



National IHC Steering Committee Newsletter

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NATIONAL FOOD CATERING CONTRACT - IHC Supts Paul Musser and Jeff Koenig attended the COTR/FDUL workshop in February 2002 to help with the rewrite of the National food contract. Jan McCluskey (NIFC Contracting Officer) will rewrite the contract this year and it will go out for bid in 2003 and be in place in 2004. Each crew should become familiar with the present contract and take the opportunity this season to make sure we get the changes we need in the contract to increase the quality and quantify of the meals we get. The national contract is on the web at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/business/nifc/html>

It can also be ordered from the Publication Management System (NFES 1276). For more information contact Paul Musser of the Flagstaff IHC.

CREW TYPING - For the 2001 fire season, the National Fire Plan funding added 19 new Interagency Hotshot Crews across the nation. These crews started out in “trainee” status and have been working towards gaining official certification as an IHC. Several of these new programs have achieved full IHC status over the last year. The National IHC Operations Guide, Appendix E, explains in detail the process for an IHC trainee to become certified. This year in USFS Region 5, approximately 12 new 20-person hand crews were added to the system with MEL funding. These new crews are in addition to the 19 new IHCs. USFS Region 5 is planning on certifying these new crews as Type 1 hand crews. The 2002 National Interagency Mobilization Guide will have new standards on hand crew typing. For more information contact Brit Rosso of the Arrowhead IHC.

CREW FREQUENCIES – The 2001 National IHC Workshop identified “Dedicated frequencies for inter-crew communication” as an action item. Several IHC Supts met with the national communications group at Boise in May of 2001 and discussed the rationale. They obtained support for inter-crew frequencies as long as these were obtained from Communications Unit on incident. This was not universally known or utilized in 2001 fire season. The following protocol was provided by Steve Jenkins and Kary Mavencamp of the NIFC communication group:

Request the dedicated frequency through the proper channels.

Comm Unit Leaders on the incident to the GACC.

GACC to NICC.

NICC to the NIFC Communication Duty Officer.

They will make every attempt to fill it.

USFS Region 5 has a draft proposal pending Regional Forester signature to make this policy in the Region. For more information contact Dennis Baldrige of the Laguna IHC.

NSR FIRELINE LEADERSHIP COURSES – In 2002, there were 15 Fireline Leadership courses presented to National Shared Resources (7 IHC courses, 6 Smokejumper Base courses, and 2 Exclusive Use Helicopter Crew courses). This is the third year of this leadership initiative and this has allowed the program to begin reaching our critical first line leaders. Most of the participants in this year's IHC courses were at the Senior Firefighter and Squad Leader level. With the current recruitment and hiring environment, a similar demand for this training is expected to continue for the next few years. Planning for next year has already begun. The number of Fireline Leadership courses scheduled will be determined by the training needs information the various NSR communities provide now. The IHC Steering Committee has been requested to gather an estimate for the number of IHC slots anticipated for this course in 2003. Each IHC needs to get that estimate to their geographic/agency rep on the committee by June 1, 2002.

One additional note regarding leadership training; there will be some opportunities for individuals that are interested in participating as a 3rd instructor in a Fireline Leadership course cadre. Individuals that are interested must have been through the course as a participant, will need to attend an instructor workshop, and commit to working on at least two course cadre assignments (this is a total of about a 3 week commitment). For more information contact Jim Cook with the Forest Service at NIFC.

NATIONAL WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER APPRENTICE ACADEMY - This program is now a National program with participation throughout all Forest Service regions and the other federal fire agencies. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Tribal students are taking part this year. Permanent facilities are being built for long-term lease at the old McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento. Six hundred plus students will be going through the Academy this year. There is a dire need for crew leaders and instructors to assist in meeting the needs of the Academy. National IHC Steering Committee will be an additional conduit to disseminate information and solicit help from the IHC community. The National IHC Steering Committee Chair has requested to be added to the mailing list and has asked for instructor request information to be available for distribution by June 1, 2002.

HAZARD PAY FOR HAZARD TREES - We are cutting an increasing amount of hazard trees away from the fire line. This occurs on the home units and while performing project work when pre-positioned for fire assignments. There continues to be injuries, near misses, and fatalities when working around hazard trees. Under current regulation hazard pay is not authorized for cutting down these trees. We do get hazard pay when this is accomplished during suppression of an uncontrolled fire. There is a process for getting specific tasks added to the CFR's through the Office of Personnel Management. The National IHC Steering Committee Chair will research the feasibility of this through the Fire Business Management folks. If anyone has statistics or information that could help in this effort please contact Dennis Baldrige of the Laguna IHC.

PHYSICAL FITNESS TRAINING MANUAL - A small workgroup has been identified to explore the idea of a Physical Fitness Training Manual that can be used by anyone wishing to improve fitness, performance and safety of their respective firefighting programs. This would be a programmatic approach to develop a self-sustaining level of fitness for our primary firefighters in the various line going positions throughout the fire service. It would be designed by benchmarking several existing manuals used by sports and military organizations. Any comments or suggestions on this proposed project should be directed to Shane Greer of the Pike IHC or Steve Karkanen of the Lolo IHC.

IHC STEERING COMMITTEE CHARTER - There was a proposal made to amend National Interagency Hotshot Crew Steering Committee Charter. This amended charter will give a voice to each of the DOI agencies that have IHC programs. This amended charter is currently in the process of being signed by the various fire directors at NIFC. The steering committee composition would then consist of 11 standing members, which would include the following:

One regional or state level fire operations staff member from an IHC sponsor agency, selected by the IHC Sponsor Agency Fire Directors to serve as their representative to the Steering Committee.

Greg Greenhoe

One Agency Administrator representative from an IHC host unit, selected by the above IHC Sponsor Agency Fire Directors representative.

Bruce Greco (transitioning out in 2002)

One National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) representative, selected by the national fire operations office of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

Jim Cook

One National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) representative, selected jointly by the national fire operations offices of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the National Park Service (NPS).

Kurt La Rue

Three IHC Superintendents, selected by the IHC Superintendents, representing the above Department of Interior agencies.

Carl Crawford; representing BIA.

Brit Rosso; representing NPS.

Jerry Soard; representing BLM.

Four USFS IHC Superintendents selected by the IHC Superintendents in these geographic areas:

Steve Karkanen; representing the Northern Rockies and Pacific Northwest Geographic Areas.

Shane Greer; representing the Great Basin, Rocky Mountain, and Eastern Geographic Areas.

Dennis W. Baldrige; representing the California and Alaska Geographic Areas.

Paul Musser; representing the Southwest and Southern Geographic Areas.

CHAIRPERSON: Dennis W. Baldrige

CO-CHAIR: Carl Crawford