



National IHC Steering Committee 2005 Newsletter

Chair: Shane Greer
(719) 488-1242
sgreer01@fs.fed.us

REVISED NATIONAL IHC OPERATIONS GUIDE

During the National IHC Steering Committee meeting in Portland on December 8-9, 2004, the committee did some minor revisions to the most current edition of the Operations Guide 2001 (revised 2004). Most revisions were clearing up the verbiage in Appendix C to more clearly define status as a certified IHC. Appendix C is now titled ***Ihc Certification/Decertification Checklist***. Minor edits were also made to Chapter 22, Minimum Mobilization Standards and an addition to Professional ethics. Please disregard all older versions of the guide and print a copy of the revised one. You will know it is the correct version if you see “Revised 2004_2” in the footer on each page. The revised Operations Guide can be found at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/hotshots/2001_IHC_Ops_Gde.pdf

IFPM SURVEY

Due to the new IFPM standards implementation, the National IHC Steering Committee felt that it would be an outstanding idea to survey the IHC's regarding this subject. This survey will attempt to gauge how the crews, as a whole, meet the new standards. This survey should also help identify any obvious problems with meeting the qualification for any particular positions. In addition, the survey will attempt to analyze how the difference between squad leader and assistant superintendent IFPM qualifications will affect potential advancement for the squad leaders. The crews will be asked to identify which positions (GS-5 crewmember through superintendent) meet current IFPM standards and/or where they fall short.

Another issue the survey will attempt to gauge will be how the squad leader through superintendent positions are affected by IFPM for advancement outside the IHC world. The survey will look at the difference between IHC qualifications and qualifications for AFMO, FOS, Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist and Engine Supervisors.

The representatives from each region look forward to receiving completed surveys from the crews that they represent.

HAZARD PAY ON PRESCRIBED FIRE

After the fatality of Daniel Holmes on the Grant West Prescribed Burn this fall, as well as other prescribed fire fatalities, it was recognized yet again that prescribed fires have the potential to be every bit as hazardous as wildland fire. During the 2004 fall meeting of the National IHC Steering Committee it was determined that the group would tackle this issue. Currently we are still in the research stage of gathering information to support the claim that hazard pay should be paid on prescribed fires. Some of the information gathered to date to guide us in making this request is contained within the Code of Federal Regulations.

According to 5 U.S.C 5545 (d) OPM has the responsibility and authority to establish a schedule for which hazardous duty and physical hardship pay is received. The exclusive schedule containing the duties for which hazard pay and physical hardship pay is received is found in Appendix A of 5 CFR, part 550, subpart I (as provided by 5 CFR 550.903 (a)). Current government regulations state that an amendment to the hazard pay / physical hardship pay schedule may be made by OPM “on its own motion” or by the head of an agency (or designee).

Thus our task will be to meet 5 primary information requirements and 11 supplemental information and statistical requirements in our request to the agency to support hazard pay on prescribed fires. If accepted by the head of any of the agencies (NPS, USFS, BLM, BIA, FWS etc) they could then make a request that OPM include it within Appendix A. Our efforts so far are geared toward gathering information that will not only persuade the agency but also provide them with enough information to make an amendment request through OPM.

IHC INTRACREW RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

As was presented at all IHC workshops this spring the NIFC-NIICD group has come to some resolution on intracrew frequencies for IHC use only. They have worked extremely hard with us over the last couple of years and have made leaps and bounds in solving our issues concerning frequencies for our use. We would ask that all crews please follow the letter of the law as outlined by Royce Shearing during his presentation at your workshop. We cannot afford to diminish the work and progress we’ve made on this subject.

If you have not for some reason received information concerning intracrew frequencies for this season please contact Royce Shearing at NIFC at 208-387-5718 or Shane Greer at 719-488-1242.

IHC vs. TYPE 1

Prior to a few years ago there were only two types of crews in the National Mobilization Guide. They were Type 1 and Type 2 with National Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC's) being Type 1 and all other crews being Type 2. A few years ago the Minimum Crew Standards Chart was changed. The chart now lists Type 1, Type 2 IA, Type 2, and Type 3 crews with a footnote that IHC's are Type 1 crews that exceed the Type 1 standard as required by the National IHC Operations Guide (2001). Since that time roughly 30 Type 1, non-IHC crews have been organized.

When the crew standards chart was redone delineation between Type 1 crews and National IHC's in the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) was not made, allowing for both types of crews to be ordered as Type 1 crews. A large percentage of the fire organization is to this day unaware that there are non-IHC Type 1 crews. When Type 1 crews arrive at an incident they are almost without fail considered IHC's and few of them do anything to disclaim this title. Orders are being sent for Type 1 crews and the sending units are sending either IHC's or Type 1 crews based on whatever reasoning they have. The receiving units may or may not be getting a Hotshot Crew and may or may not want one. With there being a difference in policy and not a difference in the ordering system it is developing into a liability and consistency issue for Incident Management Teams, Fire Managers, other crews, and the Type 1 crews themselves.

The National IHC Steering Committee has drafted a white paper to the IOS working team for consideration to change the footnote in the crew typing chart to read: "Type 1 crews are only certified Interagency Hotshot Crews that meet all elements in the National Interagency Hotshot Operations Guide 2001 (Revised 2004_2)". The intent being to hold all crews to the same standards and close an unforeseen loophole. More information will come out as this develops.

IHC TRANSPORT (FLYING vs. DRIVING)

Due to continued issues with the mobilization of IHC's via Charter or commercial aircraft the National IHC Steering Committee, in conjunction with the Forest Service National Operations Committee has written a draft proposal to make a policy on when IHC's should or shouldn't be flown for a mobilization. In the past there has not been any guidelines to be followed concerning this issue. This is an attempt to develop policy guidelines to be used nation wide. Currently the draft has been given to the FS National Operations Committee to be reviewed at their April meeting in Minneapolis. Until they have reviewed the draft no further information is currently available. If progress is made in April in Minneapolis Shane Greer will send out a message to all crews advising of the status.

FIRE REPLACEMENT

Issues concerning fire replacement come to the National IHC Steering Committee every year. As the Committee weighs the issues there are some that we feel are legitimate and some we feel are not. One thing we, as the IHC organization, need to be aware of is not being our own worst enemies. Do not try and circumvent the rules or push them to fill a need you know may not be following the rules.

One issue that did come to the Committee that we are currently working on is the legitimate replacement of some of the equipment we use daily and being denied because we weren't requested to come with that equipment. An example given was a GPS unit. Per the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, Chapter 30, 30.04 section 5, they are within policy to refuse replacement. The committee is working with the Incident Business Practices working team to try and build a list of "approved" equipment that is generally standard for IHC's and have it placed in the IBMH in the future. This would adhere to the intent of the rule and make an understanding that the list is standard equipment and thus does not fall under the rule for needing to have a resource order for it.

This is not a short term project and there will be no relief for the 2005 season. Our target will be to get this in place for the 2006 season. Until then please follow all the rules and we will continue to affect changes that need to happen through proper channels.

For further information and clarification on replacement please see the NWCG did you know letter posted at <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/hotshots/index.html>

GS-7 SQUADLEADER PD

The National IHC Steering Committee is still working on this issue. Currently we have submitted a draft to the Washington Office for review. At the time of this newsletter no decisions have been made. Information will be sent out when it is received by the Committee.

BLM HOTSHOT WEBPAGE

The BLM Hotshots have created a webpage - <http://www.fire.blm.gov/ihc/index.htm>. On this web page you can find general information on the BLM IHC program, individual BLM IHC's and links to current BLM IHC job openings. If you look in the superintendent's toolbox you will find links to the equipment and radio improvement/deficiency report form which can be sent electronically the NIFC Equipment Development Unit. You will also find links to a plethora of information on where and how to get 0401 qualified classes both online and in the classroom.

PRESENTATION TO S-580 – ADVANCED FIRE USE APPLICATIONS

During the latest course of Advanced Fire Use Applications a representative from the Smokejumpers, Fire Use Modules and Interagency Hotshot Crews were invited to provide a panel presentation.

The course was held at NAFRI, March 21 – 25, 2005. The target audience was Fire Use Managers, Agency Administrators, Type II Incident Commanders, Fire Use Team Members, wilderness, fire, resource, and other staff with direct fire planning and implementation responsibilities.

The focus of the presentation was an overview of the capabilities of each type of resource. IHC qualifications of leadership within crews and experience of personnel was provided. Equipment coming with Hotshot crews when ordered was discussed. With land management agency focus on Fire Use, Hotshot Crews must be willing to adapt and provide skilled, positive and aggressive assistance on Fire Use Incidents.

PAUL GLEASON “LEAD BY EXAMPLE” AWARD

The National IHC Steering Committee selected Superintendent, Dennis Baldrige, to represent the hotshot community on the 5 member selection panel for the Paul Gleason “Lead by Example” Award. This panel met at the end of January to review and evaluate all nominations, selected 6 worthy candidates and drafted write-ups for each candidates award. The panel reviews and discusses all the nominations and comes to a consensus on selections.

These awards will be going to individuals or groups that were nominated by their peers because they have shown by their examples to be leaders in one of three areas; Mentoring and Teamwork, Motivation and Vision or Initiative and Innovation. All awards will be presented by the first week of June and the information will be posted on the fireleadership web site.

Dennis had this to say about his experience on the selection panel “It was an honor and privilege to sit on this panel and assist in making selections. I was amazed at the wide range of projects, training, and ideas that were being presented in these nominations. I encourage everyone in the hotshot community to take a look at the folks that received these awards and what they have shown and done for the wildland firefighters. Each of you should take the time to nominate someone you know that has been a mentor or stands out in their leadership skills. This is an opportunity for the groundpounders and diggers to recognize their peers and honor the path that Paul Gleason showed to us.”

CREW FIRELINE PRODUCTION RATES STUDY

George Broyles, from the San Dimas Technology Development Center (SDTDC), is planning on researching fire crew productivity rates for constructing fire line. The existing production tables in the *Fireline Handbook* were established in the 1960's, reportedly using southern California Hotshot Crews building line in brush (and with brushhooks). Anyway, the tables probably need to be updated.

At this time, George is applying for funding and has not yet secured it. If and when he does, he will be looking for hotshot crews to observe and measure on fires. George has agreed to use the National IHC Steering Committee as his contact to the hotshot world for his needs, so some of the crews will likely end up involved with this project, which is mainly a time and motion study. Currently, he is working on his research protocol and developing testing equipment, primarily lightweight GPS devices for crewmembers to wear, for the project. He is also developing the safety plan for the study crews and determining which hotshot crews he would like to work with. The crews selected (and the actual dispatches picked) to study would depend on sampling design, location, fuel types, fire situation, etc., as well as crew willingness to participate.

There will be 2 study crews of 2-3 people each to collect the field data while the hotshot crews are working. To minimize the impact on the hotshot crews, the study crews will be self-sufficient, qualified to be on the fireline and supervised by a crew boss (CRWB) qualified person. To this end, George may be looking for a couple of CRWB qualified individuals (injured hotshots, etc.) who would be willing to participate in this study.

If George cannot obtain the funding he applied for, he will pursue alternative funding. He will also use some of his current project funds to perform a small number of field tests to test his procedures and collect preliminary data for future funding requests. He will keep the Committee informed on the progress of his project and in turn we will get that information out to the crews. IHC Steering Committee contact is Marshall Brown of the Entiat IHC

HOTSHOT HISTORY

For a while now Dave Provencio, Fire Operations for the Intermountain Region, has been working on putting together a book of IHC histories. The steering committee has contacted Dave with our interest in helping him with his initiative to complete the book and help keep it updated. Future plans will be to put it on a web site for easy access. We would like to request that all IHC's please submit a crew history for this program. It does not need to be long and it doesn't matter how long the crew has been around. This should be a very interesting product and will hopefully capture all crew's histories in one easily accessible place. Send your information to Dave Provencio - dprovencio@fs.fed.us
Provide the following information:

- Crew name
- Crew logo
- A write up of the history of the crew including when it began, where or if it has changed duty station and anything else you would like.
- A complete list of past Superintendents including names and dates of service as the Superintendent.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP and P.O.C. ASSIGNMENTS

POSITION	NAME	PHONE	AGENCY	TERM	TENURE
Chair	Shane Greer	(719) 488-1242	USFS	2 year	2004
Deputy Chair	Marshall Brown	(509) 784-1016	USFS	2 year	2004
Supt – R1, R6	Marshall Brown	(509) 784-1016	USFS	4 year	2004
Supt – R2, R4	Shane Greer	(719) 488-1242	USFS	4 year	1999
Supt – R5, R10	Dennis Baldrige	(619) 445-5032	USFS	4 year	2000
Supt – R3, R8, R9	Rich Dolphin	(505) 630-3032	USFS	4 year	2004
Supt – BLM	Randy Anderson	(208) 233-2937	BLM	4 year	2005
Supt – BIA	Luther Clements	(541) 553-1146	BIA	4 year	2004
Supt – NPS	Brit Rosso	(559) 565-4342	NPS	4 year	2002
Fire Operations	Dave Provencio	(801) 625-5565	USFS	None	2004
Agency Administrator	Terri Marceron	(928) 214-2433	USFS	None	2004
NIFC – USFS	Jim Cook	(208) 387-5204	USFS	None	1999
NIFC – DOI	Kurt La Rue	(208) 387-5439	BLM	None	2002

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	PHONE	AGENCY	POINT OF CONTACT
SHWT	Paul Broyles	(208) 387-5226	NPS	Brit Rosso
IOSWT	Bob Leverton	(719) 553-1411	USFS	Rich Dolphin
IBPWT	Hallie Locklear	(208) 387-5583	FWS	Randy Anderson
National Operations Group	Alice Forbes	(208) 387-5605	USFS	Shane Greer
IC/AC	Mike Lohrey	(503) 808-2902	USFS	Dennis Baldrige
NFES	Kim Christensen	(208) 387-5400	BLM	Marshall Brown

NATIONAL IHC SURVEY AND END OF SEASON REPORT

The following is the 2004 end of season report. 80 crews respond to the survey this year. We would ask that all crews please respond after the 2005 season.

The National IHC Steering Committee had decided to build a nation-wide end of season report. That project is currently under way and will be posted when completed. There may be more information requested from the 2005 season to help with the end of season report and any information requests pertaining to that will be sent out separately.

	Questions	Average	Max	Min	Most Common	Total
1.	Total number of days the crew was available?	144	231	87	130	10384
2.	Total number of days committed to incidents? <i>(including travel)</i>	83	135	40	80	5959
3.	Total number of days in travel status?	19	53	5	21	1315
4.	Total number of 14 day incidents?	3	18	0	2	211
5.	Total number of extensions to 14 day incidents?	0	3	0	0	20
	TRANSPORTATION					
6.	Total number of days off?	23	49	14	23	775
	(a) In pay status?	8	33	0	6	574
	(b) Non- pay status?	19	49	2	14	1283
7.	Total miles driven? (total for all vehicles)	42267	116670	6570	36000	2958659
8.	How many vehicles do you have?	3	5	3	3	238
9.	Number of lost time vehicle accidents? (Vehicle down for repair)	0	4	0	0	6
10.	Number of lost time days for vehicle failure or repairs?	3	32	0	0	198

11.	How many times did your crew fly? (Count each leg as a flight)	2	6	0	2	42
	(a) Commercial	0	3	0	0	14
	(b) Charter	1	6	0	0	79
	TRAINING					
12.	In-house training completed (number of crew hours)	1233	7600	60	120	88761
	MISC.					
13.	Total number of funded personnel on crew?	20	24	7	20	1446
14.	How many personnel did you have for an average incident?	20	24	18	20	1450
15.	Total number of career appointments? (excluding apprentices)	8	20	0	7	563
16.	Number of apprentices on crew?	2	9	0	0	122
17.	Number of career positions that were vacant?	1	9	0	0	103
18.	Number of career employee's on the crews that are eligible for retirement in the next 5 years?	0	3	0	0	29
	PROJECTS					
19.	Prescribed acres treated?	4182	39100	0	100	154724
	(a) Mechanical?	114	1200	0	0	7735
	(b) Burned?	2444	38980	0	0	171102
20.	Number of days on project work? (list specific type: trails, fuels etc)	27	76	2	15	1856