2017 Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations

Executive Summary of Changes

Chapter 1 – Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Overview

- Inserted text regarding the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations states, references, or supplements policy for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and provides fire and fire aviation program management direction for Bureau of Indian Affairs managers.

Chapter 2 – BLM

- Clarified text under heading “Program Manager Responsibilities” for the Assistant Director and Deputy Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation; Fire Operations Division Chief; and Fire Planning and Fuels Management Division Chief.
- Inserted heading “Preparedness Reviews” and associated text.
- Inserted text under major subsection “Fire Equipment Committees” regarding Dozer/Heavy Equipment Committee reports to the Fire Operations Group (FOG).
- Changed major subsection from “Deficiency Reporting” to “Improvement and Deficiency Reporting” and clarified text.
- Inserted major subsection “600 Class Command Vehicle Procurement Standards” and associated text.
- Inserted heading “Equipment Bulletins and Equipment Alerts” and associated text.
- Moved BLM specific text from Chapter 13 and inserted it under the heading “BLM Fire Training and Workforce Development” regarding agency-certified positions and personnel hired by the BLM meeting requirements established in the position description.
- Removed text in the tables under the heading “BLM Firefighters General Non-Fire Training Requirements” regarding AD, EFF, Agency Permanent, Career Seasonal and Temporary Firefighters initial defensive driving training be instructor-led.
- Removed the word “authorized” and inserted “required” regarding performing physical fitness conditioning for one hour of duty time each work day for employees serving in wildland fire positions that require a fitness rating of arduous as a condition of employment.
- Clarified text throughout the “BLM Hand Crew Standards by Type” table.
- Inserted major subsection “Establishing or Converting BLM IHC” and associated text.
- Clarified the date for CRWB will be required for BLM IHC Squad Leaders on January 21, 2018.
- Clarified how BLM Fire Suppression Modules will be statused, tracked, and mobilized in the ROSS system.
- Removed 625 and 626 Unimogs from the table under major subsection “BLM Engine Minimum Staffing Requirements.”
- Clarified existing text regarding BLM smokejumper physical fitness standards.
- Changed table heading from “National Smokejumper Standard” to “BLM Smokejumper Physical Fitness Standards.”
- Clarified NWCG type and number of BLM exclusive use helicopters in the “BLM Exclusive Use Helicopter Locations” table.

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• Clarified existing text under heading “Sage Grouse Conservation Related to Wildland Fire” referencing FA IM-2016-021 regarding guidelines for determining when a Large Fire Assessment should be considered.

Chapter 3 – NPS
• No substantial changes.

Chapter 4 – FWS
• Clarified text under heading “Agency Administrator Roles” for the Regional Director regarding prescribed fire and inserted text regarding Regional Directors will provide a written Delegation of Authority to the RFMC to represent the region on the Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group and other duties as described in this chapter under the heading “Delegation of Authority.”
• Removed, inserted or clarified text under heading “Agency Administrator Roles” in the “Management Performance Requirements for Fire Operations” table.
• Removed, inserted or clarified text under heading “Fire Management Staff Roles” in the “Fire Management Staff Performance Requirements for Fire Operations” table.
• Changed text throughout the chapter from “FMO” to “ZFMO.”
• Clarified text under heading “Delegation of Authority” for the Zone Fire Management Officer: “In order to effectively perform their duties, the ZFMO will receive a Delegation of Authority outlining the operational and administrative fire management duties. All Unit Agency Administrators within a Zone will sign a Zone and/or Refuge Fire Management delegation.”
• Inserted new heading “Wildland Fire Field Attire” and associated text.
• Clarified text under heading “Individual Fire Report” regarding an individual fire report must be completed in the FMIS for specified types of fires or treatments.
• Inserted bullet under heading “Individual Fire Report” regarding an individual fire report must be completed in the FMIS for, “Non-fire treatments completed with fuels funding.”
• Clarified under heading “Fish and Wildlife Service Use of WFDSS”: “Documentation of other wildfires in WFDSS is at the discretion of the Regional Office or local unit.”
• Inserted text under heading “Final Wildland Fire Record” stating FMIS data entry is required in the final wildland fire or project record.

Chapter 5 – FS
• Clarified text under heading “Foundational Doctrine” regarding the vision of the Forest Service’s Fire and Aviation Management program and supporting policy, and inserted a web address for more information of past doctrinal efforts.
• Removed major subsections including numbers 1-30 and associated text under heading “Foundational Doctrine.”
• Inserted definition under heading “Preparedness.”
• Removed existing text under the heading “Preparedness” regarding a field-level Agency Administrator requirement to convene and participate in annual conferences and fire reviews.
• Removed existing text under “Preparedness” heading regarding conducting after action reviews for Type 3, 4 and 5 fires and moved clarified text under major subsection “Wildfire Response.”
• Changed major subsection from “Suppression” to “Wildfire Response” throughout the chapter.
• Clarified text under heading “Specific Fire Management Staff Responsibilities for Fire Operations at the Field Level,” major subsection “Wildfire Response” regarding utilizing the Risk Complexity Assessment to ensure the proper level of management is assigned to all incidents.
• Removed “R&R” and inserted “Length of Assignment” under heading “Specific Fire Management Staff Responsibilities for Fire Operations at the Field Level,” major subsection “Safety.”
• Inserted text under heading “Structure Exposure Protection Principles,” major subsection “Strategic Principles” stating, “The use of wildland tactics in the WUI when risks are
mitigated, will be based on the objectives of preventing wildfire from reaching areas of structures and/or reducing the intensity of fire that does reach structures.”

- Inserted text under heading “Structure Exposure Protection Principles,” major subsection “Strategic Principles” stating, “Structure protection will be limited to the use of standard wildfire response tactics including the use of standard equipment, fire control lines, and the extinguishment of spot fires near or on the structure when safe and practical.”

Chapter 6 – BIA
- Inserted text regarding BIA program organization and responsibilities.

Chapter 7 – Safety and Risk Management
- Removed text applicable to all DOI agencies regarding a variance from 485 DM 16 policy that requires operators of commercial vehicles to be at least 21 years of age and inserted text from 485 DM 16 that requires commercial vehicle operators be at least 21 years old.
- Clarified text regarding required fireline PPE is a helmet throughout the chapter.
- Clarified text that the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) are now the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
- Inserted text under heading “Personal Protective Equipment (PPE),” subsection “Eye and Face Protection” regarding chainsaw/crosscut saw operators are allowed to use steel mesh goggles during falling and bucking operations only. Steel mesh glasses are not allowed for any chainsaw operations.
- Clarified text under heading “Emergency Medical Planning and Services,” major subsection “Incident Medical Emergency Management Planning” stating, “All IMTs will use the standard Medical Incident Report in their Medical Plan and Communication protocols. It is found in the IRPG under Emergency Medical Care Guidelines (red pages) and with the Medical Plan (ICS-206-WF) form available at https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/ics-forms.”
- Inserted a new web address under heading “Required Treatment for Burn Injuries,” major subsection “ABA Burn Injury Criteria” for a list of verified burn care facilities.

Chapter 8 – Interagency Coordination and Cooperation
- Inserted the web address for National Wildland Fire Cooperative Agreements throughout the chapter as the information is no longer contained in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide.
- Removed text regarding the three functional areas of the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) and inserted a web address for OWF information.
- Removed supporting text under the headings “National Dispatch/Coordination System,” “Local and Geographic Area Drawdown,” and “National Ready Reserve (NRR)” which can be found in Chapter 19.
- Inserted BIA-specific text throughout the chapter.
- Clarified text under heading “International Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation,” major subsection “U.S. – Mexico Cross Border Cooperation on Wildland Fires” regarding the date the Departments of Interior and Agriculture signed a Wildfire Protection Agreement with Mexico.

Chapter 9 – Fire Management Planning
- Clarified text under heading “Agency Planning Guidance,” major subsection “U.S. Forest Service (FS),” regarding the Forest Service FMPs have been replaced with a combination of enhanced Spatial Planning contained in the WFDSS and FMRS.
- Clarified text under heading “Connection to Other Plans” stating, “Fire Management Plans (DOI) and/or Spatial Fire Planning in WFDSS (FS) capture fire-related direction and decisions from Land/Resource Management Plans (LRMP). If fire management direction and decisions were not adequately integrated into the existing LRMP, additional NEPA may be necessary.”

Release Date: January 2017
Chapter 10 – Preparedness

- Inserted BIA-specific text throughout the chapter.
- Removed text under heading “Predictive Service Areas” stating, “Optimally, Fire Danger Rating Areas should nest within PSAs to ensure better congruence with their closely-related products.”
- Changed major subsection from “National Wildland Significant Fire Potential Outlook” to “National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook” and clarified text.
- Changed major subsection from “7-day Significant Fire Potential Outlook” to “National 7-day Significant Fire Potential Outlook” and clarified text.
- Changed major subsection from “Fuel and Fire Behavior Advisories” to “Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisories” and clarified text.
- Inserted heading “National Intelligence Products” and associated text.

Chapter 11 – Incident Management

- Clarified BLM-specific text requiring District Managers provide a written Delegation of Authority and expectations to Type 3, 4, and 5 Incident Commanders annually prior to fire season.
- Inserted text under heading “Command Organizations,” major subsection “Incident Command,” regarding Incident Commanders are responsible for ensuring standardized incident and communication center protocols identified in the Medical Incident Report section of the IRPG are utilized.
- Inserted text under heading “Command Organizations,” major subsection “Incident Command,” regarding Incident Commanders are responsible for assisting with WFDSS documentation if requested by the delegating agency administrator(s), and developing incident objectives, strategies, and tactics, consistent with the Delegation of Authority and latest published WFDSS decision(s).
- Clarified PMS 310-1 requirements of Type 3 Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance Section Chief positions mobilized outside the employee’s local dispatch area prior to and after October 1, 2018.
- Inserted and clarified text under heading “Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)” regarding a WFDSS Published Decision.
- Inserted BIA-specific text throughout the chapter.
- Removed some text regarding a WFDSS Initial Decision.
- Clarified text regarding a WFDSS Decision Approval and Publication stating, “All agencies having jurisdiction within a WFDSS Planning Area must be provided the opportunity to participate as soon as possible in the decision-making process. In situations where one agency provides fire protection under agreement or contract to a jurisdictional agency, both jurisdictional and protecting agencies should be involved in the process.”
- Clarified text under heading “Operational Guidelines for Aquatic Invasive Species.”
- Inserted new heading “Operational Guidelines for Aquatic Invasive Species” and supporting text.
- Removed heading “Noxious Weed Prevention” and accompanying text.
- Removed reference to “Wildfire Management Activity Damage Repair” and inserted “Suppression Repair” under heading “Post-Wildfire Activities.”
- Clarified text in the “Post-Fire Activities” table regarding timeframe for rehabilitation and restoration urgency.

Chapter 12 – Suppression Chemicals and Delivery Systems

- Clarified text that the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) are now referred to as the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
Chapter 13 – Firefighter Training and Qualifications

- Inserted BIA-specific text throughout the chapter.
- Inserted BLM-specific text under heading “Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS)” stating, “State Fire Management Officers will certify Position Taskbooks and Incident Qualification Cards for Area Command and Type 1 Command and General Staff positions.”
- Inserted FS-specific text regarding employees having a 13-month currency requirement for Annual Fireline Safety Refresher training.
- Moved “Physical Fitness” heading and text down in the chapter below heading “Work Capacity Tests.”
- Changed existing heading from “Medical Examinations and Work Capacity Tests” to “Medical Examinations.”
- Clarified text for requiring a medical examination whenever there is a reasonable concern, based on objective evidence, about the employee’s continued capacity to meet any of the physical or medical requirements of the position.
- Removed duplicate language regarding supervisor’s authority to require a medical examination.
- Clarified text regarding any employee with other physical or medical limiting factors/restrictions that preclude them from fully performing the activities of an arduous position must disclose this as part of the self-certification or medical examination process.
- Clarified text regarding the DOI Medical Standards Policy for performance of arduous duty to be consistent with OWF Policy Memorandum 2016-014.
- Removed redundant language regarding performance of fire duties as an AD as an alternative when failing to meet medical standards as a permanent, seasonal/temporary employee. Under OWF Policy Memorandum 2016-014, all employees and applicants, including ADs are treated the same.
- Clarified text regarding Arduous Fitness Level – Department of Interior Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program (DOUMSP).
- Clarified text regarding NPS Law Enforcement Rangers who are collateral duty wildland firefighters and the medical qualification determination process.
- Clarified existing text under major subsection “Medical Exam Process for Light and Moderate Fitness Levels” regarding standards for medical examinations using the OF-178 for light and moderate positions are only applicable to BLM and NPS.
- Inserted new heading “Work Capacity Tests.”
- Clarified text under major subsection “Health Screen Questionnaire (HSQ)” regarding reference for FS-specific direction on WCT administration.
- Inserted BLM-specific text to see Chapter 2 for physical fitness conditioning requirements.
- Changed major subsection from “Smokejumper Physical Fitness Standards” to “USFS Smokejumper Physical Fitness Standards.”
- Clarified text regarding Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC), including IHC Organization, IHC Communications and Type 1 minimum standards in the “Minimum Crew Standards for National Mobilization” table.
- Inserted BLM-specific text that IHCs have the option of traveling with 25 personnel when on incident assignments.
- Inserted text below the “Minimum Crew Standards for National Mobilization” table stating, “CRWB will be required for IHC Squad Leaders on January 21, 2018.”
- Removed heading “Agency Certified Positions” and moved agency-specific information to the beginning of Chapter 13 under heading “Standards” and moved BLM-specific information to Chapter 2 under heading “BLM Fire Training and Workforce Development.”
- Inserted FWS-agency specific requirement under heading “Chainsaw Operators and Fallers” regarding use of NWCG position task books and requirements for final evaluators for chainsaw operators and fallers.
- Clarified text under heading “Chainsaw Operators and Fallers” regarding FS reference for certification processes for sawyers.
Chapter 14 – Firefighting Equipment
- Inserted BIA-specific text throughout the chapter.
- Clarified text under heading “Firefighting Engine/Water Tender Common Standards,” major subsection “First Aid Kit” that each engine/water tender shall carry, in a clearly marked compartment, a fully-equipped 20-25 person first aid kit.
- Removed FS-specific text stating, “A Single Resource Boss may supervise a Type 6 or 7 engine.”
- Inserted BLM- and BIA-specific text stating, “…personnel will not use ATVs for any wildland fire management activity, regardless of incident jurisdiction or project/activity location after January 1, 2018.”
- Changed heading from “Vehicle Cleaning/Noxious Weed Prevention” to “Vehicle Cleaning/Invasive Species Prevention.”

Chapter 15 – Communications
- Inserted text regarding the National Air Guard Frequency (168.6250 MHz): “This frequency must be programmed into the last channel of every group in fire handheld radios.”

Chapter 16 – Aviation Operations and Resources
- Inserted text under heading “Purpose and Scope” stating, “In addition to the priorities listed in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide, Chapter 10 under headings “Total Mobility” and “Priorities,” mobilization of aircraft should be based on optimizing the use of exclusive-use contracted aircraft. Call-when-needed aircraft will be the last ordered and the first released. The exception to this is use for initial action response and capability.”
- Inserted BIA-specific text throughout the chapter.
- Changed major subsection from “Aviation Safety Assistance Team (ASAT)” to “Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team (ASAT)” and removed “optional” from Maintenance Inspector under this subsection.
- Inserted text regarding helmets not being required for multi-engine leadplane operations during low-level flights.
- Inserted text regarding Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) operations by individuals and organizations must be authorized by the FAA under Part 107.
- Removed text, “…valid under the parameters of the FAA’s Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA)” regarding federal use of cooperator agency UAS.
- Inserted text stating, “A Project Aviation Safety Plan (PASP) or agency-approved operations plan/risk assessment is required for all missions or projects, to include UAS missions on fires.”
- Inserted text regarding the individuals in DOI (UAS Division Chief) and USFS (UAS Program Manager) with authority during a multi-jurisdictional incident to determine who should obtain the Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA).
- Clarified text under heading “Unmanned Aircraft Systems” regarding justification requirements for an emergency COA.
- Inserted web addresses where department- or agency-specific UAS information can be found.
- Removed FS-specific text regarding Forest Service Administrative Use of Aircraft Desk Reference under heading “Airspace Coordination.”
- Under heading “Flight Request and Approval,” major subheading “Mission Flights,” removed text regarding mission flights for fixed-wing aircraft include “Airtanker coordinator operations” and inserted “leadplane/ASM/Airtanker operations” and removed “Night air tactical operations” and inserted “Aerial Supervision.”
- Clarified BLM-specific text regarding helitack crew size.
- Clarified existing text regarding emergency medical short-haul.
- Under heading “Aerial Supervision Principles for ATGS, ASM, and Lead,” clarified and inserted text stating, “When aerial supervision resources are collocated with airtankers, they will be launched together to maximize the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of incident operations unless aerial supervision is currently over the incident.”
• Under heading “Aerial Supervision Principles for ATGS, ASM, and Lead,” clarified and inserted text stating, “Incidents with three or more aircraft over/assigned to them should also have aerial supervision in the form of ATGS or ASM/leadplane. A qualified smokejumper spotter (senior smokejumper in charge of smokejumper missions) may coordinate smokejumper operations with on-scene aircraft over a fire until a qualified ATGS arrives.”

• Removed FS-specific text regarding Forest Service aerial supervision training, qualifications, and currency standards are contained in the FSFAQG and inserted FS policy document is the Interagency Aerial Supervision Guide.

• Removed text “ATGS Cadre” and inserted “Agency Program Manager/ATGS GACC Representative” regarding ATGS Program Management and Training.

• Inserted text under heading “leadplane” stating “Any operation that limits the national resource availability must be approved by the agency program manager.”

• Clarified existing text under heading “Airtankers” stating, “Host GACCs will check with NICC prior to releasing flight crews on T-1 and T-2 airtankers and VLATs for the day when those resources are not being used within the host area, and could be utilized elsewhere for emerging or ongoing fire activity. The National Interagency Mobilization Guide, Chapter 50, “Airtankers” contains additional direction regarding staffing and maintenance of support functions to mobilize national resources.”

• Inserted major subsection “State of Alaska Airtankers” and clarified text.

• Inserted major subsection “Canadian Airtankers” and clarified text.

• Clarified text regarding exceptions for airtanker rotation stating “Airtankers that are not Initial Attack (IA) qualified will not be dispatched to a fire unless a leadplane or Aerial Supervision Module (ASM) will be on-scene upon the arrival of the non-IA qualified airtanker.”

• Inserted text stating “Exceptions” for airtanker rotation that operating restrictions may include significant downloading of fuel or retardant based on performance and daylight remaining.

• Clarified text regarding “exceptions” for airtanker rotation stating, “MAFFS, NICC ordered state cooperators, and NICC ordered Canadian airtankers will begin rotation at that base after the contracted and FS-owned airtanker(s) at the beginning of each day.”

• Removed major subsection “Canadian Airtankers” and associated text.


• Clarified text under major subsection “Airtanker Base Personnel” stating, “Permanent, reload and temporary large airtanker bases will meet the minimum requirements listed in Appendix E (Airtanker Base Fire Readiness Review) of the IABOG and have a staffing plan prior to an airtanker landing at the airtanker base airport.”

• Inserted heading “Multi-Engine Water Scoopers” and associated text.

• Clarified existing text under heading “Cooperator Aircraft” stating, “Aircraft procured/owned by cooperating agencies (state, local, and International) may be utilized on federally managed fires when cooperative agreements are in place and the aircraft have been approved by letter nationally or regionally.”

• Inserted and clarified text under heading “Cooperator Aircraft” stating, “Under emergency circumstances, where human life is immediately at risk by wildland fire on lands under federal protection, a federal line officer can approve the use of non-federally approved aircraft to address the immediate threat. Under circumstances where a Governor has declared a state of emergency, a federal line officer at the State/Regional level, may consider any fire under federal protection, as an immediate threat to human life.”

• Removed existing FS-specific text regarding cooperator aircraft.

Chapter 17 – Fuels Management

• Inserted BIA-specific text throughout the chapter.
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Chapter 18 – Reviews and Investigations
- Inserted BIA-specific text under heading “Fire Cause Determination and Trespass Investigation.”
- Inserted web address for PMS 405-1, Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Initial Report in the table under heading “Related Policy Documents.”

Chapter 19 – Dispatch and Coordination System
- Changed existing heading from “Organization” to “National Dispatch/Coordination System.”
- Clarified text regarding Predictive Services and inserted text regarding Intelligence under heading “National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) Functional Responsibilities.”
- Removed reference throughout the chapter to all agreements located in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide, Chapter 40, and inserted the web address for agreements.
- Global replacement of Predictive Services and Intelligence text under heading “Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) Functional Responsibilities.”

Appendices
- Appendix D – Global replacement of Agency Administrator’s Briefing to Incident Management Team.
- Appendix G – Inserted a second Sample Delegation of Authority Agency Administrator to Incident Management Team. Inserted new text regarding an optional Leader’s Intent letter and briefing outline.
- Appendix M – Clarified text under Category “Medical” that the First Aid Kit is 20-25 person. Inserted text under Category “Safety” regarding Class 2 or 3 High Visibility Apparel (1 per seat belt).