

Chapter - 13

Training and Qualifications

A. Introduction

The Wildland Fire Management (WFM) profession today has evolved into a highly technical occupation, requiring skilled, knowledgeable employees and sound leadership.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), through the Branch of Fire Management, is responsible for the oversight, management and development of training programs and training professionals. The Bureau's Trust responsibility requires that long term natural resource productivity and value not be diminished or compromised. Through Tribal land management objectives, the Bureau must prudently execute land management operations that are state of the art and science. In order to enhance and maintain this high degree of technical and professional proficiency, it is essential that our organization encourage employee development through structured training and leadership development programs.

Fire Management Officers (FMOs), training officers, and course instructors are important members of the Branch of Fire Management's workforce development team. They are in the position to encourage, facilitate and mentor the personal development of our employees and are vital to our agency's success.

B. Policy

It is Bureau policy that only qualified personnel will be assigned duties in wildland fire (wildfire, prescribed fire, or wildland fire use) activities. It is also BIA policy to adopt the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards, and work jointly with other federal, state, and local agencies, through NWCG, to establish minimum fire qualification standards acceptable to all agencies. Interagency standards allow for a cost-effective exchange of personnel and resources, and reduce duplication among the agencies. The BIA also participates with other federal agencies through the National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB). Training requirements specific only to federal programs are coordinated by the NFAEB through the Federal Fire Training Task Group (FFTTG).

1. Responsibilities

The following are responsibilities of key fire management leadership pursuant to *Indian Affairs Manual, Part 90, Chapter 1*:

CHAPTER 13 – TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

a. Director, Branch of Fire Management

The Director is responsible for developing policies and standards for firefighter training and establishes WFM position competencies, standards and minimum qualifications for FMOs, wildland fire specialists and leaders based on federal interagency standards recommended by the NFAEB.

The Bureau will adhere to the minimum qualification standards required for the key fire management positions as defined in the *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide*.

b. Regional Directors

Regional Directors are responsible for ensuring that qualified personnel take immediate charge of wildfire suppression activities.

c. Agency Superintendents and Line Officers of Tribal Fire Programs

Agency Superintendents and Line Officers of Tribal fire programs are considered Certifying Officials pursuant to the definition in the *NWCG Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide* (PMS 310-1). As such, they are responsible for ensuring that agency fire management personnel develop and maintain fire management job qualifications and meet physical fitness standards in accordance with policy and assign personnel to fire suppression, prescribed fire, wildland fire use activities according to qualifications and demonstrated ability.

They are responsible for entering and maintaining employee fire qualifications in the Incident Qualification Certification System (IQCS).

Agency Superintendents and Line Officers of Tribal Fire Programs who choose to Delegate the Authority (DOA) of the Certifying Official role must do so in writing, utilizing the DOA form which can be found on the IQCS web site at: <http://iqcs.nwcg.gov/>.

C. Incident Qualifications and Certification System

The IQCS was developed under the umbrella of the NWCG, *Wildland Fire Qualifications Systems Guide* (PMS 310-1).

Agency Administrators/Line Officers are required to insure that all employee fire qualifications are entered and maintained in the IQCS. This applies to all personnel who perform jobs associated with wildland fire or all-hazard incident management.

1. System of Record

IQCS is the official incident qualification and certification record keeping system. The responder master record report generated by IQCS is the official qualification record and meets BIA requirements for proof of individual fire experience, task book, training, and qualification records. The system was designed to provide managers at the local, regional, and national level with detailed qualification, experience, and training information needed to certify employees in wildfire, prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and all-risk positions. IQCS is a tool to assist managers in certification decisions; it does not replace the manager's responsibility to validate that employees meet all requirements for position performance based on NWCG and Bureau standards.

a. Account Administration

Each Agency or Tribe will designate employees who will be responsible for ensuring that all incident experience, incident training, and Position Task Books (PTBs) for employees within the Agency or Tribe are accurately recorded in the IQCS. IQCS was designed to accommodate essentially unlimited accounts and account holders. Based on our history of maintaining qualifications databases, it is recommended that individual Agencies and Tribes have as many account holders as is necessary to satisfactorily maintain the database. It is not advisable for a moderate to high complexity unit to have only one account holder. History has demonstrated that a single account holder can not satisfactorily maintain the database.

All records must be updated annually or modified as changes occur.

b. Record Keeping

Employees must be reminded that it is their responsibility to maintain original training certificates, completed PTBs, experience records, and any other qualifications records that may prove important at some time in the future. It is recommended that the hosting unit maintain copies of these records for reference. The contents of this file may include: copy of incident qualification card (red card), training certificates, Work Capacity Test (WCT) record, verification of medical examination completion, evaluations from assignments, PTB verification, IQCS Responder Update Forms, and a copy of the Responder Master Record IQCS.

All records will be stored and/or destroyed in accordance with agency policies.

CHAPTER 13 – TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

c. Transfers and Retirement

When an employee transfers or retires, any training records maintained by the hosting unit will be given to the employee. In addition, the employee's IQCS file will be transferred to the new hosting unit.

d. Requesting New Accounts

When requesting a new account or new account holders, chain of command should be followed. For Agencies or Contract/Compact Tribal programs, these requests should be made through the Regional office or Regional FMO. Smaller Tribes who are considering developing a fire program but do not have a contract or compact should channel their requests through the Agency Superintendent.

2. Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card)

- a. The Certifying Official (Agency Superintendent, Tribal Line Officer, or delegate) is responsible for certification of personnel serving as incident responders. Agency certification is issued annually in the form of an Incident Qualification Card (Red Card), which certifies that the individual is qualified to perform in a specified position(s). The Red Card must be reviewed for accuracy and signed by the certifying official. The Certifying Official and incident responder are responsible for monitoring medical status, fitness, training, and performance, and for taking appropriate action to ensure the employee meets all position performance requirements.
- b. Red Cards generated by IQCS are required for all Bureau and Tribal employees assigned to a wildfire, prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and all-hazard incidents. This requirement includes Administratively Determined (AD) - emergency firefighter (EFF) employees.

3. Certification of Non-Agency/Tribal Personnel

Non-agency firefighters will be certified by state or local fire departments, or through private training providers with approved memorandum of understandings (MOUs) through their local geographical area coordination centers (GACCs). Agencies or Tribes under agreements with the Bureau will not maintain IQCS records, provide for training, administer the WCT or act as Certifying Official for non-agency personnel.

It is important that Agencies and Tribes acquire background information from previous employers on individuals who transfer to their fire

program. At times, EFF personnel who are banned from participating in incident assignments at one unit may attempt to persuade a new unit to sponsor them.

Personnel from other agencies who do not subscribe to the NWCG qualification standards may be used on agency managed fires. However, Agency fire managers must ensure these individuals are only assigned to duties commensurate with their abilities, Agency qualifications, and equipment capabilities.

D. Interagency Fire Program Management Standards

Requirements for fire management positions are outlined in the *Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Qualifications Standards and Guide*, referred to as the IFPM Standard. *The Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards and Guide* can be found in its entirety on the IFPM web site at: <http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov/>.

E. Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training

Refer to Safety Section.

F. Work Capacity Testing

Refer to Safety Section.

G. Training Management

Bureau and Tribal fire management training programs will be based upon criteria specified within the interagency wildland fire training curriculum approved by NWCG. This curriculum supports positions described within the NWCG PMS 310-1. The PMS 310-1 represents the Bureau's minimum training requirements.

1. Training Needs Analysis

Training need analyses are developed each year at unit, zone, regional and national levels. The assessment process provides information needed to determine which courses will be required, which employees will attend them, and how many slots will be available. Course offerings should be based upon identified unit needs, and reflect goals established in individual employee development plans. The unit or zone is responsible for sponsoring 100 and 200 level courses. It is recommended that all training, regardless of level, be presented by interagency instructors to interagency audiences.

CHAPTER 13 – TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Intermediate level (300 and 400) training needs are determined by Regional fire management staff or Training Specialists in conjunction with zone requirements. Each Region should be represented on an interagency training committee. These committees identify priority intermediate level training needs and designate host agencies and course coordinators. The Regional training committee is responsible for prioritizing Bureau and Tribal employees for mid-level and advanced training.

National level (500 and 600) training needs are determined by the Branch of Fire Management, NIFC. All national level training will be based upon a position needs analysis.

2. Individual Development Plans

In order to effectively quantify the amount of training needed at any level in our organization, it is essential that supervisors understand their workforce. Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are a tool supervisors can use to identify the employee's career development path and any training that may be needed along the way. These IDPs should be designed to not only accommodate employee goals but more importantly, serve to support the mission of the unit. There are many examples of IDPs in use today and all are acceptable.

The IQCS has an IDP function that specifically addresses incident positions and the associated training plans for individuals. Utilization of the career planning tool in IQCS to capture an individual's training plan will assist training managers at the local, regional and national level with the information needed to increase efficiency in planning course sessions to meet the future training needs.

3. Position Task Books

Position performance requirements are outlined in individual PTBs for each position. The Bureau does not require a minimum number of position performance assignments before a PTB can be certified. However, the Certifying Official should be cautioned against certifying PTBs without being confident in the employee's ability to perform at the fully qualified level.

4. Training Plans

- a. The Agency or Tribal WFM program manager is responsible for training their employees to the extent that employee skills, knowledge and abilities facilitate the mission of the unit and the personal development of the employee. This training should be planned to accommodate the development of employees so they

can perform jobs associated with “normal” program operations as well as “incident” operations.

- b. Examples of “normal” operations include responsibilities such as:
 - Development of fuels management projects and plans.
 - Implementation of prescribed fires and mechanical fuels reduction projects.
 - Leadership and Supervision of project work.
 - Project monitoring and reporting.
 - Maintenance of project equipment and inventory.
 - Development of mobilization and operating plans.
- c. Examples of “incident” operations include:
 - Suppression of wildfires.
 - Supervision of suppression resources.
 - Coordination with incident response cooperators.
- d. Depending on the position description, incident operations may comprise a smaller percentage of the employee’s work load. It is the responsibility of the unit manager to balance training plans accordingly, understanding the mission of the unit and goals of the Tribe for which they have Trust responsibility.

5. Training Nomination Process

The Interagency Training Nomination Form, available electronically on the internet, will be utilized to nominate employees for training. The training nomination process varies by unit, zone, and region.

- a. National and Geographic Level Courses

Employees identified for national level training will submit their nomination to their Regional FMO. Upon approval and prioritization of candidates, the Regional FMO will forward this nomination to the Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR). For a list of GATRs, please refer to the web site at:

<http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/>.

CHAPTER 13 – TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

b. Fire Use Training Academy (FUTA)

Nominations for FUTA should be sent directly to FUTA. The Bureau has a training specialist located at FUTA who will prioritize all Bureau and Tribal applicants with input from the Regional offices. Please visit their web site at: <http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/sw/futa/> for more information.

6. Instructor Qualifications

- a. Each Region is responsible for the selection, training, and certification of Bureau and Tribal instructors.
- b. NWCG recognizes two levels of wildland fire instructor: lead instructor (Type I) and unit instructor (Type II). A lead instructor must have sufficient experience in presenting all units of the course so as to be capable of last minute substitution for unit instructors. Lead instructors must also be position qualified and current at the next higher job level (e.g., a Lead Instructor for S-230 "Single Resource Boss-Crew" must minimally be qualified as a Strike Team Leader-Crew). Unit instructors must be experienced in the lesson content they are presenting. Unit instructors must be position qualified and current at the job level to which the training course is targeted.
- c. All 100 level courses may be taught by anyone having the prerequisite experience and is approved by the local fire management staff. No instructor training requirements exist for either lead or unit instructors for 100 level courses.
- d. Unit instructors participating in 200 level training should attend an instructor course of at least 32 hours that emphasizes adult education skills.
- e. Lead instructors for 200 level training courses and all instructors of 300 level and above courses are required to have instructor training as described above.
- f. The Facilitative Instructor Course (M-410), industry instructor training, and collegiate level adult education courses are representative of courses that may meet instructor training requirements. Exceptions may be made for those instructors who have demonstrated strong instructional skills and abilities. Certification of instructors is generally the responsibility of lead instructors, not of managers or supervisors.
- g. Administratively Determined Instructors

In limited cases, instructors may be hired under the AD Pay Plan for Emergency Workers. These instructors must meet minimum instructor qualifications pursuant to the NWCG Course Coordinators Guide and be current in these qualifications. Instructors hired under the AD Pay Plan will not be retained for extended periods of time to “manage agency training programs”.

7. Course Coordinators Guide

The *Course Coordinators Guide* will serve as the Bureaus policy related to NWCG course coordination. This document can be found on at the following web site at: <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/training/training.htm>.

8. Field Managers Course Guide

The *Field Managers Course Guide* contains valuable course-specific information for the entire NWCG-sponsored curriculum and is the authoritative reference for instructor qualifications. Course coordinators should utilize this as a desk reference. It can be found on the following web site at: <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/training/training.htm>.

H. Course Equivalencies

There are some instances where course equivalencies do exist, such as the various ways to gain the skills necessary to become an effective instructor. These will be identified periodically through this guide or instructional memorandum.

1. Leadership Training

All employees who complete the course known as Fireline Leadership (L-380), Incident Leadership (L-381), or Advanced Incident Leadership (L-480) may also receive credit for agency-required supervision training.

2. Prevention Training

Employees who have completed the 24-hour Risk Assessment Mitigation Strategies (RAMS) training can receive credit for P-301, Wildland Fire Prevention Planning.

I. BIA-Specific Position Standards

There are certain BIA positions that have position standards which exceed those or are not identified in the NWCG *Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide* (PMS 310-1). Standards for the BIA, which may exceed the minimum

CHAPTER 13 – TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

standards established by NWCG, are developed by the National Training Manager, and approved by the Director, Branch of Fire Management, and implemented through IQCS.

1. Prescribed Fire Positions:

- a. Reference BIA Fuels Management Handbook.

2. Interagency Hotshot Superintendent

The Superintendent is a permanent employee with administrative and supervisory skills sufficient to manage a highly qualified interagency initial attack hand crew. Must be able to provide fully capable leadership to the crew and have sufficient fire experience to train the crew in every aspect of fire suppression operations. The Superintendent must have sufficient management skills to manage budgets, work schedules, incident operations, and personnel.

- a. Qualifications: Refer to the *National Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations Guide*.
- b. IQCS Position Code: IHCS

3. Assistant Interagency Hotshot Superintendent

The Assistant Superintendent is a permanent employee who assists the Superintendent in all aspects of crew management and must be qualified to supervise and manage the crew in the absence of the crew superintendent. Consequently, must have sufficient management skills to manage budgets, work schedules, incident operations, and personnel.

- a. Qualifications: Refer to the *National Interagency Hotshot Crew Guide*.
- b. IQCS Position Code: IHCA.

4. Exclusive Use Fire Helicopter Crew Position Standards

Reference Aviation Section.

5. Sawyer/Faller Qualifications

Bureau employees, both in fire positions and non-fire positions, perform a variety of job duties requiring the use of a chainsaw. The Branch of

CHAPTER 13 – TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Fire Management has a training and certification process for these employees.

a. Supervisor Responsibilities

It is the supervisor's responsibility to understand Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and provide their employees with personal protective equipment, training and certification in chainsaw operation. This training can be in the form of S-212, a comparable industry course, or a course developed at the local Agency.

b. Currency

Chain saw operators maintain currency at their assigned level of proficiency for three (3) years.

c. Qualifications

There are four chain saw operator qualification levels recognized by the Bureau:

1. "A" Apprentice Sawyer (IQCS Position Code: FALA)
2. "B" Journeyman Faller (IQCS Position Code: FALB)
3. "C" Advanced Faller (IQCS Position Code: FALC)
4. "C" Faller Certifier (IQCS Position Code: CCRT)

d. Fitness Requirements

Fitness for all Sawyer and Faller positions shall be Arduous. There is no fitness requirement for Instructors of Sawyer/Faller courses.

e. EFF

Emergency firefighters may be hired under the AD Pay Plan to attend S-212, a comparable industry course, or a course developed at the local Agency.

6. ATV Operators

All Terrain Vehicle Operators (ATVO) are required to attend a government or private industry sponsored ATV safety course prior to being issued the ATVO competency in IQCS.

7. Dozer Operators

All agency or tribal dozer operators will complete S-130, S-190, and Annual Safety Refresher Training prior to being assigned to wildland fire incidents. In addition, they must meet the fitness requirement of Moderate. Contract operators should also meet this standard or, adhere to incident escort rules.

J. Agency-Specified Required Training

1. Fire Management Leadership

Fire Management Leadership (NAFRI) or a local Fire Management Leadership course is required for all:

- Agency Superintendents
- Agency Foresters
- Agency Fire Management Officers
- Regional Foresters
- Regional Fire Management Officers
- Tribal Natural Resource Program Managers

Regional Directors, Deputy Regional Directors, and Tribal Administrators are also encouraged to attend this course.

K. Funding for Training

1. General Schedule and Tribal Contract/Compact Fire Employees

- a. Training budgets for fire-funded employees and other non fire-funded employees who maintain red card positions are included within preparedness funding. Budget submissions for training should be supported by training needs analyses. Besides individual travel and tuition costs, these budgets may also consider costs associated with contracting trainers, paying the travel costs of non-agency trainers, or the need to conduct recurring annual workshops or meetings.
- b. Emergency Operations funding will not be used to cover training costs for employees in this category.
- c. Training will not be scheduled on weekends unless pre-approved by the Line Officer.

2. AD/EFF Hires

- a. The AD Pay Plan provides for the hiring of emergency workers and trainers for attending and conducting training. FMOs will practice prudent and wise use of Emergency Operations funding (92310) used for training purposes. The BIA-NIFC office will establish Regional FireCodes to be used to fund the AD training program.
- b. Although the AD Pay Plan provides for a maximum of 80 hours of training for emergency firefighters, this should not be considered an annual “entitlement”. Training is authorized for classes that maintain or improve qualifications, within the context of the employees’ qualifications development pathway and the mission of the local unit.
- c. AD-EFF employees can only be paid while attending “REQUIRED” courses as identified in the PMS 310-1 or this “Blue Book”. Courses categorized as “OTHER TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS” are not authorized for delivery to AD-EFF employees. However, this does not prevent the individual from attending this course while not being reimbursed by the government.