



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

February 6, 2004

Memorandum

To: NWCG Members; Chairs- Working Teams and Advisory Groups

From: Chair, NWCG /s/ J L Stires

Subject: National Incident Operations Driving Standards

This memo revises the 02/26/03 NWCG interagency standards concerning emergency hours of driving, hereinafter referred to as "incident operations driving".

Further in-depth research and legal consultation has resulted in a determination that state and federal fire agencies are exempted from several requirements under Department of Transportation 49 CFR (CDL requirements). These include hours of service (duty day hours) and record of duty status (log book). These exemptions intentionally provide fire agencies the latitude for more flexibility within incident operations driving than we originally interpreted and subsequently reflected in the 02/26/03 standards.

These revised driving standards set forth limitations consistent with the new 02/06/04 NWCG work/rest standards, while allowing significantly improved operational functionality over the earlier standards. Notably, this revised standard eliminates earlier duty day hour differences between CDL and non-CDL engine operators, which resulted in serious operational difficulties for the field. These incident operations driving standards have already been adopted as policy through the "Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations 2004" Handbook by federal signatory agencies.

These new driving standards will provide improved incident operations within the interagency wildland fire community. Please insure that this information is made available to your fire management personnel.

Cc: Chairs, Geographic Area Coordinating Groups

Attachment

Incident Operations Driving

These standards address driving by personnel actively engaged in wildland fire or all-risk response activities, including driving while assigned to a specific incident or during initial attack fire response (includes time required to control the fire and travel to a rest location). In the absence of more restrictive agency policy, these guidelines will be followed during mobilization and demobilization as well. Individual agency driving policies shall be consulted for all other non-incident driving.

1. Agency resources assigned to an incident or engaged in initial attack fire response will adhere to the current agency work/rest policy for determining length of duty day.
2. No driver will drive more than 10 hours (behind the wheel) within any duty-day.
3. Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty-day limitation provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of 10 hours.
4. A driver shall drive only if they have had at least 8 consecutive hours off duty before beginning a shift.

Exception: Exception to the minimum off-duty hour requirement is allowed when **essential** to:

- a) accomplish **immediate** and **critical** suppression objectives, or
 - b) address **immediate** and **critical** firefighter or public safety issues.
5. As stated in the current agency work/rest policy, documentation of mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue is required for drivers who exceed 16 hour work shifts. This is required regardless of whether the driver was still compliant with the 10 hour individual (behind the wheel) driving time limitations.