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Subject: Southern Area Advanced Fire and Aviation Academy Policy

To: Southern Area Advanced Fire and Aviation Academy Students, Instructors, and Staff

Welcome to the 3rd annual Southern Area Advanced Fire and Aviation Training Academy in Chattanooga, TN. The purpose of the academy is to provide an efficient delivery of upper level fire training in a two-week academy format. This effort consolidates regional training to avoid redundancy and fragmented efforts that historically presented limited individual courses throughout the year in multiple locations.

This academy is a nationally significant innovative effort responsive to building upper level fire staffing capacity and capability. This is consistent with the USDA Forest Service, Southern Region's priority focus on training tied to our regional succession planning efforts in fire management. The prime objective is to assure continuity of leadership in fire, aviation and all hazard management through focus on required training to meet personnel certifications and qualifications. The country depends on a professionally trained and skilled firefighting workforce standing ready to respond at all times; especially during times of catastrophic wildfire and all-hazard incidents.

This Regional interagency effort has been coordinated with several state and interagency fire academies which offer lower level prerequisite courses and provides logical sequencing of courses to prepare personnel for advanced training levels. Geographic interagency training coordinators collaborated to identify skill shortages and respective advanced training courses to be offered. This assists in avoiding duplication of training and aids in eliminating identified skill gaps. The courses included in this academy have been advertised interagency and nationwide.

My intent as Incident Commander is to meet our training objective with a high degree of professionalism. I do expect participants to **"remember who you are and who you represent"** as a guest in Chattanooga and its hosting facilities. I expect you to work at maintaining the credibility of this event and ask that you take time to review the enclosed policy statements.

On behalf of the Incident Management Team have a great stay, improve your craft, network, and build relationships!

*/s/Stephen P. Weaver*

STEPHEN P. WEAVER  
Incident Commander  
Southern Area Advanced Fire and Aviation Academy

Enclosure (1)



## Southern Area Advanced Fire and Aviation Academy Policy

Academy policy protects the effectiveness of the academy course delivery and the safety of all who participate –students, instructors and staff. The policy is monitored and enforced by the Incident Commander and delegated staff –allowing instructors the opportunity to focus completely on their teaching.

### **Cancellation of Nomination**

A request to cancel a nomination will not be accepted from the employee. The academy staff confirms nominations based on supervisor and/or training officer recommendations and approval. Therefore, only the employee's supervisor or unit training officer can request a cancellation. A cancellation request must be submitted via email prior to the scheduled training dates to [r8\\_sacg\\_training@fs.fed.us](mailto:r8_sacg_training@fs.fed.us) and should include the students name, unit, the course title and dates, and reason for cancelling. Students not cancelled properly or “no shows,” regardless of tuition exemption status, are subject to a one week tuition charge of \$400.

### **Certificates**

Certificates are issued to students who complete all required prework assignments, stay for the duration of the session, and successfully pass any course tests and assessments. Special arrangements will not be made to test students early for student convenience (travel, conflicting work assignments, etc.).

### **Conduct**

Students, staff and instructors are expected to act and dress professionally at all times. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior, ethics and conduct violations, or disregard for safety will be reported to the employee's home unit/employer and may result in demobilization. Report any conduct issues to the academy staff.

The Advanced Academy is an education event—all classroom behavior should promote the learning environment. Students and instructors should not use computers or cell phones in the classroom for the purpose of personal or other work business. Discussions not related to training and benefit of the learning environment should be taken outside of the classroom.

### **Requests for Substitutions**

A supervisor is allowed to send a qualified substitute for a confirmed student. The request must include all appropriate nomination paperwork and should be received prior to the course dates. All substitution requests are subject to the new employee's ability to meet any pretesting/prework requirements. Some courses may have established alternate lists and employees on these lists will have priority placement.

### **Nonscheduled Employees**

All employees must be registered in advance of the academy dates. Participants that show up at the academy without enrollment confirmation and are not in alternate status will be directed back to their home unit and the unit manager will be notified.

### **Request to Alter a Confirmed Course Schedule**

Any requests to change confirmed courses on a student's schedule must be in writing from the employee's supervisor or unit training officer and are subject to course prerequisite

recommendations and requirements. Academy staff **will not change** an employee's schedule at the training event without appropriate written approval and concurrence from the supervisor or training officer. Please note the time involved with changing a schedule at the main campus may delay an employee's entrance to the course.

### **Course Attendance**

Students enrolled in a course **must** attend the duration. Students are not allowed to "sit in" on a portion of a course as it is disruptive to both the instructor and other students. Students may not leave a class early (i.e., travel arrangements, conflicting work assignments, etc.) as these should be considered prior to enrolling in the course. Emergency situations should be addressed to the Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief – **instructors are not allowed to make decisions on early departures regardless of the reason.**

Students should respect instructor timelines for breaks and lunch by returning on time. Students may not request the instructor change published classroom hours as they do not have the authority to make that decision. There are many courses being offered at the academy and classroom hours are standardized for administrative and logistical support, as well as safety issues.

### **Nominations – Double Booking**

Nominations received for an employee for multiple courses with conflicting schedule dates will be scheduled by academy staff based on course availability and may not reflect the student's preference. Please reference Course Attendance.

### **Tuition**

Academy Sponsors (Forest Service, State, and Fish and Wildlife Service (R4)Attendees in the Southern Area - No tuition will be charged to attend the academy; however, travel and per diem expenses for all participants are the responsibility of the sending unit.

All Other Agencies and Out-of-Area Attendees - A \$400 tuition fee will be assessed (includes any portion of a week's training), per week. An SF182 complete with appropriate supervisor's signature (along with completed NWCG nomination) must be submitted by the nomination deadline of **March 18, 2011** to [r8\\_sacg\\_training@fs.fed.us](mailto:r8_sacg_training@fs.fed.us) or via hardcopy addressed to: Debra Burgos, USDA - Forest Service, 1720 Peachtree Road, NW, Suite 710N, Atlanta, Georgia 30309. NWCG nominations received without a complete SF182 will not be considered for enrollment. All SF182's must be received **prior** to attending the academy (**affected students without an SF182 will not be allowed into class**).