

May 12, 1997

Ms. Eliza May, Executive Director
Funeral Services Commission
510 South Congress, Suite 206
Austin, Texas 78704

Dear Ms. May:

The Funeral Services Commission (Commission) has a 75 percent rate of compliance with the Position Classification Act. The Commission was reviewed to monitor its compliance with the Position Classification Act.

Position Number 5, Inspector II (4142-11), should be an Inspector III (4143-13). The incumbent's responsibilities include team leader functions such as writing and revising inspection standards, training new inspectors, identifying funeral homes due for annual inspections, creating and assigning the schedules for three inspectors, and tracking necessary follow-up actions. This incumbent spends 30 percent of his time participating in investigations of complaints and gathering information and evidence to respond to those complaints. These responsibilities should be compensated at a level higher than Inspector II, which appears to be the entry level for this type of position at the Commission. Team leaders and team members can be at the same salary group.

Management's Response

Will reclassify Inspector II, Position Number 5, to an Inspector III in May 1997.

Position Number 6, Inspector IV's (4144-15) assigned responsibilities appear to be routine and do not support this classification level. The tasks outlined on the incumbent's job description include conducting inspections for existing and new funeral homes, making recommendations on compliance attainment, creating and sending reports to the Austin office, and interpreting and educating funeral home staff about new, relevant regulations or laws. While this employee has significantly more years of experience conducting inspections than the other Inspectors, the assigned duties are comparable to the newly hired Inspector II.

Management's Response

Position Number 6 will be reclassified upon the retirement of the [current] employee in August 1997, when position is reposted upon vacancy. If the employee does not follow through on stated retirement plans, the position will be reclassified effective September 1, 1997.

While there are small differences in duties outlined in the State Classification job description, the responsibility level is progressive within the class series. The Inspector IV should have a

significantly higher level of responsibility than the lower levels of the series. Also, the Commission should be consistent in its use of a class series; assigned responsibilities should have a progressively higher level of responsibility among positions to justify different salary levels, especially for positions in the same series. The Inspector IV description lists three examples of higher-level tasks to differentiate it from the lower levels. These examples are “Evaluates programs and procedures to improve operations,” “Reviews and implements quality control systems,” and “Assists in budget preparation.” While the employee in Position Number 6 did list the first example above on his job description, the employee stated in an interview that he did not perform this task.

While any reclassification of Position Number 6 would result in a loss of salary for the incumbent, other alternatives may be considered. Three possible options are:

- Move the team leader functions to this position.
- Assign the more complex or difficult inspections to this position, if the inspections can be defined by levels of complexity.
- Assign the responsibility for program evaluations and improvements, as well as the implementation of a quality control system, to this position.

The percentages of time would have to be adjusted if new duties and responsibilities are assigned. If these options are implemented, management needs to establish specific goals and identify achievement of those goals as part of the employee’s performance accountability. Management also needs to consider the merits of dividing the time of two-thirds of the inspection staff and still accomplishing the legislatively mandated obligation to conduct annual inspections. However, taking on higher-level duties provides a more appropriate workload to support the current Inspector IV level.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Funeral Services Commission was selected for review in order to monitor its compliance with the Position Classification Act.

All eight classified positions at the Commission were reviewed. In determining whether all full-time classified positions were properly classified, we reviewed:

- State job descriptions
- Position questionnaires completed by incumbents
- Organizational reporting relationships

In addition, two incumbents were interviewed, and information was gathered concerning other positions from the Executive Director, who directly supervises all of the positions.

Ms. Eliza May, Executive Director
Funeral Services Commission
May 12, 1997
Page 3

This review was conducted in accordance with the Position Classification Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 654, by the following members of the State Auditor's staff:

- Mary Shearer (Project Manager)
- Kelli Dan, CCP, PHR (Audit Manager)
- Deborah Kerr, Ph.D. (Director)

We appreciate the cooperation we received from all Commission employees who completed questionnaires. If you or your staff have any questions regarding this audit, please contact Mary Shearer at 479-4958.

Sincerely,

Kelli Dan, CCP, PHR
State Classification Officer

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Attachment

cc: Mr. John Keel, CPA, Director, Legislative Budget Board
Mr. Albert Hawkins, Director, Governor's Office of Budget and Planning
The Honorable John Sharp, Comptroller