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Route To:

Subject: Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Implementation Update and Clarifications, and Forest Service Crosswalk

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and Deputy Chiefs

The Forest Service continues its commitment to the successful implementation of Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) and all of the crosswalk positions. On March 11, 2005 a letter and attachment was issued clarifying the updated Forest Service crosswalk positions associated with IFPM. The letter also explained that some crosswalk position implementation had been delayed (grayed out) and that a strategy would be developed to address the delayed positions. As promised, the Washington Office completed an analysis to determine the agency's ability to successfully incorporate grayed out positions. Implementation of the grayed out positions and several other program updates are listed below. Previously grayed out positions established per this letter are not covered as part of the Interagency implementation of IFPM and can be referred to as Forest Service - Fire Program Management (FS-FPM).

There are four categories associated with IFPM that Forest Service employees should be aware of. They are:

1. The 14 key interagency standard positions identified on October 1, 2004.

- The Forest Service is actively implementing these Interagency standards and making adjustments to these standards when the National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) approves suggested changes from the IFPM Implementation Team and Federal Fire Training Task Group.

2. The Forest Service Crosswalk positions that were not delayed in 2005.

- These crosswalk positions included those that shared sufficient common duties to be included in Standard Position Descriptions for Unit Fire Managers, Wildland Fire Operations Specialists, Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist, and Prevention and Mitigation Specialist at the Unit level. Unit is defined by the Forest Service as a complete forest or zone (multiple forests). Units are currently implementing these standard positions and they are shown in the attachment to this letter.

3. The "grayed out" positions which were identified in the 2005 Forest Service Crosswalk; referred to as FS-FPM.

- Several of the positions are specific to the fourth tier or "sub-unit" that is unique to the Forest Service and are not specifically addressed in Interagency standards. Others grayed out positions are subordinate to those listed in the 14 "Key" IFPM positions. Since sub-unit and subordinate positions are not covered in IFPM, the Forest Service is implementing these positions as an agency addendum referred to as Forest Service - Fire Program Management (FS-FPM). The positions are shown in the attached addendum to this letter and will be added to FS-FPM based on the time lines described later in this letter.

4. The Forest Assistant Fire Management Officer (FAFMO).

- The FAFMO was one of the Wildland Fire Operations Specialist positions that were not grayed out in the 2005 Forest Service Crosswalk. It has been determined by FS IFPM Subject Matter Experts that the primary competencies for the FAFMO position should be those of the Unit Fire



Program Manager. This change should not significantly impact the field. However, FAFMO incumbents will now have until the FS-FPM designated completion date (listed below) to attain full Minimum Qualification Standards and 401 Fire Management Specialist supplemental standards.

The following implementation direction and attached US Forest Service Standard Position Description Crosswalk Addendum (FS-FPM) are effective per the time frames identified in this letter. Some clarifications of the IFPM process have also been included below.

New IFPM Direction

- The “US Forest Service Standard Position Description Crosswalk Addendum” (see attachment) now supplements Appendix C “Position Identification” of the IFPM Qualifications Standards and Guide. Previously grayed out “Sub-Unit” (i.e., District) positions are part of this addendum but are identified as FS-FPM standard positions and not IFPM standard positions.
- The grayed out positions of the 2005 crosswalk were reviewed. It was determined by Fire and Aviation Management that all FS-FPM (grayed-out) positions, with the exception of those specific only to the smokejumper organization, will be implemented on October 1, 2008. Where smokejumper positions are not incorporated in other categories such as Senior Firefighter they will remain on hold until organizational issues can be addressed.
- Once implemented (October 1, 2008), all FS-FPM position incumbents have until October 1, 2013 to meet position competencies and positive education (if applicable).
- As with the 14 Key IFPM positions, the agency is obligated to assist incumbents in meeting all FS-FPM position standards within five years of implementation.
- The training and competencies for all previously grayed out positions (now labeled FS-FPM) have been evaluated and potentially adjusted to achieve a balanced transition from sub-unit or subordinate positions to the next higher level. A number of FS-FPM positions in the addendum require that the incumbent meet at least 2 of the 3 “NWCG Minimum Qualifications” listed for each position at the corresponding complexity level. In the cases where one of the three options includes alternative operations positions, qualification for both operations positions does not meet the 2 of 3 NWCG Minimum Qualifications requirement. They would also have to meet designated Command or Fire Use position qualifications.

Note: The home or hiring unit determines which 2 NWCG Qualifications are required; however, these qualifications must be established initially. Once the NWCG minimum requirements have been established, they may not be altered unless sufficient position requirements have changed. The requirements are based on the needs of the position; not the employee encumbering the position.

Professional 0401 Series Clarifications

- Sub-Unit FMO positions are not part of IFPM. They are part of FS-FPM and may be filled at the GS-462 or GS-401 level based on the appropriate classification of duties.
- Per NFAEB approval, only positions identified in IFPM as being solely 401 (at or above the GS-11 grade level) may be advertised dually (462 and 401) through September 30, 2009. Sub-Unit FMOs are FS-FPM positions and may only be advertised as a GS-462 or a GS-401 but not both.
Note: Once the Sub-Unit FMO position series (GS-462 or GS-401) has been determined it may not be altered in future advertisements unless sufficient position requirements have changed. The series is based on the needs of the position; not the employee encumbering the position.
- The new Merit Promotion Plan has been signed and employees in the following IFPM positions can be converted from GS-462 to GS-401 (if they meet the 401 qualifications).
 - Region Fire Management Officer

- Forest Fire Management Officer
- Wildland Fire Operations Specialist (Forest level only - GS-11 and above)
- Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist (Forest level only - GS-11 and above)
- Prevention and Education Specialist (Forest level only - GS-11 and above)
- Center Fire Manager (GS-11 and above)

Like others in IFPM positions, they have until 10/01/2009 to meet the rest of the NWCG training and position standards.

Note: Information on any future IFPM/crosswalk Merit Promotion conversions will be widely distributed.

- Financial support of those pursuing 401 position education standards should be focused on a land management curriculum.

Unit/Sub-Unit Options

- In instances where complexity is a measurement of position standards, Sub-Unit (i.e., District) complexity may differ from that of the Unit (i.e., Forest). In most instances, Sub-Unit complexity will be the same or lower than the unit. In rare circumstances when a Sub-Unit is the primary driver of complexity, it may be higher in complexity than the Unit. Regional Offices should take the lead in working with forests and zones to determine consistent Sub-Unit complexity.
- Prioritization for required training and qualification assignments should be balanced between incident position needs and unit staffing needs. Local, Regional and Agency needs should be evaluated along with historical availability and the quality of the individual's performance.

General Clarifications

- Position inclusion in IFPM or FS-FPM does not justify a change in grade. Those determinations are still tied to classification based on the duties of the position which have already accounted for the complexity of the sub-unit or unit.
- A number of "NWCG Minimum Qualifications" standards require "currency." Please keep in mind that PMS 310-1 "Wildfire Qualification System Guide" defines "currency" as follows: "For the positions identified in this guide, the maximum time allowed for maintaining currency is three (3) years for air operations and dispatch positions and five (5) years for all others.

Currency for a position can be maintained by meeting any of the following requirements:

2. By successful performance in a position identified in this guide as Other Position Assignments That Will Maintain Currency.
3. By successful performance in a higher position(s) for which that position is a prerequisite, providing the individual was previously qualified in that position.

Example: Currency for a Resources Unit Leader (RESL) can be maintained by (1) successful performance as a Resources Unit Leader (RESL); or, (2) successful performance as a Demobilization Unit Leader (DMOB) or Status/Check-In Recorder (SCKN); or, (3) successful performance as a Planning Section Chief Type 2 (PSC2) within five years."

- If someone is required to maintain currency in an IFPM position, they can accomplish this for the IFPM position without being required to meet the Work Capacity Standard for the associated ICS position unless they are actually going to perform in that ICS position.
- **Example:** A Wildland Fire Operations Specialist is required to maintain currency for the ICT3 position. They may maintain that currency by performing in various other positions (as outlined in PMS 310-1). They would only be required to successfully complete the annual arduous Work Capacity Test (Pack Test) if they are intending to perform in the ICT3 position.

- All of the FS-FPM position standards will be added to Chapter 40 “Fire and Aviation Management Position Competencies” of the 2007 amendment to the Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications and Certifications Handbook (FSH 5109.17).
- IFPM and subsequent FS-FPM data will be entered into the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS). The agency should soon be able to better determine the success levels and recognize trends associated with an inability of a region, unit or sub-unit to meet some of the standards. If significant problems are identified, they may be addressed through standard IFPM channels or by the Forest Service if it appears to be unique to FS-FPM.
- The developers of IFPM recognized that there would be individuals who were unable to meet the standards within the established deadlines. In cases where individuals appear unable to meet the standards deadlines, they may be allowed to present potentially mitigating documentation to an Interagency Resolution Board through a pre-identified chain-of-command. As the Resolution Board establishes further direction and standards for extensions, waivers or other alternatives, information will be distributed through Regional IFPM leads and the IFPM web site. If alternative resolution standards are developed for FS-FPM positions, that information will also be distributed through Regional IFPM leads.
- The Forest Service Director of Fire and Aviation has the authority to adjust the FS-FPM standards or process when they deem it necessary.
- The National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) have the authority to adjust the IFPM standards or process when it deems necessary. Several adjustments to IFPM standards and procedures have been made and are posted under “New Developments” at the following website: <http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov/newdevelopments.htm>

Please review and follow the attached combined Forest Service Standard Position Description Crosswalk and Addendum. A link to the Crosswalk and other FS-FPM information will be posted on the IFPM website at <http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov/> by October 1, 2007.

Designated Regional/Station Fire and Human Resources (HR) representatives may contact Jim Barnett, National Fire and Aviation Management representative, at 208-387-5350, or Joy Thomas, National Human Capital Management representative, at 707-562-9178, with their questions and concerns. Fire and HR Regional IFPM leads, are responsible for updating their local units.

/s/ T.C. Harbour
TOM HARBOUR
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Enclosure (1):