly titled Public Safety Technicians have been reassigned to the Law Enforcement Family (77XX), job classes within this family were also considered in the review for salary analysis.

Comparison job classes at range 9: Fish and Wildlife Technician II. This class performs work under direct supervision, which is technical in nature. Work requires some knowledge of programmatic procedure but incumbents rely on direction and instruction for all work that would

require the use of discretionary judgment. The similarities are such that this job class was included in the internal alignment.

Comparison job classes at range 10: Natural Resources Technician I. This class performs entry level technical work in support of professional staff. Positions in this job class have a broad programmatic focus, extensive contact with the public, and collect data from outside sources that have already gathered data. Because the scope of the work for the Natural Resources Technician I is broader than the Public Safety Technician performing at this level, the Natural Resource Technician I will not be further considered in the internal alignment. There are no job classes in the Law Enforcement Family at range 10 that are available for comparison.

Comparison job classes at range 11: Fish and Wildlife Technician III. This is a journey level technical position, with incumbents working primarily at field sites, on vessels, or in the office. Positions may act as lead, work requires that the incumbent possesses programmatic knowledge of policies and procedures, and the incumbent has considerable contact with the public. The similarities are such that this job class was included in the internal alignment. There are no job classes in the Law Enforcement Family at range 11 that are available for comparison.

Comparison job classes at range 12: Fish and Game Program Technician, Natural Resource Technician II, Latent Fingerprint Examiner I, and Alaska Automated Fingerprint ID System Operator I. These classes provide specific information in support of programs through the interpretation and analysis of specific data rather than focus on data collection. Because the nature of these job classes are different, they will not be further considered in the internal alignment.

The job class most comparable to Public Safety Technician I is the Fish and Wildlife Technician II (SR 9). Both job classes perform technical work under strict guidelines and direct supervision. Incumbents perform a variety of field and office duties requiring little discretion, under direct supervision.

The job class most comparable to Public Safety Technicians II is the Fish and Wildlife Technician III (SR 11). Both job classes perform journey level technical work under general supervision. Work for both classes require knowledge of program policies and procedures, and the ability to carry out assignments independently and with discretion. Training or leading lower level technicians is common for each job class.

Conclusion

The request to create a series consisting of two levels is appropriate. The newly created class specifications for both the Public Safety Technician I and II levels accurately define and distinguish the work. Both job classes are assigned to the Law Enforcement group (P77XX). Public Safety Technician I is assigned salary range 9 and Public Safety Technician II is assigned salary range 11. The effective date for these changes is February 1, 2004.

cc: Julia Grimes, Director
Division of Alaska State Troopers

Department of Public Safety

Danial Spencer, Director
Administrative Services
Department of Public Safety

Public Protection Management Services
Kim Peterson