

Chapter 14 Firefighting Personnel

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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.

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.

Policy

Requirements for fire management positions are outlined in the *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide*, referred to as the IFPM Standard. The supplemental Qualification Standard for professional GS-0401 Fire Management Specialist positions, approved by the Office of Personnel Management, is also included in the IFPM Standard. The *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards and Guide* can be found in its entirety on the IFPM website: <http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov>

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 Qualifications Guide*.

- *FS - FS5109.17 - Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook.*

Minimum Age Requirements for Hazardous Duty Assignments on Federal Incidents

Persons under 18 years old will not perform hazardous duties during wildland fire management operations on federal jurisdictions.

Engine Modules

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

Helicopter Modules

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

Smokejumpers

Smokejumpers provide professional and effective fire suppression, fuels reduction, and fire management services to help land managers meet objectives.

1 **Policy**

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

4

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

- 9 • **BLM** - *Smokejumper operations use the ram air (square) parachute*
10 *exclusively.*
11 • **FS** - *FS smokejumper operations are guided by direction in FSH 5709.14,*
12 *and the Interagency Smokejumper Operations Guide. Smokejumpers use*
13 *the round FS14 parachute system exclusively.*

14

15 **Smokejumper Organization**

16 The operational unit for smokejumpers is “one load.”

- 17 • **BLM** - *A load is typically one plane with pilot(s), one or two spotters, and*
18 *eight smokejumpers.*
19 • **FS** - *A load is typically 8-20 smokejumpers and varies as per aircraft type.*

20

21 Concurrence with National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) must be
22 obtained prior to configuring smokejumpers as a Type 2 IA crew.

23

24 **Coordination & Dispatch**

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

- 27 • **BLM** - *Specific information on the coordination, dispatch, ordering, and*
28 *use of BLM smokejumpers in the contiguous 48 states can be found in the*
29 *BLM Boise Smokejumpers User Guide, and in the Alaska Fire Service*
30 *operational procedures, policies, and guidelines. Contact the BLM*
31 *smokejumpers in Boise at (208) 387-5426 or the Alaska smokejumpers in*
32 *Ft. Wainwright at (907) 356-5670 for these publications.*
33 • **FS** - *FS bases have operations plans pertinent to each base.*

34

35 **Communications**

36 All smokejumpers carry programmable radios and are proficient in their use and
37 programming procedures.

38

39 **Transportation**

40 Smokejumper retrieval is accomplished by coordinating with the requesting
41 dispatch center. More detailed information can be found in the guides
42 mentioned above.

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1 Safety

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

5 Training

6 To ensure proficiency and safety, smokejumpers complete annual training that
7 covers aspects of aviation, parachuting, fire suppression tactics, administrative
8 procedures, and safety, related to the smokejumper mission and fire operations.
9 The training program for first-year smokejumpers is four weeks long.

10 Candidates are evaluated to determine:

- 11 • Level of physical fitness
- 12 • Ability to learn and perform smokejumper skills
- 13 • Ability to work as a team member
- 14 • Attitude
- 15 • Ability to think clearly and remain productive in a stressful environment

17 Physical Fitness Standards

18 The national minimum standards for smokejumpers are:

- 19 • 1.5 mile run in 11:00 minutes or less
- 20 • 45 sit-ups in 60 seconds
- 21 • 25 pushups in 60 seconds
- 22 • 7 pull-ups
- 23 • 110 lb. packout over 3 miles/level terrain/90 minutes
- 24 • Successful completion of the WCT at the arduous level.

26 Interagency Hotshot Crews

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

30 Policy

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

37
38 As per agency policy all IHCs will be managed under the *National Interagency
39 Hotshot Crew Operations Guide* (NIHCOG).

- 40 • ***BLM/NPS - BLM Preparedness Review Checklist #12 (Hotshot Crew)***
41 *supercedes the checklist found in the NIHCOG.*

43 Certification

44 Annual certification of IHC's is required prior to being made available for
45 assignment as an IHC. For certification the crew superintendent will:

- 1 • Submit a completed NIHCOG Appendix C to the local unit Fire
2 Management Officer for approval.
- 3 • Upon approval, the local unit Fire Management Officer will submit the
4 signed Appendix C to the State/Regional Fire Management Officer.
- 5 • Upon approval, the State/Regional Fire Management Officer will notify the
6 Geographical Coordinating Committee and NICC of the crew's status.

7

8 **IHC Organization**

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

12

13 **Availability Periods**

14 All IHCs must be certified annually prior to initial assignment. Submit a
15 completed "Appendix C" from the *NIHCOG* prior to the crew being made
16 available for any incident assignment as an IHC. Any IHC not meeting all of
17 the requirements in "Appendix C" before, or during, the crew's availability
18 period will be available as an IHC(t). The Crew Superintendent is responsible to
19 inform local supervisor and the local GACC of any required changes in the
20 crew's typing. IHCs will be available to meet or exceed availability periods
21 specified in *NIHCOG* 2001 (Revised 2004).

- 22 • *BLM - IHC crewmembers will receive 40 hours of basic or refresher*
23 *training before their first fire assignment in a fire season. Refresher*
24 *training will include, but is not limited to, crew safety, risk management,*
25 *firefighter safety, fire behavior, communications, and organization. The*
26 *final responsibility for crew availability will rest with the Superintendent's*
27 *certification to local unit management that all training is complete. The*
28 *minimum tour of availability excluding required training periods for BLM*
29 *IHCs will be 130 calendar days for crews in the lower 48 states and 90*
30 *calendar days for crews in Alaska.*
- 31 • *NPS/FS - IHCs follow the NIHCOG, including minimum tours. In some*
32 *regions, tours may exceed the minimum based on preparedness and fuels*
33 *funding levels, or non-fire funding for these resources.*

34

35 **Communications**

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

38

39 **Transportation**

40 Crews will be provided adequate transportation. The number of vehicles used to
41 transport a crew should not exceed five. All vehicles must adhere to the
42 certified maximum Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) limitations.

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2 Other Hand Crews

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4 Policy

5 All crews must meet minimum crew standards as defined in Appendix T as well
6 as any additional agency, state, or contractual requirements. Typing will be
7 identified at the local level with notification made to the local GACC.

8

9 Crew Types**10 • Agency Crews**

11 Agency hand crews consist of qualified agency personnel and are
12 organized on a local basis. These crews are designated as Type 2 or Type
13 2 IA.

14 • State Crews

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

18 • Emergency Firefighter Crews (EFF)

19 These crews are usually Type 2 crews consisting of agency sponsored on
20 call personnel who meet the requirements for Type 2 IA or Type 2 as
21 defined in Appendix T.

22 • Contract Crews

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

**26 • FS - The FS endorses the National Minimum Standards for crews and
27 applies FSH 5109.17 for training requirements.**

28

29 Fire Use Modules

30 • *NPS - The National Park Service has Fire Use Modules. The primary
31 mission and priority of the modules is to provide skilled and mobile
32 personnel to assist with Wildland Fire Use (WFU) in the areas of
33 planning, fire behavior monitoring, ignition, and holding. Secondary
34 priorities follow in the order below:*

35 ➤ *Support burn unit preparation.*

36 ➤ *Assist with fire effect plot work.*

37 ➤ *Support mechanical hazardous fuel reduction projects.*

38 • *NPS - As an interagency resource, the modules are available nationally
39 throughout the fire season. Each module is comprised of a module leader,
40 assistant leader and three to eight module members. See the Fire Use
41 Module Operation Guide for specifics. Modules are mobilized and
42 demobilized through established ordering channels through the GACCs.*

43

44 Agency Certified Positions

45 As a supplement to the qualifications system, certain agencies have identified
46 the additional positions of Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 3 (RXB3) - see Chapter

Release Date: January 2007

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1 18; Engine Operator (ENOP) - see Chapter 15; and Chainsaw Operators and
2 Fallers listed below.

3

4 **Chainsaw Operators and Fallers**

5 The agencies have established the following minimum qualification and
6 certification process for Chainsaw Operators (Red Card certified as Faller A):

- 7 • Successful completion of S-212, including the field exercise, or those
8 portions of S-212 appropriate for Faller A duties.
- 9 • Agency administrator (or delegate) certification of qualifications after
10 verification that training is successfully completed.
- 11 • Documentation must be maintained for individuals.
- 12 • The individual tasks required for completion of the “A” Task Book and the
13 final evaluation for the “A” level saw operators must be verified or signed
14 by a qualified “B or C” level saw operator.
- 15 • The individual tasks required for completion of the “B” Task Book must be
16 evaluated by a qualified “B” or “C” level operator. The Final Evaluator
17 Verification for “B” level operators must be signed by a “C” level saw
18 operator.
- 19 • The individual tasks required for completion of the “C” Task Book must be
20 evaluated by a qualified “C” level operator. The Final Evaluator
21 Verification for “C” level operators must be signed by a state approved
22 “C” level certifier.
- 23 • Each of the states/regions will certify and maintain a list of their current
24 “C” class saw operators who they approve to be “C” class certifiers.
- 25 • The certification of “C” class certifiers will remain the responsibility of the
26 agency administrator or delegate.
- 27 • All fire related (red carded) saw operation qualifications are maintained
28 through the IQCS system and will have a currency of five years.
- 29 • *FS - FS direction can be found in FSH 5109.17 and FSH 6709.11.*
- 30 • *FWS/NPS - Reference the BLM/FWS/NPS position task book. Found at:*
31 *<http://www.fire.blm.gov/training/blmtrng/PDFs/Faller/PTBFallerABC.pdf>*
- 32 • *FWS/NPS - Exceptions to the above policy are:*
 - 33 ➤ *The individual tasks required for completion of the “B” Task Book*
34 *and the final evaluation for the Class “B” saw operations must be*
35 *verified by a qualified Class “B” or “C” saw operator.*
 - 36 ➤ *The individual tasks required for completion of the “C” Task Book*
37 *and the final evaluation for the Class “C” saw operators must be*
38 *verified by a region approved Class “C” Final Evaluator.*
 - 39 ➤ *Each of the regions will certify and maintain a list of current,*
40 *qualified Class “B” and “C” saw operators, approved as Class “B”*
41 *or “C” Final Evaluators.*
 - 42 ➤ *The certification of “C” class evaluators will remain the*
43 *responsibility of the regional agency administrator or delegate.*