

United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
**Wildlife Services Directive**

**WS 4.110**  
**AUGUST 2025**

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**HAZARDOUS DUTY**

**1. PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines to Wildlife Services (WS) on application of regulations to pay hazard and environmental differentials.

**2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

This Directive replaces WS Directive 4.110, Hazardous Duty, dated, October 7, 2005 and WS Directive 3.115, Pocatello Supply Depot, dated, January 8, 2018.

**3. AUTHORITY**

7 U.S.C. 8351 to 8353, and 16 U.S.C. 667, authorizes officers, agents, and employees of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), WS to conduct a program of wildlife services and to enter into agreements with states, local jurisdictions, individuals, and public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions for the purpose of conducting such services.

General schedule (GS) employees are entitled to receive hazard differential pay in certain circumstances under 5 CFR 550.903 Appendix A to subpart I.

Prevailing rate (wage grade (WG)) employees are entitled to receive environmental differential pay in certain circumstances under 5 CFR 532.511 Appendix A to subpart E.

**4. POLICY**

**a. Hazard Differential Pay for General Schedule (GS) Employees**

- (1.) WS supervisors will pay hazard differential of 25% of the basic rate of pay whenever GS personnel conduct WS specific operational tasks that qualify under 5 CFR, Part 550, Subpart I, such as those tasks provided in this Directive in 4a (3) below.
- (2.) Hazard differential must be paid for those hours a GS employee is in pay status on the day on which the duty is performed.
  - *WS Specific Application:* Conducting aerial gunning operations for 6 hours and conducting additional duties for a total of 8 hours requires hazard pay differential for 8 hours.

(3.) The hazardous duties for which WS is authorized to pay differential are listed here and further defined in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Schedule of Pay Differentials Authorized for Hazardous Duty Table (US CFR, Title 5, Ch.1, Subchapter B, Part 550, Subpart I, Appendix A):

- i. **Exposure to Hazardous Agents, work with or in close proximity to Explosive or Incendiary Materials.** Explosive or incendiary materials which are unstable and highly sensitive.
  - *WS Specific Application:* Correcting a misfire when using binary explosives to remove beaver dams.
- ii. **Exposure to Hazardous Agents, work with or in close proximity to Toxic Chemical Materials.** Toxic chemical materials when there is a possibility of leakage or spillage.
  - *WS Specific Application:* Exposure to toxic chemicals (poisons) during manufacturing, storing and shipping at the Pocatello Supply Depot.
- iii. **Flying, participating in Limited Control Flights.** Flights undertaken under unusual and adverse conditions (such as extreme weather, maximum load or overload, limited visibility, extreme turbulence, or low-level flights involving fixed or tactical patterns) which threaten or severely limit control of the aircraft.
  - *WS Specific Application:* Crewing an operational flight that is under 500' AGL in either a fixed or a rotary wing aircraft.
- iv. **Groundwork Beneath Hovering Helicopter.** Participating in ground operations to attach external load to helicopter hovering just overhead.
  - *WS Specific Application:* Attaching external loads to helicopters hovering overhead.

**b. Environmental Differential Pay for Wage Grade (WG) Employees**

- (1.) WS supervisors will pay environmental differential at the appropriate rate whenever WG personnel are exposed to a working condition or hazard that qualify under 5 CFR, Part 532, Subpart E., such as those tasks provided in this Directive in 4b (3) below. This differential is applicable to work assignments that require working with or in close proximity to poisons (toxic chemicals), other than tear gas or similar irritants wherein protective devices and/or safety measures have been developed but have not practically eliminated the potential for serious personal injury.
- (2.) Environmental differential must be paid a minimum of one hour's differential pay for the exposure. For exposure beyond one hour, the employee shall be paid in increments of one quarter hour for each 15 minutes or portion thereof, in excess

of 15 minutes. Entitlement begins with the first instance of exposure and ends one hour later, except when exposure continues beyond the hour, it shall be considered ended at the end of the quarter hour in which exposure actually terminated.

(3.) The environmental duties for which WS is authorized to pay differential are listed here and further defined in the OPM Schedule of Environmental Differentials Paid for Exposure to Various Degrees of Hazards, Physical Hardships, and Working Conditions of an Unusual Nature Table (US CFR, Title 5, Ch.1, Subchapter B, Part 532, Subpart E, Appendix A, Part II):

i. **Poisons (Toxic Chemicals)—Low Degree Hazard (4%)**

- *WS Specific Application:* Handling for shipping, marking, labeling, hauling, and storing loaded containers of toxic chemical agents that have been monitored.

ii. **Poisons (Toxic Chemicals)—High Degree Hazard (8%)**

- *WS Specific Application:* Handling and storing toxic chemical agents including monitoring of areas to detect presence of vapor or liquid chemical agents; examining of material for signs of leakage or deteriorated material; renovation, maintenance and modification of toxic chemicals.

## 5. SCOPE

- a. This Directive is applicable to all GS and WG personnel for which the hazardous duty or physical hardship was not considered in the classification of their position.  
*Note: Hazardous duty was considered in the classification of GS pilots and many supervisors in grade 11 and higher positions within WS. As such, personnel including PSD managers and other supervisors who have been considered are not entitled to hazard pay differential unless specifically authorized by federal regulations.*
- b. Administratively Determined (AD) personnel will have hazard pay differential specifically listed and included with the basic pay scale within the annual negotiated wage schedule.
- c. Collaborators, who are managed under non-Federal personnel systems at the WS State Program level, are subject to hazardous duty pay requirements as established by those systems and are outside the scope of this Directive.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

- a. Environmental differential: a differential paid to WG personnel for a duty involving unusually severe hazards or working conditions.
- b. Hazard differential: a differential paid to GS personnel for the performance of hazardous duty or duty involving physical hardship.

## **7. REFERENCES**

- a. USDA APHIS Human Resources Desk Guide 4550 – Premium Pay – Section G - Physical Hardship, Hazard Duty and Evacuation Payments for General Schedule Employees
- b. 5 CFR Part 550, Subpart I, Pay for Duty Involving Physical Hardship or Hazard.
- c. 5 CFR Part 532, Prevailing Rate Systems.

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