

Casual Payment Center 2006 Annual Report



A RECORD FIRE YEAR

The Casual Payment Center was prepared for its second fire season in operation. The National Interagency Fire Center reported 95,241 wildland fires burned in the United States, for 9,725,805 acres. The acreage burned this year is 61% above the 5-year average of 5,926,499 acres—and the highest in recent decades. These statistics have prompted some to term the fire season as “record-breaking” or “worst in years.”



The Casual Payment Center worked diligently to process nearly 37,000 payments in 2006, 26% more than 2005.



We modified office procedures to streamline speed and improve productivity. Following is a summary of the

last year and statistics for all participating agencies. We would like to thank everyone involved for their support, patience and feedback to the Casual Payment Center.

The principal mission of the CPC is the delivery of excellent customer service in the cost effective and prompt processing of payment of casual hires for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

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2006 AD PAY PLAN

The Incident Business Practices Working Team (IBPWT) devised a new pay plan that was released with an effective date of March 28, 2006. There were several small changes made to the verbiage for 2006. The major change included an entirely new AD Classification with rates A-L instead of the number system 1-5. The expansion of pay rates were closely “evaluated and leveled to more accurately compensate casual hires for the duties performed.”

The new pay plan also added “exception positions” with classification guidelines. This allowed a hiring official the opportunity to establish a position not listed in the Incident Position Matrix to fit the scope of duties for the exception position.

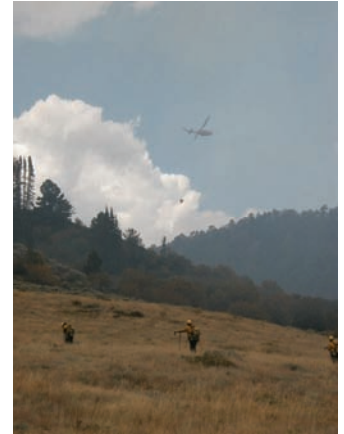
The Casual Payment Center began actively enforcing minimum compensable time allowance. According to page 6(f) of the pay plan, a casual is guaranteed 2 hours for each work period.

The pay plan also clarified:

- ◆ AD hires are NOT to exceed 120 hours of instructing
- ◆ AD hires are NOT to exceed 300 hours of prescribed fire projects
- ◆ Point of Hire— location of the unit where hiring documentation is completed

2007 AD Pay Plan

The 2007 AD Pay Plan is in the review process and should be approved and distributed in the near future. Once approved, the Pay Plan can be obtained from the National Wildfire Coordination Group website located at <http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/ibpwt/index.htm>.



WHO'S WHO AT THE CPC

Kristy Valentine	Center Manager	Several Basics and Phone/file positions have been hired to do the majority of data entry, filing, mail and every-day CPC tasks that are essential to successful, smooth and accurate output. Here are a few that have spent a lot of time and commitment processing EFF payroll this year:	
Sandra Braseth	Assistant Center Manager		
Juana Branson	Government Night Lead		
The CPC employed a total of 30 contract employees during 2006 year hired by IAP World Services out of Cape Canaveral, FL.		Brandon Labit	*Also served as Lead during peak fire season
The following contractors were staff Leads . Lead responsibilities include, but are not limited to: audit and certify payroll, guide and train basics, and communicate with the field regarding issues, lost checks and other inquiries.		Autumn Rodriguez	Issue Basic
Kylee Hutchins	Issue Lead	Nancy McKenzie	Basic
Tina McMullen	Lost Checks Lead	Melissa Maiden	Basic
Simi Torres	Handled employment verifications; helped develop procedures, statistics and reports.	Chris Baltazor	Phone/file
Sandra Braseth	Handled SSN merges and corrections *Recently hired as the new Assistant Center Manager on January 8. Congratulations!	Approximately 17 government employees have contributed tremendously to the success of our second year. The following regular government employees committed significant hours helping with entering, filing, auditing and certifying work.	
Julie Baranco	Lead	Rose Secakuku	Ian Glander
Neal Bradshaw	Joined us from June through August as a Lead	Maribel Gonzalez	Lisa Kilpatrick
Mary Lingg	Joined us from June through September as a Lead.	Amy Kishpaugh	Lin Buck

CPC ISSUES

LOST CHECKS

Handling lost checks requires a full time Lead position during fire season. Calls from a casual looking for his/her check are fielded by the Lost Check lead. A treasury check will take approximately 7-10 business days to receive from processed date and an EFT will take 3-5 business days.

The majority of lost checks have come from closed EFT (electronic funds transfer) accounts that were not changed to check mailing addresses. All information from the old EFF pay system was moved to the FPPS system on January 2, 2005.

Unfortunately, we cannot remove an EFT without a signed authorization from the casual indicating a new payment destination. A different address on their OF-288 is not used enough to authorize a change of

address in our system. A new W-4 or Removal of EFT form must be received to authorize a change in check mailing address.

All reissued checks are processed through the National Business Center, Payroll Operations Division.



Confirmed Reissues	665
*Returned WES- (EFT)	412
*Returned WES—(chk)	85
TOTAL	1162

*The CPC sends out a Wage and Earnings Statement for every processed payment. Returned Wage and Earnings Statements resulting from an insufficient address often lead to lost checks. A valid mail address must be obtained for any future correspondence, including year end W-2s.

ISSUES

The Issue Lead is responsible for tracking and resolving all issues. If anything is found during our stages of processing a timesheet, the casual timesheet is pulled from the batch, and the approving official on the memo will be called to resolve the issue.

Our goal is to make a contact within the first day the issue is found to get it resolved as soon as possible. No other timesheets in the batch are held; the rest of the batch is processed.

All issues are logged and tracked and the multitude that come in require a fulltime Lead position and a Basic to assist in phone calls and processing resolved issues.

Each OF-288 that is held is counted as one (1) issue and all calls are documented until the issue is resolved and timesheet is processed. All documentation is filed with the casual's file.

The CPC sends the Issue log and statistics to each National Point of Contact (NPOC) monthly for review.

The CPC follows specific guidelines as set forth by the National Point of Contacts creating a separation of powers. This information is obtained to keep us from doing the function of the timekeeper versus the processor.

Frequent Issues Include:

- Incomplete position code
- Casual not marked (block 4)
- Block 26 Time Officer Signature of OF-288 not signed or not an original signature
- Incomplete cost coding
- Hired At unit identifier (eg ID-BOD) missing or incorrect
- Duplicate or overlapping hours on timesheet
- Fewer than 2 hours posted in a work period
- Start and stop time not in 15 min increments, time overlaps into following day, or not in military time.
- Check mailing address in the FPPS system is different than their address on the OF-288.

We attempt to contact the casual to avoid a lost check.

All issues logged for 2006 are:

AGENCY	Issues	Contacts made	% Issues per agency received payments
BIA	9,398	5,187	34%
BLM	2,658	2,656	31%
FWS	414	579	48%
TOTAL	12,470	8,422	34% of total payments received were issues

CPC ISSUES

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

With the Agency's move from handwritten OF-288s to the I-Suite program, time and attendance is entered on site at most large incidents. It is vital that the SSN is entered correctly to eliminate the possibility of two profiles being created for the casual. When there are payments processed under two SSNs, an extensive process for merging the SSNs into the correct number must be undergone. During 2006, we had 65 incidences of SSN errors that required corrections to the casual's profile.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) periodically creates a report of exceptions and sends to the Casual Payment Center. Upon hiring, verification of the employee's name and SSN to their Social Security card is important – the W-4 should match the SS card or the casual's profile must be updated with the SSA. Name changes because of marital status changes, adoptions, etc. are the most common reasons for an exception. Completing the W-4 correctly ensures the accuracy of the casual's name or SSN being entered into the payment system. During 2006, we had an average of 52 casuals per month reported as exceptions during the peak 6 months of fire season.

*It is extremely important for each casual hire to ensure the accuracy of the information provided. The addresses on file are used to create the W-2 Tax Reporting to the IRS and should be updated prior to the first of December each year to ensure the prompt accurate mailing by the National Business Center.

Incorrect SSNs entered in the system could result from:

- ◆ Agency errors (submitting or transposing incorrect SSN on the OF-288) ≈ 15%
- ◆ Casual errors (writing an incorrect SSN on their W-4) ≈ 31%
- ◆ Operator Error (Data entry worker does not search for casual in the system and enters a new casual hire under a different SSN in the system or interprets the SSN incorrectly from an illegible W-4) ≈ 45%
- ◆ Unknown (could be carried over from 2004 or error origination is unknown) ≈ 9%

There were **65** completed SSN merges in 2006



PAYROLL CORRECTIONS

PCOR

Payroll corrections (PCOR) and Payroll Adjustments (PADJ) are FFS processes used to correct **Cost Coding Errors** either for the current pay period (PCOR) or a prior pay period (PADJ).

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF PCOR ERRORS:

- ◆ Cost codes on OF-288s received with incorrect or illegible information.
- ◆ Project codes entered with the incorrect characters (numeric instead of alpha or vice versa) or being used with the wrong subactivity or office.

AGENCY	Agency error	CPC Error	Total
BIA	251	155	406
BLM	45	92	137
TOTAL	296	247	543
% of corrections	55%	45%	1.5% error of total payments

*FWS did not have a process for payroll corrections in 2006.

2006 STATISTICS

BUDGET

FY 2006 CPC CENTER FUNDING				
	BLM	BIA	FWS	Total
Non Wildland Urban Interface	\$10,000	\$28,000	\$1,000	\$39,000
Wildland Urban Interface	\$15,000	\$42,000	\$2,000	\$59,000
Preparedness	\$71,000	\$204,000	\$8,000	\$283,000
Suppression /CPC Contract	\$519,090			\$519,090
Total	\$615,090	\$274,000	\$11,000	\$900,090

CORRESPONDENCE

The Casual Payment Center has a toll free number to provide better customer service to casualls and the field.

A casual may call the payment center to inquire about their pay or employment verifications at any time. The payment center has a main receptionist and several backups to answer all calls promptly and in a friendly manner to answer any inquiries.

Due to the busy fire season, the number of calls and minutes logged increased in 2006.

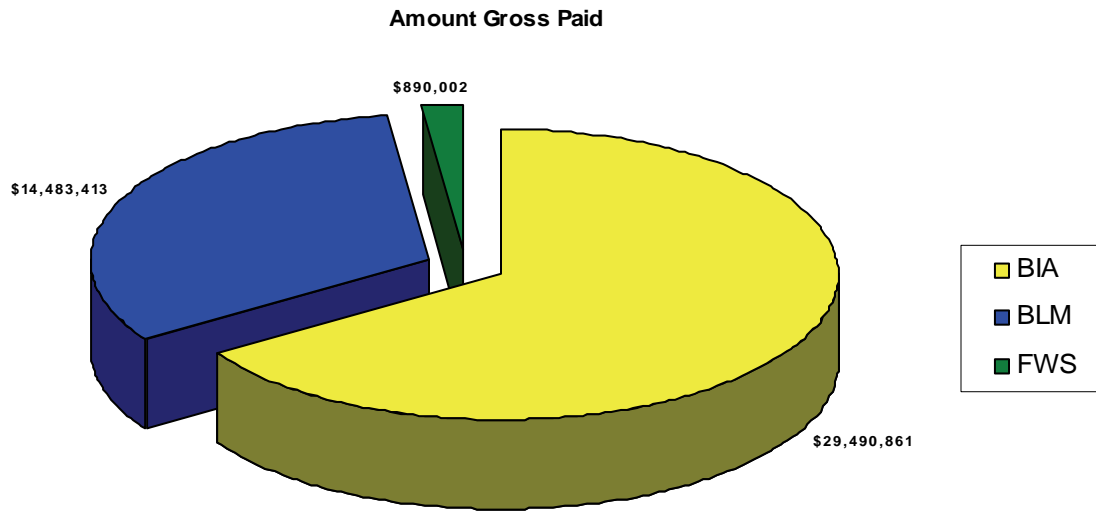
*In 2005, the CPC used **33,066 minutes** and logged **9,830 incoming and outgoing calls**.

*In 2006, the CPC used **52,252 minutes** and logged **18,931 incoming and outgoing calls**– nearly twice as many calls as the previous year.



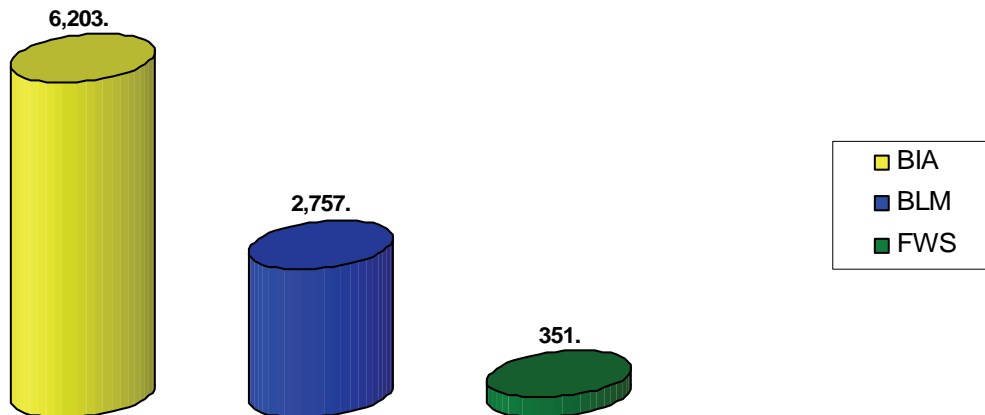
Month	Number of Incoming and Outgoing Calls
Jan	449
Feb	658
Mar	995
Apr	1,114
May	1,181
Jun	1,752
Jul	2,815
Aug	3,362
Sep	3,372
Oct	1,926
Nov	720
Dec	587
Total Number of Incoming and Outgoing Calls	18,931 calls

2006 STATISTICS



Office ID	Casual Count	Amt Gross	YTD Total %
BIA	6,203	\$29,490,861.29	66%
BLM	2,757	\$14,483,413.45	32%
FWS	351	\$890,002.04	2%
Total	9,311	\$44,864,276.78	100%

Casuals Payrolled



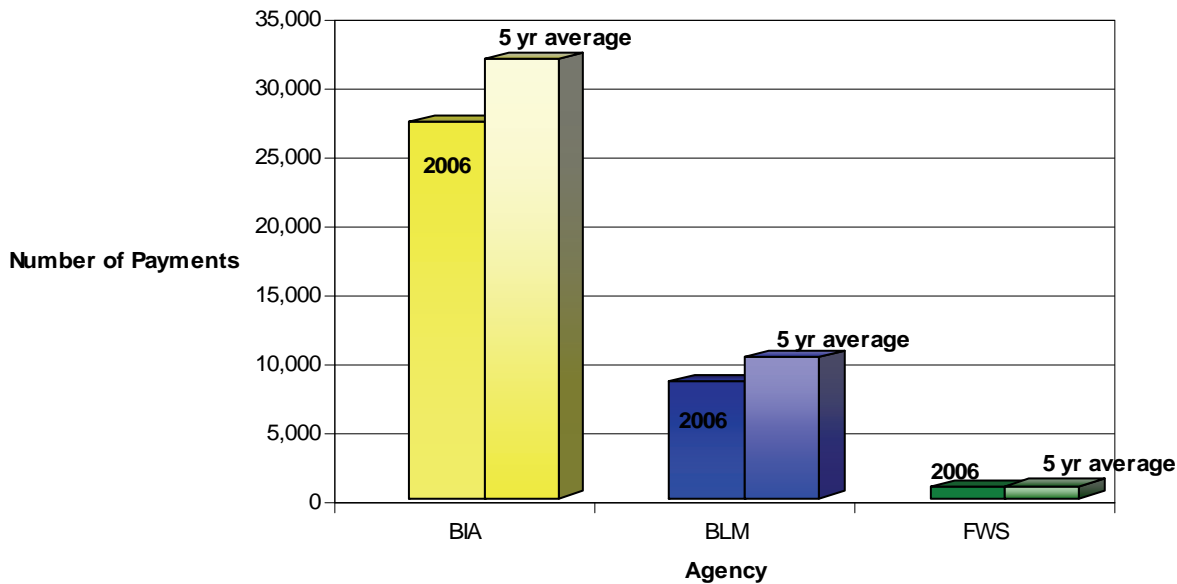
2006 STATISTICS

AGENCY PAYMENTS 2006

	Number of Payments	Percent
BIA	27,313	75%
BLM	8,437	23%
FWS	860	2%
Total	36,610	100%

5 YEAR AVERAGE (2002-2006)

	Number of Payments	Amt Gross	Total 5 yr Average %
BIA	31,809	\$29,605,139	66%
BLM	10,183	\$14,292,155	32%
FWS	868	\$791,546	2%
Total	42,860	\$44,688,840	100%



*In 2006, the Casual Payment Center processed **85.4%** of the 5 year average for EFF payments and **100%** of the 5 year average for amount gross paid.

Casual Payment Center

BIA, BLM & FWS

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Visit the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Incident Business Practices Working Team (IBPWT) website for Casual Payment Center information. Links to this annual report and other pertinent memos are located here:

<http://web.http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/ibpwt/documents/personnel/casual.html>

Visit the National Business Center Website designed for hiring units and other entities regarding payroll processing, Federal and state income tax withholding and links to other related websites:

<http://www3.nbc.gov/customer/casualpay/index.html>

*Photographs in this annual report taken from Jackson Canyon fire in August 2006

Our main goal is to provide excellent customer service, and we certainly welcome any suggestions from the field that would improve our office. The goal of this annual report is to provide customer service by sharing information with you in a concise report. Enjoy!



Annual Report assembled by: Simi Torres