



INCIDENT BUSINESS PRACTICES WORKING TEAM

May 11, 2004

To: Jim Stires, Chair, NWCG (Outgoing)
Kirk Rowdabaugh, Chair, NWCG (Incoming)

From: Hallie Locklear, Chair, Incident Business Practices Working Team

Subject: Cost Management Issues

The NWCG Incident Business Practices Working Team (IBPWT) hosted a national Incident Business Workshop in February 2004. One focus of the workshop was Cost Accountability. The breakout groups identified a number of issues that the IBPWT felt that, if timely communicated to agencies, geographic areas, IMT's and down to the field office/unit level, could result in improved incident cost management for the 2004 season.

Did you know....

- **That replacement of government property items on fires is not handled consistently and oftentimes the incident is incorrectly charged for replacement?**
Some organized crews routinely arrive at an incident and provide the Incident Management Team with a laundry list of items that need to be replaced. The home unit originally provided these items through use of preparedness funds and replacement due to normal wear and tear should be accomplished using home unit funds, not incident funds. If the government property item was damaged on the incident due to a specific event, e.g, wind event destroys tent, the incident could, upon receipt of required documentation and proof of damage, authorize replacement using the Incident Replacement Requisition. Cache items could be replaced if available at the incident; replacement of non standard items is the responsibility of the home unit. The 2004 Interagency Incident Business Management, Chapter 30, Section 35 addresses government property/equipment damage/replacement.
- **That some Incident Management Teams have adjudicated personal property/loss damage claims?** Home units are responsible for processing personal property loss/damage claims. Only specific individuals have the authority to settle claims. Incident Management Teams do not have the authority to approve personal property claims or authorize expenditure of funds to replace items. The IIBMH Chapter 70 addresses personal property loss/damage claims.

- **Not all incident personnel and not all home units are aware that charges to an incident must be supported by a resource order?** This results in charges to an incident for items not ordered or approved by the incident agency, and impedes effective cost management. The incident agency is responsible to specifically order items necessary for the resource to accomplish position duties.

For example, can the incident agency provide a cell phone and computer access?
Or should the Incident Business Advisor bring those items from the home unit?
If the resource is ordered with cell phone, then the home unit can charge the incident for incident related costs; if not ordered, the home unit must use home unit funds.

The IIBMH, Chapter 10, Section 11.2 addresses providing casualties with incident ordered electronic devices; Chapter 20, Section 24 addresses documentation of incident acquisitions, and Chapter 30, Section 30.04 addresses the use of home unit electronic devices on incident.

- **That some incident agency administrators are not aware that they should review and approve Incident Management Team Mobilization Check List?** Agency administrators should be personally involved in order to provide effective oversight. IMTs establish a Mobilization Check List to facilitate their mobilization and initial incident response. However, some Mobilization Check List items may not be necessary depending on the size, complexity, type or location of the incident.

For example, is a Fire Behavior Analyst necessary for a non-fire incident, e.g., hurricane, flood? If the incident command post will operate out of a school, is the pre-order for a large volume of plywood necessary?

Some incident agencies accept the Mobilization Check List at face value and don't understand their role in the approval process. Review of the check lists and a determination of appropriateness to the specific incident will result in cost savings to the incident.

Your assistance in communicating this to the federal fire agencies, geographic areas, IMT's and down to the field office/unit level prior to the 2004 fire season is greatly appreciated.

/s/ Hallie Locklear

Hallie Locklear, Chair IBPWT

cc: Chair, IOSWT
Chair, SHWT
Chair, IRMWT
Chair, FEWT