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## Chapter - 13 Training and Qualifications

### 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.

### 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.

### Responsibilities

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

#### Chief, Branch of Fire Management

The Chief 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.

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

4

#### 5 **Regional Directors**

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

8

#### 9 **Agency Superintendents and Line Officers of Tribal Fire Programs**

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

17

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

20

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

25

26

#### 27 **Incident Qualifications and Certification System**

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

30

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

35

#### 36 **System of Record**

37 IQCS is the official incident qualification and certification record keeping  
38 system. The responder master record report generated by IQCS is the official  
39 qualification record and meets BIA requirements for proof of individual fire  
40 experience, task book, training, and qualification records. The system was  
41 designed to provide managers at the local, regional, and national level with  
42 detailed qualification, experience, and training information needed to certify  
43 employees in wildland fire and all-risk positions. IQCS is a tool to assist  
44 managers in certification decisions; it does not replace the manager's

1 responsibility to validate that employees meet all requirements for position  
2 performance based on NWCG and Bureau standards.

3

#### 4 **Account Administration**

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

15

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

17

#### 18 **Record Keeping**

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

28

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

30

#### 31 **Transfers and Retirement**

32 When an employee transfers or retires, any training records maintained by the  
33 hosting unit will be given to the employee. In addition, the employee's IQCS  
34 file will be transferred to the new hosting unit or moved to the inactive (INAC)  
35 organization code.

36

#### 37 **Requesting New Accounts**

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

43

44

1 **Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card)**

2 The Certifying Official (Agency Superintendent, Tribal Line Officer, or  
3 delegate) is responsible for certification of personnel serving as incident  
4 responders. Agency certification is issued annually in the form of an Incident  
5 Qualification Card (Red Card), which certifies that the individual is qualified to  
6 perform in a specified position(s). The Red Card must be reviewed for accuracy  
7 and signed by the certifying official. The Certifying Official and incident  
8 responder are responsible for monitoring medical status, fitness, training, and  
9 performance, and for taking appropriate action to ensure the employee meets all  
10 position performance requirements.

11

12 Red Cards generated by IQCS are required for all Bureau and Tribal employees  
13 assigned to wildland fire or all-hazard incidents. This requirement includes  
14 Administratively Determined (AD) - emergency firefighter (EFF) employees.

15

16 **Use of Non-Agency/Tribal Personnel**

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

22

23 **Interagency Fire Program Management Standards**

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

29

30 **Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training**

- 31 • Refer to Safety Section.

32

33 **Work Capacity Testing**

- 34 • Refer to Safety Section.

35

36 **Training Management**

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

42

43

44

45

**1 Training Needs Analysis**

2 Training need analyses are developed each year at unit, zone, regional and  
3 national levels. The assessment process provides information needed to  
4 determine which courses will be required, which employees will attend them,  
5 and how many slots will be available. Course offerings should be based upon  
6 identified unit needs, and reflect goals established in individual employee  
7 development plans. The unit or zone is responsible for sponsoring 100 and 200  
8 level courses. It is recommended all training, regardless of level, be presented  
9 by interagency instructors to interagency audiences. Intermediate level (300 and  
10 400) training needs are determined by Regional fire management staff or  
11 Training Specialists in conjunction with zone requirements. Each Region  
12 should be represented on an interagency training committee. These committees  
13 identify priority intermediate level training needs and designate host agencies  
14 and course coordinators. The Regional training committee is responsible for  
15 prioritizing Bureau and Tribal employees for mid-level and advanced training.  
16  
17 National level (500 and 600) training needs are determined by the Branch of  
18 Fire Management, NIFC. All national level training will be based upon a  
19 position needs analysis.  
20

**21 Individual Development Plans**

22 In order to effectively quantify the amount of training needed at any level in our  
23 organization, it is essential that supervisors understand their workforce.  
24 Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are a tool supervisors can use to identify  
25 the employee's career development path and any training that may be needed  
26 along the way. These IDPs should be designed to not only accommodate  
27 employee goals but more importantly, serve to support the mission of the unit.  
28 There are many examples of IDPs in use today and all are acceptable.  
29  
30 The IQCS has an IDP function that specifically addresses incident positions and  
31 the associated training plans for individuals. Utilization of the career planning  
32 tool in IQCS to capture an individual's training plan will assist training managers  
33 at the local, regional and national level with the information needed to increase  
34 efficiency in planning course sessions to meet the future training needs.  
35

**36 Position Task Books**

37 Position performance requirements are outlined in individual PTBs for each  
38 position. The Bureau does not require a minimum number of position  
39 performance assignments before a PTB can be certified. However, the  
40 Certifying Official should be cautioned against certifying PTBs without being  
41 confident in the employee's ability to perform at the fully qualified level.  
42  
43  
44

## 1 **Training Plans**

2 The Agency or Tribal Fire Program Manager is responsible for training their  
3 employees to the extent that employee skills, knowledge and abilities facilitate  
4 the mission of the unit and the personal development of the employee. This  
5 training should be planned to accommodate the development of employees so  
6 they can perform jobs associated with “normal” program operations as well as  
7 “incident” operations.

8

9 Examples of “normal” operations include responsibilities such as:

- 10 • Development of fuels management projects and plans.
- 11 • Implementation of prescribed fires and mechanical fuels reduction projects.
- 12 • Leadership and Supervision of project work.
- 13 • Project monitoring and reporting.
- 14 • Maintenance of project equipment and inventory.
- 15 • Development of mobilization and operating plans.

16

17 Examples of “incident” operations include:

- 18 • Suppression of wildfires.
- 19 • Supervision of suppression resources.
- 20 • Coordination with incident response cooperators.

21

22 Depending on the position description, incident operations may comprise a  
23 smaller percentage of the employee’s work load. It is the responsibility of the  
24 unit manager to balance training plans accordingly, understanding the mission of  
25 the unit and goals of the Tribe for which they have Trust responsibility.

26

## 27 **Training Nomination Process**

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

31

## 32 **National and Geographic Level Courses**

33 Employees identified for national level training will submit their nomination to  
34 their Regional FMO. Upon approval and prioritization of candidates, the  
35 Regional FMO will forward this nomination to the Geographic Area Training  
36 Representative (GATR). For a list of GATRs, please refer to the web site at:  
37 <http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/>.

38

## 39 **BIA Fire Mentoring Program**

40 The BIA Fire Mentoring Program is designed to select trainees to travel and  
41 participate in Prescribed Fire activities in order to gain valuable experience and  
42 aid progression in attaining position qualification. Participants, under the  
43 guidance of a Field Coordinator, conduct prescribed fire work at a selected unit  
44 referred to as a mentoring hub.

1 Nominations for this program are open to all BIA and Tribal fire management  
2 employees. Those interested in participating should notify their Regional Fuels  
3 Specialist who will coordinate the nominations coming from their region.  
4 Nominations will be accepted annually between October 1 and November 30.

5

6 **Fire Use Training Academy (FUTA)**

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

11

12 **Instructor Qualifications**

13 Each Region is responsible for the selection, training, and certification of  
14 Bureau and Tribal instructors.

15

16 NWCG recognizes two levels of wildland fire instructor: lead instructor and  
17 unit instructor. A lead instructor must have sufficient experience in presenting  
18 all units of the course so as to be capable of last minute substitution for unit  
19 instructors. Lead instructors must also be position qualified and current at the  
20 next higher job level (e.g., a Lead Instructor for S-230 "Single Resource Boss-  
21 Crew" must minimally be qualified as a Strike Team Leader-Crew). Unit  
22 instructors must be experienced in the lesson content they are presenting. Unit  
23 instructors must be position qualified and current at the job level to which the  
24 training course is targeted.

25

26 All 100 level courses may be taught by anyone having the prerequisite  
27 experience and is approved by the local fire management staff. No instructor  
28 training requirements exist for either lead or unit instructors for 100 level  
29 courses.

30

31 Unit instructors participating in 200 level training should attend an instructor  
32 course of at least 32 hours that emphasizes adult education skills.

33

34 Lead instructors for 200 level training courses and all instructors of 300 level  
35 and above courses are required to have instructor training as described above.

36

37 The Facilitative Instructor Course (M-410), industry instructor training, and  
38 collegiate level adult education courses are representative of courses that may  
39 meet instructor training requirements. Exceptions may be made for those  
40 instructors who have demonstrated strong instructional skills and abilities.  
41 Certification of instructors is generally the responsibility of lead instructors, not  
42 of managers or supervisors.

43

44

45

1 **Administratively Determined Instructors**

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

7

8 **Course Coordinators Guide**

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

12

13 **Field Managers Course Guide**

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

19

20 **Course Equivalencies**

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

25

26 **Leadership Training**

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

30

31 **Prevention Training**

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

35

36 **S-580, Advanced Fire Use Applications**

37 The 36 hour regional course known as “Managing Wildland Fire for Resource  
38 Benefits” is equivalent to S-580, Advanced Wildland Fire Use Application.

39

40 Managing Wildland Fire for Resource Benefits is offered by the Northern  
41 Rockies Training Center in Missoula, Montana, but may be offered at other  
42 locations. Any individual who has completed Managing Wildland Fire for  
43 Resource Benefits can be credited with taking S-580, Advanced Wildland Fire  
44 Use Application.

45

1 **BIA-Specific Position Standards**

2 There are certain BIA positions that have position standards which exceed those  
3 or are not identified in the NWCG Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide  
4 (PMS 310-1). Standards for the BIA, which may exceed the minimum standards  
5 established by NWCG, are developed by the National Training Manager, and  
6 approved by the Director, Branch of Fire Management, and implemented  
7 through IQCS.

8

9 **Interagency Hotshot Superintendent**

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

- 16 • Qualifications: Refer to the *National Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations*  
17 *Guide*.
- 18 • IQCS Position Code: IHCS

19

20 **Assistant Interagency Hotshot Superintendent**

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

- 26 • Qualifications: Refer to the *National Interagency Hotshot Crew Guide*.
- 27 • IQCS Position Code: IHCA.

28

29

30 **Exclusive Use Fire Helicopter Crew Position Standards**

31 Reference Aviation Section.

32

33 **Sawyer/Faller Qualifications**

34 Bureau and tribal employees, both in fire positions and non-fire positions,  
35 perform a variety of job duties requiring the use of a chainsaw. The Branch of  
36 Fire Management has a training and certification process for these employees.

37

38 **Supervisor Responsibilities**

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

44

1 **Currency**

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

4

5 **Qualifications**

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

7

- |    |                          |                            |
|----|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 8  | 1. "A" Apprentice Sawyer | (IQCS Position Code: FALA) |
| 9  | 2. "B" Journeyman Faller | (IQCS Position Code: FALB) |
| 10 | 3. "C" Advanced Faller   | (IQCS Position Code: FALC) |
| 11 | 4. "C" Faller Certifier  | (IQCS Position Code: CCRT) |

12

13 **Fitness Requirements**

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

16

17 **Emergency Fire Fighters (EFF)**

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

20

21 **ATV Operators**

22 Refer to Chapter 6, Equipment.

23

24 **Dozer Operators**

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

29

30

31 **Agency-Specified Required Training**

32

33 **Fire Management Leadership**

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

- 36 • Agency Superintendents
- 37 • Agency Foresters
- 38 • Agency Fire Management Officers
- 39 • Regional Foresters
- 40 • Regional Fire Management Officers
- 41 • Tribal Natural Resource Program Managers

42

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

1 **Funding for Training**

2 General Schedule and Tribal Contract/Compact Fire Employees

3

4 Training budgets for fire-funded employees and other non fire-funded  
5 employees who maintain red card positions are included within preparedness  
6 funding. Budget submissions for training should be supported by training needs  
7 analyses. Besides individual travel and tuition costs, these budgets may also  
8 consider costs associated with contracting trainers, paying the travel costs of  
9 non-agency trainers, or the need to conduct recurring annual workshops or  
10 meetings.

11

12 Suppression funding will not be used to cover training costs for employees in  
13 this category.

14

15 Training will not be scheduled on weekends unless pre-approved by the Line  
16 Officer.

17

18 **AD/EFF Hires**

19

20 The AD Pay Plan provides for the hiring of emergency workers and trainers for  
21 attending and conducting training. FMOs will practice prudent and wise use of  
22 Emergency Operations funding (92310) used for training purposes. The BIA-  
23 NIFC office will establish Regional FireCodes to be used to fund the AD  
24 training program.

25

26 Although the AD Pay Plan provides for a maximum of 80 hours of training for  
27 emergency firefighters, this should not be considered an annual "entitlement".  
28 Training is authorized for classes that maintain or improve qualifications, within  
29 the context of the employees' qualifications development pathway and the  
30 mission of the local unit.

31

32 AD-EFF employees can only be paid while attending "REQUIRED" courses as  
33 identified in the *PMS 310-1* or this "*Blue Book*". Courses categorized as  
34 "OTHER TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF  
35 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS" are not authorized for delivery to AD-EFF  
36 employees. However, this does not prevent the individual from attending this  
37 course while not being reimbursed by the government.