

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Personnel

To: Dianne Kiesel
Director

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Through: Sarah Brinkley
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Subject: Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer Study

Preamble:

Three Security Guard I positions located at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) - Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) were included in a classification study of seven Security Guard positions that was requested by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) October 8, 2004. Classification staff members were unavailable to begin the project until August 2005. At that time, seven Security Guard I positions established for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) were also included in the study.

The study was requested by DMVA to determine if a new job class could be created to address what their department perceived as higher level duties that are being performed by PCNs 090222 and 090228.

Study Scope:

All position descriptions for security guards at Fort Richardson (DMVA), at API (DHSS), and at AMHS ferry terminals (DOT&PF) were reviewed to identify common characteristics and determine if a single job class series was appropriate for positions within classified service that perform unarmed security duties.

Study Method:

A planning meeting was held September 9, 2005 and representatives of the impacted departments were invited to attend.

In accordance with the approved Classification Study Plan, the objectives of the study were to:

- 1) analyze and define the body of work common to unarmed security positions in classified service;
- 2) identify other job classes that include security responsibilities, if such classes exist, and determine if additional levels were necessary;
- 3) create class specifications that clearly describe and distinguish each class and provide appropriate minimum qualifications; and

- 4) analyze the new classes for internal alignment and determine appropriate salary ranges.

Each participating department was asked to assign an occupational consultant or contact to work with the Division of Personnel. Each department designated at least one individual to fill this role. Recent Position Descriptions (PDs) for all positions that perform unarmed security functions had been submitted at that time. Department representatives were invited to make presentations to classification staff about their organizations, security functions and characteristics of the positions that perform the work. All three impacted departments participated in presenting information about security work at their facilities.

Initial review of position descriptions from AMHS showed that inclusion in the Security Guard Study was not appropriate. Duties assigned to "Security Screeners" are very specialized, and serve a function that is not sufficiently related to the other positions included in the Security Guard Study. Accordingly, positions established to perform the "Security Screener" function were given additional shoreside duties and allocated as Ferry Terminal Assistants; in part, because positions allocated as Ferry Terminal Assistants were already performing much of that security function. The 19 positions within the AMHS that had been included in the study were removed.

Security Guard positions work shifts intended to cover all hours of day and night; therefore it was not possible to arrange a suitable to interview each incumbent. Those positions that could not be contacted for a telephone interview were presented a series of questions to answer and return via email.

An analysis of Security Guard duties and responsibilities was completed, after incumbents were interviewed. Significant differences were identified between positions at API and those at Fort Richardson. Two factors quickly emerged from analysis of the interview question responses. Positions at DMVA installations are intended to control persons allowed to enter or leave specified areas of the assigned facility; and to protect property from theft and vandalism. Positions at API, by contrast, ensure the safety and security of people (patients and staff) as a first priority, and are thoroughly trained in methods of employing passive restraint.

Definitions and Distinguishing Characteristics were drafted for each level, and copies were distributed via e-mail. As a result of recommendations and comments received, the Definitions and Distinguishing Characteristics were refined, revised, and incorporated in drafts of the complete specifications.

Job Class History:

The Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer (PSSO) job classes were developed after analysis of Security Guard I positions at API showed that they were not sufficiently similar to security guards specifications to justify continued allocation within that job class series. PCNs 062336, 062337, 065348, 065349, and 065350 are currently allocated to Security Guard I (SR9) and provide around the clock security at API. A complete review of their assigned duties was performed. The emphasis on passive restraint and non-aggressive intervention methods employed at API underlined the need to provide job classes other than the Security Guard I and Security Guard II for use at the psychiatric institute. In addition to the differences in methods

used by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and by API, the need for PSSOs to occasionally assist with patient care further justifies the need for unique job classes.

Class Concepts:

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I:

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I ensure the safety and security of patients and staff at the state-owned psychiatric facility, Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). Incumbents provide the ongoing presence needed to enforce policies intended to control access to, and behavior of persons within the facility or on the grounds, and regulations relating to safety at the facility (e.g., possession of firearms or other weapons), ensure that doors and windows are properly secured, and patrol the campus to deter theft and vandalism.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I positions represent the trainee level of the job class series. Incumbents participate in required training courses and on-the-job training needed to provide safety and security services under the direct supervision of a higher-level security position or under the oversight of the on-duty nursing supervisor. Incumbents at this level do not function independently. As training progresses and competency is gained in essential areas, supervision is relaxed and greater independence of action is allowed. Certification, required for promotion to the working level, is made possible by completing training required by the International Association for Healthcare Safety and Security (IAHSS) and by satisfactorily completing a written examination.

Most incumbents do not work the same shift as their immediate supervisor. A senior level safety and security officer usually directs the initial training and orientation of a Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I. As training nears completion, the trainee may report to the Nursing Shift Supervisor. Trainees are not expected to function with the same independence and initiative required of a Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II.

All Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers are flexibly staffed. Because the main body of work exists at the working level, trainees are expected to move to the working level within 18 months of appointment. Progression to the higher level can occur when the incumbent (1) successfully completes the approved training plan, which includes obtaining first level certification by the International Association for Healthcare Safety and Security (IAHSS); (2) meets all other specified terms of the flexible staffing agreement and regulatory requirements; and (3) is certified by the supervisor as prepared to perform at the higher level. Failure to meet these requirements within the prescribed time may result in termination.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I are distinguished from certified police officers and State Troopers, in that Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I are unarmed, and do not complete the training program mandated by the Alaska Police Standards Council. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I job class is unique to the Division of Behavioral Health.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I are distinguished from Security Guards I in that Security Guards I represent the journey level of their job class series and their duties are most directly intended to protect property and ensure against vandalism, theft, or sabotage. Security

Guards I rarely work directly with persons who perform other than security or emergency service work. Unlike Security Guards I, Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I check persons being admitted to the facilities for items that could be harmful to themselves or others (e.g., lighters, matches, penknives) and strive to ensure acceptable behavior from persons at the facility or on the grounds, whether as a patient or a visitor. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I frequently interact with a wide variety of persons and regularly assist medical/psychiatric staff in areas such as providing for the safety of patients by removing them from locations that might result in injury, or sitting with a patient during a suicide watch.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II:

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II ensure the safety and security of patients and staff at the state-owned psychiatric facility, Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). Incumbents provide the ongoing presence needed to enforce policies intended to control access to, and behavior of persons within the facility or on the grounds, and regulations relating to safety at the facility (e.g., possession of firearms or other weapons), ensure that doors and windows are properly secured, and patrol the campus to deter theft and vandalism.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II positions represent the working level of the job class series. Incumbents participate in ongoing training courses to maintain the skills needed to provide safety and security services at the assigned facility. Incumbents at this level function in a largely independent manner. Most incumbents do not work the same shift as their immediate supervisor.

The Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II and the Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I are distinguished from one another, in that level-II positions are expected to act independently, on their own initiative, as a result of their training and experience. Certification, required at the working level, is made possible by completing training required by the International Association for Healthcare Safety and Security (IAHSS) and by satisfactorily completing a written examination. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II typically work with training level positions, one-on-one, providing guidance and oversight until each skill area is learned by the trainee.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II are distinguished from certified police officers and State Troopers, in that Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II are unarmed, and do not exercise arrest authority, as do State Troopers and certified police officers.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II are distinguished from Security Guards I in that Security Guards I have limited contact with persons other than security and law enforcement personnel. Security Guards I rarely become involved in assisting persons who perform other than security work. Unlike Security Guards I, Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II check persons being admitted to the facilities for items that could be harmful to themselves or others (e.g., lighters, matches, penknives) and strive to ensure acceptable behavior from persons at the facility or on the grounds, whether as a patient or a visitor. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II participate in ongoing training to maintain required skill levels and frequently interact with a wide variety of persons. Incumbents regularly assist medical/psychiatric staff in areas

such as providing for the safety of patients by removing them from locations that might result in injury, or sitting with a patient during a suicide watch.

Class Title:

A class title should be the best descriptive title for the work. It is intended to concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed and should be brief, easily recognized, gender neutral, and understood by potential applicants.

API contacts recommended that titles for these job classes reflect the importance placed on protecting the safety and security of patients and staff, and that the titles also reflect a unique relationship with psychiatric facilities. The requirement for journey level positions to possess first level certification by the International Association for Healthcare Safety and Security (IAHSS) also influenced title selection. Accordingly, the series title Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer was selected. The new position descriptions for “security guards” located at API clearly show both a learning level and a full performance level of work. The titles Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I and Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II were chosen for the resulting job classes.

Minimum Qualifications:

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I

High school diploma or the equivalent; a valid Alaska driver's license; and six months of experience in a work environment that requires regular interaction with people and the ongoing application of safety and security precautions (e.g., *a museum, library, national/state/local park, historical site, correctional facility, or similar location where safety and security are major concern*).

Special Requirements: CPR and Basic First Aid certifications are required within six months of hire.

Special Note:

Most positions are required to work shifts and/or nonstandard workweeks are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II

A person eligible for appointment to this class must possess:

- A valid Alaska driver's license, AND
- A high school diploma or the equivalent, AND
- First-level certification by the International Association for Healthcare Safety and Security (IAHSS), AND
- One year of experience ensuring the safety and security of patients and staff at any licensed psychiatric or patient care facility. (Such work is equivalent to that of a Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I with the State of Alaska or the equivalent elsewhere.)

Special Requirements:

Incumbents of this class must hold current certifications in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), basic First Aid (or higher), and Mandt techniques.

Special Note:

Incumbents work shifts and/or nonstandard workweeks, and are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Class Code:

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer job classes are derived from the Security Guard I job class. Security Guard job classes belong to the Job Family 78XX (Fire Inspection, Protection, and Guards). Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I/ II positions are fundamentally different from Security Guards I in other agencies. Still, the broad scope of their work rests within the same community of interest (i.e., Fire Inspection, Protection, and Guards job family). Security Guard I and Security Guard II are assigned class codes P7820 and P7821, respectively. Since the mid-1990's, the class code assignment preference has been to select codes whose last digit is the same as the class level within a job class series, if possible. In this case, such placement would place the PSSO classes among positions whose primary interest is police and fire safety. In the case of Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I and II classes, it is preferable to assign class codes **P7822** and **P7823**, respectively, to help show their relatedness of the Security Guard series.

Fair Labor Standards Act:

The minimum wage and maximum hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as Amended (FLSA) cover positions in this study. Exemptions from the provisions of the Act are determined by the specific circumstances of individual employees on a workweek basis. The general aspects of these classes are such that bona fide executive, professional, or administrative exemptions are precluded for the study positions as they are currently defined.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I and II perform *line function work* directly related to the safety and security of patients, staff, and property at API. This work is not administrative in nature, and does not satisfy the primary duty criterion for administrative exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Court rulings have held, that '[i]n general, where employees of a state or local government agency are performing activities that carry out the ongoing mission and day-to-day functions of the agency – rather than its management policies or the management policies of the state or political subdivision (such as an agency devoted to personnel activities for the entire local government) – such activities cannot be viewed as the types of duties contemplated by the regulation for exemption.'

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I and II cannot satisfy all executive criteria for exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act because they do not supervise other positions.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I and II do not satisfy the professional criteria for exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. None of the positions in the subject job classes requires knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction; nor do they require invention, imagination, originality, or talent in a recognized field of artistic or creative endeavor.

Position Allocation:

None of the five positions included in this study meet all certification requirements for advancement to the Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II. All initial allocations to the job class series are therefore made at the first level.

Current Classification:

<u>PCN</u>	<u>Class Title</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Rg</u>	<u>Loc</u>	<u>BU</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>FLSA</u>
062336	Security Guard I	P7820	09	EBA	GG	PACL	N
062337	Security Guard I	P7820	09	EBA	GG	FACL	N
065348	Security Guard I	P7820	09	EBA	GG	FACL	N
065349	Security Guard I	P7820	09	EBA	GG	FACL	N
065350	Security Guard I	P7820	09	EBA	GG	PACL	N

Approved Classification:

<u>PCN</u>	<u>Class Title</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Rg</u>	<u>Loc</u>	<u>BU</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>FLSA</u>
062336	Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I (flex I/II)	P7822	09	EBA	GG	PACL	N
062337	Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I (flex I/II)	P7822	09	EBA	GG	FACL	N
065348	Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I (flex I/II)	P7822	09	EBA	GG	FACL	N
065349	Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I (flex I/II)	P7822	09	EBA	GG	FACL	N
065350	Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I (flex I/II)	P7822	09	EBA	GG	PACL	N

A flexible staffing agreement has been developed for all positions in this job class series. Positions may be moved from one level to another when required as described in standard operating procedures defined for the Division of Personnel.

Internal Alignment Analysis:

Job class salary ranges are determined by comparing classes that perform similar work. The aim of such comparisons is to provide “like pay for like work”, in keeping with the State’s pay plans and merit principles. The difficulty encountered in performing assignments, the level of responsibility entrusted to a position, and the knowledge and skills needed to perform the work are among the characteristics compared with other job classes to ensure internal salary consistency.

The salary range for the journey level of a job class series must be determined before other job classes can be properly aligned. The journey level for the Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer series is the PSSO-II.

Salary comparisons made with job classes within the same job family, whose incumbents are in the same bargaining unit, usually provide the best alignment. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I and II (PSSO-I and -II) belong to the “Fire Inspection, Protection, and Guards” job family. A preliminary review of the 23 job classes within that job family reveals four job classes that invite closer comparison with PSSOs; Guard I (P7812 – SR6), Dormitory Attendant (P7805 – SR11), Security Guard I (P7820 – SR9), and Security Guard II – SR11).

The Guard I job class was removed from comparison after learning that all incumbents of that class are hired on a temporary basis, all Guard I positions are partially exempt so they do not belong to a bargaining unit, and the minimum qualifications for appointment to the class are not on par with those for the PSSO classes.

Dormitory Attendants (P7805 – SR11) ensure the safety and security of students housed at the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC). These positions have considerable latitude for independent judgment. Dormitory Attendants at AVTEC interpret broadly stated policies to determine proper application to dormitory residents. Policies and procedures used by Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II generally require less interpretation to determine proper application; however greater knowledge and skill is needed to work with API patients than is required to deal with students at AVTEC. Dormitory Attendants are responsible for taking necessary actions to correct behavior and maintain the safety and security of students housed at AVTEC facilities; whereas, Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II are on watch constantly to intervene, should violent situations occur. The PSSO must protect the staff, visitors, and patients while placing themselves in peril of injury.

Security Guards I (P7820 - SR 9) and the Security Guard II (P7821 - SR 11) perform foot and vehicular patrols to observe people on or near assigned facilities, keep intruders out of secure areas, observe and report security hazards, and call emergency service personnel as needed. SG-I positions follow narrowly defined situational procedures, and do not apply independent judgment except when higher level authority is not immediately available and action is required. The SG-II position has much greater latitude for independent action and interprets policies when necessary. All PSSOs conduct periodic exterior patrols similar to those conducted by security guards, though the physical size of the API facility and campus makes vehicular patrols less necessary.

While security guards operate on an “observe and report” basis, PSSOs often intercede to prevent dangerous situations. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers are constantly at risk of injury from mentally disturbed individuals. Unlike security guards, PSSOs must use non-aggressive behavior and passive restrain techniques in dealing with patients; their actions must be tailored to circumstances surrounding specific individuals. The journey-level Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II exercises greater latitude of independent judgment than does its Security Guard I counterpart. PSSO-II positions require initiative and originality in performing their work because the circumstances affecting their work are as varied and complex as the patients at API. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers II lack the supervisory responsibilities of the Security Guard II, but more nearly reflect the level of independence found in that class than in the journey-level Security Guard I.

The Safety Officer at Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) was encouraged to recommend relevant job classes for comparison during the salary alignment analysis. Psychiatric Nursing Assistant I-IV (P5170 – P5173) job classes were offered for comparison because they work within the same environment and deal directly with the patients. Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer incumbents assist PNAs with a number of duties performed to help ensure the welfare of API patients. Among the job classes in the PNA series, the Psychiatric Nursing Assistant III (P5172 – SR12) was selected; because it shows greatest similarity to the journey level PSSO-II, in terms of decision making and responsibility and because PSSOs and PNAs sometimes work together to control volatile situations or to ensure the safety of patients.

PNAs-III and PSSOs-II share a common work environment. The work assigned to PNAs is largely within the facility, and is devoted to assisting with patient care functions. PSSOs work both inside and outside the facility, and are sometimes called upon to accompany patients to a medical facility for emergency care. Like PSSOs-II, PNA-III positions are expected to act independently, exercise sound judgment, and initiate action in emergency situations based on their training and experience. Neither job class is supervisory in nature, but both may lead the work of lower level positions within their job class series.

Summary

Of the job classes compared for this salary alignment analysis, only the Security Guard II has supervisory responsibility. The Dormitory Attendant, Security Guard II, Psychiatric Nursing Assistant III, and Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II all exercise considerable discretion within existing guidelines to perform their respective jobs, applying the discretion and independent judgment needed to adjust to observed circumstances. Recommendations made by the SG-II regarding procedural changes appear to be given more weight than the other compared classes. The initial training requirements for the Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II surpass those for each of the classes used for alignment. Though the PNA-III and the PSSO-II are comparable in many respects, a composite of classification characteristics shows that Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II does not attain equality with the Psychiatric Nursing Assistant III or the Security Guard II. A recent study of Security Guard positions resulted in the SG-II being advanced to SG12. An initial salary range assignment for Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer II of SR11 is recommended.

Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I is a trainee job class. The level of responsibility and authority PSSO-I positions are expected to exercise is extremely limited. Though an incumbent performs most of the duties assigned to journey level positions, all work is completed under close supervision until proficiency has been demonstrated. The salary range for trainee job classes are typically two ranges lower than journey level positions (i.e., two ranges below the salary range 11 for the PSSO-II). The level of work performed entry level Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers I and the latitude for independent action exercised is best compared to a Security Guard I; the class from which the PSSO-I was derived. An initial salary range assignment of SR9 is recommended for the Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer I.

Conclusions:

This study was originally part of an inclusive study of all unarmed security positions within classified service for the State of Alaska. Differences in work environment, required training,

and methods employed to ensure security indicated that a single job class series for positions at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the Alaska Marine Highway System, and the Alaska Psychiatric Institute was not feasible. The Psychiatric Safety and Security Officer job class series was created to address the unique characteristics of security positions at API.

The positions retained in this study require a considerable amount of training. Positions working under close supervision can successfully perform most of the essential duties during the training process. When trainees have completed required preparation and gained all required certifications, they can advance to the journey level and work with little supervision.

The level of responsibility and discretion required of a journey level Psychiatric Safety and Security Guard II, and the potential for personal injury by psychiatric patients, makes a salary range eleven (SR11) appropriate. The fact that trainee level positions perform all duties of journey level positions except direct intervention with patients; coupled with the comparability of the work performed with Security Guards I, makes the initial salary assignment for Psychiatric Safety and Security Officers to salary range nine (SR9) fitting.

Attachments:

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