

## Chapter 14 Firefighting Personnel

### A. Introduction

Firefighting personnel from all federal agencies, state organizations, and the private sector are used in the suppression and management of wildland fires. These resources fill all positions in the Incident Management System.

#### 1. Leadership

The most essential element of successful wildland firefighting is competent and confident leadership. Leadership means providing purpose, direction, and motivation for wildland firefighters working to accomplish difficult tasks under dangerous, stressful circumstances. This concept can be applied to all individuals and not just those in a leadership role.

##### **A Good Leader Must:**

- Be technically and tactically proficient
- Be responsible for your actions
- Know yourself and seek improvement
- Know your firefighters and look out for their well-being
- Set the example
- Make sound and timely decisions
- Keep your firefighters informed
- Ensure the task is understood, supervised and accomplished
- Develop a sense of responsibility in your firefighters
- Build the Team
- Employ your team in accordance with its capabilities

### B. Policy

All individuals filling positions within a fire management organization must be qualified according to agency direction found in *PMS 310-1 National Interagency Incident Management System Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualifications Guide*.

1. *USFS- FS5109.17- Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook.*
2. **Minimum Age Requirements for Hazardous Duty Assignments on Federal Incidents**
  - a. Persons under 18 years old will not perform hazardous duties during wildland fire management operations on federal jurisdictions.

**C. Engine Modules**

Staffing levels and specific requirements for engine personnel may be found in Chapter 15, Fire Fighting Equipment, section D Firefighting engines.

**D. Helicopter Modules**

Staffing levels and specific requirements for helicopter personnel may be found in Chapter 17, Aviation, Section C Helitack.

**E. Smokejumpers**

Smokejumpers provide wildland fire suppression and hazardous fuels reduction services to interagency land managers.

**1. Policy**

Smokejumper operations are guided by direction in the *Interagency Smokejumper Operations Guide*.

Each base will comply with smokejumper operations standards. The arduous duties, specialized assignments, and operations in a variety of geographic areas require smokejumpers to have uniform training, equipment, communications, organization, and operating procedures.

- a. **BLM**- Smokejumper operations use the ram air (square) parachute exclusively.
- b. **USFS** – FS smokejumper operations are guided by direction in FSH 5709.14, and the *Interagency Smokejumper Operations Guide*. Smokejumpers use the round FS14 parachute system exclusively.

**2. Smokejumper Organization**

The operational unit for smokejumpers is “one load.”

- a. **BLM**- A load is typically one plane with pilot(s), one or two spotters, and eight smokejumpers.
- b. **USFS**- A load is typically 8-20 smokejumpers and varies as per aircraft type.

Concurrence with NICC must be obtained prior to configuring smokejumpers as a Type 2 IA crew.

**3. Operational Procedures****a. Coordination & Dispatch**

Smokejumpers are a national resource and are ordered according to geographic area or national mobilization guides.

- b. **BLM**- Specific information on the coordination, dispatch, ordering, and use of BLM smokejumpers in the contiguous 48 states can be found in the *BLM Boise Smokejumpers User*

*Guide, and in the Alaska Fire Service operational procedures, policies, and guidelines. Contact the BLM smokejumpers in Boise at (208) 387-5426 or the Alaska smokejumpers in Ft. Wainwright at (907) 356-5670 for these publications.*

- c. **USFS-** FS bases have operations plans pertinent to each base.
- d. **Communications**  
All smokejumpers carry programmable radios and are proficient in their use and programming procedures.
- e. **Transportation**  
Smokejumper retrieval is accomplished by coordinating with the requesting dispatch center. More detailed information can be found in the guides mentioned above.

**4. Safety**

All aviation and parachute operations will be accomplished in accordance with standard operating procedures and regulations.

**5. Training**

To ensure proficiency and safety, smokejumpers complete annual training that covers aspects of aviation, parachuting, fire suppression tactics, administrative procedures, and safety related to the smokejumper mission and fire operations.

The training program for first-year smokejumpers is four weeks long. Candidates are evaluated to determine:

- a. Level of physical fitness
- b. Ability to learn and perform smokejumper skills
- c. Ability to work as a team member
- d. Attitude
- e. Ability to think clearly and remain productive in a stressful environment

The following are ICS qualifications for smokejumpers:

Position	Target Recommendations
Overhead Cadre	ICT3, DIVS
Spotter	ICT3, DIVS
Squad Leader	STCR, ICT4
GS-6 Smokejumper	CRWB
GS-5 Smokejumper	FFT1, FFT2

**6. Physical Fitness Standards**

The national minimum standards for smokejumpers are:

- 1.5 mile run in 11:00 minutes or less
- 45 sit-ups in 60 seconds
- 25 pushups in 60 seconds
- 7 pull-ups
- 110 lb. packout over 3 miles/level terrain/90 minutes

In addition to these physical fitness standards, smokejumpers are required to pass the WCT at the arduous level.

#### F. Interagency Hotshot Crews

Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHCs) provide an organized, mobile, and skilled hand crew for all phases of wildfire suppression.

##### 1. Policy

IHC standards provide consistent planning, funding, organization, and management of the agency IHCs. The sponsoring unit will ensure compliance with the established standards. The arduous duties, specialized assignments, and operations in a variety of geographic areas required of IHCs dictate that training, equipment, communications, transportation, organization, and operating procedures are consistent for all agency IHCs.

Agency IHCs will be managed under the *National Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations Guide (NIHCOG)*.

a. **BLM/NPS** – *These agencies IHCs have adopted the NIHCOG as policy.*

##### 2. IHC Organization

Individual crew structure will be based on local needs using the following standard positions: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Squad Leader, Skilled Firefighter, and Crewmember.

##### 3. Availability Periods

All IHCs must be certified annually prior to initial assignment. Submit a completed “Appendix C” from the *NIHCOG* prior to the crew being made available for any incident assignment as an IHC. Any IHC not meeting all of the requirements in “Appendix C” before, or during, the crew’s availability period will be available as an IHC(t). The Crew Superintendent is responsible to inform local supervisor and the local GACC of any required changes in the crew’s typing.

IHCs will be available to meet or exceed availability periods specified in *NIHCOG* 2001.

a. **BLM -IHC** *crewmembers will receive 40 hours of basic or refresher training before their first fire assignment in a fire season. Refresher training will include, but is not limited to, crew safety, risk management, firefighter safety, fire behavior, communications, and organization. The final responsibility for crew availability will rest with the Superintendent’s certification to local unit management that all training is complete.*

*The minimum tour of availability excluding required training periods for BLM IHCs will be 130 calendar days for crews in the lower 48 states and 90 calendar days for crews in Alaska.*

- b. *NPS/USFS- IHCs follow the NIHCOG, including minimum tours. In some regions, tours may exceed the minimum based on preparedness and fuels funding levels, or non-fire funding for these resources.*

**4. Communications**

IHCs will provide a minimum of five programmable multi-channel radios per crew as stated in the *NIHCOG*.

**5. Transportation**

Crews will be provided adequate transportation. The number of vehicles used to transport a crew should not exceed five. All vehicles must adhere to the certified maximum Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) limitations. See GVW standards in Chapter 15 for details.

**G. Other Hand Crews**

**1. Policy**

All crews must meet minimum crew standards as defined on page 14-08 as well as any additional agency, state, or contractual requirements. Typing will be identified at the local level with notification made to the local GACC.

**2. Crew Types**

a. **Agency Crews**

Agency hand crews consist of qualified agency personnel and are organized on a local basis. These crews are designated as Type 2 or Type 2 IA.

b. **State Crews**

State crews are organized under the auspices of individual states. These crews may be designated as Type 1, Type 2, or Type 2 IA. These crews include organized state inmate crews.

c. **Emergency Firefighter Crews (EFF)**

These crews are usually Type 2 crews consisting of agency sponsored on call personnel who meet the requirements for Type 2 IA or Type 2 as defined on page 14-08.

d. **Contract Crews**

These organized crews consist of personnel trained, equipped, and certified by a private contractor and must meet the contractual specifications as stated in their state or national crew contracts.

- e. *USFS – The FS endorses the National Minimum Standards for crews and applies FSH 5109.17 for training requirements.*

## H. Fire Use Modules

1. *NPS- The National Park Service has Fire Use Modules. The primary mission and priority of the modules is to provide skilled and mobile personnel to assist with Wildland Fire Use (WFU) in the areas of planning, fire behavior monitoring, ignition, and holding. Secondary priorities follow in the order below:*
  - a. *Support burn unit preparation.*
  - b. *Assist with fire effect plot work.*
  - c. *Support mechanical hazardous fuel reduction projects.*
2. *NPS- As an interagency resource, the modules are available nationally throughout the fire season. Each module is comprised of a module leader, assistant leader and three to eight module members. See the Fire Use Module Operation Guide for specifics. Modules are mobilized and demobilized through established ordering channels through the GACCs.*

## I. Agency Certified Positions

As a supplement to the qualifications system, certain agencies have identified the additional positions of Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 3 (RXB3) – see Chapter 18; Engine Operator (ENOP) – see Chapter 15; and Chainsaw Operators and Fallers listed below.

## H. Chainsaw Operators and Fallers

1. The DOI has established the following minimum qualification and certification process for Chainsaw Operators (Red Card certified as Faller A):
  - a. Successful completion of S-212, including the field exercise, or those portions of S-212 that are appropriate for Faller A duties.
  - b. Agency administrator (or delegate) certification of qualifications after verification that training is successfully completed.
  - c. Annual refresher training is required as specified by the local unit.
  - d. Documentation must be maintained for individuals, including annual refresher training.
2. The DOI has established the following minimum qualification and certification process for BLM/NPS Fallers (Red Card certified as Faller B or C):
  - a. Certification of employees will remain the responsibility of the agency administrator (or delegate) after successful completion of training has been verified.
  - b. Training and certification of Fallers should be addressed case-by-case, and used only if a need is identified.

- c. Annual refresher training is required and specified by the local unit.
- d. Documentation must be maintained for individuals, including annual refresher training.
- e. *USFS – FS direction can be found in FSH 5109-17 and FSH 6709.11, specifically in the 2000-01 supplement.*