



File Code: 5100/6130

Date: November 24, 2004

Route To:

Subject: Implementation of Interagency Fire Program Management Plan

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director

OPTIONAL REPLY DUE DECEMBER 6, 2004

In 1996, in response to the *1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review*, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture published the *Implementation Action Plan Report*. One of the action items states that agencies “shall establish fire management qualifications based on program complexity, and staff existing and future fire management vacancies with individuals who meet these qualifications and who are committed to accomplishing the total fire management program.” The overall response to the action item is the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide (IFPM Standard).

In June 2004, P. Lynn Scarlett, Department of Interior (DOI) Assistant Secretary, and Dale Bosworth, Chief, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, issued memoranda establishing October 1, 2004, as the date for our agencies to begin officially implementing the IFPM Standard. The IFPM Standard established uniform fire management qualification standards intended to improve firefighter safety and increase the level of skill and competence in fire management programs. The IFPM Standard was developed by an Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Task Group with an objective to complete staff work acceptable to all federal agencies with wildland fire management responsibilities and to the Office of Personnel Management.

The National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) worked with the Federal Fire Training Task Group to charter an IFPM Implementation Team consisting of human resources, training, and fire management personnel throughout the five wildland firefighting agencies. The Team has developed a plan and guide for implementing uniform qualifications standards for key fire management positions. Direction for implementation of the program has been completed. Response due dates have been identified and the initial communication and implementation process is underway.

Fire and fuels organizations will be analyzed to assess their Forest level complexity and to identify subsequent education and experience needs and goals of the individuals within the 14 key fire targeted positions. Additional fire management key elements are:

- A five-year transition period for incumbents.
- Agency assistance to incumbent employees on meeting the new qualification standards.
- Establishment of clear and consistent career ladders for federal firefighters and fire program specialists.



- Cooperation among Fire program representatives, human resource specialists and the Union to ensure interagency standards are consistently applied.
- Professional standards that will contribute to better managers that enhance fire management expertise decision-making abilities, and communication skills that will increase efficiency, effectiveness and improve safety on the fire line.

The Implementation Plan has been posted on the IFPM website. It has step-by-step instructions and supporting documents to assist you in implementing the IFPM Standards. An Implementation Time Table can be found on page 14 of the Plan. A change has been made to the Plan regarding temporary employment. The NFAEB has made a decision to delay the implementation of the IFPM Qualifications Standards and Guides for temporary employment, GS-05 and GS-06 positions, for the 2005 field season. This will give managers adequate time to ensure employees acquire the necessary training in 2005 to prepare them to meet IFPM qualifications for the 2006 field season.

The IFPM Standard, Implementation Plan, and related information may be found on the Internet at http://www.nifc.gov/training_qual/IFPM/ifpm.htm. New developments and Frequently Asked Questions will also be posted on this website. This will be the primary communication source for the most current information regarding implementation of the IFPM Standard. The satellite broadcast produced to communicate the Plan can be seen at <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/>. It will be available through December 17. Human Resource Guidelines, Enclosure 1, provides guidance to assist Human Resources Specialists in the implementation process

This is a major interagency effort, in addition to our own FS commitment. National Fire & Aviation and HR representatives have been designated by each agency to coordinate the concerns and questions that arise. The goal is to ensure consistent application of the IFPM Standard throughout the five wildland firefighting agencies through a network of communication between the agency Fire & Aviation Management and HR offices. Jim Barnett has been designated the national Fire & Aviation Management representative and Joy Thomas has been designated the national Human Resources representative for the Forest Service. Designated Regional/Station Fire and Human Resources representatives can contact Jim at (202) 205-1488 or Joy at (703) 605-0861 with their questions and concerns. Your Fire & Aviation and Human Resources contacts will be responsible for updating the local units. Please provide a contact name that will serve as your Human Resources representative in implementing the IFPM Standard by email to Joy at jrthomas@fs.fed.us by December 6.

To be successful in meeting our goals, every supervisor is responsible for providing opportunities and ensuring support for employees to meet the new qualification standards. Every employee is responsible for identifying his or her goals. Fire Management, Human Resources Specialists, and Fire Training personnel must assist in a timely and consistent implementation of the IFPM Standards.

/s/ John G. Lopez
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cc: pdl wo OPS HRM personnel officers, pdl wo OPS HRM employment officers, pdl wo OPS HRM class officers

Enclosures