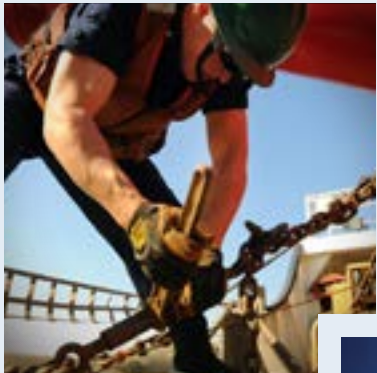


# Positions over **PEOPLE:**

An investigation into delays in the administration of  
civilian classification at the Department of National Defence



SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE  
REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL DEFENCE AND CANADIAN ARMED FORCES OMBUDSMAN

**OCTOBER 2018**



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# Mandate

The Office of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman was created in 1998 by Order-in-Council to increase transparency in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, as well as to ensure the fair treatment of concerns raised by Canadian Armed Forces members, Departmental employees, and their families.

The Office is a direct source of information, referral, and education for the men and women of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. Its role is to help individuals access existing channels of assistance or redress when they have a complaint or concern. The office is also responsible for reviewing and investigating complaints from constituents who believe they have been treated improperly or unfairly by the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Armed Forces. In addition, the Ombudsman may investigate and report publicly on matters affecting the welfare of members and employees of the Department or the Canadian Armed Forces and others falling within his jurisdiction. The ultimate goal is to contribute to substantial and long-lasting improvements to the Defence community.

Any of the following people may bring a complaint to the Ombudsman when the matter is directly related to the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Armed Forces:

- A current or former member of the Canadian Armed Forces
- A current or former member of the Cadets
- A current or former employee of the Department of National Defence
- A current or former Non-Public Fund employee
- A person applying to become a member
- A member of the immediate family of any of the above-mentioned
- An individual on an exchange or secondment with the Canadian Armed Forces

The Ombudsman is independent of the military chain of command and senior civilian management and reports directly to the Minister of National Defence.

# Executive Summary

Civilian employees of the Department of National Defence are an integral part of the Defence Team and perform functions essential to the effective execution of military operations across Canada and abroad. To quote *Strong, Secure, Engaged* – Canada’s Defence Policy: “Defence civilians face different demands than many of their public service counterparts [...] Increasingly, defence civilians also have a role in supporting operations.”<sup>1</sup> As such, the Department of National Defence has committed, through the new defence policy and other initiatives, to improving the well-being of their civilian workforce.

The Department of National Defence has tens of thousands of employees and in terms of occupational groups, it is one of the most diverse federal government departments. As duties, functions, and work tools evolve, the Department has a responsibility to update job descriptions and review impacts on classification.

This office has been tracking issues related to civilian classification since 2011. In recent years, this office has become increasingly concerned about reported delays in the administration of classification. While the Department of National Defence states that classification relates to positions, it also has a significant human dimension that must be considered. Delays in the administration of classification can directly and negatively affect the employees who occupy those positions.

Over the past seven years, this office has consistently expressed its concerns to senior officials at the Department of National Defence. In response to continued complaints, this office launched a systemic investigation. Its purpose was to identify the factors contributing to the delays in the administration of classification and make recommendations to contribute towards long lasting improvements for the Defence team. This is this office’s first systemic report into issues affecting civilian employees exclusively.

This report makes thirteen recommendations to the Minister of National Defence. If implemented, we believe that these recommendations will bring positive change to all civilian employees at the Department of National Defence. Additionally, our office believes timely implementation will assist the Department of National Defence’s efforts to fulfill its commitments made in *Strong, Secure, Engaged*.

---

1 National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, page 20.

# Introduction

Civilian employees<sup>2</sup> of the Department of National Defence have a proud history of supporting the Canadian Armed Forces. As an integral part of the Defence team, and numbering a total staff of 27,216, civilian employees perform functions that are essential to the effective execution of military operations both at home and abroad. The Defence Policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, acknowledges that civilian employees at the Department of National Defence face unique stressors that include experiencing tragic loss related to military operations, as well as challenges associated with civilian deployments to dangerous locations.<sup>3</sup>

**“Glad this investigation is happening — long overdue”**

— Civilian employee

Over the past several years, this office visited numerous military installations across the country, where I sought to connect with this important segment of our constituency in order to better understand the issues and challenges they face. During these visits, civilian employees voiced frustration about

outdated job descriptions that are not reflective of the work being performed, and lengthy delays in the processing of classification grievances.

In response to these concerns, this office undertook several internal reviews of the classification grievance process between 2011 and 2016, during which we noted a reduction in the number of active classification grievances from approximately 300 to 112. However, these reviews uncovered other interrelated and systemic areas of concern within the classification program. This office published information to educate constituents about the classification process<sup>4</sup> and subsequently launched a broader systemic investigation into the administration of civilian classification at the Department of National Defence.

<sup>2</sup> Civilian employees are public servants who are governed by Terms and Conditions of the *Public Service Employment Act*. This is in contrast to employees of Non-Public Funds who work in the Defence community, but fall under Schedule V of the *Financial Administration Act*.

<sup>3</sup> National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, page 20.

<sup>4</sup> National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman, *Helpful Information, Civilian Classification*.



The investigation covers the following three areas:

- Classification reviews;
- Cyclical job description reviews; and
- Classification grievances.

This office did not examine or assess:

- Public service jobs, occupations, or positions that fall outside the Department of National Defence;
- The content of classification or grievance decisions made by the authorized delegates at the Department of National Defence; and
- The content of the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada policy.

This is the first systemic report by this office into issues that affect civilian employees exclusively. The purpose of this report is to make timely, evidence-based recommendations which, if accepted and implemented, will assist the Department of National Defence in improving the overall administration of classification within the Department. It is our hope that these recommendations will bring positive change to the well-being of all civilian employees at the Department of National Defence.

Additional information on the data collected and interviews conducted for this investigation is outlined in Appendix B – Scope and Methodology.



# Section I – Context

The Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces is comprised of military members and civilian employees, two distinct groups that often work side by side to achieve Canada's Defence objectives.<sup>5</sup>

**Civilians are public service employees who are governed by the Treasury Board. Civilians fill three roles at the Department of National Defence. They provide:**

- 1. Local or base support services at a base or station (firefighters, cleaners, environmental safety officers etc.).**
- 2. Operational support (mechanics, shop repairmen, quality control, engineers, technical inspectors, university teachers etc.).**
- 3. Corporate support (policy analysts, personnel consultants, procurement specialists, finance officers etc.).**

— Canadian Armed Forces 101 for Civilians, page 14

There are 35,669 civilian positions<sup>6</sup> at the Department of National Defence, 27,216 of which are occupied by civilian employees. The remaining positions are vacant or frozen.

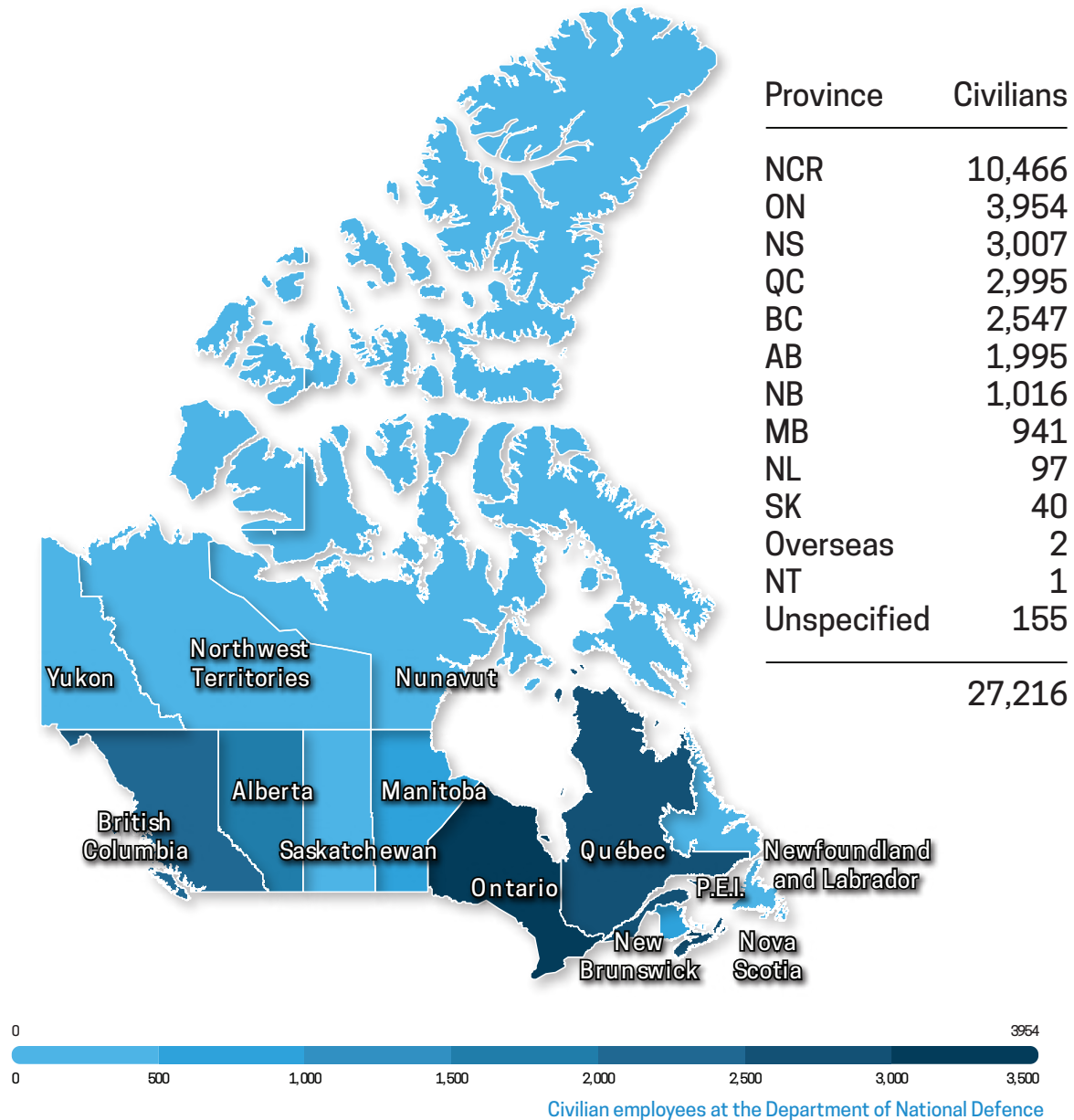
Nearly 40 percent (10,466) of civilian employees work in the National Capital Region. Civilian employees also represent a significant portion of the total workforce on Canadian Armed Forces bases, wings, and establishments across the country.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> There are numerous differences between military members and civilian employees. National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces 101 for Civilians*, page 133.

<sup>6</sup> Position: "A specific set of duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual employee and described in the job description. An employee is appointed to a position and the position is linked to a specific job". Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

<sup>7</sup> After the NCR, the largest numbers are: Canadian Forces Base Halifax and surrounding regions (2,636 employees), Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt and surrounding regions (2,297 employees), Canadian Forces Base Kingston and surrounding regions (1,390 employees). Director Human Resources Information, data.





Within the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces, civilian and military entities operate as one, with civilian employees reporting to military members, and military members reporting to civilians.

**“I’m part of the military family even if I’m just a civilian.”**

— Civilian employee

# What is Classification?

The term “classification” refers to the process by which the relative value of positions is determined. All positions are meant to be classified accurately and consistently so that their associated salaries are reflective of their relative value.

## **Treasury Board Secretariat Policy on Classification defines the classification program as:**

“The infrastructure for the effective management and control of the classification of jobs or positions in the core public administration. It includes policies and related instruments, job evaluation standards, occupational groups, job descriptions, job evaluations, learning, oversight, as well as recourse mechanisms. The program ensures the determination of the relative value of work and provides a basis for employee compensation in the core public administration.”

A position’s relative value is not assessed based on an individual’s performance, but instead on the value of the duties assigned to the position. This determination is made based on a detailed analysis of the work performed, its importance within an organization,

and how it compares to the work carried out by other similar positions in other departments. In this way, effective classification can ensure fairness in compensation for people who do work of similar overall value.

At the Department of National Defence, the determination of a position’s relative value can be more challenging due to the blended nature of the organization (military and civilian).<sup>8</sup> It can be difficult to determine a civilian position’s relative importance within its organization in cases where civilian positions are subordinate to military positions.

Civilian job descriptions are position-specific and reflect the key activities, skills, and responsibilities of the position relative to others in the organization.<sup>9</sup> In the Canadian Armed Forces, there is no equivalent job description. Military members are required to perform certain duties that are specific to their occupation and at the same time, perform duties that are common to all military members.<sup>10</sup>

For more information on the classification process, refer to Appendix D.

<sup>8</sup> The challenges of the Department’s blended nature are also felt by other Departments (e.g., the Royal Canadian Mounted Police).

<sup>9</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, *Organization and Classification - Job Descriptions*.

<sup>10</sup> *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 5070-1, Military Employment Structure Framework*, paragraph 2.1.

# Administration of Classification

## Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada Classification Policy Suite

In July 2015, Treasury Board Secretariat issued a revised classification policy suite<sup>11</sup> with the intent of streamlining and clarifying the classification responsibilities of stakeholders, and harmonizing reporting requirements for the core public administration.<sup>12</sup>

The revised classification policy suite introduced three main changes to classification in the core public administration:

1. centralize the administration of classification accreditation;<sup>13</sup>
2. adopt a new approach to classification oversight, including monitoring, auditing, and reporting on a biannual cycle; and
3. introduce standardized departmental and interdepartmental job descriptions with the intent of minimizing the number of unique job descriptions.<sup>14</sup>

11 This policy suite includes the Policy on Classification, Directive on Classification, Directive on Classification Oversight, and Directive on Classification Grievances.

12 Core Public Administration refers to the departments named in Schedule I and the other portions of the federal public administration named in Schedule IV of the *Financial Administration Act*.

13 Classification Accreditation: "Attestation that classification trainees have successfully completed all requirements of the Organization and Classification Learning Curriculum". Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

14 Treasury Board Secretariat, *Renewal of Treasury Board Classification Policy Suite*.

# Authorities

The changes introduced by the revised classification policy suite have impacted the roles and responsibilities of various authorities involved in the classification program.<sup>15</sup>

## Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer

The Chief Human Resources Officer is the senior official within the Treasury Board Secretariat and is responsible for administering the Classification Program for the core public administration. This program comprises:

- The occupational group structure;
- Classification policies and related instruments;
- Classification grievance procedures and requirements;
- Job evaluation standards;<sup>16</sup>
- Learning tools; and
- Classification oversight.<sup>17</sup>

Under the revised classification policy suite, the Chief Human Resources Officer is now responsible for the centralized administration of all classification accreditation.<sup>18</sup> As part of this function, the Chief Human Resources Officer is authorized to direct organizations to take specific actions to avoid or correct classification anomalies and to impose consequences for non-compliance as required.

<sup>15</sup> Classification Program: “The infrastructure for the effective management and control of the classification of jobs or positions in the core public administration. It includes policies and related instruments, job evaluation standards, occupational groups, job descriptions, job evaluations, learning, oversight, as well as recourse mechanisms.” Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

<sup>16</sup> Job evaluation standard (classification standard): “An instrument that describes the factors, elements and other criteria used to establish the relative value of work for an occupational group.” Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

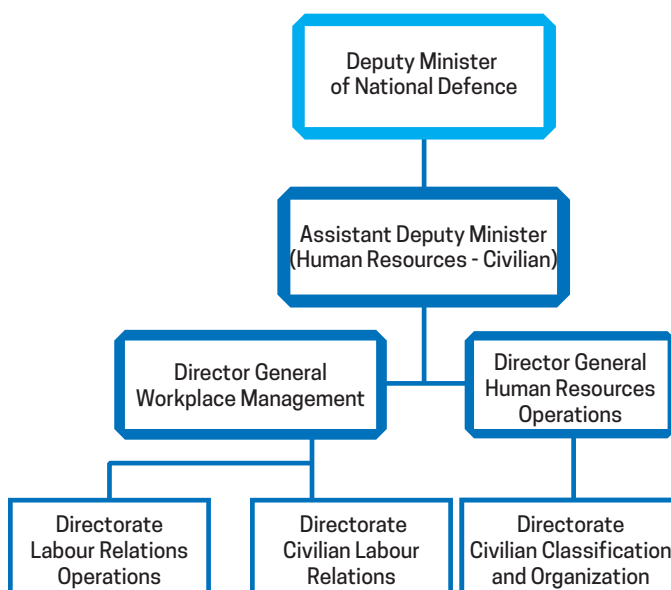
<sup>17</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Policy on Classification*, paragraphs 6.2.1 and 6.2.4.

<sup>18</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Renewal of Treasury Board Classification Policy Suite*.

The authorities that play a role in the classification program at the Department of National Defence are:

## Deputy Minister

As the Deputy Head of the Department of National Defence, the Deputy Minister has the delegated authority for classification in accordance with the *Policy on Classification* and its related instruments.<sup>19</sup> Deputy heads may then sub-delegate their classification authority to managers or human resources advisors within their organizations.<sup>20</sup>



Organizational reporting structure for classification requests

## Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization

Within the Department of National Defence, the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization has been sub-delegated the authority for overseeing and implementing departmental policies, plans, and programs related to the classification of positions held by civilian employees. This includes the administration of classification grievances within the Department of National Defence.<sup>21</sup>

There are 118 positions on the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization organizational chart. Employees are assigned to various teams within the organization:

- The Executive office;
- Program support (including E-Class, projects, and Human Resources Management Support);
- Functional direction (including policy, oversight, classification grievances, Fast Track and training); and
- Five Centre of Expertise teams which handle organizational design and classification for all organizations within the Department of National Defence.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Policy on Classification*, paragraph 3.4.

<sup>20</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Renewal of Treasury Board Classification Policy Suite*, paragraphs 3.5 and 6.1.1.

<sup>21</sup> Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 5025-0 - *Classification of Civilian Positions*.

<sup>22</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, *Contact List*.

## Directorate Labour Relations Operations and Directorate Civilian Labour Relations

Within the Department of National Defence, the Directorate Labour Relations Operations and Directorate Civilian Labour Relations provide advice, guidance, and interpretations to service providers and military and civilian managers regarding employee and labour relations matters. Directorate Labour Relations Operations provides frontline service to managers and Directorate Civilian Labour Relations is responsible for managing the grievance process at the final level.<sup>23</sup>

## Managers

Within the Department of National Defence, managers are responsible for:

- Establishing job descriptions for positions within their area of responsibility;
- Ensuring that employees are formally notified in writing of classification decisions affecting positions that they occupy;<sup>24</sup>
- Ensuring that job descriptions remain up to date through cyclical review; and
- Initiating classification requests when required.



<sup>23</sup> Directorate Labour Relations Operations (E-mails to the Office of the Ombudsman, August 8 and September 12, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 6.1.



# Recourse and Complaint Mechanisms

There are several recourse and complaint mechanisms available to employees who have concerns regarding the classification of the position they occupy, or issues related to a classification action associated with their position:

1. Civilian employees can discuss their concerns with their manager or Chain of Command.
2. Represented employees can contact their bargaining agent.<sup>25</sup>
3. Employees can file a grievance.

## Labour Relations Grievances

Employees who feel that their job description does not accurately reflect the duties they are assigned can file a labour relations grievance.<sup>26</sup> The time limit to submit a labour relations grievance is determined by the employee's collective agreement. The outcome of a labour relations grievance may result in a job description being sent to the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization for review.

## Classification Grievances

As opposed to labour relations grievances,<sup>27</sup> a classification grievance is filed when an employee objects to a classification decision for their position. According to the Treasury Board Secretariat *Directive on Classification Grievances*, an employee has 35 calendar days after they receive notification, or when they first become aware of an action or circumstance affecting the classification of the position they occupy, to present a classification grievance.<sup>28</sup>

Classification grievances are presented either through the employee's bargaining agent or directly to their manager.<sup>29</sup> The manager then sends the grievance to the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization where it is heard by a Classification Grievance Committee. The Department has 80 calendar days to provide the grievor a written response. This time limit can be extended if both the department and the grievor (or their bargaining

25 Bargaining Agent: "An employee organization that is certified by the Public Service Labour Relations Board as the bargaining agent for the employees in a bargaining unit and is empowered to enter into a collective agreement with the employer". Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

26 *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 5026-0 - Civilian Grievances*, 2005.

27 Labour Relations Grievance: grievance relating to "a provision of a statute or regulation, or of a direction or other instrument made or issued by the employer, that deals with terms and conditions of employment" or "a provision of a collective agreement or an arbitral award" or "as a result of any occurrence or matter affecting his or her terms and conditions of employment". *Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act*, 2003, section 208.

28 Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, 2005, paragraph 1.3.

29 Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4.

agent representative) mutually agree.

The Classification Grievance Committee is “responsible for establishing the appropriate classification of the grieved position based on the work assigned by the responsible manager and described in the job description”.<sup>30</sup> The Committee is comprised of three representatives: a chairperson (an accredited classification advisor), a grievance officer from the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, and an individual from within or outside the organization.<sup>31</sup>

During the hearing, the aggrieved employee is given the opportunity to provide information to the committee in person or through a bargaining agent. The employee’s manager is also made available to the committee to provide clarification on the position’s job description as required.

Once the Committee has deliberated, a written report is submitted to the Deputy Minister or their delegate. In the Department of National Defence, this is the Director General Human Resources Operations. The report contains recommendations regarding the appropriate classification for the position. A written decision is then issued based on that recommendation.

Classification grievance decisions are final and binding. If an employee is dissatisfied with the decision, their only recourse is to apply for judicial review through the Federal Court.

According to the *Directive on Classification Grievances*, classification grievances are held in abeyance until any related labour relations grievance process is complete.<sup>32</sup>



<sup>30</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2.

<sup>31</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 3, Appendix B.

<sup>32</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 2, Appendix B.

# Occupational Group Structure Review

The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer is reviewing the Occupational Group structure,<sup>33</sup> a structure which had not been reviewed in decades.<sup>34</sup>

- data analysis;
- consultation with bargaining agents and other stakeholders;
- collection of information from each department for the work being reviewed;
- creation of new occupational group definitions when required; and
- validation of results.

Currently, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer is developing and streamlining job evaluation standards for the Program and Administrative Services (PA) and Computer Systems (CS) occupational groups.<sup>35</sup>

**“Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian) Intranet site identifies that the Financial Management (FI) group is also slated for conversion in 2020/2021. However, this office was advised by the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization that the FI occupational group underwent small technical changes and would therefore not be undergoing a conversion.”**

— Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization  
discussing the occupational group structure review

33 An occupational group: “a series of jobs or occupations related in broad terms by the nature of the functions performed.”  
Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

34 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *2003 May Status Report*, Chapter 6 – Reform of Classification and Job Evaluation in the Federal Public Service.

35 Treasury Board Secretariat, *Occupational Group Structure Review*.

# Classification Renewal and Three-Year Cyclical Plan

## Treasury Board Secretariat Classification Program Renewal

In July 2015, the Treasury Board Secretariat launched the Classification Program Renewal, which included a new classification policy suite, to modernize and streamline classification within the core public administration.<sup>36</sup>

## Departmental Classification Initiatives

In April 2017, the Department of National Defence announced five initiatives that would bring the Department of National Defence in line with the Treasury Board Secretariat classification policy suite and address existing issues related to classification and organizational design:


1. Increasing the use of standardized job descriptions;<sup>37</sup>
2. Imposing a moratorium on new unique job descriptions with few exceptions;
3. Abolishing positions vacant for two years or more, in consultation with clients;
4. Providing oversight on all classification work conducted by contractors; and
5. Launching a mandatory training course in classification for managers and directors with financial delegations.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Renewal of Treasury Board Classification Policy Suite*.

<sup>37</sup> Standardized Job Description: "Document that describes the work assigned to a job classified at a specific occupational group and level, which is common across a number of work units, regions or organizations". Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

<sup>38</sup> CANFORGEN 068/17, *Classification Renewal*.





The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization launched a Three-Year Cyclical Plan in July 2017. The Plan involves direct engagement with each departmental organization within the Department of National Defence to review their organizational structure on a recurring basis. The first three year cycle is scheduled to take place over the course of 2017-2020.<sup>39</sup> The Plan aims to streamline classification and prepare for the completion of the Office of the Chief Human Officer's occupational group structure review.<sup>40</sup>

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization discusses the mission and mandate and reviews their organizational structure of each departmental organization. In doing so, they confirm and update data in the Human Resources Management System (HRMS), identify the positions requiring cyclical job description reviews,<sup>41</sup> and consult with managers to highlight vacant positions that should be abolished.<sup>42</sup> They also map positions to new or existing standardized job descriptions. The goal is to have 90 percent of positions mapped to a standardized job description by the end of the first review cycle.<sup>43</sup>

### Did You Know?

The Directorate Civilian Classification Organization provides communication tools to managers to help convey information regarding the Three-Year Cyclical Plan to employees, including the purpose of standardized job descriptions and the parties' responsibilities

<sup>39</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, *Cyclical Review*.

<sup>40</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, Sharepoint documents, *Engagement 1 – OC – Conversion and simple solutions* Power Point, page 6.

<sup>41</sup> Cyclical Job Description Reviews: "The process of reviewing a job description within a reasonable time frame to ensure that the duties being performed match the content of the job description". Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

<sup>42</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.

<sup>43</sup> The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization is responsible for the management, development, and updating of standardized job descriptions. A manager is responsible for verifying on a 5-year basis that their employee's duties match the standardized job description. Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, *Standardized Job Description Guide*, page 15.

# Section II – Findings

## Administration of Classification

**Finding:** The Three-Year Cyclical Plan undertaken by the Department of National Defence does not consider the impact on employees.

### Job Description Reviews

In accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat Directive on Classification, organizations must ensure that “job descriptions are reviewed within a reasonable timeframe (preferably in five (5) year cycles) and as soon as possible when significant changes in the work occur or when new work is assigned.”<sup>44</sup>

The Three-Year Cyclical Plan was launched by the Department of National Defence in July 2017 to address the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization’s heavy workload and to stabilize the Department’s organizational structure. Its approach to classification is based on a holistic review of each departmental organization’s civilian positions. A schedule was established to review each organization, which is posted on the internal Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian) Intranet site.<sup>45</sup>

In August 2018, the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization indicated that 68 percent of job descriptions within the Department of National Defence had been reviewed within the last five years. They further reported that they had completed the cyclical review of four organizations.<sup>46</sup> However, this office found that approximately 21 percent of job descriptions within these four organizations are still out-of-date.<sup>47</sup>

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization identified legitimate reasons for which a position might not be updated. For example, one percent of the outdated positions within the four organizations had not been reviewed because they are slated for abolishment. This action can only occur once the employees currently occupying the positions are transferred to newly-created positions and are paid accordingly.

<sup>44</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification* paragraph 1(a), Appendix H.

<sup>45</sup> The Three-Year Cyclical Plan schedule is based on organizational priorities, client readiness, and Treasury Board Secretariat pressures. Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, *Cyclical Review*.

<sup>46</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, August 21, 2018).

<sup>47</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, Sharepoint documents, General Position Information as of August 15, 2018.



In this office's view, the number of outdated job descriptions remaining from the four organizations reviewed is problematic in the context of the Three-Year Cyclical Plan. Since the Plan's intention is to perform a holistic review of each departmental organization, a departmental organization's review should not be considered complete while there are positions that remain outdated.

## Administration of Active Classification Requests

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff is organized in teams to facilitate the holistic review of departmental organizations. They identified that there is no capacity to process non-urgent/non-priority actions during implementation of the Three-Year Cyclical Plan.<sup>48</sup> In order to avoid the duplication of work for classification officers, these routine cases are generally placed on hold by the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization or remain pending until the departmental organization becomes due for its review.

Exceptions exist where requests can be processed if there is a need to action urgent classification requests that fall outside of the Three-Year Cyclical Plan's schedule. Prioritization is given to cases where there is a need for immediate staffing, pending retirement, or a classification request resulting from a labour relations grievance. However, this prioritization can only occur if the classification officer is made aware of the circumstances by either a manager or labour relations officer.<sup>49</sup>

This office's analysis indicates that the amount of active requests continues to increase despite the fact the Three-Year Cyclical Plan's intent is to reduce the workload. Based on the review of the Civilian Classification Tracking System,<sup>50</sup> there were 2,606 active classification requests in the system on 1 July 2018, 789 of which predate the Three-Year Cyclical Plan. The oldest active classification request was 3.5 years old.

48 Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, Three-Year Cyclical Plan.

49 Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.

50 The Civilian Classification Tracking System is the primary tool used to receive, monitor, and track progress of all classification requests.

## What is the impact on employees?

The Three-Year Cyclical Plan intends to complete a total review of all departmental organizations' job descriptions, which will increase departmental efficiencies and reduce the duplication of work for classification officers. However, the holistic approach being taken prioritizes the cyclical review of positions over the needs of employees, some of whom have been waiting years for resolution of a classification request. Furthermore, even in organizations whose review is deemed complete, there may be employees whose job description is outdated.

It is well understood that there may be legitimate reasons that preclude a job description from being reviewed within the cyclical review timeframe and that the goal of the *Three-Year Cyclical Plan* is to review all positions within the Department by 2020. To alleviate further impacts on employees, it is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

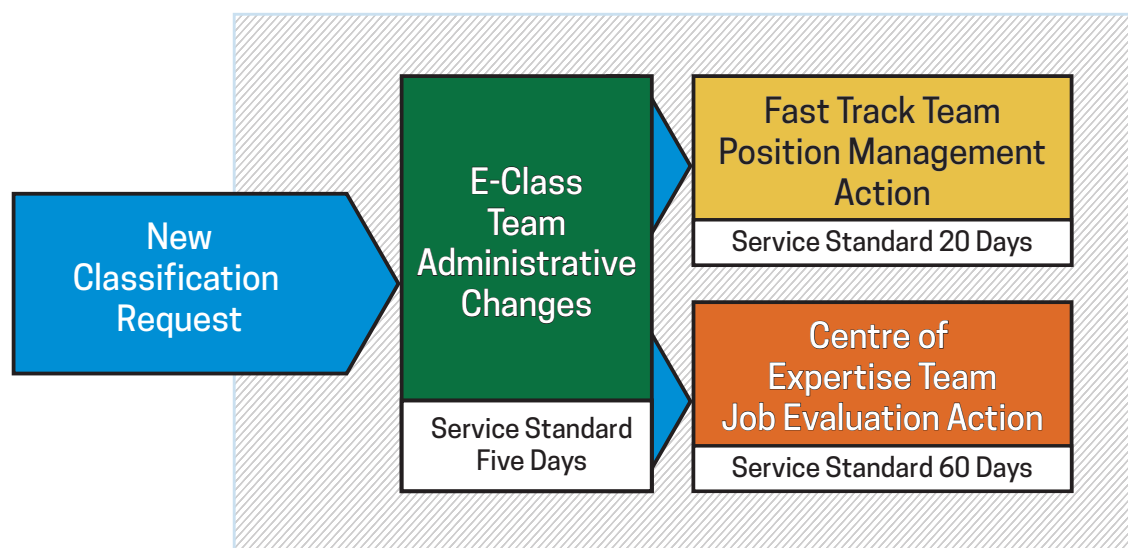
**Recommendation 1:** By October 2020, review all job descriptions on a five-year basis to ensure that they are current and accurate.

**Recommendation 2:** By October 2019, complete the processing of all classification requests that pre-date the start of the *Three-Year Cyclical Plan*.



**Finding:** The Department of National Defence is not meeting its goal of completing 80 percent of classification requests within internal service standards.

### Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization



Triage process for classification requests

The Department has service standards in place to assess whether the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization is completing classification activities within a reasonable timeframe. These service standards are determined by the type of request and the complexity of the review that is required by the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization.

Each type of classification service has a distinct service standard:

1. Administrative: five days
2. Position management: 20 days
3. Job evaluation: 60 days<sup>51</sup>

The Department's goal is to achieve these service standards 80 percent of the time.<sup>52</sup> It should be noted that there are no service standards for bulk classification requests.<sup>53</sup>

When new classification requests are submitted, they are received by the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization's E-Class team. If the request relates to an administrative change, it will be processed by E-Class. If the request relates to position management or job evaluation actions, E-Class will relay such a case to the Fast Track team or the Centre of Expertise, respectively.<sup>54</sup> However, there is currently no requirement that E-Class

51 Administrative changes (e.g., changes to the linguistic profile, security level, creation/change to student/casual position, etc.); Position management changes (e.g., create/apply standardized job description, change a reporting relationship, abolish a position, review/update to positions using an existing job description, etc.); Job evaluation (e.g., creating a new position using a unique or modified job description, applying an existing job description or standardized job description which results in reclassification, etc.), Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian), *Classification Standards*.

52 Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian) (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, July 25, 2018).

53 Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff. (Human Resources-Civilian), (Classification Standards)

54 The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization has Classification Standards which break down the types of activities that fall within each service category. Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian), *Classification Standards*.

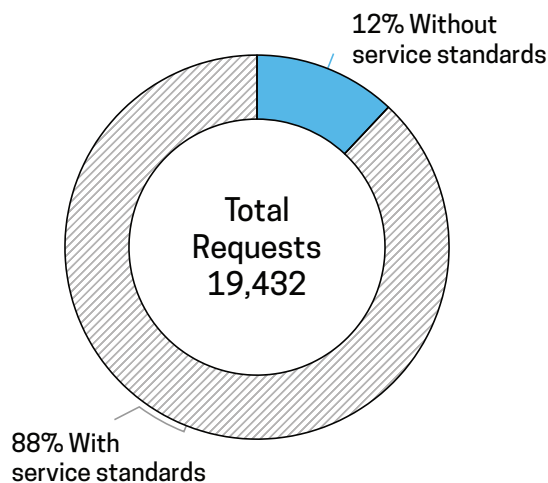
verify in the Civilian Classification Tracking System whether there is an active request related to the same position.<sup>55</sup>

In discussions with Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff, this office was advised that in cases where information is missing from a request, the file is returned to the manager for action and the request is put on hold until the required information is provided. The calculation of service standards does not include this period. Furthermore, this office's analysis of the Civilian Classification Tracking System identified differing levels of timeliness between the filing of a classification action request by managers and the reception of that request by the Department.

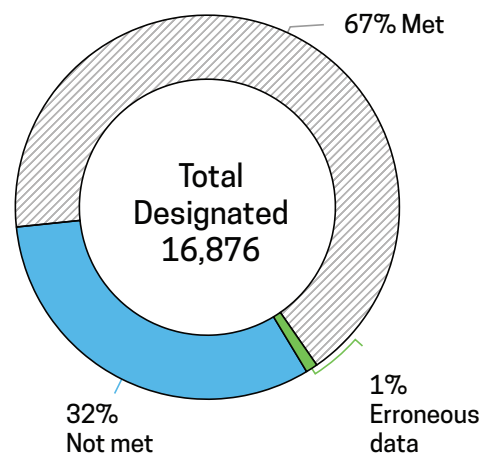
## Service standard results

In July 2018, the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian) issued an update regarding Civilian Human Resources Services and Management. This update mentioned that in the 2017/2018 fiscal year, the service standards for classification were met 68 percent of the time.<sup>56</sup> This office's data analysis of the Civilian Classification Tracking System confirmed this percentage.<sup>57</sup>

**Classification Requests  
(1 July 2015 - 1 July 2018)**



**Designated Service Standard Requests  
(1 July 2015 - 1 July 2018)**



Breakdown of service standards for classification requests

<sup>55</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.

<sup>56</sup> Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian) (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, July 25, 2018).

<sup>57</sup> Civilian Classification Tracking System.

It should be noted out of a total of 19,432 classification requests, 12 percent (2,405) were not assigned service standards. This office's review identified various reasons that requests would not be assigned service standards. For example, bulk classification requests were not assigned service standards. There were also cases where service standards were omitted in error.

The Treasury Board Secretariat Guideline on Service Standards highlights the importance of service standards:

Service standards are integral to good client service and to effectively managing performance. They help clarify expectations for clients and employees, drive service improvement, and contribute to results-based management. Service standards reinforce government accountability by making performance transparent, and increase the confidence of Canadians in government by demonstrating the government's commitment to service excellence.<sup>58</sup>

## What barriers are preventing service standards from being met?

**Three-Year Cyclical Plan:** Active classification requests are generally placed on hold by the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization or remain pending until the organization becomes due for its review during the Three-Year Cyclical Plan. Based on discussions with the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, there has been a shift to processing classification requests in bulk, due to the implementation of standardized job descriptions. This, however, prevents active classification requests from being processed individually within service standards.

**Knowledge of Classification Service Standards:** During interviews with civilian employees and managers, we observed varied levels of knowledge of the classification service standards. In many instances, these employees acknowledged their lack of knowledge and said that they would consult with their human resources advisor or classification representative for advice, if and as required.

<sup>58</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Guideline on Service Standards*.

There were also varied levels of knowledge of service standards held by employees at the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization. Some of these respondents were not aware of the existence of service standards at all. This is problematic given that service standards are used to measure the organization's work and hold staff accountable. Service standards should also be used as a tool to provide services to all employees within a reasonable timeframe. Knowledge will be discussed further in the *Training and Awareness* section of this report.

**Resourcing:** During interviews with the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, respondents identified that there is a shortage of accredited classification officers<sup>59</sup> within the organization, which impacts their ability to meet classification service standards. Resourcing is further complicated by the lengthy duration of accreditation training.<sup>60</sup> Based on interviews with staff from the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization and a review of the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization's training and development program, accreditation training can take up to three years or longer. Furthermore, the availability of classification courses at the Canada School of Public Service is limited, particularly in French.<sup>61</sup>

In September 2018, the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization reported that they have 53 trainees undergoing their accreditation training program. The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization indicated that once trainees become accredited, they will be better positioned to action classification requests in a timely manner.<sup>62</sup>

**“To be completely honest, most of the people that I’ve worked with that have classification issues have acted very professionally. They haven’t refused to do the tasks that have been assigned to them. They carried on despite the fact that they may have been misclassified.”**

— Military manager

59 In total, there are 41 accredited classification officers within the Department, of which 12 work in the operations with the Centre of Expertise. The remaining accredited classification officers are team leads, managers, and resources in the corporate team. Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, September 10, 2018).

60 As part of the revised classification policy suite, the accreditation process for classification officers has been centralized under the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer. Classification officers must fulfill all requirements of the Organization and Classification Learning Curriculum.

61 Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff and the Office of Chief Human Resources Officer.

62 Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.



## What is the impact when service standards are not met?

When classification service standards are not respected, managers are unable to meet their employees' expectations. This office heard that although employees continued to complete their duties, there was a negative impact on morale in the workplace.

This office was informed that recruitment and retention can be challenging in cases where position reviews are pending and employee perception is that the positions are inappropriately classified.<sup>63</sup>

Through the course of the investigation, several employees who had gone through the process identified the impact that delays in the administration of classification had on their health and well-being. In one case, the employee reported taking medication to manage stress resulting from the grievance process. Other employees identified feeling discouraged by delays in the process.

**“[It is d]emoralizing to not be recognized for what you are doing.”**

— Civilian Employee

One employee reported that delays in the administration of classification resulted in tax implications. The employee received a lump sum payment for an upward reclassification dating back ten years. Consequently, they were subject to a higher tax rate for that payment and indicated that the sudden increase in income impacted their eligibility for specific tax benefits.<sup>64</sup>

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization has internal service standards and aims to meet these standards 80 percent of the time. Therefore, it is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

**Recommendation 3:** Achieve their goal of completing 80 percent of classification requests within internal service standards by October 2019.

**Recommendation 4:** By January 2019, publish quarterly reports demonstrating classification service standard rates and make this information available to all civilian employees on multiple platforms.

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with Employees held from August 10 to September 7, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> Interviews with Employees held from August 10 to September 7, 2018.

**Finding:** When positions are mapped to standardized job descriptions in bulk, managers are not always informing employees of the change.

When changes are made to an individual job description, managers are required to provide a copy of the updated job description to the employee who occupies the position. Although not a requirement, it is best practice that documentary evidence of employee notification be placed on the classification file. Examples of such evidence include a copy of the job description signed by the employee or a copy of the email providing the job description to the employee.

When standardized job descriptions are applied to multiple positions in bulk, the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization accepts managers' attestation as confirmation of employee notification.<sup>65</sup>

This office spoke to several representatives from organizations who have undergone the Three-Year Cyclical Plan review. We were made aware of examples where employees whose position was mapped to a standardized job description during a bulk review were not informed of the change.<sup>66</sup>

**“It felt like the request fell into a black hole.”**

— Civilian employee

<sup>65</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.

<sup>66</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, departmental organizations; DND/CAF Ombudsman, complaint files.

## What is the impact of failing to notify employees?

Employees should be involved in the review of their job description, through notification of the review, discussion of their work duties,

explanation of the outcome, and access to recourse mechanisms. If this does not happen, employees do not have the ability to flag issues to management. These circumstances also make it impossible for employees to access recourse mechanisms in a timely manner.

Furthermore, if an employee is not advised of changes to their position, they may leave their position, at which they would lose their right to access the classification grievance process.

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

**Recommendation 5:** By January 2019, establish a process requiring managers to provide the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization with documentary evidence showing that employees have been notified of changes to their job description. This includes cases of bulk mapping to standardized job descriptions.

**Finding:** While there has been recent improvement in the processing of classification grievances, they are still not being completed within the Treasury Board Secretariat mandated time limit.

In 2011, in response to several individual complaints related to classification grievances, this office completed an internal assessment of the classification grievance process. At the time, the assessment identified approximately 300 active classification grievances. A subsequent follow-up in 2015 revealed that the number of cases had been reduced to 154, then to 112 in 2016. As of 1 July 2018 there were 72 active classification grievances.<sup>67</sup>

## Grievance Tracking System<sup>68</sup>

As part of this office's investigative methodology, this office reviewed all data from the Grievance Tracking System related to classification grievances that were closed from 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2018 as well as all active grievances until 1 July 2018.

- **Active Classification Grievances:** There were 72 active files that had been open for an average of 983 days (2.65 years). The oldest active classification grievance is over nine years old.<sup>69</sup>

- **Closed Classification Grievances:** It was determined that 268 classification grievances were closed during the scope of the investigation. The average processing time for these grievances was 3.85 years (1,407 calendar days). This represents 18 times the mandated 80-day limit for processing classification grievances.<sup>70</sup> The only classification grievances which had been completed within the 80-day limit had either been rejected by Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization or withdrawn by the grievor. Examples of cases where a grievance may be rejected include: a lack of timely submission and when the grievor had already left the position prior to the grievance submission.

## Classification Grievance Case Studies

This office also conducted a review of 20 classification grievance case files. In all these cases, the classification grievances exceeded the mandated time limit.

<sup>67</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, May 22, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> Classification Grievance Tracking System: The database used by federal departments to communicate key classification grievance information to the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer at Treasury Board.

<sup>69</sup> Due to errors in the data in the Grievance Tracking System, two active files could not be analyzed.

<sup>70</sup> Due to errors in the data in the Grievance Tracking System, 19 closed files could not be analyzed.



## Did You Know?

You can request an update on your classification grievance through your bargaining agent. If you are not being assisted by a bargaining agent, you can contact the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization for information.

## What is the impact of delays in processing classification grievances?

- **On employees:** Delays in the processing of classification grievances can have financial impacts on employees in cases where the decision involves a retroactive upward reclassification. These delays can also affect employees' entitlements through their collective agreement in cases where a grievance decision results in a change in occupational group.

Employees reported feeling demoralized during lengthy processing delays while continuing to perform tasks that they feel do not match their group or level. They also reported that their involvement in the grievance process required a significant time commitment.

- **On the organization:** Delays can also have impacts on the organization. Managers reported that improper classifications made it more difficult to attract and retain employees. There are also budget implications when employees receive retroactive pay as it comes out of the current year's budget.<sup>71</sup>

In one example, the employee reported that their hands-on approach to seeking updates impacted their relationship with management and they indicated that they were viewed as an administrative burden on the organization.<sup>72</sup>

**"If I could get back the hours I put into this it would be amazing."**

— Civilian Employee

<sup>71</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, managers.

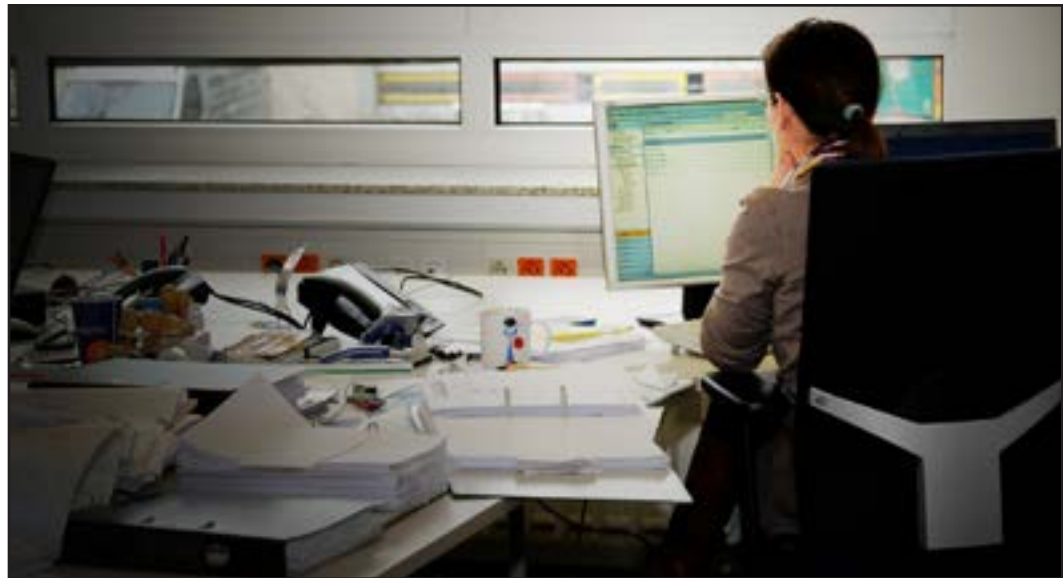
<sup>72</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, employees.

Although positive progress has been made since 2011, the 80-day time limit for classification grievances is still not being met. To alleviate further impacts on employees who are waiting on the resolution of outstanding classification grievances, it is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

**Recommendation 6:** Resolve all outstanding classification grievances by October 2019.

**Recommendation 7:** By October 2019, implement a plan to ensure future grievances are resolved within Treasury Board Secretariat mandated time limits moving forward.

**Recommendation 8:** By January 2019, publish quarterly reports demonstrating classification grievance completion rates and make this information available to all civilian employees on multiple platforms.





**Finding:** The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization is not requesting extensions for classification grievances within the Treasury Board Secretariat mandated time limit.

A classification grievance must be processed, and the employee provided a written decision, within 80 calendar days of receipt of the grievance by the employee's immediate supervisor or local officer-in-charge.<sup>73</sup> In the event that a decision cannot be rendered within the applicable time limit, the organization can request an extension beyond the 80-day time limit.<sup>74</sup>

The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer confirmed that there is an "implicit agreement by the parties that extensions would be requested at the actual hearing, reducing the requirement to request multiple extensions."<sup>75</sup> Both the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer cited a lack of resources and a high volume of work as the rationale for adopting this approach.

**"Due to lack of resources from departments, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, and unions, there is a common understanding that this 80 days is waived as none of the parties are able to meet the timelines. Employees who feel their case is urgent (pending retirement) should bring it to the attention of their union representative".**

— Director, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, 26 September 2018

<sup>73</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 1.6.1.

<sup>74</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 1.6.2.

<sup>75</sup> Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, 13 September, 2018).

## Classification Grievance Case Studies

In all 20 classification grievance case studies reviewed by this Office, the processing of the classification grievance exceeded the 80-day time limit.<sup>76</sup> In addition, an extension was not requested within the 80-day time limit in any of the case files and there was no documented evidence of consequences for the Department of National Defence.

In cases where an extension was requested, the following note was added to the file:

“A mutual agreement was reached between DCCO and the griever/Bargaining agent for an extension to the classification grievance response. The deadline for the response is 80 calendar days from the date of the grievance hearing. The employee notification of the final and binding classification grievance decision is therefore due on: ...”<sup>77</sup>

In all of the case studies reviewed, the extension request was made during the hearing, which occurred after the 80-day time limit. In some cases, the hearing took place several years after the grievance was originally filed.

## Grievance Tracking System

As noted above, the only classification grievances that were completed within the 80-day time limit had been rejected or withdrawn. No determination could be made on the percentage of extensions requested, due to poor data quality in the Grievance Tracking System.

### What is the impact when extensions are not requested?

When extensions are not requested within the initial 80-day time limit, employees are unable to predict the timeline for resolution of their grievance. As the Department of National Defence is not notifying employees when it is unable to meet its obligations with respect to classification grievances, it negatively affects government accountability and transparency. Furthermore, it does not respect employees' entitlements with respect to the process.

Employees must adhere to the submission deadline of their classification grievance; otherwise it will be rejected.<sup>78</sup> By comparison, the same rigour in application of deadlines was found not to apply to the Department of National Defence within the scope of this investigation.

**“I’ve just fallen into a black hole.”  
(Translation)**

— Employee comment on the submission of their classification grievance.

<sup>76</sup> This excludes cases that were rejected.

<sup>77</sup> This information is included in a transmittal slip in the employee classification grievance case file.

<sup>78</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 1.3.1, Appendix B.

During interviews, respondents voiced frustration over the lack of updates on the status of their case and felt a lack of control over their classification grievance following its submission.

Recognizing that there are cases where the 80-day time limit cannot be adhered to, it is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

**Recommendation 9:** Immediately ensure that all extension requests are made prior to the expiration of the Treasury Board Secretariat 80-day time limit, are included in the grievance file, and are properly identified in the Grievance Tracking System.



**Finding:** The Department of National Defence grievance decision letter does not identify the option for the grievor to seek judicial review before the Federal Court.

According to the Treasury Board Secretariat *Directive on Classification Grievances*, grievors must be advised in writing of the grievance decision issued by the deputy head or delegate.<sup>79</sup>

Employees who are dissatisfied with the decision rendered on their grievance can seek judicial review before the Federal Court.<sup>80</sup> This office's investigation determined that this information is not reflected on the grievance decision letter provided to grievors.

Treasury Board Secretariat's template of the grievance decision letter does not mention judicial review.<sup>81</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat reported that this is a best practice, as employees have a responsibility to inform themselves of their rights, or obtain this information through their bargaining agent if they are represented. This information is also made available to all employees online through the Treasury Board Secretariat website. However, they noted that information on seeking judicial review can be included in the grievance decision letter, at the discretion of each department.

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization explained that judicial review is a process review and not a decision review; therefore, it would not be included in the Department's classification grievance decision letters.<sup>82</sup>

Of the employees we interviewed who had gone through the classification grievance process, not all were aware of their ability to seek judicial review. Employees reported that in some cases their bargaining agent informed them of this recourse mechanism.

The Military Grievance Process specifically refers to judicial review in the Defence Administrative Order and Directive. The decision letter provided to the grievor in this process references judicial review and the grievance is not considered closed until the time limit for judicial review has passed.<sup>83</sup>

### Did You Know?

Employees have the right to seek judicial review of a classification grievance decision within 30 days.

<sup>79</sup> Our analysis of the classification grievances case studies found that a decision letter was included in all files from 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2018. Two of the twenty grievance files were withdrawn or abandoned; therefore, no letter was required. Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 5 – Response to grievor, Appendix B.

<sup>80</sup> *Federal Courts Act*, s. 18(1).

<sup>81</sup> GCIntranet, Classification grievance letter template – Results.

<sup>82</sup> Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, 4 September, 2018).

<sup>83</sup> Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 2017-1, Military Grievance Process.

**Finding:** Retroactive salary adjustments due to upward reclassification are applied inconsistently.

## Retroactive Salary Adjustments

According to the Treasury Board Secretariat,

[w]hen a position is reclassified, only the incumbent of that position is entitled to the salary adjustment for services rendered as of the effective date of the reclassification. In situations involving former incumbents, the delegated manager may consider the possibility of acting pay only if they are able to certify that the former incumbent significantly performed the duties and met the conditions of the reclassified position.<sup>84</sup>

This means that only employees currently occupying a position are entitled to retroactive salary adjustments for upward reclassifications.<sup>85</sup> However, managerial discretion to award acting pay retroactively to a former employee is permitted on a case-by-case basis. Managers would have to proactively contact former employees to notify them of the change in the classification of the position they once occupied in order to process the acting pay.<sup>86</sup>

Where a classification grievance results in an upward reclassification, an employee is entitled to retroactive salary if they occupied the position the day the classification grievance was filed.

Through the course of the investigation, we consulted the Directorate Staffing Policies and Programs to determine how these retroactive salary adjustments are administered within the Department of National Defence. This organization provides policy direction and guidance for the Department and supports the development of national human resources strategies.<sup>87</sup> They confirmed that Treasury Board Secretariat guidance is followed at the Department of National Defence.

84 Information memo to the heads of human resources directors from the compensation and Labour Relations Sector at the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, 27 May 2011.

85 Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Terms and Conditions of Employment*. Article 2.4 – Reclassification or classification conversion.

86 This can be more challenging in a military context due to increased mobility.

87 Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian), Directorate Staffing Policies and Programs.

However, this office received conflicting information during interviews regarding the requirement for managers to notify employees whose former position was retroactively reclassified upwards.<sup>88</sup> This office was unable to identify a clear process to ensure that all affected employees are being notified consistently.

## What are the impacts on employees?

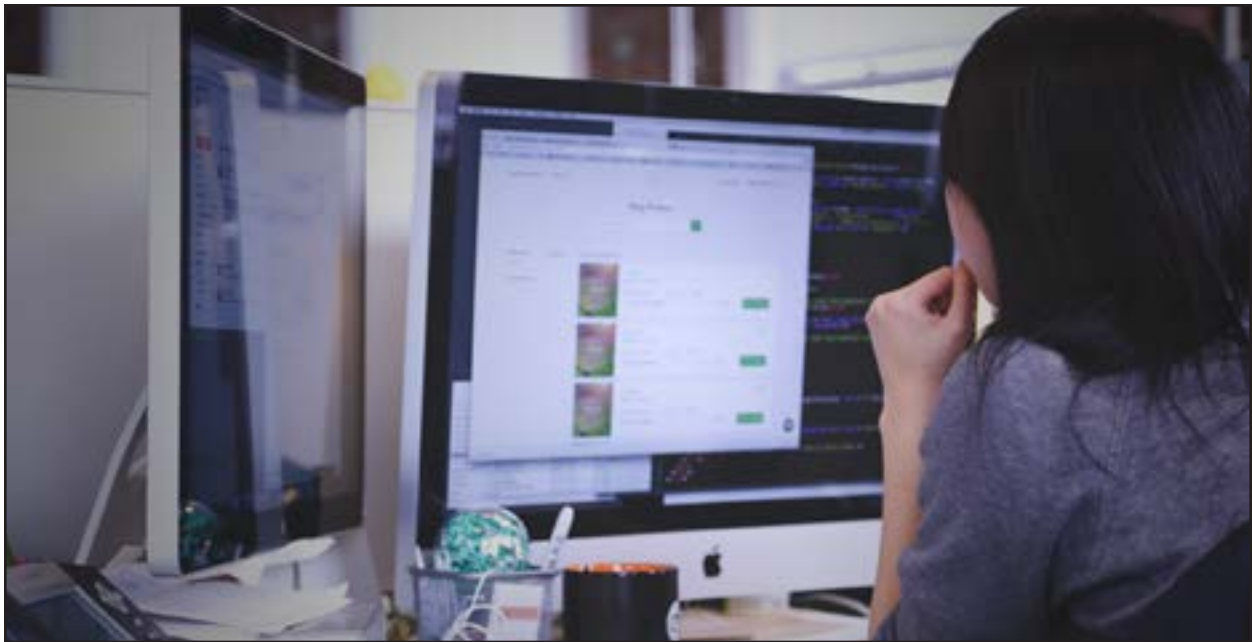
The longer a classification decision is delayed beyond the Department's service standards, the more difficult it becomes to locate and communicate with an employee who once occupied a position. This in turn reduces the likelihood that an employee would receive acting pay for a retroactive upward reclassification. In contrast, if a classification decision is processed within service standards, it is more

likely that an employee would still be occupying the position.

### Did You Know?

As government pensions are tied to employee salaries, retroactive acting pay can also have an impact on pension calculations for employees who have left the public service.

Managerial discretion to grant retroactive acting pay to former occupants of a position can result in an inconsistent application of policy, as there is no guarantee that all former occupants will be contacted by their managers or receive retroactive acting pay, even in comparable cases. This inconsistency may result in unfairness for former occupants of positions for which classification decisions were delayed beyond the Department's service standards.



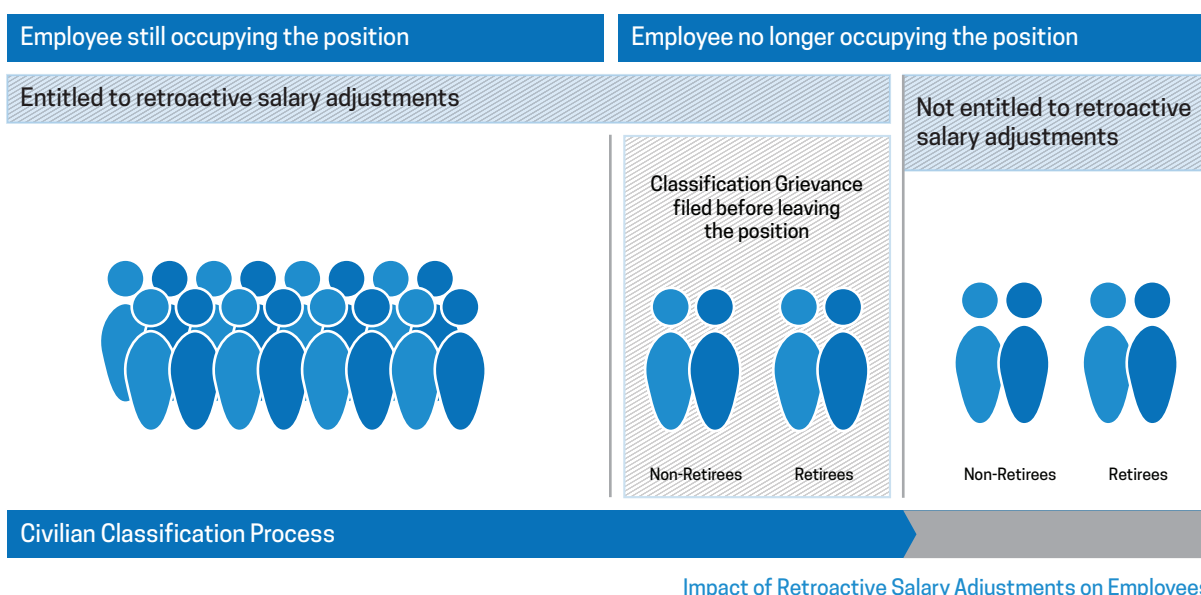
<sup>88</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.



As part of this review, this office reviewed 20 case files. One case file pertained to a group grievance contesting a classification decision from April 2014. The classification grievance was filed in May 2014. Eleven employees submitted a grievance; however two of these grievances were rejected as the employees were no longer the incumbents of the position. Of these two employees, one had left the position in 2009, but the other had only resigned from the position one month prior in March 2014. The

classification grievance resulted in an upward reclassification<sup>89</sup> dating back to October 2008. However, neither of the two employees were entitled to retroactive pay as they no longer occupied their positions.

In these two cases, if the Department's review of the positions had been timely, the employees would likely have been advised of the reclassification prior to leaving their positions and would have been entitled to retroactive pay.



89 "A reclassification occurs when there is a change in the occupational group, sub-group and/or level of an existing job within the Core Public Administration in accordance with the employer's classification program. For greater certainty, a reclassification is not a classification conversion." Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

# Information Management and Communication Practices

**Finding:** There are deficiencies in the quality of data in the Civilian Classification Tracking System and the Grievance Tracking System.

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization is responsible for the entry of data in the Civilian Classification Tracking System and the Grievance Tracking System.<sup>90</sup> Through the course of this investigation, this office reviewed data spanning 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2018 in both systems. We identified issues with data quality, including incomplete entries, errors, and inconsistencies.

## Civilian Classification Tracking System

There are 19,432 records in the Civilian Classification Tracking System that fall within the scope of this investigation. The Civilian Classification Tracking System contains 49 data elements, for example, position title, classification action type, and the date the request was assigned to classification personnel. As part of this investigation, this office reviewed three of the 49 data elements: date received at E-Class, number of days on hold, and status date. These three data elements were chosen because they provide key information to classification personnel on the processing time of a classification request.

This office identified 413 erroneous data points within the three data elements reviewed. For example, some records had missing “received” dates, did not reflect when the file had been taken “off hold”, or the status date did not show when the latest action was taken on a file. As this office did not review all 49 data elements or compare the data in the system to the classification file, we could not determine the full extent of the data quality issues in the Civilian Classification Tracking System.

<sup>90</sup> As previously discussed, the E-Class team within the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization creates entries in the Civilian Classification Tracking System when classification requests are received. Once the file is triaged, data entry is completed by either the Fast Track Team or Centre of Expertise. The Functional Direction team is responsible for the entry of grievance data in the Grievance Tracking System.

## Grievance Tracking System

The Treasury Board Secretariat *Directive on Classification Grievances* specifies that departmental leads for classification grievances are responsible for “ensuring the completeness and the accuracy of the classification documentation and information contained in the classification grievance files and of the required departmental input into the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat’s Classification Grievance Tracking System”.<sup>91</sup>

There are 360 classification grievance files in the Grievance Tracking System that fall within the scope of this investigation. The Grievance Tracking System contains 37 data elements. This office examined the following six: date grievance received at department, grievance hearing date, number of grievance extensions, grievance closure date, grievance withdrawal date, and grievance rejection date.

This office’s analysis identified 230 errors within the 2,160 data points reviewed.<sup>92</sup> For example, four classification grievances that were identified as withdrawn also contained a grievance decision date; one grievance had a closure date that took place before the grievance hearing date; one grievance had a closure date without a filing date. There are also concerns with respect to data integrity related to grievance extensions. In 22 cases, an extension date was entered; however the corresponding extension request field reflected zero extension requests.

## Classification Grievance Case Studies

This office also reviewed a sample of 20 classification grievances and compared it to the corresponding file in the Grievance Tracking System. In seven cases, the outcome of the decision was incorrectly entered. In all 20 cases, grievance extension information was either missing or incorrectly entered.

<sup>91</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Directive on Classification Grievances*, paragraph 6.2.5.

<sup>92</sup> A data point is a single piece of information contained within a record.

## Monitoring and oversight<sup>93</sup>

The Functional Direction Team within the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization performs an oversight and monitoring function. They conduct randomized spot checks of Civilian Classification Tracking System data and provide training to staff when issues are identified. Spot checks are performed more frequently for trainees than for accredited classification officers to ensure that any knowledge gaps are addressed early on. This team is also responsible for the administration of classification grievances and the data entered into the Grievance Tracking System.<sup>94</sup>

## What is the impact of unreliable or missing data?

When files in the Civilian Classification Tracking System and Grievance Tracking Systems are missing key information, this impacts the quality of the organization's records. Personnel at the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization should be seeking to fill these gaps while the files are still active. Such efforts could result in increased workload, but would ultimately ensure the accuracy of the file. The Department should aim for a zero percent error rate in these systems. Erroneous data can hinder the efficient processing of classification requests and grievances, which can have a negative impact on civilian employees.

Missing or unreliable data in the tracking systems makes it difficult to effectively monitor the administration of and compliance with classification policy requirements.

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

**Recommendation 10:** By October 2019, undertake a total review and correction of data held in all active cases within the Civilian Classification Tracking System and the Grievance Tracking System, and strengthen data quality controls moving forward.

<sup>93</sup> Monitoring and oversight: The activity whereby programs, operations and outcomes are continuously reviewed to assess their effectiveness. This may include studies, reporting and audits. Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

<sup>94</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.

**Finding:** Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization does not consistently receive critical information about labour relations grievances on job content, thereby preventing them from prioritizing this work.

At the Department of National Defence, the administration of labour relations grievances falls under the purview of the Director General Workforce Management, while the administration of classification, including classification grievances, falls under the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization. Both of these directorates are under the purview of the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian).

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization identified that when they are made aware that classification actions result from a labour relations grievance decision on job content, they can prioritize these actions accordingly. Early notification of labour relations grievances that touch on job content also allows the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization to explore options for informal resolution where warranted, for example, facilitating the understanding of a job description.<sup>95</sup>

## Lack of notification process

Through this office's investigation, it was determined that the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization is not consistently receiving critical information about labour relations grievances on job content.

- **Through the Classification Action Request Form:** When managers submit a classification request, they do not consistently identify that the classification action is a result of a labour relations grievance, nor does the Classification Action Request Form specify that this information should be provided.<sup>96</sup> As a result, there is no way to guarantee consistency in the identification of a labour relations grievance through the Classification Action Request Form.

<sup>95</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff.

<sup>96</sup> Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian), *Welcome to E-Class*.



- **Through the Civilian Classification Tracking System:**

The Civilian Classification Tracking System is the primary tool used to receive, monitor, and track the progress of all classification requests. There is no field in the Civilian Classification Tracking System to identify whether a classification action is related to a labour relations grievance on job content. Currently, the notes section is used to track this information when it is known, however there is no standardized process to document this information. As a result, cases where a classification action is related to a labour relations grievance on job content are not consistently identified and cannot be effectively prioritized.

- **By Labour Relations Officers:**

Employees of the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization indicated that the notification of classification actions stemming from labour relations grievances on job content is inconsistent despite the fact that this information was requested from labour relations officers.<sup>97</sup> Both the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization and the Directorate Labour Relations Operations stated that there is no formal process in place for this notification. In addition, the Directorate Labour Relations Operations reported that due to poor data quality in the Human Resources Management System (HRMS), the current number of active labour relations grievances that are related to job content is unknown.<sup>98</sup>

**“If we knew from the beginning, we would try to prioritize them.”**

— Employee at the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization discussing notification of classification actions resulting from labour relations grievances.

<sup>97</sup> Stakeholder Interviews, bargaining agents and classification personnel.

<sup>98</sup> Directorate Labour Relations Operations (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, 7 September, 2018).

## What is the impact when notification is not provided?

In cases where a classification action results from a labour relations grievances, the lack of consistent notification to the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization prevents the classification team from appropriately prioritizing any resulting classification actions. This in turn could delay the resolution of files, to the detriment of employees and the organization. This is especially problematic when an employee has already waited years for the resolution of a labour relations grievance.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, if the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization is not aware of labour relations grievances on job content, they are unable to participate in the discussion of informal resolution options.

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

**Recommendation 11:** By October 2019, develop a formalized process that requires the reporting of labour relations grievances on job content to the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization.

<sup>99</sup> During interviews with employees, this Office heard that some labour relations grievances took several years.

# Training And Awareness

**Finding:** There is a lack of knowledge and awareness of the classification process by managers, supervisors, and employees within the Department of National Defence.

## Awareness of managers and supervisors<sup>100</sup>

At the Department of National Defence, managers with delegation to approve job descriptions and organizational charts are required to complete the *Introduction to Organization and Job Classification*<sup>101</sup> (P930) course.<sup>102</sup>

As of 1 July 2018, 687 Department of National Defence registrants had completed the course through the Canada School of Public Service. Until recently, members of the Canadian Armed Forces could not access courses offered by the Canada School of Public Service.<sup>103</sup> However, this training was available to military managers through the Defence Learning Network.

Through discussions with the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, it was determined that they are not tracking the completion rates of the P930 course. Completion rates were only made available to this office via the Canada School of Public Service. The Department of National Defence could not provide completion rates for either training platform. This is problematic because the organization is not aware of how many managers have taken this mandatory training.

Through interviews with departmental organizations, managers, and bargaining agents, we determined that managers have varied levels of knowledge of the classification process and accompanying policy framework. In addition, several military and civilian managers interviewed were unfamiliar with their roles and responsibilities with respect to the administration of classification. Several managers reported not having taken any specific training on classification.

100 Manager: "an employee who is accountable for exercising delegated authority over human resources (i.e., staffing and/or labour relations delegation)"; Supervisor: "an employee who has the responsibility for day-to-day supervision of other employees, e.g. assign work, set priorities, assess performance and approve or recommend approval of leave." Treasury Board Secretariat, *Glossary*.

101 CANFORGEN 068/17, Classification Renewal.

102 This course provides common understanding of organizational design and classification concepts for managers. Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, 10 August, 2018).

103 CANFORGEN 146/18, CAF Access to CSPA Learning Products and Services.

In discussions with Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization, this office was advised that managers also have a role to play in the delays in the administration of classification. They noted that certain managers do not fulfill their classification responsibilities by failing to provide required information in a timely manner. This could be attributed in part to a gap in training and education on the part of these managers.

Respondents also indicated that there is a lack of knowledge of the classification process on the part of front-line supervisors. These individuals are often the first point of contact for discussions about employees' job description or general inquiries on the classification process. They may also be more knowledgeable of an employee's day-to-day tasks than a manager. Supervisors without delegation to approve job descriptions and organizational charts are not required to complete the P930 course, which may contribute to their reported lack of awareness.

## Mobility

Through the investigation, this office also found that military managers' awareness of classification is further impacted by their mobility.

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces "work in a command driven environment."<sup>104</sup> As identified in this office's *On the Homefront* report, they have "limited influence over when, where, and for how long their postings, training, and deployments occur."<sup>105</sup> They are subject to personnel tempo<sup>106</sup> and can be called away for training, taskings, deployments, and other operational requirements. Mobility was reported to reduce the time military managers have available to complete their civilian human resources responsibilities, including those that relate to classification.<sup>107</sup>

During the course of the investigation, we heard stories of delays in the submission of classification requests and cyclical job description reviews due to military managers' frequent turnover.<sup>108</sup> Respondents indicated that in some instances, classification requests were duplicated because the incoming military manager was unaware that a request had previously been submitted.<sup>109</sup>

104 National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces 101 for Civilians*, page 133.

105 DND/CAF Ombudsman, *On the Homefront: Assessing the Well-being of Canada's Military Families in the New Millennium*, pages 3-4.

106 Personnel tempo is defined as the "frequency and duration of military duties away from home. Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 5009-0 - Personnel Readiness.

107 Stakeholder Interviews, employees, departmental organizations and bargaining agents.

108 Stakeholder Interviews, Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization staff and departmental organizations.

109 Stakeholder Interviews, departmental organizations.

While frequent staff turnover and inadequate knowledge transfer can also occur between civilian managers, the higher frequency of military postings increases this risk.<sup>110</sup>

The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization identified that the administration of classification is impacted by the operational nature of the department as well as military managers' need for additional support throughout the classification process.<sup>111</sup>

## Awareness of employees

The majority of employees interviewed identified that they were not provided classification training by the Department of National Defence. In order to increase their awareness and navigate the classification grievance process, employees reported taking steps to self-educate, consult their bargaining agents, or speak with their manager.

All bargaining agents interviewed as part of this investigation confirmed that they provide assistance to employees for classification-related inquiries. The Union of National Defence Employees representative added that they offer

a one-week classification training program to civilian employees to provide education on the civilian classification system.<sup>112</sup>

This office was informed that some employees and occupational groups unique to the Department of National Defence do not have access to a computer with Defence Intranet Network because of their duties. Given that the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization website is currently only available on the Intranet, entire groups of Department of National Defence personnel are potentially unable to access critical classification updates.

## What is the impact of a lack of knowledge and awareness?

If managers and supervisors lack knowledge and awareness of the classification process, this impacts their ability to fulfill their obligations with respect to classification and provide appropriate guidance to employees with regard to the classification process.

110 In the report *On the Homefront*, this Office found that military members relocate three times as frequently as civilians. DND/CAF Ombudsman, *On the Homefront: Assessing the Well-being of Canada's Military Families in the New Millennium*.

111 Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization (E-mail to the Office of the Ombudsman, 10 September, 2018).

112 Stakeholder Interviews, bargaining agents.



Employees are also impacted by the lack of guidance and education regarding the classification process. They are often required to self-educate, which can cause frustration and misinterpretation of the classification policy framework. A lack of knowledge of the classification process can impact their access to complaint mechanisms if they are unaware of time limits.

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence:

**Recommendation 12:** Take measurable steps to improve the knowledge and awareness of classification for managers and supervisors (civilian and military), and employees at the Department of National Defence through:

- By October 2019, implement mandatory training for supervisors (civilian and military);
- By October 2019, integrate classification information in the civilian employees' orientation process; and
- By January 2019, implement tracking and monitoring of completion rates of mandatory training.

**Recommendation 13:** By January 2019, make information on the Department of National Defence's classification program available to all civilian employees on multiple platforms.

**“Without the critical enabling functions performed by civilian employees at Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces could not effectively execute their operations at home and abroad. It is critical that the integrated civilian-military Defence Team work together to deliver.”**

— ADM (HR-Civ), Update to Civilian HR Services and Management, issued 25 July 2018.

# Conclusion

Our office set out to examine the impact of delays within the administration of classification at the Department of National Defence.

The stakeholders consulted throughout this investigation demonstrated exemplary cooperation and professionalism, which included the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, bargaining agents, and all civilian and military personnel who participated in interviews. The Department's commitment to improving the classification program was well-reflected by way of their collaboration with our office.

Since our office first contacted the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian) regarding civilian classification in 2011, there have been major improvements to the classification program at the Department of National Defence. A cyclical review plan was developed and implemented to respond to concerns about outdated job descriptions. Additionally, a complement of new classification trainees was hired to address the workload.



Our office acknowledges that the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization faces numerous challenges in their efforts to improve the classification program. For example, the accreditation program followed by classification officers can take three years or more. Furthermore, the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization relies on the collaboration of other parties throughout the classification process, including employees, managers, bargaining agents, and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Despite the progress that has been made to the classification program, our investigation revealed a number of areas where improvements can and should be made:

- Classification reviews initiated prior to the implementation of the Three-Year Cyclical Plan are not routinely prioritized. Instead, they are deferred until their organization comes due for its review;
- As of 1 July 2018, 32 percent of job descriptions within the Department of National Defence were out-of-date;
- The time limit for classification grievances is not being met, nor are extensions being requested within the mandated 80 days.

- There are varied levels of knowledge and training regarding classification throughout the Department of National Defence, including military and civilian personnel directly involved in the classification process.

Our investigation found that the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources-Civilian) is aware of most of the issues outlined in the report, and in conversations it is apparent that the organization is seized with these concerns. Additionally, the departmental initiatives that are already underway, if properly resourced and followed through upon, will result in better performance in this area.

Our recommendations, if accepted and implemented, will enable the Department of National Defence to take concrete steps towards improving the well-being of employees. Our office will produce routine progress reports to track the implementation of our recommendations.

As *Strong, Secure, Engaged* poignantly states: “Investing in our people is the single most important commitment we can make”.<sup>113</sup> Our office could not agree more.

<sup>113</sup> National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, page 19.

# Section III – Summary of Recommendations

**We recommend that the Department of National Defence:**

**Recommendation 1:** By October 2020, review all job descriptions on a five year basis to ensure that they are current and accurate.

**Recommendation 2:** By October 2019, complete the processing of all classification requests that pre-date the start of the Three-year Cyclical Plan.

**Recommendation 3:** Achieve their goal of completing 80 percent of classification requests within internal service standards by October 2019.

**Recommendation 4:** By January 2019, publish quarterly reports demonstrating classification service standard rates and make this information available to all civilian employees on multiple platforms.

**Recommendation 5:** By January 2019, establish a process requiring managers to provide the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization with documentary evidence showing that employees have been notified of changes to their job description. This includes cases of bulk mapping to standardized job descriptions.

**Recommendation 6:** Resolve all outstanding classification grievances by October 2019.

**Recommendation 7:** By October 2019, implement a plan to ensure future grievances are resolved within Treasury Board Secretariat mandated time limits moving forward.

**Recommendation 8:** By January 2019, publish quarterly reports demonstrating classification grievance completion rates and make this information available to all civilian employees on multiple platforms.

**Recommendation 9:** Immediately ensure that all extension requests are made prior to the expiration of the Treasury Board Secretariat 80-day time limit, are included in the grievance file, and are properly identified in the Grievance Tracking System.

**Recommendation 10:** By October 2019, undertake a total review and correction of data held in all active cases within the Civilian Classification Tracking System and the Grievance Tracking System, and strengthen data quality controls moving forward.

**Recommendation 11:** By October 2019, develop a formalized process that requires the reporting of labour relations grievances on job content to the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization.

**Recommendation 12:** Take measurable steps to improve the knowledge and awareness of classification for managers and supervisors (civilian and military), and employees at the Department of National Defence through:

- By October 2019, implement mandatory training for supervisors (civilian and military);
- By October 2019, integrate classification information in the civilian employees' orientation process; and
- By January 2019, implement tracking and monitoring of completion rates of mandatory training.

**Recommendation 13:** By January 2019, make information on the Department of National Defence's classification program available to all civilian employees on multiple platforms.



# Appendix A – Letter from the Minister of National Defence

30 November 2018

Mr. Gregory Lick  
National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
100 Metcalfe Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ottawa ON K1P 5M1

Dear Mr. Lick:

I am writing in response to the report sent to me by your predecessor, Mr. Gary Walbourne, dated September 28, 2018, entitled *Positions over People: An Investigation into the Delays in the Administration of Civilian Classification at the Department of National Defence*.

The investigative team was diligent throughout the process, and the recommendations will prove to be very helpful in augmenting our current plans. The report's timeliness and findings are aligned with a number of initiatives already under way, and I have been advised by the Deputy Minister, as the accountable officer for Human Resources, that she agrees with the findings and that the Department is committed to addressing the recommendations contained in the report.

In particular, the investigation highlights a number of concerns regarding delays in the administration of classification including, but not limited to, classification grievances and job description currency. It is recognized that the Department needs to do better in addressing grievances and ensuring that all employees have an up-to-date job description.

As well, the Department will maintain a strong focus on data integrity, education and process improvements. To this end, I have asked that the Deputy Minister pay particular attention and monitor initiatives to ensure that progress is being made to improve the classification program so that it is reflective of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* and is caring for our people.

I look forward to our offices working together in support of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Yours Sincerely,

The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, PC, OMM, MSM, CD, MP.

# Appendix B – Scope and Methodology

The report looks exclusively at civilian employees. When the term “employees” is used in this report, it is referring to civilian employees at the Department of National Defence, unless otherwise noted.

This investigation focuses on the administration of classification within the Department of National Defence, namely classification requests, cyclical job description reviews, and classification grievances. During this investigation, The Office set out to:

- Identify the overall policy and legislative framework for classification;
- Identify how classification is administered at the Department of National Defence;
- Examine the compliance of classification activities with regards to service standards; and
- Evaluate the impact of current practices.

## Timeframe

This investigation commenced in July 2018, and covers classification files that were active between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2018, including any outstanding files that predate this period. The start date was chosen to coincide with the implementation of the Treasury Board Secretariat’s 2015 classification policy suite.<sup>114</sup>

## Documentation Research

The investigation began with a documentary review of applicable policies and directives. Information was obtained from the following sources:

- Treasury Board Secretariat Policy on Classification;
- Treasury Board Secretariat Directive on Classification;
- Treasury Board Secretariat Directive on Classification Oversight;
- Treasury Board Secretariat Directive on Classification Grievances;

<sup>114</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, *Renewal of Treasury Board Classification Policy Suite*.

- Department of National Defence regulations, policies, and directives;
- Department of National Defence classification instructions, procedures, training documents, and other information products;
- Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman case files received between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2018;
- Previous Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman classification-related reviews;
- Defence Information Network; and
- Other open sources.

## Interviews

Meetings with subject matter experts were conducted in person and by phone to determine their involvement, if any, in the administration of classification at the Department of National Defence. Input was also provided by email. The following organizations were consulted:

- Treasury Board Secretariat, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer;
- Directorate General Workforce Development;
- Directorate Staffing Policies and Programs;
- Directorate Human Resource Information Management;
- Directorate Corporate Services and Modernization;
- Directorate Labour Relations Operations;
- Director General Human Resources Strategic Directions; and
- Directorate Future Workforce Strategies.

Interviews were conducted with the following Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization personnel to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the classification program:

- One director;
- One assistant director;
- Two portfolio managers;
- One classification grievance manager;
- Three portfolio team leaders;
- Six classification officers (accredited and trainees);
- One position management supervisor (E-Class);
- Two position management assistants;
- One senior project officer; and
- One project assistant.

Interviews were conducted with bargaining agents, managers, and employees to ascertain their experience with classification at the Department of National Defence; from both a process and impact perspective. Individuals were selected based on availability.

- Four individuals from three bargaining agents that represent employees of the Department of National Defence: respondents were selected based on membership size within the Department National Defence;
- Nine representatives from Department of National Defence organizations that have commenced or completed their organizational review as part of the Three-Year Cyclical Plan;
- Seven managers: respondents were selected based on their involvement in prior or ongoing classification requests or classification grievances; and
- Eight employees: respondents were selected based on their involvement in prior or ongoing classification requests or classification grievances.

### **Classification Requests**

This office referred to the Civilian Classification Tracking System, a database which provides a comprehensive account of all classification requests. This office's analysis was limited to active requests within the timeframe of the investigation, 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2018, including active requests that fall outside this time period.

### **Classification Grievance Case Studies**

This office reviewed 20 classification grievances. Of these 20, 18 represented grievances resolved in the longest and shortest timeframes. Two additional cases were requested to ensure that multiple bargaining agents were included in the review. The review included grievances represented by four bargaining agents and one self-represented grievor.

This office also referred to the Grievance Tracking System, a database which provides an account of all classification grievances. This office's analysis was limited to active grievances within the timeframe of the investigation, 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2018, including active grievances that fall outside this time period.

## Limitations

The investigation did not:

- Include public service jobs, occupations, or positions that fall outside of the Department of National Defence;
- Include positions occupied by employees who are not part of the core public service administration as defined in section 11 of the *Financial Administration Act*;
- Include casual employees as identified in section 50 of the *Public Service Employment Act* (appointed for a period of no more than 90 days);
- Include employees appointed to term positions lasting less than 90 days;
- Include contractors;
- Include Non-Public Funds employees or contractor positions currently engaged with the Department of National Defence or Canadian Armed Forces;
- Include Canadian Armed Forces positions;
- Assess the accuracy of any up-to-date classification reviews or job descriptions;
- Assess the content of the Treasury Board Secretariat classification policy suite, or policy from outside the Department of National Defence; or
- Evaluate classification or grievance decisions made by the authorized delegates at the Department of National Defence.

# Appendix C – The Classification Process

A position's classification can only be altered when there has been a significant and permanent change to its main functions. The classification process is separated into three sequential steps.

## **Step 1 – Manager prepares a written job description**

The first step of the classification process is the preparation of a written job description by the manager responsible for the position being assessed. This description must identify the main purpose of the work performed by the position and detail the key activities involved in doing that work.<sup>115</sup> Where possible, managers are encouraged to select an existing standardized job description rather than create a unique one.<sup>116</sup>

## **Step 2 – Manager considers the importance of the position within the organization**

The second step of the classification process requires managers to consider the value of the position within its

organizational context. This involves looking at where the position fits within the reporting structure of its section, directorate, division, or even with the Department of National Defence as a whole.<sup>117</sup>

## **Step 3 – The Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization evaluates the manager's findings**

Once a job description has been written or selected and the organizational importance of a position has been determined, results are submitted to the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization for evaluation.<sup>118</sup> This process requires the Director to assess the work performed in a position against classification standards for the position's occupational group.<sup>119</sup>

Once the evaluation is complete, the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization will classify the position and the manager will ensure that employees occupying the position are notified of the classification decision.

<sup>115</sup> Department of National Defence, *Classification De-classified: Clarifying Basic Concepts and Common Misconceptions Concerning the Public Service Job Classification System*, pages 3-4.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 4-5.

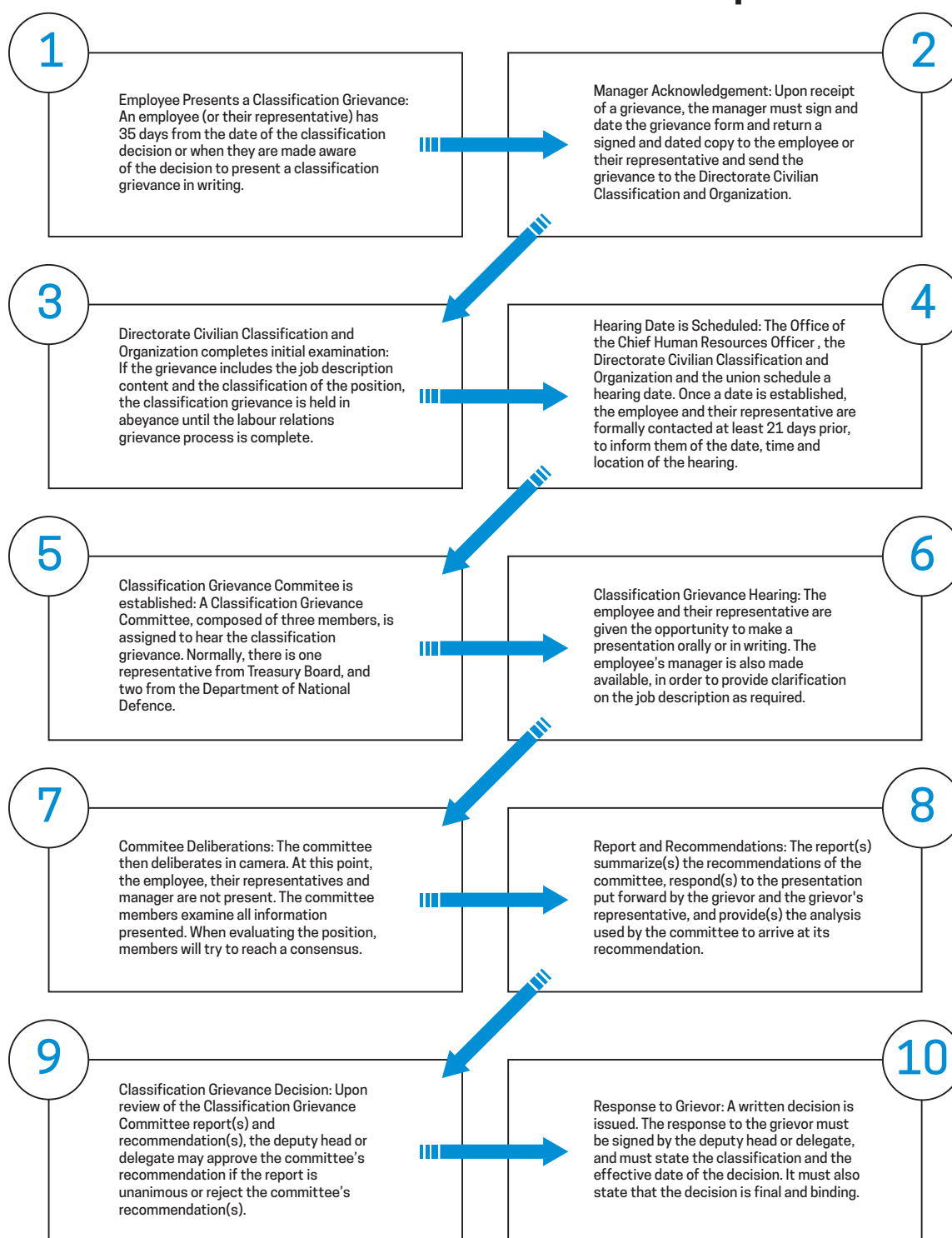
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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*



# Appendix D – Classification Grievance Process Map



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