

INTRODUCTION

INTERAGENCY FIRE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS AND GUIDE

BACKGROUND

As a result of the South Canyon fire and subsequent South Canyon Fire Investigation Report (August 17, 1994) the Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management, and the Chief, Forest Service, established the Interagency Management Review Team (IMRT) to serve as a steering group, study the findings and conclusions of the Investigation Team, and propose a plan for corrective action.

On October 17, 1994, the Report of the IMRT was published. It included, among others, these recommendations (IMRT Topic 3.6):

1. "Establish minimum qualifications for fire managers and agency administrators who are required to make fire management decisions."
2. "Agency Administrators should ensure that personnel holding, or selected for, fire management or agency administrator positions are qualified for the level of wildland fire complexity involved in the position or are able to obtain these qualifications within an acceptable time period."

On December 18, 1995, the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture published the final report of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (Federal Fire Policy). Signed by both Department Secretaries, it directed the federal agencies to:

"establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future agency administrator and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program."

On May 23, 1996, the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture published the Implementation Action Plan Report outlining action items which must be accomplished by the signatory agencies to fully implement the Federal Fire Policy. Several action items are specific to the development of qualifications for agency administrators and personnel assigned fire management duties including:

Action Item 27, "establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future agency administrator and fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program."

Action Item 62, “Develop and utilize consistent fire management qualification standards and specific selection criteria for fire program managers.”

Action Item 63, “Establish job performance standards for Agency Administrators and fire managers that clearly reflect the complexity and scope of fire management responsibilities.”

To accomplish these action items, the former Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council (FFALC) formed an Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications task group. The objective of the Task Group was to complete staff work, acceptable to all federal agencies with wildland fire management responsibilities and to the Office of Personnel Management, sufficient for the establishment of minimum qualifications standards for key fire management positions.

The resulting *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards and Guide (IFPM Standard)* was approved by FFALC in January 2000. The *IFPM Standard* defined 14 key fire management positions as well as minimum qualification standards for those 14 key positions.

The 14 key positions can be broken down into three categories:

First Line Supervisor (Those that implement fire projects)

Interagency Hotshot Crew Superintendent (IHCS)

Helicopter Manager (HMGR)

Senior Firefighter (SFF)

Engine Module Supervisor (EMLS)

Supervisor Engine Operator (SEOP)

Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP)

Fire Project Specialist (Those that plan fire projects)

Wildland Fire Operations Specialist (WFOS)

Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist (PFFS)

Prevention and Mitigation Specialist (PAMS)

Initial Attack Lead Dispatcher/Assistant Center Manager (ACMG)

Center Manager (CMGR)

Fire Program Manager (Those that manage the overall fire program)

Unit Fire Program Manager (UFPM)

Geographic Area Fire Program Manager (GFPM)

National Fire Program Manager (NFPM)

In June 2004 Dale Bosworth, Chief, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA-FS) and Department of Interior (DOI) Assistant Secretary P. Lynn Scarlett issued memorandums establishing October 1, 2004 as the date to officially begin implementing the *IFPM Standard* with a 5 year implementation time frame.

The *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide* is broken into four sections:

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Individual Position Standard and Guide
- ◆ Common Competencies
- ◆ Program Complexities.

INDIVIDUAL POSITION STANDARD AND GUIDE

The individual position standard and guide includes the following components:

- ◆ Minimum Qualifications Standards
- ◆ Employee Development Training
- ◆ Position Specific Competencies

Minimum Qualification Standards consists of:

- ◆ Basic Requirements for GS-0455, GS-0462 or GS-0401 positions
- ◆ Specialized Experience Requirements
- ◆ National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Incident Management Qualifications
- ◆ Additional Required Training

These Minimum Qualifications Standards were established to meet the direction outlined in the Implementation Action Plan Report of the 1995 Federal Fire Policy Review.

To meet these minimum standards, all identified “Minimum Qualifications Standards” components (“OPM Standard Requirements,” “Specialized Experiences,” “Additional Required Training” and “NWCG Incident Management Qualifications”) must be met.

These “Minimum Qualification Standards” must be used when recruiting for vacant positions.

Where NWCG Incident Management Qualifications are shown, they relate to minimum incident management skills required to manage the local program on the unit. The assumption is made that if higher incident management skills are needed to manage an incident, they would be ordered through the standard resource ordering process.

Each Minimum Qualification Standard is identified by the fire organizational title. The formal classification title will be based on the appropriate job series.

Employee Development Training – identifies training that assists an employee in meeting position competencies, in addition to training that is required. It is recognized that training is

not the only way of obtaining competencies, but the identified courses do provide many, though not necessarily all, of the knowledge and skills needed to meet position competencies.

Position Specific Competencies – constitute the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities which, when acquired, allow a person to perform a task or function at a defined level of proficiency based on complexity.

COMMON COMPETENCIES

The Common Competency Descriptors for All Positions is intended to supplement the Position Specific Competency Descriptors. They are competencies needed for most positions. Employees obtain these “Common Competencies” through personal education and experiences, through agency orientation and mission renewal programs, and through interaction with peers, teams, and supervisors. These Common Competency Descriptors are used in a variety of ways including constructing Employee Development Plans and evaluating employee performance.

PROGRAM COMPLEXITIES

The Rating Guide for Evaluating Fire Program Complexity is used to determine the overall complexity of a fire management program at the unit level. A rating of low, moderate or high is assigned. The series and competency level of some of the key fire management positions is tied directly to the complexity rating. ***Grade is not tied to the complexity level that is determined through the classification process.***

Changes to a unit’s complexity rating can be made at any time. The need for re-analysis may be generated at the local unit level, or from regional or state-level direction. Possible reasons for a re-analysis include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Changes in protection area that increase or decrease a unit’s responsibility for providing fire protection.
- ◆ The combining of multiple units into an interagency zone or organization
- ◆ Addition or subtraction of key components to a unit’s fire management program.

Changes to key elements of a fire management program should be “programmatic” and long term, and not adjustments to respond to a temporary arrangement.

TRAINING FOR AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS

In addition to common qualification standards for fire management personnel job performance standards for agency administrators and fire managers were developed. The Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations (Red Book) identifies the requisite training and

competencies for various levels of agency administrators, fire program managers and other agency managers of the five federal wildland fire management agencies. For the most current policy refer to the Red Book at http://www.nifc.gov/policies/red_book.htm.

EARLY CHANGES TO THE IFPM STANDARDS AND GUIDE

Since October 1, 2004 some of the NWCG Incident Management Qualifications for certain positions have changed to address concerns from the field and more accurately reflect current fire management organization needs. The following is a list of the changes that occurred, prior to the comprehensive 2008 Position Analysis (Page 6). Some of these historical changes are no longer relevant following the 2008 Position Analysis.

Unit Fire Program Manager, High Complexity – Prescribed fire qualification was changed from Prescribed Fire Manager, Type 2 (RXM2) to Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, Type 2 (RXB2).

Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist, High Complexity – Prescribed fire qualification was changed from Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, Type 1 (RXB1) to Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, Type 2 (RXB2).

Center Manager - The additional required training of “40-HR Supervisory Training, Basic dispatch computer skills, and Training to provide intermediate computer skills and working knowledge of various fire management computer programs” was removed.

Senior Firefighter – The NWCG Incident Management qualifications requirement of Incident Commander, Type 5 (ICT5) **and** Firefighter, Type 1 (FFT1) or Helicopter Crewmember (HECM), as appropriate was changed to ICT5 **or** FFT1 or HECM, as appropriate.

More information on these changes can be found on the IFPM website at www.ifpm.nifc.gov.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD EXTENSION

In an August 15, 2008 memo from the Associate Deputy Secretary of the Interior, the deadline to meet IFPM requirements was extended to October 1, 2010, providing incumbents an additional year to meet both “position specific IFPM Standards” (NWCG qualifications and additional required training) as well as positive education requirements for GS-0401 positions. A similar extension letter will be forthcoming for Forest Service employees.

2008 POSITION ANALYSIS

At the request of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) the IFPM Implementation Team completed a position analysis of the 14 key fire management positions. The analysis focused on two areas; is the position still appropriate for inclusion as one of the 14 key positions; and the NWCG incident management qualification requirements associated with the position.

As a result of that analysis and subsequent meetings between the Implementation Team and NWCG, the following changes were implemented:

- A. **Prevention and Mitigation Specialist:** The Prevention and Mitigation Specialist position was removed from the IFPM Standard. It was determined that the competencies associated with these positions did not necessitate prescription of minimum NWCG incident qualification requirements or additional required training.
- B. **Driving for the Fire Service (S-216):** This course was removed as additional required training for the Supervisory Engine Operator position. It was determined that agency-specific driver safety training or engine academies were currently sufficient to meet or exceed this training requirement.
- C. **Delegation of National and Geographic Area Fire Program Manager IFPM Role:** Due to organizational complexities, there may be instances in national and geographic organizations where the senior fire program manager delegates the IFPM requirements to a senior officer, other than the employee who holds the title of National or Geographic Fire Program Manager. The primary intent of this delegation is to place the appropriate individual who meets IFPM minimum qualification standards in the position of authority to support safe operations in the field.
- D. **Adjustment of Minimum NWCG Incident Qualifications:** Adjustments were made to several IFPM positions as a result of the Analysis. Four categories of NWCG incident qualifications were presented in the original IFPM standards. These categories were replaced as follows:

<u>Old Position Categories</u>	<u>New Categories</u>
Command	Primary Core Requirements
Operations	Secondary Core Requirements
Prescribed Fire	
Dispatch	

The analysis determined that Operations qualifications would serve as the fundamental building block for each position (the “Primary Core Requirement”), with the exception being the High and Moderate Complexity Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist positions in which RXB2 is the Primary Core Requirement.

The distinction between Primary and Secondary Core Requirements is based on a position competency ranking conducted during the analysis process. Both Primary and Secondary Core Requirements are weighted equally from a selective placement factor standpoint.

Primary Core Requirements, Secondary Core Requirements, and Additional Required Training are all mandatory and will be used as selective placement factors in vacancy announcements beginning October 1, 2010. Prior to October 1, 2010 (the “implementation period”) vacancy announcement language will reference the requirement that these qualifications be obtained prior to October 1, 2010.

Where an “OR” option is indicated, any NWCG position listed can be chosen to meet the qualification standard. For example, the Secondary Core Requirement for the position of Geographic Area Fire Program Manager can be achieved if the employee has been qualified in one of three position options: Incident Commander, Type 3 (ICT3) or, Type 2 Command and General Staff (see C&GS list) or, Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, Type 2 (RXB2).

NWCG incident qualification requirements were changed for the following positions as a result of the 2008 Position Analysis. This list contains qualification requirements both before and after the position analysis adjustment:

1. ***National Fire Program Manager:***
Before: TFLD **and** ICT3 **and** T2 C&G **and** RXB2.
After: TFLD **and** (ICT3 or T2 C&G or RXB2).
2. ***Geographic Area Fire Program Manager:***
Before: TFLD **and** ICT3 **and** T2 C&G **and** RXB2.
After: TFLD **and** (ICT3 or T2 C&G or RXB2).
3. ***Unit Fire Program Manager, High Complexity:***
Before: DIVS **and** ICT3 **and** RXB2.
After: DIVS **and** (ICT3 or RXB2).
4. ***Unit Fire Program Manager, Moderate Complexity:***
Before: TFLD **and** ICT3 **and** RXB2.
After: TFLD **and** (ICT3 or RXB2).
5. ***Unit Fire Program Manager, Low Complexity:***
Before: (CRWB or ENGB) **and** ICT4 **and** RXB2.
After: (CRWB or ENGB) **and** (ICT4 or RXB2).
6. ***Wildland Fire Operations Specialist, High Complexity:***
Before: DIVS **and** ICT3 **and** RXB2.

After: DIVS **and** (ICT3 or RXB2).

7. *Wildland Fire Operations Specialist, Moderate Complexity:*

Before: TFLD **and** ICT3 **and** RXB2.

After: TFLD **and** (ICT3 or RXB2).

8. *Wildland Fire Operations Specialist, Low Complexity:*

Before: (ENGB or CRWB) **and** ICT4 **and** FIRB.

After: (ENGB or CRWB) **and** ICT4.

9. *Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist, High Complexity:*

Before: RXB2 **and** ICT3 **and** TFLD.

After: RXB2 **and** (ICT3 or TFLD).

10. *Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist, Moderate Complexity:*

Before: RXB2 **and** (ENGB or CRWB) **and** ICT4.

After: RXB2 **and** (ENGB or CRWB).

11. *Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist, Low Complexity:*

Before: (ENGB or CRWB) **and** FIRB **and** ICT4.

After: (ENGB or CRWB or FIRB) **and** ICT4.

12. *Supervisory Fire Engine Operator:*

Before: ENOP **and** ICT5.

After: ENGB **and** ICT5.

13. *Senior Firefighter:*

Before: FFT1 **or** ICT5 **or** HECM.

After: FFT1.

E. Command and General Staff Positions: One of the qualification pathways for the Secondary Core Requirement for National and Geographic Area Fire Program Managers is a Command and General Staff qualification. The following is the official list of qualifying C&GS positions and replaces all previous versions:

ICT1/2	Incident Commander Type 1 or Type 2
PIO1/2	Public Information Officer Type 1 or Type 2
SOF1/2	Safety Officer Type 1 or Type 2
OSC1/2	Operations Section Chief Type 1 or Type 2
PSC1/2	Planning Section Chief Type 1 or Type 2
LSC1/2	Logistics Section Chief Type 1 or Type 2
FSC1/2	Finance/Administration Section Chief Type 1 or Type 2