



**File Code:** 6130/6150-1-1/5100  
**Route To:** (5100), (6130), (6150)

**Date:** September 17, 2008

**Subject:** Clarification of Upgrades to GS-08 Engine Captain Positions and Staffing of Subordinate Positions

**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and Deputy Chiefs

The primary objective of this document is to clarify engine positions that can be upgraded noncompetitively. The Washington Office issued the review results of Supervisory Fire Engine Operator - Engine Captain - (SFEO Engine Captain) positions on May 30, 2006. The determination was: the GS-08 grade level was supportable for an SFEO Engine Captain of a Type III or Type IV engine in areas with the added complexities of wildland-urban interface, including proximity of high-value improvements, and regular and recurring all hazard incidents, and frequent interagency jurisdictional issues and coordination requirements; and that the SFEO Engine Captain GS-07 grade level is supportable for all engine types when these complexities are not present. The review primarily focused on the upgrade of the SFEO Engine Captain position and did not address the subordinate structure. After the May 30 letter, many Regions issued memos of direction and reviewed their engine module configuration. While the initial memo was issued over two years ago and dealt with SFEO Engine Captain positions only, we continue to receive numerous requests to promote employees into these and subordinate positions.

In the rare instances where you still have a GS-06 SFEO Engine Captain; incumbents can be upgraded to the Engine Captain (SFEO), GS-456-07 (FS1474 position description).

If you have an Engine Captain (SFEO) at the GS-07 level and are considering the possibility of an upgrade to a GS-08 based on wildland-urban interface, you must complete the USDA Forest Service Engine Captain Complexity Analysis Rating Sheet developed by the Multi-Regional Engine Working Team this spring. As explained in our attached letter of June 4, 2008, this rating sheet was developed to provide documentation to support the complexities of the Engine Captain position. This form must be signed by the Forest Supervisor and submitted with Standard Agency Position File (APF) FS1471. The GS-08 Engine Captain upgrade is predicated on the complexity of the position, not the staff size of the engine module.

If the conditions on your unit warrant the upgrade of the GS-7 Engine Captain to a GS-08, and you are staffing the module to include a GS-07 Fire Engine Operator (FEO), you will need to add the FEO position to your organization and advertise the FEO position. There is not a requirement to include a GS-07 FEO in your organization if the staff size indicates one is not needed.

Upgrades are based on the work personally performed by the incumbent and therefore, does not change the relationship of the GS-06 Assistant Fire Engine Operator (AFEO) lead position. Classification principles denote an "Assistant" position is classified one-grade lower than the grade of the supervisory work performed. In either case, the GS-08 Engine Captain (SFEO) *supervisory duties* are equivalent to the GS-07 level, therefore, this position is properly classified



at the GS-06 level. No organizational changes were made to the GS-06 AFEO positions or GS-05 senior firefighter positions as described in the enclosed June 4, 2008, memo. Therefore, upgrades are not appropriate for GS-06 or GS-05 grade levels; these positions must be filled under competitive procedures. Follow the same process developed to fill any vacant or new position as used for open and continuous fire positions.

Based on the above, there are three organizational structures for engine modules.

<u>Engine Module</u>	<u>Engine Module</u>	<u>Engine Module</u>
GS-08 (SFEO)	GS-08 (SFEO)	GS-07 (SFEO)
GS-07 (FEO)	GS-06 (AFEO)	GS-06 (AFEO)
GS-06 (AFEO)	GS-05 (Senior FF)	GS-05 (Senior FF)
GS-05 (Senior FF)		

Where it is determined that a noncompetitive promotion is warranted for an *encumbered* Engine Captain SFEO (GS-06 SFEO to GS-07 SFEO *or* GS-07 SFEO to GS-08), the unit will submit a request in the 52 Tracker. When entering this action, ensure you click “No” on “Do you want to fill or classify a position”; under “Action Requested” click on Promotion.

The appropriate Job Code for the GS-08 SFEO Engine Captain is FS1471; in “Remarks” make the following notation: “This position was reviewed as a non-competitive promotion from a GS-07 Engine Captain position to a GS-08 Engine Captain position and met the GS-08 attached criteria as verified by the Line Officer.” The enclosed “SFEO Engine Captain Rating Sheet” must be completed and approved by the Line Officer and attached to the action in the 52 Tracker.

The appropriate Job Code for the GS-07 SFEO Engine Captain is FS1474; in “Remarks” make the following notation: “This position was originally filled as a target grade GS-06 SFEO Engine Captain; per letter of May 30, 2006, the GS-07 is supportable for all engine types.” Please provide any information that you have verifying the position was originally advertised and filled as a SFEO Engine Captain.

Once approved, ASC-HCM staff will work with supervisors to certify and process the upgrade action. Effective dates should be set at least 2 pay periods from the approval date. If a complete package is received, we can process the action within those timeframes. Employees are not entitled to back pay as promotions cannot be processed retroactively (5 CFR 511.701).

Please work through your chain of command if you have any questions. Please call the case manager if you have specific questions regarding your case once it has been approved.

*/s/ Kathleen D. Burgers*  
KATHLEEN D. BURGERS  
Director of Human Capital Management

*/s/ T.C. Harbour*  
TOM HARBOUR  
Director, Fire and Aviation Management

cc: Neal Hitchcock  
Erin Newman  
Wade A Spang  
pdl wo nfs forest supervisors  
pdl wo spf fam regional fire directors