



**FOREST SERVICE HANDBOOK
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (WO)
WASHINGTON, DC**

**FSH 5109.17 - FIRE AND AVIATION MANAGEMENT
QUALIFICATIONS HANDBOOK**

CHAPTER - ZERO CODE

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Associate Deputy Chief

Date Approved: 05/20/2005

Posting Instructions: Amendments are numbered consecutively by Handbook number and calendar year. Post by document; remove the entire document and replace it with this amendment. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. The last amendment to this Handbook was 5109.17-2004-7 to 5109.17_contents.

New Document	5109.17_zero_code	9 Pages
Superseded Document(s) by Issuance Number and Effective Date	5109.17_zero_code (Amendment 5109.17-2004-1, 04/28/2004)	7 Pages

Digest:

01 - 07 - Minor editing throughout this amendment.

03 - Lists the policy for the positions for which the Forest Service deviates from the PMS 310-1 Wildland Fire and Prescribed Fire Qualification Guide established by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

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Digest--Continued:

06 - Adds additional references approved by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, which contain qualifications and certification standards; recommends that Forest Fire Program Management Staff Officers, who serve as fire managers and certifying officials for Department of the Interior units, maintain a set of the references listed in section 06 that contain Interagency requirements requiring consultation prior to certifying Interior employees.

07 - Clarifies the composition and duties of the Fire Qualifications/Handbook working team and ad hoc committee in a new paragraph 5.

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02 - OBJECTIVE

To establish positions, qualifications, and certification requirements in fire and aviation management to ensure Forest Service personnel have the organization, training, and qualifications to carry out fire and aviation management policies and programs in a safe, cost-efficient manner, consistent with land and resource management objectives.

03 - POLICY

1. Forest Service employees shall comply with the qualifications requirements for the skills and knowledge unique to fire and aviation management and the Incident Command System (ICS), as established by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) in the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, Publication Management System (PMS) 310-1 (referenced in FSM 5108). The Forest Service deviates from the standards contained in the PMS 310-1 for the following positions:

- a. Procurement Unit Leader (PROC). Forest Service Procurement Unit Leaders must be qualified Contracting Officers; they shall not serve in other ICS positions and they shall not be mobilized into any other positions (FSH 6309.32). The prerequisite experience in the PMS 310-1 is Equipment Time Recorder (EQTR). Forest Service Contracting Officers and trainee Procurement Unit Leaders shall not accept assignments in the EQTR position.
 - b. Aircraft Base Radio Operator (ABRO). The Forest Service allows an alternative prerequisite experience of Radio Operator.
 - c. Deck Coordinator (DECK). The Forest Service does not require prerequisite experience of Takeoff and Landing Coordinator.
 - d. Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO). The Forest Service allows an alternative prerequisite experience of Strike Team Leader.
 - e. Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS). The Forest Service provides an alternative prerequisite experience of a combination of two strike team leader qualifications which must include either Strike Team Leader, Engine or Strike Team Leader, Crew.
2. Forest Service employees shall comply with any additional Forest Service requirements for additional training and qualifications as set forth in chapter 20 of this Handbook which determines all fire and aviation management qualifications for Forest Service employees.

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3. Forest Service employees shall accept qualifications for personnel currently employed and certified by State agencies or other non-Federal cooperators (such as, city and rural fire departments) who are hired as Administratively Determined (AD) personnel when participating in cooperative fire management efforts, provided they meet the minimum position requirements as specified in the NWCG Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualifications Systems Guide, PMS 310-1 (referenced in FSM 5108).

In instances where a non-Federal cooperator is retired and desires to be certified or “hosted” as an Administratively Determined (AD) employee by a National Forest, the Forest Fire Program Management Staff Officer, who serves as the Certifying Official, may determine additional training requirements, as outlined in this Handbook, prior to certification in the position and issuance of the Incident Qualifications Card.

04 - RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Washington Office Staff Directors, Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, Forest Supervisors, and District Rangers are responsible for assessing the training development needs of employees in their units and providing appropriate training opportunities.

2. Employees and their supervisors are ultimately responsible for their own development and should respond to training opportunities that will improve their performance.

3. Managers and employees have the responsibility to review direction and propose necessary revisions as part of the annual review and revision process for this Handbook (sec. 07).

05 - DEFINITIONS

For additional definitions of terms related to the Incident Command System (ICS), refer to FSM 5105 and the Glossary of Terms for the Fireline Handbook, NWCG 410-1 (FSH 5109.32a, sec. 05) <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/glossary/index.htm>. The following definitions supplement the glossary contained in Appendix D of the PMS 310-1.

Certification. The process in which a manager confirms that an individual has met all minimum qualifications and is qualified to perform in a specified position based on performance. The certification is documented on a data management system program and with the issuance of Form PMS 310-3, Qualification Card Incident Command System, to the qualified individual.

Decertification. The process of removing or reducing an individual’s incident management, fire suppression, fire use, and/or prescribed fire management position(s) qualification(s).

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Evaluator. A person who is certified in the position in which the trainee is being evaluated and who is assigned to evaluate a trainee's performance. Prior to evaluating a trainee's performance, the Evaluator must have served in a minimum of two assignments as fully qualified in the position.

Experience. Documented, satisfactory performance in specified ICS positions that is needed to qualify for another (usually higher level) position; in the case of a trainee, satisfactory performance in the position for which the trainee is to qualify.

Forest Fire Program Management Staff Officer. The Staff Officer who has been delegated Fire Program Management responsibility for a National Forest(s) fire program by the Forest Supervisor. This individual usually serves as the Certifying Official for the Incident Qualifications Card. This authority cannot be re-delegated to the District level, except where identified in this Handbook.

Grandfathering. A process of linking unrecognized or uncertified position experience and/or training together to establish a qualification. There is no "grandfathering" allowed for any position contained in this Handbook, FSH 5109.17.

Incident Command System (ICS). The combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, with responsibility for the management of assigned resources to effectively accomplish stated objectives pertaining to an incident.

Qualified Individual. An individual whose agency has documented that the individual has successfully completed all requirements for training, experience, and physical fitness for a specific ICS position.

Re-certification. Reissuance of Form PMS 310-3, Incident Qualifications Card, certifying that an individual has regained qualification for an ICS position.

Satisfactory Performance. Performance by an individual that meets or exceeds the written standards for a specific ICS position as evaluated by the individual's incident or agency supervisor.

Skill Position. A position that requires specific skills and knowledge to perform on a wildland fire incident. Examples include Firefighter, Fire Behavior Analyst, Single Resource Boss, Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, or Ignition Specialist.

Subject Matter Expert. A person who has a thorough technical knowledge and recent field experience in performing and/or supervising the task in question. A person generally recognized among working associates as being very competent at performing the task(s).

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Technical Specialist. A person having unique skills performed in an everyday job that is needed to support an incident operation. Examples include Contracting Officer, Environmental Specialist, Electrician, and Meteorologist.

Trainer/Coach. A qualified individual who provides instruction to a trainee in the classroom, on the job, or on an incident. A Trainer/Coach must be currently qualified in the position being observed and must have successfully performed in a minimum of two assignments in the position for which the Trainer/Coach is training others.

Training Specialist. A person who identifies incident evaluation opportunities for trainees and ensures that the assignment is properly documented. On initial attack and extended attack incidents the Training Specialist's duties would be performed by unit personnel.

06 - REFERENCES

Forest Fire Program Management Staff Officers, who also serve as fire managers and certifying officials for Department of the Interior units should maintain a library of the following interagency guides as reference for Interior qualifications and certification standards. For additional information, consult the references listed in FSM 5108, FSM 5706, and the following:

1. Forest Service World Wide Web/Internet Fire website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire>.
2. Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide, National Fire Equipment System (NFES) 1885.
3. Interagency Air Tactical Group Supervisor Guide, NFES 1393.
4. Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, PMS 901-1.
5. Fireline Handbook, PMS 410-1.
6. Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide NFES 1080.
7. Interagency Single Engine Air Tanker Operations Guide, NFES 1844.
8. Interagency Helicopter Rappel Guide.
9. Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations.
10. Interagency Aviation Training Guide.

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11. Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide.
12. Interagency Airtanker Base Operations Guide.
13. Incident Business Advisor Guide, PMS 314.

07 - REVIEW AND REVISION

To maintain the currency of FSH 5109.17, Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook, the Director, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office, requires an annual review and revision of the direction in this Handbook using the following procedures:

1. The Director of Fire and Aviation Management, Washington Office, shall issue an annual call letter by September 1 to field units and Washington Office Staffs requesting their review of this Handbook and submission of responses. Comments and proposed revisions are due October 1.
2. Field units should submit proposed revisions to their respective Regional Fire Training Officers.
3. The Regional Fire Training Officers shall consolidate responses for their Regions and forward them to the Branch Chief for Fire Training, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office or the representative designated in the call letter.
4. The Branch Chief for Fire Training, Fire and Aviation Management Staff, Washington Office, shall annually assemble a working team to review the consolidated comments submitted by field units and Washington Office Staff Units; consult with subject matter experts and Regional Fire Training Officers as appropriate; and determine the need for revision.
5. The working team is appointed by the Branch Chief for Fire Training.
 - a. The Fire Qualifications/Handbook working team should be composed of the following:
 - (1) A Partnership Council Representative.
 - (2) A Forest Service Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) Account Manager.
 - (3) Selected Regional Fire Training Officers.
 - (4) Selected, appropriate subject matter experts (for example, Fuels Specialists or Helicopter Operations Specialists).

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b. The working team members will serve as:

(1) Contacts representing the Branch Chief for Fire Training.

(2) Subject matter experts in the Incident Command System sections, including support and technical specialists.

c. A listing of the Fire Qualifications/Handbook working team representatives and contact phone numbers, along with the ICS sections they represent, can be found on the National Training Information Communications System (TICS) World Wide Web/Internet: <http://www.nationalfiretraining.net>.