



**MWD**

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

8-14

January 29, 1997

**To:** Board of Directors (Organization and Personnel Committee--Action)

**From:** General Manager

*J. Ruodvaska*  
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*Izetta E. Birch*  
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**Submitted by:** Izetta E. Birch  
Director of Human Resources

**Subject:** Classification Study Implementation

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

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It is recommended that the General Manager be granted authority to establish a Z rate in order to compensate employees at pay rates outside of the ranges reflected in the established pay rate schedules in accordance with the language contained in Exhibit A. Such authority will apply only to employees in classifications contained within the general and confidential bargaining units.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The objectives of the study of classifications within the General and Confidential Units include: revising Metropolitan's outdated classification descriptions; reducing the number of classifications; eliminating specialized, one-position classifications where possible; consolidating overlapping classifications; and incorporating federal requirements relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These objectives were the result of findings contained in the 1994 Blue Ribbon Task Force Report.

## DETAILED REPORT

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A major classification study was initiated in late 1995 to conduct a full-scale job review of the various positions in classifications represented by the General and Confidential Units. A Request for Proposal (RFP) resulted in the selection of Ralph Andersen & Associates to conduct this study. While a classification study of this magnitude has not been conducted at Metropolitan in the past, there were several reasons for initiating such a study.

One of the principal reasons for a District-wide study was to revise the organization's existing classification descriptions to reflect current responsibilities and minimum requirements associated with the various classifications within the General and Confidential bargaining units. A study was conducted during 1994 to update all classification descriptions within the Management and Supervisory Management bargaining units; however, the descriptions for the majority of positions within the organization remained outdated. Many of the existing classification descriptions have not been revised since 1974, and as such are not effective tools for recruiting and promoting employees. Further, the existing classification descriptions were not compliant with federal ADA requirements. This study also sought to reduce the number of specialized, one-position classifications; consolidate duplicate classifications; and broaden the various classification series to incorporate overlapping duties and responsibilities, thereby providing more flexibility for managers and supervisors in the assignment of duties and tasks. An Employee Review Process has been established to ensure that employees have an opportunity to address issues relating to their recommended classification and/or duties and responsibilities at the conclusion of this study. A maintenance program has been developed to ensure that all updated classification descriptions will now be reviewed at least once every three years to remain current and accurate.

This classification study involved participation of 1623 employees in 170 classifications through completion of job analysis questionnaires, training and briefing sessions, and individual and group interviews. Implementation of the classification study recommendations will result in deletion of 61 of the 170 classifications studied, and the establishment of 9 new classifications to support the new classification plan concepts with a net decrease of 52 classes. Administrative Code Section 6208, Pay Rate Administration, requires the General Manager to ensure that employees are properly classified; therefore, no action is required by your Board to establish the new classifications.

Some classifications will be consolidated with classifications at lower pay grades. This will cause some employees to be allocated to classifications at lower pay grades than their former classes. To avoid a loss in pay for employees placed in classifications at lower pay ranges, it is requested that a Z rate be established. Application of a Z rate will place these employees on their new lower classifications but allow them to remain at their current hourly rates and salary grades. They will continue to be eligible for any merit or across-the-board increases. However, the Z rate status for these employees will only remain in effect until such time as they are promoted, involuntarily demoted, returned to their former classification as a result of the Employee Review Process, or the current Memorandum of Understanding expires.

There is no immediate cost to implement this study, as employees who are being allocated to classifications at higher salary grades will be placed within the new ranges at their current hourly rates; any merit adjustments will be addressed on their anniversary dates.

## **Z RATE**

When an employee is placed on a Z rate, the employee will move to the new lower classification, but will remain on the employee's current salary range at the current step and shall be eligible for merit increases and across-the-board increases according to normal pay rate administration rules as found in the Administrative Code and the applicable Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). For purposes of performance reviews as provided in Administrative Code Section 6208 (g), the employee shall be evaluated based on the requirements of the new lower classification on which the employee has been placed.

A Z rate shall remain in effect until an employee is: returned to the employee's former classification as a result of the Employee Review Process, promoted (including promotional reclassification), involuntarily demoted, or until the current MOU expires. The extension of the Z rate beyond the current MOU may be the subject of bargaining for a successor MOU.