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Subject: Release of FSH 5109.17 (Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook)

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Job Corps, and WO Staff

The Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook (FSH 5109.17) has been revised and will be issued with an effective date of July 8, 2003. This handbook serves as the primary position qualification requirements guide for Forest Service employees. FSH 5109.17 supplements the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1. PMS 310-1 provides national minimum incident management and prescribed fire requirements for personnel. The FSH 5109.17 describes more specific skill levels and lists additional training to meet agency specific requirements.

FSH 5109.17 is designed to establish a single qualification standard for the Forest Service. Regional Foresters can supplement fire and aviation management qualifications requirements only to comply with State or local law.

This amendment identifies additional required National Wildfire and Coordinating Group and equivalent courses for some positions. Individuals who have initiated task books for those positions shall be required to complete the training prior to certification for the position.

Bill Terry, Branch Chief for Fire Training, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office has established an FSH 5109.17 ad hoc committee with members who serve as: contacts representing the Branch Chief for Fire Training; and subject matter experts in the functional areas of the Incident Command System positions, including the technical specialist. A listing of the ad hoc committee representatives and contact phone numbers, along with the functional areas they represent, can be found on the National Training Information Communications System (TICS) world wide web/Internet: <http://www.nationalfiretraining.net>

The handbook is available electronically on the Forest Service Web site at <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/directives/fsh/5109.17/> and to other agencies and the public on the World Wide Web at <http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/fsh/5109.17/>. Please review the document in its entirety and implement it on your units.

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To establish positions, qualifications, and certification requirements in fire and aviation management to ensure Forest Service personnel have the organization, training, and qualifications to carry out fire and aviation management policies and programs in a safe, cost-efficient manner, consistent with land and resource management objectives.

03 - POLICY

1. Comply with the qualifications requirements for the skills and knowledge unique to fire and aviation management and the Incident Command System (ICS) as established by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) in the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1 (sec. 12 and FSM 5108). Comply with any additional Forest Service requirements for additional training and qualifications as set forth in sections 25.1 through 25.3 of this Handbook, FSH 5109.17, which is the controlling document with respect to all fire and aviation management qualifications for Forest Service employees.

2. Accept personnel from State agencies or other non-Federal cooperators hired as Administratively Determined (AD) personnel participating in cooperative fire management efforts, provided they meet the minimum position requirements as specified in the NWCG Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualifications Systems Guide, PMS 310-1 (sec. 12 and FSM 5108).

04 - RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Washington Office Staff Directors, Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, Forest Supervisors, and District Rangers are responsible for assessing the training development needs of employees in their units and providing appropriate training opportunities.

2. Employees are ultimately responsible for their own development and should respond to training opportunities that will improve their performance.

3. Managers and employees have the responsibility to review direction and propose necessary revisions as part of the annual review and revision process for this Handbook (sec. 07).

05 - DEFINITIONS

For additional definitions of terms related to the Incident Command System (ICS), refer to FSM 5105 and the Glossary of Terms for the Fireline Handbook, NWCG 410-1 (FSH 5109.32a, sec. 05).

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Certification. The process in which a manager confirms that an individual has met all minimum qualifications and is qualified to perform in a specified position based on performance. The certification is documented on a data management system program and with the issuance of Form PMS 310-3, Qualification Card Incident Command System, to the qualified individual.

Currency Requirement. The requirement to have performed satisfactorily in a specified position within the last 5 years (or last 3 years in aviation and dispatch positions) to maintain qualification for that position. (See also "Other Positions Meeting Currency Requirements.")

De-certification. The process of removing or reducing an individual's fire suppression, fire use, and/or prescribed fire management position(s) qualification(s).

Evaluator. A person who is certified in the position in which the trainee is being evaluated and who is assigned to evaluate a trainee's performance. Prior to evaluating a trainee's performance, the Evaluator must have served in a minimum of two assignments as fully qualified in the position.

Experience. Documented, satisfactory performance in specified ICS positions that is needed to qualify for another (usually higher level) position; in the case of a trainee, satisfactory performance in the position for which the trainee is to qualify.

Grandfathering. Linking unrecognized or uncertified position experience and/or training together to establish a qualification. There is no "grandfathering" allowed for any position contained in this Handbook, FSH 5109.17.

Incident Command System (ICS). The combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, with responsibility for the management of assigned resources to effectively accomplish stated objectives pertaining to an incident.

Other Positions Meeting Currency Requirements. Positions in another function, or at an equivalent or lower level in the same function, that meet the currency requirements for the position under which they are listed.

Position Performance Assignment. An assignment in which an individual is being evaluated for tasks found in the position task books. Exceptions for the Single Resource Boss and Strike Team Leader positions are found on page A-13 of the NWCG Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1.

Qualified Individual. An individual whose agency has documented that the individual has successfully completed all requirements for training, experience, and physical fitness for a specific ICS position.

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Re-certification. Reissuance of Form PMS 310-3, Qualification Card Incident Command System, certifying that an individual has regained qualification for an ICS position.

Satisfactory Performance. Performance by an individual that meets or exceeds the written standards for a specific ICS position as evaluated by the individual's incident or agency supervisor.

Skill Position. A position that requires specific skills and knowledge to perform on a wildland fire incident. Examples include Firefighter, Fire Behavior Analyst, Single Resource Boss, Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, or Ignition Specialist.

Subject Matter Expert. A person who has a thorough technical knowledge and recent field experience in performing and/or supervising the task in question. A person generally recognized among working associates as being very competent at performing the task(s).

Technical Specialist. A person having unique skills performed in an everyday job that are needed to support an incident operation. Examples include Contracting Officer, Environmental Specialist, Electrician, and Meteorologist.

Trainee. An agency-approved individual who is preparing to qualify for a position through completion of training courses and on-the-job training. Also, a person who is attempting to demonstrate task evaluation or position performance of required job tasks under the direct supervision of an evaluator who is qualified in the position.

Trainer/Coach. A qualified individual who provides instruction to a trainee in the classroom, on the job, or on an incident. A Trainer/Coach must be currently qualified in the position being observed and must have successfully performed in a minimum of two assignments in the position for which the Trainer/Coach is training others.

Training Specialist. A person who identifies incident evaluation opportunities for trainees and ensures that the assignment is properly documented. On initial attack and extended attack incidents the Training Specialist's duties would be performed by unit personnel.

06 - REFERENCES

For additional direction and information, consult the references listed in FSM 5108 and the following references:

1. Forest Service World Wide Web/Internet Fire website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire>.
2. Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide, NFES 1885 (FSM 5716.03).
3. Interagency Air Tactical Group Supervisor Guide, NFES 1393 (FSM 5716.03).
4. Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, PMS 901-1 (FSH 5109.34).

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5. Fireline Handbook, PMS 410-1 (FSM 5109.32a).
6. Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide NFES 1080 (FSM 5142.2).
7. Interagency Single Engine Air Tanker Operations Guide, NFES 1844 (FSM 5716.03).
8. Interagency Rappel Guide (FSM 5711.11).
9. Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations (FSM 5108).

07 - REVIEW AND REVISION

To maintain the currency of FSH 5109.17, Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook, the Director, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office, has established a process for annual review and revision of the direction in this Handbook.

1. The Director of Fire and Aviation Management, Washington Office, shall issue an annual call letter by September 1 to field units and Washington Office Staffs requesting their review of this Handbook and submission of responses. Comments and proposed revisions are due back by October 1.
2. Field units should submit proposed revisions to their respective Regional Fire Training Officers.
3. The Regional Fire Training Officers shall consolidate responses for their Regions and forward them to the Branch Chief for Fire Training, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office or the representative designated in the call letter.
4. The Branch Chief for Fire Training, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office, shall annually assemble a working team to review the consolidated comments submitted by field units and Washington Office Staff Units; consult with subject matter experts and Regional Fire Training Officers as appropriate; and determine the need for revision.

The working team shall include a Partnership Council Representative and Forest Service REDCARD Project Leader, as well as selected Regional Fire Training Officers and appropriate subject matter experts (for example, Fuels Specialists, Helicopter Operations Specialists, and so on).

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5. An FSH 5109.17 ad hoc committee has been established by the Branch Chief, Fire Training, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office, with members who serve as:

- a. Contacts representing the Branch Chief for Fire Training, and
- b. Subject matter experts in the functional areas of the ICS positions, including the technical specialist. A listing of the ad hoc committee representatives and contact phone numbers, along with the functional areas they represent, can be found on the National Training Information Communications System (TICS) world wide web/Internet: <http://www.nationalfiretraining.net>

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11 - NATIONAL INTERAGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

(For further direction, see FSM 5133.)

All wildland fire protection agencies are organized to manage forest, brush, and grass fires within their jurisdictions. They can usually manage large, complex fires with their own resources. However, additional or substantial outside assistance may be required at times. To address this need, a nationwide multi-agency management system has been adopted, called the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS), which provides the total systems approach necessary for response in emergency situations involving a wide range of natural or human-caused incidents.

NIIMS consists of five major subsystems, which together provide a total approach to incident management. The subsystems and their functions are as follows:

1. Incident Command System (ICS). An on-scene structure of generic management-level positions suitable to manage any incident.
2. Training. Development and delivery of training courses
3. Qualifications and Certification. National standards for qualifications and certification for ICS positions.
4. Publications Management. Development, control, sources, and distribution of NIIMS publications provided by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).
5. Supporting Technology. Technology and systems used to support an emergency response, such as orthophoto mapping, National Fire Danger Rating System, remote automatic weather stations, automatic lightning detection systems, infrared technology, and communications.

11.1 - Organizational Charts for Incident Command System

Exhibits 01 through 09 display the organization and reporting lines for Incident Command System (ICS) positions for the most complex incidents.

Following is the key to the qualification flow charts. The charts in this chapter show the progression of qualifications from one position to another within the system. These charts are not organization charts.

Each box within the charts contains information pertaining to prerequisite qualifications, training, and physical fitness and should be read as shown in the following diagram:

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