

Personnel Rule 2.1 – Classification of Position in the Classified Service

2.1.0 Authority

SMC 4.04.040 and subsequent revisions thereto, Administration

SMC 4.04.050 and subsequent revisions thereto, Rule-making authority

SMC 4.04.130 and subsequent revisions thereto, Classification

SMC 4.20.080 and subsequent revisions thereto, Changes in incumbent status

2.1.1 Definitions

- A. “Allocation” shall mean the placement of a position in the appropriate classification within the classified service.
- B. “Appointing authority” shall mean the head of an employing unit, or a designated management representative, authorized by ordinance or City Charter to employ others on behalf of the City. The term includes and can be used interchangeably with department head, department director, superintendent and chief.
- C. “Classification” shall mean any group of positions the Seattle Human Resources Director determines is sufficiently similar in nature and level of work that the same title may be applied to all.
- D. “Classification determination” shall mean a signed and dated report issued by the Seattle Human Resources Director indicating the proper allocation of a classified service position.
- E. “Classification review” shall mean a review of a position’s assigned duties and responsibilities to determine its proper allocation to a classification based on a comparison with the typical duties, responsibilities and requirements of other City classifications.
- F. “Classification series” shall mean two or more classifications that perform similar tasks or work but differ in degree of difficulty and responsibility.
- G. “Classification specification” shall mean a written description of a classification in the Step Progression Pay Program that includes a title, a description of distinguishing characteristics, a statement of typical duties and responsibilities, and a statement of minimum qualifications.
- H. “Classified service” shall mean all employment positions in the City that are not excluded by ordinance, City Charter or State law from the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 4.04 or the Personnel Rules adopted pursuant thereto.
- I. “Out-of-class assignment” shall mean the assignment of an eligible employee to perform the ongoing duties and accept the responsibilities of a higher-paying title on a temporary basis in order to avoid a significant interruption of services.
- J. “Seattle Human Resources Director” shall mean the director of the Seattle Department of Human Resources or his or her designated management representative.

- K. "Position" shall mean the selection of duties and responsibilities that constitute the body of work an employee is assigned to perform.
- L. "Position incumbent" shall mean the employee who has a regular appointment to a specified position.
- M. "Reallocation" shall mean the placement of a position in a different classification because its management has made a deliberate decision to assign to it a new body of duties that substantively changes its nature and scope.
- N. "Reclassification" shall mean the placement of a position in a different classification due to the gradual accretion of duties over a period of 6 months or longer, that substantively changes its nature or scope.
- O. "Reconsideration" shall mean a process whereby a position incumbent or departmental management may, following the issuance of a classification determination, submit additional information to the Seattle Human Resources Director that they believe may change such determination.
- P. "Regularly appointed employee" shall mean an employee who has a probationary, regular or exempt appointment to a position of City employment.
- Q. "Status" shall mean the condition of being probationary or regular in the current classification.
- R. "Step Progression Pay Program" shall mean a compensation system that provides for salary progression based on length of service.

2.1.2 Application of this Rule

- A. This Rule applies to regularly appointed employees in the classified service.
- B. For regularly appointed employees in the classified service who are represented under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, this Rule prevails except where it conflicts with the collective bargaining agreement, any memoranda of agreement or understanding signed pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement, or any recognized and established practice relative to the members of the bargaining unit.
- C. This Rule does not apply to individuals who are employed under the terms of a grant that includes provisions that conflict with this Rule.
- D. This Rule does not apply to individuals hired by the City on a temporary, intermittent or seasonal basis, or for a work schedule of fewer than 20 hours per week; nor does it apply to individuals hired under contract to the City.
- E. Appointing authorities may establish written policies and procedures for the implementation and administration of this Rule to facilitate the management of the personnel system within their employing units, provided that such procedures do not conflict with the provisions of this Rule.

2.1.3 Classification of Positions

- A. The Seattle Human Resources Director is authorized to classify each position in the classified service.

- B. The Seattle Human Resources Director shall allocate to the same classification positions that are assigned substantially similar work at similar levels of complexity and responsibility.
- C. The Seattle Human Resources Director shall allocate to the same classification series positions that are assigned substantially similar work at differing levels of complexity and responsibility.
- D. The appointing authority is responsible for the delegation and management of work within the employing unit.

2.1.4 Review of Position Classification

- A. A classification review is required when:
 - 1. The appointing authority changes, on other than an out-of-class basis, the body of work that is assigned to a position such that the current allocation no longer applies to the body of work performed.
 - 2. A position incumbent accretes, over a period of at least 6 months, additional tasks and responsibilities such that the current allocation no longer applies to the body of work performed.
 - 3. The appointing authority proposes the establishment of a new position within the employing unit.
- B. The appointing authority shall timely submit a request for classification review, including a signed and dated position description questionnaire, to the Seattle Human Resources Director.
- C. The incumbent of a position may request a classification review of the work assigned to his or her position with or without the concurrence of the appointing authority if:
 - 1. The position incumbent has accreted over a period of at least 6 months a body of work that is not adequately described by the current classification specification or other official job description for the position on file with the Seattle Human Resources Director; and
 - 2. The new or additional tasks and responsibilities do not represent an out-of-class assignment.
- D. Effective September 30, 2003, retroactivity of classification determinations is limited to 30 calendar days prior to the date a completed position description questionnaire is received by the Seattle Human Resources Director. A position incumbent may submit a signed and dated position description questionnaire directly to the Seattle Human Resources Director, in which case retroactivity of the classification determination is limited to 30 calendar days prior to the date it is received by the Director. A request for an exception to the effective date as specified in this Rule must have the written concurrence of the appointing authority and the City's Finance Director.

2.1.5 Implementation of a Classification Determination

- A. The appointing authority must approve a classification determination before it is implemented. If the appointing authority determines that a classification

determination is the result of improperly assigned or accreted duties, he or she may reassign the duties in question to another properly classified position rather than implement the classification determination. The appointing authority shall notify the Seattle Human Resources Director of his or her decision not to implement the classification determination within 30 calendar days of the date of the Seattle Human Resources Director's transmittal of such determination. The reassignment of duties must be reviewed by the Seattle Human Resources Director to ensure no impact on the second position's allocation.

- B. The incumbent of the first position must be correctly compensated for the performance of any higher level duties from the time the duties were assigned or fully accreted, according to the classification determination, until they are reassigned to another position.

2.1.6 Effect of Classification Changes on Incumbent

- A. Retitling: When the title of a classification is changed without a change in duties or responsibilities, the incumbent will have the same status in the class (i.e. probationary or regular) as he or she previously held. The employee's service credit for purposes of layoff shall carry forward into the new classification.
- B. Reclassification:
 - 1. When a position is reclassified because of a gradual change in the nature, scope or complexity of the duties, the incumbent will have the same status (i.e., probationary or regular) as previously held. The employee's service credit for purposes of layoff in the new classification shall accrue from the effective date of the classification determination.
 - 2. In the case of a reclassification which results in a reduction to a position with a lower maximum pay rate, the appointing authority may transfer the incumbent to a vacant position in the original classification in the same employing unit. If there is no vacant position in the original classification in the employing unit, the appointing authority will reduce the incumbent to the lower-paid classification.
 - 3. Assignment of duties on an out-of-class basis does not constitute a gradual change in duties.
- C. Reallocation: When an appointing authority, deliberately and usually prospectively, assigns a new body of work to a classified service position resulting in a classification change, the reallocated position will be filled by a selection process. If the appointing authority intends to consider the position incumbent for appointment, the selection process may be limited to a qualifications audit by the Seattle Human Resources Director.
 - 1. If the incumbent is not selected for the reallocated position and cannot be moved to a vacant position in the previous classification, the appointing authority shall request an order of layoff be prepared for the position's previous classification.
 - 2. If the incumbent is selected for the reallocated position, the appointment thereto will be treated as a promotion, reduction, or transfer, depending

upon the relationship between the maximum pay rate of the new classification and the maximum pay rate of the previous classification.

2.1.7 Effective Date of Classification Change

- A. A classification change which results in the allocation of a position to a classification with a lower maximum pay rate becomes effective 30 calendar days following the expiration of the reconsideration request period, or 30 calendar days following the issuance of a final classification determination from a reconsideration process, whichever is later .
- B. A classification change which results in the allocation of a position to a classification with a higher maximum pay rate becomes effective on the date that the substantive change to the position can be verified by the Seattle Human Resources Director, but no earlier than 30 calendar days prior to the receipt by the Seattle Human Resources Director of the completed position description questionnaire and request for a classification review as provided by Rule 2.1.4 (D). The effective date of the classification change shall be confirmed in the classification determination.
- C. A reallocation becomes effective on the date that the position's supervisor, manager, or appointing authority assigns a new body of duties thereto, but no earlier than 30 calendar days prior to the receipt by the Seattle Human Resources Director of the completed position description questionnaire and request for a classification review as provided by Rule 2.1.4 (D). The effective date of the reallocation will be confirmed in the classification report.