United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
Washington, DC 20240

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JUN 18 2004

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

From: P. Lynn Scarlett
Assistant Secretary - Office of Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Implementation of the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide (IFPM Standard)

I am pleased to announce the culmination of a lengthy collaborative effort between the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Agriculture to establish uniform fire management qualification standards to improve firefighter safety and increase professionalism in fire management programs.

Studies of wildland fire incidents for a number of years highlighted the fact that more stringent, uniform qualification standards were needed for certain fire management positions to assure firefighter safety. This fact was made even clearer through investigation of the 1994 South Canyon fire that resulted in the death of 14 wildland firefighters.

In response to these needs, an interagency task group formed subsequent to the South Canyon investigation has developed 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 attached White Paper contains additional information about the IFPM Standard.

October 1, 2004 has been established as the date to officially begin implementing the IFPM Standard. Prior to October 1, the National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) will charter a standing committee composed of fire officials and human resources specialists to oversee the implementation process. The initial task of this committee is to develop and distribute an overall implementation plan. Full implementation of that plan will require the cooperation of fire program managers, supervisors, affected employees and human resources specialists at all levels in both the Forest Service and DOI Bureaus. The standing committee will also establish an effective communications plan, including a dedicated web site, so that everyone can stay abreast of our implementation progress.

I look forward to continuing the cooperation and teamwork that has brought us this far in developing these comprehensive qualification standards for wildland fire positions. I am confident that with this collective vigor, we will accomplish our primary objectives of greater safety for wildland firefighters while at the same time ensuring fair and equitable career opportunities for all employees engaged in wildland fire management work. I commend all of the DOI and Forest Service fire and human resources employees who diligently applied their expertise to complete this effort.

Attachment

cc: Deputy Assistant Secretary – Budget and Finance
Acting Director, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination
Director, Office of Personnel Policy
Fire Director, Bureau of Land Management
Fire Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Fire Director, National Park Service
Fire Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs