



**Bureau of Indian Affairs**  
U.S. Department of Interior

**Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Mgt**  
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## **Congratulations! You've chosen to become a Public Information Officer (PIO)! What Now?**

**The Incident Command System (ICS):** ICS is used to manage an emergency incident (like wildland fire, search and rescue, etc) or a non-emergency event. The information officer reports to the Incident Commander, who in turn reports to the agency or jurisdictions responsible for the incident. A good overview of ICS is provided in the independent study course titled *Introduction to ICS (I-100)* – go to <http://training.nwccg.gov/classes/i100.htm> to access this course.

**What does a Public Information Officer (PIO) do?** A PIO is responsible for the formulation and release of information about the incident to the news media, local communities, incident personnel, the incident management team, other agencies and organizations. As you progress in your training and development, you may become a Lead Information Officer, responsible for the management of other PIOs assigned to the incident.

**Who is eligible to be a PIO?** Technically, anyone can become a PIO, but it does require communication skills and strong writing skills to meet the needs of the position. There is training and task books associated with the three levels of public information officers. All Public Information Officers (PIOs) begin locally as a PIOF; if you wish to work regionally or nationally, you will progress up to a Public Information Officer Type 2 (PIOF2). After gaining appropriate experience and training PIO2s move to the most advanced level, an Information Officer Type 1 (PIO1).

**What do I need to do to start the process and why do I need training?** First, discuss your interest with your supervisor. Then, contact your local Fire or Emergency Management Officer to initiate your task book. PIOs (who work fire and other events) are certified through the completion of requirements listed in the *Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide*. Training and qualifications are completed through four avenues: Training Courses, which provide specific background knowledge; Position Task Books, which contain tasks required to perform the job; Job Aids, to provide ready reference; and finally Agency Certification, which provides the documentation certifying the individual is qualified to perform in the specific job. (This is the responsibility of the employing agency.) As you move through the qualifications, the skills you gain will be a value to you in your daily life, so do not let the requirements intimidate you!

**Information Officer Position Task Books:** Your home unit must initiate the task book. Position Task Books are available on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group website at <http://www.nwccg.gov> - Click on *Publications*, then *Taskbooks*. Within Taskbooks, scroll down to *Command and General Staff*, to find the PIO task books.

**Physical Fitness Requirements:** Typically, a PIO has no physical fitness requirements, **UNLESS** that PIO will be expected to visit the fireline with media, dignitaries, etc. This would be a typical occurrence on most incidents; therefore, a light duty fitness test is required – walking 1 mile in 16 minutes.

**The Next Step:** If you are working toward certification as a PIOF, you will receive a qualifications card that states you are a PIOF(t) (Public Information Officer Trainee); as a Type 2 trainee, your qualifications card would read PIO2(t). When task books are completed, your home unit will finalize your certification. You should receive an Incident Qualifications and Certification System card (IQCS card or "Red Card") from your Fire Management Officer that states you are qualified as a PIO. The card is required to go on the fireline on incidents. You must also be registered in the ROSS (Resource Ordering and Status System). Check with your local unit protocol on how to be added to ROSS.

**Reference:** *Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide* PMS 310-1, NFES 1414.



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	<b><u>Public Information Officer (PIOF)</u></b>	<b><u>Public Information Officer 2 (PIO2)</u></b>	<b><u>Public Information Officer 1 (PIO1)</u></b>
<b><u>Required Training</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S-203 Introduction to Incident Information</li> <li>S-130 Firefighter Training</li> <li>S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior</li> <li>I-100 Introduction to ICS</li> <li>L-180 Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service</li> <li>RT-130 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully Qualified PIOF</li> <li>S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior</li> <li>S-420 Command and General Staff</li> <li>RT-130 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S-520 Advanced Incident Management or Complex Incident Management Course</li> <li>RT-130 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher</li> </ul>
<b><u>Other Training Which Supports Development of Knowledge and Skills</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advanced ICS (I-400)</li> <li>Incident Information Officer (S-403)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional</li> </ul>
<b><u>Required Experience</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful position performance as a Public Information Officer (PIOF).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful position performance as a Public Information Officer Type 2 (PIO2).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory performance as a Public Information Officer Type 2 (PIO2).</li> <li>+ Successful position performance as a Public Information Officer Type 1 (PIO1).</li> </ul>
<b><u>Physical Fitness</u></b>	Light Duty*	Light Duty*	Light Duty*
<b><u>Other Position Assignments that Will Maintain Currency</u></b>	Public Information Officer Type 2 (PIO2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Information Officer (PIOF)</li> <li>Any higher position for which this position is a prerequisite</li> </ul>	Public Information Officer Type 2 (PIO2)

\* See Publication Management System 310-1; Position Qualifications, page 10 – “Physical Fitness Levels”