

NORTHERN ROCKIES COORDINATING GROUP
FIRE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Feb 27-28, 2008

DNRC Southwest Area Land Office, Missoula

In Attendance:

Pam Okon: MT-DNRC, Fire Business Tech Specialist and Committee Chair.
Biddy Simet, Glacier Park, Fire Program Asst. NWMT Zone Rep, Vice chair
Eric Heyn: Resource Forester, Kootenai NF, Logistics Rep.
Ken Homik: IDL, North Idaho Zone Rep
Jeanne Robertson: Kootenai NF, Contracting Tech Spec
Ann Vogt: BLM, Equipment Tech Spec
Debby Wesselius, NR Buying Team Coordinator
Terry Vaughn, MT-DNRC, Anaconda, SWMT Zone Rep
Joyce Anderson, LNF Budget Officer, Central MT Zone Rep
Jane Haker, R-1 Incident Business Specialist, USFS
Scott Waldron, Fire Chief, Frenchtown, Local Government Rep.
Gaylen Weates, Bozeman Dispatch Center Manager, South Central Zone Rep
Lily Huskey, USFS, ND Zone Rep
Peg Geiger, BLM MT State Office Purchasing Agent, Eastern MT Zone Rep
Tony Lubke, Bitterroot NF Dispatch, Dispatch Rep
Matt Hedrick, MT-DNRC Fire Business Mngt Specialist

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Reviewed the charter and updated the committee membership list and individual roles.
Discussed the importance of disseminating information to our zones per established protocols from each zone board. .

Action Item: Zone reps should determine the best way to disseminate information through their zone. We'll discuss and put into the notes at our next meeting.

Training:

Procurement Training: Jeanne worked with NPI to put together a course that would last 3 days for \$349 per student (based on 20, will go down if more than 20). Potential Dates: May 13-14 in Missoula. Agenda topics include an overview of incident procurement procedures and issues with a potential agenda handed out to the group. We need to get state (MT-ID) purchasing information to the NPI folks to incorporate into the course.

The audience would be beginners who would work on buying teams. This would be good for folks who already have purchase authority but limited exposure to incident procurement.

Action Items: Business Committee needs to help find folks to attend this training to be able to assist with local support. Go back to our agencies to look for individuals who may be interested in participating on Buying Teams.

Buying Team Update: Debby

Region 1 does not have sufficient folks to host a national team this year. Direction/requests went out to the zone leads and we're waiting for responses. This is an interagency issue. All agencies should try to supply folks. With fewer trainees in the pipeline, there are fewer people to complete all of the work. Position funding is still an issue for participation.

Finance/Logistics Workshop:

There is a national logistics workshop in March in Reno this year. Two area reps will attend and will bring information back.

Suggestion: In lieu of a local Finance/Logistics Workshop we will request that someone at the IMT meeting breakouts take detailed notes that we can disseminate to everyone. Jane will contact Kathy Elzig to arrange this.

Decision: No workshop this year. Will go with IMT notes and will see how it works for this year, then make a determination for next year.

I-Suite:

Jane showed the Northern Rockies I-Suite Course list. Joyce developed and piloted an "I-Suite for Locals" abbreviated course and presented it in Billings and Great Falls, Lily sponsored one in North Dakota. When we get this course completed and working well, we'll disseminate it to other regions who may need to do something similar. Region 2, 3 and 4 are interested.

IBA:

Jane and Frank put together the skill base required for IBAs and hard copy was routed. IBA training course is tentatively scheduled for the first week of May. Jane will send out a note with the potential dates so we can do a zone sensing of folks who may be interested. Each agency should review the skill-base material for their agencies and respond back to Jane.

Agency Administrators Meeting / IMT Meetings:

NRCG is sponsoring an Agency Administrator's workshop April 10-11 noon-noon at Fairmont Hot Springs. Topics include: Long durations plans, structure protection, and cost-share agreements. Pam and Jane are leads for Cost-share agreements to discuss the different cost-share methodologies, instruments, importance and decision documentation. Agency-specific incident business updates need to be forwarded to Pam or Jane prior to this meeting. General Session of IMT is April 8, while the whole meeting is April 7-9, with more meeting on 10. IMT is in Garden Hilton Inn in Missoula.

Dispatcher's Workshop

In Butte March 11-13 with business committee on agenda March 12 (Pam/Jane and Debbie Godfrey for IDL). Jane will send out a message containing all upcoming meetings and workshops so that all agencies can contribute any updates or changes to incident business guidelines that we'd like presented.

Electronic Delivery of finance training for Operations or other interested folks:

No update on this matter.

For next year we can look at the NRTC calendar and see what courses are planned that have a finance component and see who they have lined up for instructors. Maybe we can get more involved with current information into the courses.

We still need to determine what the ops folks need and what's the best way to develop it. Lily will bring this forward to the training committee. We need to develop a pool of folks (like C.O.s) who can discuss the Best Value contract information. They need to be currently involved in fire so they are presenting the most current information.

Equipment Inspection Workshop/CATS Training

In Billings, May 6-7 EQPI workshop, May 7-8 is the CATS workshop. CATS is changing to CANR: Contract Administrator, Northern Rockies. In Missoula May 20-21 for EQPI, with May 21-22 CANR workshop. Debby Wesselius is planning to instruct the contracting material for both Billings and Missoula. Ann will get a workshop agenda to Pam.

Other Items:

A new course will be presented April 14-18 in Helena: a Heavy Equipment Class geared to Ops and anyone who needs to know about equipment. They plan to go in the field and work with the equipment including a night shift. Will assist with qualifying for DOZB. Cost is \$100 for the class. The NRCG website has information on this course.

2008 Solicitations: Debby Wesselius

Debby presented a spreadsheet on the current status of 2008 solicitations

SOPs for Unoperated Equipment: Joyce

Joyce used the data in I-Suite to set up an SOP chart for correct entry. All I-Suite reports are based on the KIND code. For USFS accruals, the KIND code and Agency inputs need to be accurate for the accrual default to be correct.

Vehicles: Local units may want to set up a small "ground support" to track rental vehicles.

AGENCY: This is the I-Suite code that feeds to the accruals. Very important to get this right. All contracts should be PVT.

All private equipment/supplies should be inspected in some format pre and post, and documented.

Decision: Include corrected copy as an Exhibit in Chapter 20.

Suggestion: Use I-Suite KINDs to update our Chapter 20 charts for equipment. Jane will do this when she does the formatting.

Checklist Items: Joyce is looking for feedback on the Audit Checklist and Transition Checklist. All Committee members will review her items and send her feedback by the end of next week.

Zero Code: Jane

Discussed changes. Ken Homik change cell phone number to: 208-755-2924.

Web pages: will be updated to make them more efficient. Move some of the links that reference DOT/Haz Mat and other specifics to Chapter 20 near the equipment that it would assist.

Add business practices or fire web page for DNRC along with the Forest Service business practices web site. Will expand the NRCG and NWCG website links to take people directly to the business practices sites.

Chapter 10:

Update CATS to CANR, update the exception positions, update DNRC EFF rates.

Chapter 20:

Excavators with Thumb: Types have changed. Jeanne will get with Kevin Erickson to determine rates for the revised classes.

Rental Vehicles: triangles and 5BC Fire extinguisher: not required in the DNRC solicitation.

Buses: Add; No bus shall be released or reassigned without a completed Use Invoice (OF-286).

Transports: Discussion and rewording of EERAs to utilize transports on incident when they arrive as part of a Best Value contract with a piece of heavy equipment.

Fuel Tenders: R4 went to credit cards for fuel vendors. All fuel vendors must be able to handle credit cards in the field, including government cards. It went well last year. R1 will move toward that. All vehicles should have credit cards. Unoperated equipment for which the government is responsible for providing supplies, can obtain fuel on a government procurement card. A system will need to be set up between ground support and finance to provide payment to the vendor on a regular basis. We would need to get the word out to all vendors that they would need to have credit cards in order to purchase their fuel from the fuel vendors.

Decision: For 2008 have dual language: The preferred method of hire is for vendors to have the capability to accept field credit cards. But in 2009, the only method of hire will be for fuel vendors to have credit card capability.

Discussion of Type 1 and Type 2 engines: Committee agreed to revisit their placement in Chapter 20 for the 2009 edition.

Chapter 80:

Joyce created a new spreadsheet that's good for 5 days and provides formulas to make for quick calculation. Her revised spreadsheet will be our Chapter 80 supplement.

No changes for Chapters 30, 40, 60, 70 and 90.

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Reviewed Chapter 20 with Kevin Erickson

Discussed operated and unoperated equipment related to damage and claims.

Discussed rate validation: Need one person from Operations and one person from Equipment committee to join two people on the Business Committee to work together to validate our rates and anchor back to a verifiable source for rates in 2009. Ann will take this back to Equipment, Bidy will take this back to Operations. Pam Geiger and Frank Priete will work on the subcommittee from Business Committee.

Chapter 50:

Reviewed Chapter 50 changes with Matt Hedrick.

Review of Issues and FAQs:

Went through all of the issues and decided which are valid FAQs that could be edited for posting to a website.

Discussion of S# or E# selection. There is direction in the MOB guide but it needs to be clarified for the dispatch and finance communities.

Chapter Revisions:

All Chapters should be completed and published by May 1. Chapter 20 should be the priority to be completed first, others can follow.

Cost Share Methodologies:

A briefing paper was sent around for review. When templates are developed we could put together a supplement for Chapter 80. We will also create a template/document for the decision making process. We can document how decisions were derived for later review and explanation. Need to review, "Items to Consider When Negotiating a Cost Share Agreement."

Discussion of the methodologies should be conducted preseason using tabletops and scenarios, but we must be aware that the situations may change as fires evolve. It would be valuable to give direction to the IMTs as fires develop so that Costs can be calculated appropriately.

Use of I-Suite will be very important and uploads to the data repository will be critical.

APMC:

APMC has been abused in the past so it's getting a fresh look. An NRCG Issue Paper was put together. DNRC is also reconsidering the use and application of APMC.

Two options:

- A: Limit APMC to specific instances such as “camp crud.” All first aid should be handled by the IMS in camp. If an employee needs more care, use OWCP.
- B. Eliminate the use of APMC in the Northern Rockies. If an employee must see a doctor, then it is a workers’ comp claim.

Comments:

- A CA-1 or CA-2 (as appropriate) should be filled out for every visit to a medical facility.
- Don’t have the people in the field to judge whether illnesses/injuries are fire-related.
- When medical facilities pay for “yellow-shirts” without keeping accurate records, we may be accidentally paying for contractors/operators.
- We’re essentially paying twice when we use APMC because we cover Workers’ Comp insurance, which we’re not using, then we pay the medical bills directly.
- Part of the problem is that local units (all agencies) have not set up local procedures with medical facilities. But facilities have a lot of turnover so even if we did establish procedures, they may get lost or forgotten.
- When OWCP is used, employees have the choice of medical facilities, but with APMC they are required to accept care from the established clinic.
- Due to a shortage of people in administration in home units and even on IMTs, we’re better off anchoring back to solid regulations that allow for OWCP support.
- We’ll be left with cleaner finance packages and fewer medical claims to process and pay after the incidents end.

Recommendation passed by vote: For 2008, Northern Rockies approach to medical care outside of camp will be OWCP so CA-1 or CA-2 and CA-16 forms will be required for all medical treatment. Anything that needs treatment at a medical facility will be OWCP.

Will be presented to the NRCG BOD for acceptance.

If approved by the BOD, it needs to be presented to teams at their inbriefing so they all hear it. It also needs to go in Operating Guidelines for each unit.

Other Topics:

EERAs: State EERAs need to be co-signed by a federal contracting officer in order to be used on a federal incident and paid for by a federal agency.

Shift Length: The “16-hour shift” has become nearly a standard nationally. A time analysis was conducted and it was determined that between 14.5 and 15.5 is now average (an upward creep from an average of 12-14 in the past). If we have folks working 16 hours, they are not really getting 8 hours of rest when eating and showering is considered. In addition, contracts are based on 14 hour average days but they’re being asked to work consistently 16 hours. IAPs are based on 12 hour shifts but resources were working up to 16 hours. The upward creep has become a huge issue and we should expect direction soon.

AD / EFF Guidelines:

Jane asked the NRCC to run a UTF report for the Northern Rockies region to see what positions were really short this year, plus a report to see who/how many people were qualified in those

positions. The analysis was hard to determine since the numbers are skewed due to multiple qualifications.

Do we want to add any finance positions to the shortage list? Debby suggested Buying Team Leaders. (Retired C.O.s can be rehired as A.D.s and have their warrants reinstated).

Discussed the draft guidelines and suggested some changes. Jane will complete the changes then take them forward to the NRCG BOD for adoption

Make the revised guidelines part of Chapter 10 supplements.

For shortage categories:

Add SOF2, HELM, DOZB, Move HRSP to Plans, Add CANR and COMP, EDSO, BUYL and IBA1 and IBA2.

Incident Sign Ordering and Payment Protocols:

Draft protocols have been developed and have been routed for review. Review and get back to Jane with comments.

Interagency Incident Business Audit Guidelines:

Need to have audit standards in place prior to interagency billing. We should build audit standards into our Operating Plans. This was a task issued by the NRCG based on requirements from MT Legislature for interagency billing. So if we have an understanding of what our (collectively among all agencies) audit practices are, we can develop standards that can be part of our Operating Plans. One item that is not audited at ASC is personnel pay.

Next meetings:

Conference Call: May or June to follow up on these items.

Missoula meeting: potentially October 28-29.

Dates are flexible due to confirmation of Equipment Committee meeting (possibly the same week).