



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

STATE HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION | DIRECTOR'S REVIEW PROGRAM  
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July 18, 2013

TO: Teresa Parsons, SPHR  
Director's Review Program Supervisor

FROM: Kris Brophy, SPHR  
Director's Review Program Investigator

SUBJECT: LeRoy Mertens v. Department of Corrections (DOC)  
Allocation Review Request ALLO-12-063

A management-initiated position review was conducted on Mr. Mertens' position based upon an updated Position Description form (PDF) received by the DOC Human Resource Services office (DOC HR) on August 30, 2012 (Exhibit B-2). As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, including the exhibits presented during the Director's review telephone conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of Mr. Mertens' assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude his position is properly allocated to the Electronics Technician classification.

**Background**

On August 30, 2012, DOC HR received Mr. Mertens' PDF from management, requesting that his Electronics Technician position be reallocated to the Electronics Technician 4 classification (Exhibit B-2).

By letter dated October 23, 2012, DOC HR notified Mr. Mertens that the request to reallocate his position was denied and that he was properly allocated to the Electronics Technician classification (Exhibit B-8).

On November 19, 2012, the State Human Resources Division received Mr. Mertens' letter appealing DOC's allocation determination (Exhibit A-1).

I conducted a Director's review telephone conference with the parties on May 16, 2013. Present during the conference were LeRoy Mertens, Ms. Sarah Conly, Human Resource Consultant, and Tina Cooley, HRIS and Classification Manager, DOC.

### **Rationale for Director's 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. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

Mr. Mertens works for the Security Electronics shop within the Coyote Ridge Correction Center's (CRCC) Maintenance Department. Mr. Mertens installs, maintains, repairs and tests a variety of electronic communication, fire alarm, intercom, surveillance, and other electronic systems and equipment.

The Position Objective section of the PDF states that Mr. Mertens' position maintains the offender television system and also keeps the fire – life safety standards in compliance. It states a key role of his position is to ensure that the low voltage electronic security systems are working properly.

The majority of Mr. Mertens' time is spent performing troubleshooting, maintenance, testing and repair of electronic and low voltage electrical systems and sub-systems used in and around the CRCC facility. This includes sensors, logic relay and other controls used in facility and security, alarm, closed circuit and cable television surveillance systems, fire/smoke detection and fire suppression systems.

As stated in the PDF for his position (Exhibit B-2), Mr. Mertens performs a variety of shop and field testing, adjustment, troubleshooting and repair work to replace system components, integrated circuits, transistors and resistors of electronic systems, equipment and devices used in security and alarm surveillance systems. He checks, adjusts, calibrates and repairs a variety of recording and indicating devices and equipment. He performs electronic repairs to system, board or component level, and calibrates and tests for proper operation.

Mr. Mertens' duties and responsibilities are summarized from the PDF form as follows:

- 75% Plans, prioritizes and organizes the work associated with maintenance and repairs of Security Electronics equipment to assure systems are in good repair and working as expected. Perform preventive maintenance (PM) as recommended by manufacturers or suppliers.

Tasks include:

Implement and evaluate workflow priorities to maintain/troubleshoot/repair all equipment and systems assigned to Security Electronics shop. Repairs, maintains, troubleshoot offender TV system. Maintains and repairs fire alarm system and all associated components including replacement, repair and testing of smoke, heat and duct detectors. Maintains and repairs hand portable fire extinguishers in compliance with NFPA requirements. Maintains security cameras, recording devices, computers and monitoring devices associated with these systems. Maintain, troubleshoot and

repair Systemax telephone infrastructure, intercom system and monitor the perimeter electronic fence security systems. Ensures repair/maintenance/troubleshooting will not negatively impact operations using effective communication to appropriate staff and/or supervisor(s). Determine materials and equipment needed to perform maintenance and repairs. Contact vendors, order equipment and/or materials and install as necessary. Provide information and instruction to unit staff to assure proper operation of such equipment in the future.

- 15% Develop methods, processes and tasks to resolve work orders submitted by CRCC staff in a timely manner.

Tasks include:

Review the work order status with staff and supervisors in the work areas. Use effective communication with staff and/or supervisor(s) to ensure repair/maintenance or troubleshooting activity will not negatively impact operations of the facility. Complete repair/maintenance as appropriate for the situation. Upon completion of the repair/maintenance or troubleshooting performed, document all work activities accurately and timely to reflect resolution of the work order in Micromain.

- 5% When performing preventative maintenance, repairs or other duties associated with Security Electronics equipment, independently evaluate the equipment to ensure it will continue to achieve standard and effective performance.

Tasks include:

Using preventative maintenance (PM) protocols and within parameters of the budget to identify areas that need further evaluation for replacement or upgrades of equipment.

During the review telephone conference Mr. Mertens clarified that while he and his co-workers within the Electronics shop may work on any piece of equipment or system, each technician is generally assigned one or more specific electrical systems to work on. For example, Mr. Mertens stated that he generally has primary responsibility for maintaining the facility's Systemax telephone system's data cabling infrastructure.

### Supervisor's Comments

Mr. Mertens' supervisor is Mr. Michael V. Autio, Electronics Technician Supervisor. Mr. Autio signed the PDF for Mr. Mertens' position, indicating that the job duties described within Mr. Mertens' PDF are accurate and complete. Mr. Autio provided comments to Ms. Conly during her position review as indicated in Exhibit B-5.

In his comments, Mr. Autio also states, *"Work is assigned to the Electronics Shop through the Micromain CMMS. It is a standard work system in addition to projects assigned."* Mr. Mertens works with another employee in the shop, Mr. Nathan Franco, who is also allocated to the Electronics Technician class. Mr. Autio has administrative responsibility for receiving all work orders via the Micromain and then assigning them to the technicians. Mr. Autio also states that, *"both positions are capable of determining scope and priority and working together or independently as needed to resolve the facility need."*

Mr. Autoio also states that projects are "*decided on a group basis. Each technician is charged with being able to handle all work orders that are assigned. The Electronic Technician Supervisor is responsible for making certain that work is distributed equitably.*"

#### Summary of DOC's Reasoning

DOC contends Mr. Mertens' duties do not reach ET 4 level responsibility. DOC contends Mr. Mertens' position provides journey-level electronics technician work consistent with the Electronics Technician (ET) class. Therefore, DOC contends the majority of Mr. Mertens' time is spent performing journey-level work as an Electronics Technician, which involves performing standard installation, maintenance, testing and repairing activities for a variety of electrical and electronic systems used in security and alarm surveillance at CRCC. DOC contends Mr. Mertens' position is properly allocated to the ET class.

#### Summary of Mr. Mertens' Perspective

Mr. Mertens asserts he performs senior-level electronics technician work at CRCC, and that the overall level of responsibility and complexity of his work is consistent with the requirements of the Electronics Technician 4 class. Mr. Mertens asserts the technology associated with the safety and security systems at the facility are far more advanced than they used to be, requiring specialized knowledge and training in order to maintain, develop, install and repair those systems.

In total, Mr. Mertens asserts his position should be reallocated to the ET 4 class.

#### Class Specifications

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations.

#### Comparison of Duties to the Electronics Technician 4 (ET4)

The Definition for this class states:

Serves as Lead or senior level technician and performs work in [the] layout, construction and installation of electronic and safety equipment. Troubleshoots, maintains, repairs and tests, analog, and/or digital electronic equipment. Delivers and installs equipment, calibrate test equipment. Assembles scientific instruments or electronic air monitoring systems. Implements and evaluates workflow priorities. Develops and disseminates instructions and information to unit personnel. [Emphasis added]

The State Human Resources Glossary of Classification Terms defines Lead as:

An employee who performs the same or similar duties as other employees in his/her work group and has the designated responsibility to regularly assign, instruct, and check the work of those employees on an ongoing basis.

The State Human Resources Glossary of Classification Terms defines Senior as:

The performance of work requiring the consistent application of advanced knowledge and requiring a skilled and experienced practitioner to function independently. Senior-level work includes devising methods and processes to resolve complex or difficult issues that have broad potential impact. These issues typically involve competing interests, multiple clients, conflicting rules or practices, a range of possible solutions, or other elements that contribute to complexity. The senior-level has full authority to plan, prioritize, and handle all duties within an assigned area of responsibility. Senior-level employees require little supervision and their work is not typically checked by others.”

Mr. Mertens' position does not have lead responsibility and his duties do not fully reach the requirements of this class of performing a variety complex, senior-level tasks as required.

Mr. Mertens does not spend a majority of his time performing complex senior-level work at the level anticipated by this class such as fabricating, assembling and testing electronic circuitry in accordance with schematics and diagrams. The majority of his work does not require devising methods and processes to resolve complex or difficult issues. He does not develop or evaluate newly-developed equipment or other types of instrumentation.

Mr. Mertens does not have full authority to independently plan, prioritize, and handle all duties within his assigned area of responsibility. From the information presented, the majority of his work involves completing standard and generally recurring work assignments which come from written work orders and assignments from his supervisor. Therefore, the overall latitude to which he can independently plan and prioritize his work within his assigned area of responsibility is limited.

Additionally, Mr. Mertens' responsibility for consulting with professional and technical personnel on design concepts, equipment requirement(s), and feasibility of fabrication and installation during new construction or remodeling projects is limited.

Mr. Mertens does not develop preventative maintenance procedures, schedules and forms or develop quality assurance procedures for proposal to management.

Mr. Mertens does not prepare reports for management review.

Mr. Mertens does maintain and operate electronic test equipment. He keeps records of work performed and supplies used and he does perform standard preventive maintenance on electronic systems and electronic test equipment. He tests, diagnoses, adjusts and calibrates to appropriate standards.

In total, the overall thrust of Mr. Mertens' position, and the majority of his duties as a whole, involves performing standard journey-level maintenance and repair tasks on electronic systems, components and equipment at the CRCC facility. While Mr. Mertens has a high degree of independence and latitude in completing his work, and portions of his work reach the requirements of this class, the majority of his duties, and his overall level of responsibility do not fit the ET 4 class. The ET 4 class does not address the primary focus of his position which is to provide standard, journey-level technical support to a variety of electronic safety and security systems across the CRCC facility.

For these reasons his position should not be reallocated to the ET 4 class.

Comparison of Duties to the Electronics Technician (ET) class

The Definition for the Electronics Technician class states:

Installs, maintains, repairs and tests electrical and electronic systems used in security and alarm surveillance and instructs personnel in the proper operation and minor maintenance of this equipment.

A previous Personnel Appeals Board (PAB) decision provides guidance as to the type of work performed by positions allocated to the Electronics Technician by concluding the following:

The specification for the Electronics Technician classification states that incumbents perform skilled journey level work which includes installing, maintaining, repairing and testing electrical and electronic systems used in security and alarm surveillance and instructing personnel in the proper operation and minor maintenance of this equipment. The typical work for this class includes the installation and maintenance of internal security systems, including electronic surveillance systems, and conducting inspections and tests to ensure the security systems are functional. The typical work also includes recommending purchases of security devices, consulting with contractors, and instructing employees in the use and repair of security systems. This class specifically addresses the maintenance and repair of electrical and electronic systems used in security and alarm surveillance such as those used at Fircrest School. Hafzalla v. Dep't. of Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-00-0025 (2001).

The Glossary defines Journey as "Fully competent and qualified in all aspects of a body of work and given broad/general guidance. Individuals can complete work assignments to standard under general supervision. Also referred to as the working or fully-qualified level."

The Glossary defines General Supervision as:

- Employee performs recurring assignments without daily oversight by applying established guidelines, policies, procedures, and work methods.
- Employee prioritizes day-to-day work tasks. Supervisor provides guidance and must approve deviation from established guidelines, policies, procedures, and work methods.
- Decision-making is limited in context to the completion of work tasks. Completed work is consistent with established guidelines, policies, procedures and work methods. Supervisory guidance is provided in new or unusual situations.
- Work is periodically reviewed for compliance with guidelines, policies and procedures.

The primary focus of Mr. Mertens' position falls within the scope of the Definition of the Electronics Technician class. As a whole, his position performs a variety of standard, journey-level work installing, maintaining, repairing and testing electrical and electronic systems used in security and alarm surveillance.

Mr. Mertens works under general supervision and completes a majority of generally recurring standard-level repair and maintenance assignments without the daily oversight of his supervisor. He applies established guidelines, policies, procedures, and work methods to complete his tasks. Mr. Mertens prioritizes his day-to-day work tasks and follows established guidelines, policies, and procedures to complete his work.

Although the typical work examples do not form the basis for an allocation, they do lend support to the work envisioned within the classification.

The following examples of typical work align with the duties performed by Mr. Mertens in his position:

- Installs and maintains internal security systems to include electronic surveillance and instructs personnel in the proper operation and minor maintenance of this equipment.
- Conducts frequent inspections and tests to ensure that the security systems are functional and adequate;
- Recommends the selection, installation, and maintenance of security devices
- Instructs Electricians or Electrician Supervisors in the maintenance of security devices;
- Tests and evaluates new electronic equipment and makes site inspections;
- Supervises purchases of all parts and materials, maintenance of adequate stocks of maintenance parts and supplies, and supervises inventory of equipment, parts, and supplies;

Mr. Mertens' duties are consistent with these statements. He performs skilled journey-level work installing, maintaining, repairing and testing electrical and electronic systems used in security and alarm surveillance. He installs and maintains internal security and surveillance systems, and conducts inspections and runs tests to ensure security systems are functional.

He also provides primary support to the Systemax telephone system data cabling infrastructure. He also maintains security cameras and recording devices. He provides secondary support to computers and video workstation monitoring devices associated with these systems. He maintains, troubleshoots and repairs intercom system and also provides secondary support to the electronic perimeter fence security system.

Most positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more than one classification. However, when determining the appropriate classification for a specific position, the duties and responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and the position must be allocated to the classification that provides the best fit overall for the majority of the position's duties and responsibilities. Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).

Finally, positions are to be allocated to the class which best describes the majority of the work assignment. Ramos v DOP, PAB Case No. A85-18 (1985).

During the review conference, Ms. Conley stated that Mr. Mertens is a highly-valued employee and his work is greatly appreciated. However, a position's allocation is not a reflection of

performance or an individual's ability to perform higher-level work. Rather, a position allocation is based on the majority of work assigned to a position and how that work best aligns with the available job classifications. Based on the overall level, scope and diversity of the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to Mr. Mertens' position, his position is properly allocated to the ET classification.

### **Appeal Rights**

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, WA 98504-0911. An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The PRB Office is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Insurance Building, 302 Sid Snyder Avenue SW, Olympia, Washington, 98501-1342. The main telephone number is (360) 902-9820, and the fax number is (360) 586-4694.

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

c: LeRoy Mertens, DOC  
Sarah Conly, DOC  
Tina Cooley, DOC  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

**LEROY MERTENS v DOC (ALLO-12-063)**

List of Exhibits

A. LeRoy Mertens Exhibits

1. Director's Review letter of appeal from LeRoy Mertens, received November 19, 2023 (1 page)
2. Copy of DOC allocation determination letter from Sarah Conly to LeRoy Mertens dated October 23, 2012 (5 pages)

B. DOC Exhibits

1. Exhibit submittal cover letter from Sarah Conly to Karen Wilcox dated December 26, 2012 enclosing the following exhibits (1 page)
2. Revised Position Description Form (PDF) for LeRoy Mertens submitted for reallocation August 30, 2012 (6 pages)
3. Copy of the existing PDF on file for Mr. Mertens' position dated March 7, 2012 (5 pages)
4. Copy of CRCC Maintenance Department Organizational Chart (1 page)
5. Email string including the position review questions and responses from supervisor Michael Autio to Sarah Conly (3 pages)
6. Copy of Michael Autio's PDF dated March 7, 2012 (5 pages)
7. State of Washington Class Specifications for Electronics Technician 1 through Supervisor class series (10 pages)
8. Allocation determination letter from Sarah Conly to LeRoy Mertens dated October 23, 2012 DOC (5 pages)

C. Class Specifications

1. State of Washington Class Specification for Electronics Technician, 592W
2. State of Washington Class Specification for Electronics Technician 1, 592J
3. State of Washington Class Specification for Electronics Technician 2, 592K
4. State of Washington Class Specification for Electronics Technician 3, 592L
5. State of Washington Class Specification for Electronics Technician 4, 592M