

Journey 12 Level Upgrade for Frontline Positions
Questions & Answers
To Be Posted August 18, 2010

The following Q&As are intended to provide employees with answers to questions they may have regarding the upcoming rise of the journey level for the frontline positions from GS-11 to GS-12.

1. Who is eligible to advance to the GS-12 level?

Border Patrol Agents (BPAs) GS-1896, Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs) GS-1895, and Customs and Border Protection Agriculture Specialists (CBPASs) GS-0401 at the GS-11 level who have one year time-in-grade as a GS-11 and have demonstrated their ability to perform successfully at the GS-12 level.

2. I lack time in grade as of August 29, when will my promotion be effected?

For those employees who lack time in grade at the time of implementation, i.e., August 29, 2010, and are otherwise eligible, that is, demonstrated their ability to perform successfully at the GS-12 level, their promotion will be processed by HRM as soon as they fulfill the time in grade requirements.

3. Will I need to compete for the GS-12 Level?

No, BPAs, CBPOs, and CBPASs who are eligible for promotion will be non-competitively promoted to GS-12 if they have one year time-in-grade as a GS-11 and have demonstrated their ability to perform successfully at the GS-12 level.

4. How will GS-5, 7, and 9 level positions be affected?

The position's full performance level will change from GS-11 to GS-12 and the following employees will be reassigned to revised position descriptions:

| | | |
|------|----------------|---|
| 0401 | GS-5/7/9/11/12 | Non-Supervisory CBP Agriculture Specialists |
| 1895 | GS-5/7/9/11/12 | Non-Supervisory CBP Officers |
| 1896 | GS-5/7/9/11/12 | Non-Supervisory Border Patrol Agents |

5. As a GS-12 first-line supervisor, will I be eligible to be upgraded to GS-13?

Yes. The Office of Human Resources Management (HRM) has reviewed the grades and determined that, based on the increase in the journey level, first-line supervisors are now properly graded at the GS-13 level. Individuals who meet time-in-grade requirements and supervise at least two subordinate employees, as required by the Office of Personnel Management, will be eligible for promotion to GS-13 on August 29.

6. I am a GS-12 Port Director. How does the guidance above in Question 5 affect me?

GS-1895-12 Port Directors who supervise 2 or more employees will be eligible for promotion to the GS-13 level. As a result of the review, it was determined that there were a number of GS-1895-12 Port Directors who had no subordinates, or only 1 subordinate; they will **not be eligible for promotion** at this time. They will be assigned to a non-supervisory GS-12 Port Director position description that is excluded from the bargaining unit based on managerial responsibilities.

7. I am a second line (or third line) supervisor. Does this affect my position?

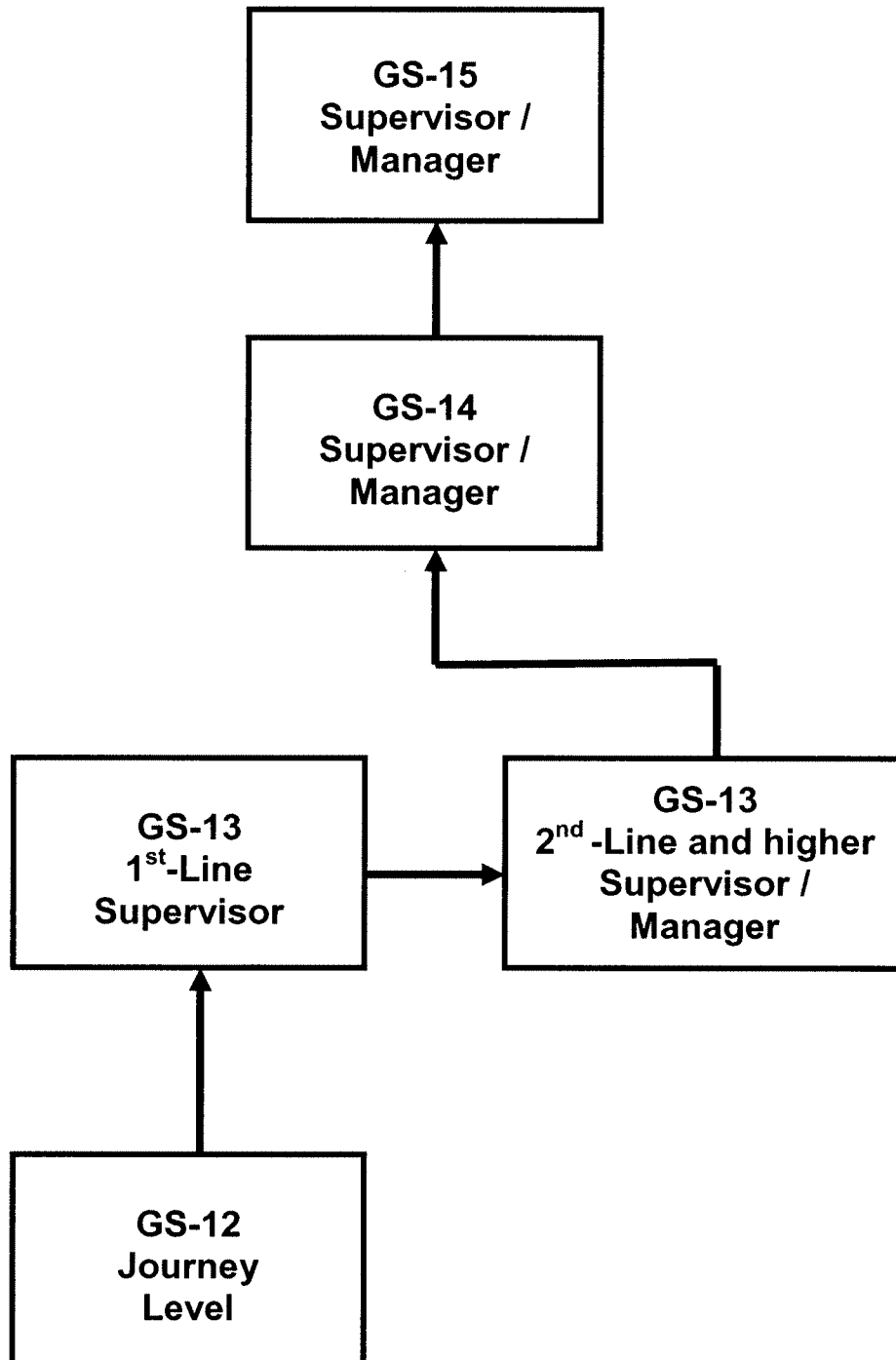
The management structure, scope, and complexity of second and third line supervisors, have not changed sufficiently to automatically trigger an increase in the grade level for those positions. Most of these positions are currently credited with the proper levels for program scope, complexity, and organizational setting; therefore, the current classification (title, series, and grade) of these positions will be maintained. At this time, the grade and pay levels for these positions will remain status quo.

While this will result in some grade compression at the GS-13 level (similar to the grade compression present now at the GS-14 level), we will continue to preserve the rank structure to distinguish between levels of supervisors.

This will mean that the competition for advancement will follow a career path based on supervisory level. Specifically, GS-13 first-line supervisors must compete for second-line and higher supervisory and managerial positions at the GS-13 level rather than obtain those positions through noncompetitive reassignment. Furthermore, GS-13 first-line supervisors must compete for and obtain a higher-level GS-13 position before being eligible for a GS-14 supervisory or managerial position. The attached diagram illustrates the new career path; arrows indicate competitive career advancement.

Further details regarding the career path will be forthcoming in future communications.

GENERAL PLAN



8. As a GS-14 Supervisor, will I be promoted to the GS-15 level?

GS-14 supervisors were reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The determination from HRM indicates that the positions do not support upgrades at this time.

9. Will Program Managers in the 0340 series be promoted?

There will be no immediate change to the full performance level of Program Managers in the 0340 series. However, HRM will review the positions in concert with the Program Offices.

10. Will the full performance level of CBPOs (Enforcement), GS-1895-11 change?

CBPO (Enforcement), GS-1895-11 who have one year time-in-grade and have demonstrated their ability to perform successfully at the GS-12 level will be non-competitively promoted to the GS-12 level on August 29.

11. Will the full performance level of BPAs in specializations (BORSTAR, BORTAC, and SRT) change?

HRM has reviewed the position in concert with OBP and, through application of the appropriate OPM standard, has determined there is no change to the grade level of this position.

12. Will the full performance level of the Lead BPA (Intelligence) change?

HRM has reviewed the position in concert with OBP and, through application of the appropriate OPM standard, has determined there is no change to the grade level of this position.

13. Will there be any effect on my Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) or the Enhanced CBPO Retirement (ECBPO) retirement system coverage?

No, if you are currently covered as either LEO or ECBPO your retirement system coverage will not change.

14. What will this mean to me if I am on military duty at the time of the change to the Journey 12?

If you are a GS-11 and on military leave without pay on August 29, 2010, and you otherwise meet time in grade and specialized experience requirements for GS-12, your name will go on a list for processing your promotion action upon your return to duty with CBP; the effective date of your promotion will be August 29, 2010.

If you are a GS-11 and have not met your specialized experience and/or time in grade as of August 29, 2010, upon your return to duty with CBP, you must complete your time in grade or specialized experience requirements before you will be eligible for promotion.

If you are a GS-12 and on military leave without pay on August 29, 2010 and you otherwise meet time in grade and specialized experience requirements for GS-13, your name will go a list for processing your promotion action upon your return to duty with CBP; the effective date of your promotion will be August 29, 2010.

15. Where can I get a copy of the new GS-12 position descriptions?

Positions have been finalized and will be available on the CBPnet, Office of Human Resources Management's electronic position description (ePD) library no later than August 29, 2010.

16. How will my performance standards change?

At the present time, performance standards will not change. Non-supervisory employees will remain under the CBP Pass/Fail Performance Management Program, and supervisory employees will continue to be covered under the multi-rating level DHS Performance Management System.

17. Will there be any effect on support positions such as the Customs and Border Protection Technicians?

This journey level increase applies only to CBPO, BPA and CBPAS positions and does not impact the current full performance levels of CBP Technicians or other support positions.

18. Will there be any change to the qualification or physical requirements of the positions?

At this time there will be no change. However, these requirements are under review.

19. Will more training be required?

Not as a result of this change. However, there will continue to be an ongoing effort to further develop and refine the skills of frontline personnel and update the training curriculum as needed.

20. Has my union been consulted about this change in the journey level?

CBP's two exclusive representatives, the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) and the National Border Patrol Council (NBPC) have been informed at the national level.

21. What affect will this change have on positions outside the Office of Border Patrol and Office of Field Operations?

The full performance level of eligible GS-11 CBPASs, CBPOs and BPAs with one year of time in grade in offices outside of OBP and OFO will also be upgraded to the GS-12.

22. If I have additional questions where do I go?

You may send an inquiry to journey12@dhs.gov.

23. How will my promotion be calculated?

Normally, the CFR regulation for the two-step promotion rule is 5 CFR 531.214 which basically says take the current grade and step and add two steps. Using the new pay level after applying the 2-step rule, go to the grade to which the person is being promoted and find the dollar amount which equals or exceeds the two-step amount and this would be the promotion grade and step.

For illustration purposes and based on the Rest of the U.S. pay scale, the chart below is provided. The examples begin at the step 2 due to the one-year time and grade requirement.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| From | 11/2 | 11/3 | 11/4 | 11/5 | 11/6 | 11/7 | 11/8 | 11/9 | 11/10 |
| To | 12/1 | 12/1 | 12/1 | 12/2 | 12/2 | 12/3 | 12/4 | 12/5 | 12/6 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| From | 12/2 | 12/3 | 12/4 | 12/5 | 12/6 | 12/7 | 12/8 | 12/9 | 12/10 |
| To | 13/1 | 13/1 | 13/1 | 13/2 | 13/3 | 13/3 | 13/4 | 13/5 | 13/6 |

If you would like to determine the salary increase you would receive upon promotion using the 2 step rule, Locality Salary Tables are available on the OPM’s website, www.opm.gov, and click on Salary and Wages on the right hand side of the screen.

For unusual salary setting situations such as a re-promotion or credit to Highest Previous Rate, please contact the Minneapolis Hiring Center at 612-467-7032 (for OFO employees) and 612-467-7035 (for OBP employees) or your program office’s local Mission Support for additional assistance.

24. How is my promotion calculated if I am already on step 9 or 10 in my grade?

To calculate your salary from step 9 or 10, double the amount of the within-grade increase (difference between steps 9 and 10), then add that amount to your current salary. The total amount is the projected value of the promotion. Compare this figure with the pay scale for the next grade level and select the step that fully meets this figure. If the figure falls between two steps, your pay would be set at the higher step.

For illustration purposes, a GS-11/10 on the Rest of U.S. pay scale (RUS pay scale) would make about \$74,628. The difference between steps 9 and 10 is \$1,914. Double \$1,914 and add the figure to the GS-11/10 salary of \$74,628 (\$3,828 + \$74,628= \$78,456.) Go to the RUS GS-12 table. You will find that a GS-12/5 makes \$77,983 and a GS-12/6 makes \$80,276. Since \$78,456 exceeds the 12/5, the employee’s salary would be set at the GS-12/6.

For unusual salary setting situations such as a re-promotion or credit to Highest Previous Rate, please contact the Minneapolis Hiring Center at 612-467-7032 (for OFO employees) and 612-467-7033 (for OBP employees). You may also contact your program office's local Mission Support for additional assistance.

25. If I currently earn AUO with FLSA, will I continue to receive AUO and FLSA?

The change in journey grade level will have no affect on your AUO and FLSA overtime.

26. Will the change in journey grade level change my entitlement to COPRA and FLSA?

The change in journey grade level will have no affect on your entitlement to COPRA and FLSA.

27. Does the journey level increase apply to GS-1801, Marine Interdiction Agents and Air Interdiction Agents and to other series not previously listed? If not, why?

CBP values all employees in all job series, and HRM will continue to ensure that positions are properly classified against the appropriate OPM standards. However, at the present time, we anticipate no other increases in journey levels other than those announced by the Acting Commissioner on October 14, 2009.

28. Does the journey level apply to Seized Property Specialist, Import Specialist, Drawback Specialist, and Entry Specialist?

CBP values all employees in all job series, and HRM has committed to commencing a review of these positions early next fiscal year. We will keep you informed regarding that review.

29. I am a CBPO (E), GS-1895-11. Will my promotion be delayed?

CBPO (E), GS-1895-11 who have one year time-in-grade and have demonstrated their ability to perform successfully at the GS-12 level will be non-competitively promoted to the GS-12 on August 29, 2010.

30. I am a CBPO (Canine), GS-1895-11. Will my journey level change? Will I be promoted?

CBPO (Canine), GS-1895-11 who have one year time-in-grade and have demonstrated their ability to perform successfully at the GS-12 level will be non-competitively promoted to GS-12.

31. I am CBPO (Port/ Station Director), GS-1895-11. Will my journey level change? Will I be promoted?

CBPO (Port/ Station Director) GS-1895 at the GS-11 level who have one year time-in-grade and have demonstrated their ability to perform successfully at the GS-12 level will be non-competitively promoted to the GS-12 on August 29.

32. I am a CBPO (Field Canine Enforcement Trainer), GS-1895-12. Will my journey level be upgraded?

HRM has reviewed the position in concert with OFO and, through application of the appropriate OPM standard, has determined there is no change to the grade level of this position.

33. I am a CBPO (Course Developer/Instructor), GS-1895-12. Will my journey level be upgraded?

HRM has reviewed the position in concert with OTD and, through application of the appropriate OPM standard, has determined there is no change to the grade level of this position.

34. Will the CBPO (Field Canine Advisor), GS-1895-13 be eligible for upgrade?

HRM has reviewed the position in concert with OFO and, through application of the appropriate OPM standard, has determined there is no change to the grade level of this position.

35. I am a current CBPO (Course Developer/Instructor), GS-1895-13. Does the upgrade to the journey make my temporary promotion to the GS-13 level permanent?

Temporary promotions are not affected by the journey level increase.

36. Who made the decision to upgrade the journey level increase for only CBPOs, BPAs and CBPAS, GS-1895-11, GS-1896-11, and GS-0401-11, respectively?

The CBP Office of Human Resources Management is delegated the authority to increase the journey level through application of the appropriate OPM standards.

37. What if an employee is on extended leave without pay (LWOP), LWOP-OWCP, or military leave?

A GS-11 employee who has been on leave without pay, including OWCP, or deployed to serve active duty in the military will be promoted to GS-12 upon his/her return to duty if s/he has already completed one year of specialized experience at the GS-11 level prior to LWOP or deployment. The effective date of the promotion action will be August 29, 2010. Other GS-11 employees who are on LWOP or deployed who have not met the specialized

experience and/or time in grade requirements as of August 29, 2010, will be promoted once they return to duty and complete these requirements.

38. What if an employee has been on extended light duty?

To be eligible for promotion to the GS-12, the employee must have completed one year of specialized experience at the GS-11 level. An employee who performed regular (specialized) duties for at least one year at the GS-11 before being placed on light duty is entitled to an immediate promotion. An employee who was placed on light duty prior to the completion of the required one year of regular (specialized) duties may be promoted if (1) s/he completes a year as a GS-11 and (2) the light duty can be determined to constitute specialized experience. Whether an employee fulfills the second requirement requires an assessment of the kinds of work and duration while an employee has been on light duty. This assessment will be conducted by HRM Staffing personnel. To request this analysis, the employee's supervisor or other management official should contact the appropriate staffing specialist in the Minneapolis Hiring Center at 612-467-7032 (for OFO employees) and 612-467-7035 (for OBP employees).

39. I will be due for a Within-Grade Increase (WGI) shortly after the promotions are effected. How will my promotion be calculated?

If the effective date of the promotion takes place before the employee's WGI date, then the WGI is superseded by the promotion action. The employee's new WGI waiting period starts when the new grade begins. (See Item #21 regarding promotion calculations).

40. Will my insignia change?

- A. *For Border Patrol Agents* – there will be no change to the insignia as a result of the upgrade
- B. *For U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers and Agriculture Specialists* – OFO is currently fulfilling its bargaining unit obligations with the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) on this issue. Further information will be forthcoming at the conclusion of these discussions.

41. When will the promotions be processed or effective?

Promotions will be processed effective August 29, 2010.

42. When will I be able to view promotion actions in the HR systems?

You will be able to see the promotion actions on your leave and earnings statements in your employee personnel page on September 24, 2010. In addition, you will be able to view your notification of personnel action (SF-50) in your eOPF on September 24, 2010.

Please do not call or email your mission support personnel or generate a pay problem ticket until after that date. After September 24, if you do not see the promotion action on your statement, please utilize the normal pay trouble ticket process. If you have questions regarding this process, contact your Field Office mission support personnel.

As further information becomes available, we will continue to communicate with you. We will also post updates to these Q&As on a bi-weekly or as needed basis.