

September 26, 2007

RE: William DeRouen v. Department of Labor and Industries (LNI)  
Allocation Review No.ALLO-07-03

Dear Mr. DeRouen:

The Director's review of LNI's allocation determination of your position has been completed. The review was based on the written documentation submitted by you and by LNI. LNI determined that your Warehouse Operator 2 position should be reallocated to the Supply Control Technician classification. You asked for a Director's review of LNI's determination. You believe that your position should be reallocated to either the Warehouse Operator 3 or the Supply Officer 1 classification.

### **Background**

On November 14, 2006, your supervisor signed an updated Position Description form for your position. You signed the form on November 17, 2006. Debbie Yantis, Human Resource Consultant for LNI reviewed your position and determined that it should be reallocated to the Supply Control Technician classification. You were informed of this determination by letter dated December 12, 2006. On January 8, 2007, you requested a Director's review of LNI's determination.

By letter dated August 8, 2007, Karen Wilcox, the Director's Review Coordinator, informed the parties that the review of your position would be conducted based on the documents provided by the parties. Ms. Wilcox set an exhibit deadline of September 10, 2007 for submission of additional documentation. On September 7, 2007, LNI submitted a written allocation appeal statement with attachments. We received no additional documentation from you. But, your request for review included a number of attachments that were considered as part of my review.

### **Summary of Mr. DeRouen's Perspective**

In your January 8, 2007 letter, you indicate that with the introduction of fully automated inventory systems, warehouse functions have become more complex and you have had to become proficient utilizing the newer inventory systems at LNI. You assert that you serve as the

principle assistant for the inventory function to the Warehouse Operations Supervisor who is allocated to the Supply Officer 2 classification. You contend that automated inventory systems involve technical functions necessary to maintain accurate master inventory records. You feel these functions are encompassed by the definition and examples of work described in the Supply Officer 1 specification. In addition, you argue that the impact of errors is significant for senior warehouse operators performing complex inventory functions. You believe the Warehouse Operator 3 classification includes this level of complexity.

In addition, you assert that because of the increased complexity of the duties you perform, an increase in salary of more than one pay range is justified.

### **Summary of LNI's reasoning**

LNI states that they reviewed the duties of your position and compared them with the Warehouse Operator 2 and the Supply Control Technician classifications. In their written allocation appeal statement, LNI also addresses the Supply Officer 1 classification. Subsequent to your request for review, LNI compared your duties to the Warehouse Operator 3 classification. This classification is also addressed in LNI's written allocation appeal statement.

LNI explains that your "position is supervised by a Supply Officer 2 who is responsible for supervising and coordinating the activities of the procurement, receiving, storage, issue and transfer of supplies, equipment and property in the Labor and Industries Warehouse. The supervisor receives, examines, approves and processes procurement requests for supplies and equipment." LNI also states that your assigned duties do not include leading staff.

LNI determined that your position did not meet the definition of the Warehouse Operator 3 classification because you do not have lead responsibilities. LNI further determined that the lead worker assigned to the warehouse serves as the principle assistant to the supervisor for the overall duties assigned to the warehouse, including procurement and inventory functions; therefore, your position does not function as the principle assistant to your supervisor as required by the Supply Officer 1. LNI concluded that the Supply Control Technician classification best encompassed the duties of your position because you perform the full range of technical duties under the warehouse supervisor.

### **Director's Determination**

For purposes of my review of your position, I compared the duties and responsibilities described in Position Description for your position to the classification specifications in place on November 20, 2006, the date on which LNI received your updated Position Description form. I specifically reviewed the Warehouse Operations Occupational Category which includes the Warehouse Operator 2 and 3 classifications, the Supply Officer 1 classification and the Supply Control Technician classification.

As the Director's designee, I carefully reviewed all of the documentation in the file including your letter requesting a review of LNI's determination and your attachments to the letter. Based on my review of the documents, the available classifications, and my analysis of your assigned

duties and responsibilities, I conclude that your position should be allocated to the Warehouse Operator 2 classification.

### **Rationale for Determination**

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

You argue that the increased complexity of your work warrants an increase in salary. However, salary inequity is not an allocation criteria and should not be considered when determining the appropriate allocation of a position. See Sorensen v Depts. Of Social and Health Services and Personnel, PAB Case No. A94-020 (1995).

The distinguishing characteristics for the Warehouse Operator 3 classification state: “[t]his is the senior level of the series. Positions lead staff and participate in the work of procuring, receiving, storing, inventory control, or shipping operations in a commissary or warehouse, or electronic/communications stockroom, or a combination of these activities. Some positions manage the retail store and/or food counter at a large institution.” (Emphasis added).

One of the attachments you included with your request for review was an excerpt from the Department of Personnel's Classification and Pay Administrative Guide. This attachment included the definition of class levels for fully merged occupational categories. However, page 13 of the Guide also states: “[o]nce the [occupational] category has been determined, the specific class levels within the category should be reviewed. The distinguishing characteristics are the primary criteria for determining the appropriate class within the category. Additionally, the broad definitions of each of the four class levels (page 7) serve to further define the intent of the distinguishing characteristics.” (Emphasis added).

In this case, the distinguishing characteristics for the Warehouse Operator 3 classification require that positions at this level lead staff. You are not assigned lead responsibilities; therefore, allocation of your position to this level is not appropriate.

The definition for the Supply Officer 1 classification states, in relevant part, “. . . serves as principle assistant to higher level supply officer.”

As explained by LNI, the lead worker assigned to the warehouse serves as the principle assistant to the Warehouse supervisor for the overall duties encompassed by the warehouse functions. In your letter requesting a review of your position, you assert that you are the principle assistant for the inventory function only. You do not assert that you function as a principle assistant to the Warehouse supervisor in the areas of the procurement, receiving, storage, issue and transfer of

supplies, equipment and property. Typically, the scope of a principle assistant would include providing assistance in all aspects of his/her superior's areas of responsibilities. Your position does not perform the scope of duties that would be performed by a principle assistant to a Warehouse Supervisor. Your position does not fit within the Supply Officer 1 classification.

The definition for the Supply Control Technician classification states: "[p]erforms the full range of technical duties under the supervision of the individual responsible for the purchasing of supplies, materials and equipment for an agency, institution, major subdivision, or major operating location of agency. Supervises and/or participates in purchasing control, maintaining inventory levels, contract and invoice billing, and correspondence work connected with tracing and expediting orders."

The distinguishing characteristics for the Supply Control Technician classification state: "[p]ositions at this level support an individual responsible for the purchasing of supplies, materials, and equipment for an agency, institution, major subdivision, or major operating location of an agency, by handling the purely technical aspects of purchasing and inventory control."

In summary, your Position Description indicates that the key activities of your position are:

55% General Warehouse support including receiving, stocking, issuing and shipping activities, operating inventory management systems, working the front counter, taking orders by telephone, servicing walk-in customers and receiving shipments. You forward invoices for payment, assemble furniture and equipment prior to delivery, troubleshoot and correct discrepancies in orders and invoices. You also assist the Warehouse Supervisor in managing the master inventory stock records.

10% Materials handling equipment operation including operating a forklift and electric pallet jack to load and unload materials and supplies.

10% Surplus processing including receiving surplus property and preparing documentation for disposition. You also disassemble furniture, tag items for disposition, and coordinate transfer of surplus items with other agencies.

10% Facilities management support including performing workstation ergonomic adjustments, accessory installations, office reconfigurations and minor office repairs. You also install and repair building fixtures and operate hand and power tools.

Your duties include some technical aspects of inventory control and purchasing. But your overall duties and work activities also include work of a specialized manual or mechanical nature. The Supply Control Technician classification does not include manual or mechanical warehouse work functions.

The Warehouse Operator 2 classification includes technical, manual and mechanical warehouse duties. In Mikitik v. Dept's of Wildlife and Personnel, PAB No. A88-021 (1989), the Personnel Appeals Board concluded that when there is a class that specifically includes a particular assignment and there is a general classification that has a definition which could also apply to the position, the position should be allocated to the class that specifically includes the position.

The distinguishing characteristics for Warehouse Operator 2 state, in relevant part: “[t]his is the journey level of the series. Performs warehouse functions in a major area within a large warehouse or independently operates a small or decentralized warehouse; receives, records, stores, issues, and ships stock and supplies; and disposes of surplus property. . . Some positions may be required to operate material handling equipment such as forklift trucks and light trucks.”

All aspects of your position fit within the distinguishing characteristics of this class. You perform warehouse functions including operating inventory management systems, receiving, stocking, issuing and shipping activities, taking orders, dealing with invoices, operating material handling equipment and receiving and preparing surplus property for disposition. Your duties and responsibilities are also encompassed by the following examples of work for this class. For example, you:

- Participate in the procuring, receiving, unloading, moving and loading of various types of materials, equipment or electronics/communications components and equipment;

- Conduct ongoing property inventory control maintenance and are responsible for accurate maintenance of accounting records that identify inventory on hand in addition to that being shipped and received;

- Participate in unpacking incoming items and checking their condition, quantity, and type, against shipping documents; make stock identification tags; coding acquisition and handling charges shown on receiving documents;

- Operate material handling equipment such as forklift trucks and light trucks;

- Maintain perpetual inventory and keep other records as required;

- Oversee disposal of surplus or excess property; and

- Oversee assembly of goods received.

Your position should be allocated to the Warehouse Operator 2 classification.

### **Appeal Rights**

WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director's review to the Personnel Resources Board by filing written exceptions to the Directors' determination in accordance with Chapter 357-52 WAC.

WAC 357-52-015 states that an appeal must be received in writing at the office of the Board within thirty (30) calendar days after service of the Directors' determination. The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

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Sincerely,

Holly Platz, SPHR  
Director's Review Investigator

cc: Debbi Yantis, LNI  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP