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FS-Memorandum

To: Bureau of Land Management District Managers and Forest Service Forest Supervisors: Attn: Fire Management Officers

Subject: Minimum Age for Hazardous Duty Assignments on Wildland Fire Management Operations on Federal Jurisdictions

We have received National direction regarding minimum age requirements for hazardous duty assignments on wildland fire management operations on federal jurisdictions. The direction was received from the Federal Fire and Aviation Directors and Fire Director, National Association of State Foresters. Please see the attached memorandum.

This direction states “Persons under 18 years old will not perform hazardous or arduous duties during wildland fire operations on federal jurisdictions.” We must comply with this direction. We recognize that both states have youth programs that have assisted in wildland fire and other projects over the past years. Our expectations are these programs will still be an integral part of our wildland fire fighting efforts off the fire line.

We have discussed the new directive with our National Offices and understand the National Wildfire Coordinating Group will further review the policy later this year.

If you have questions regarding this new direction, please call Leo Sidebotham, Chief, Branch of Fire and Aviation Management, at 503-808-6590 or Laurie Perrett, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, at 503-808-2145.

/s/ Charles E. Wassinger (for)  
/s/ Mike Ash (for)  
ELAINE M. BRONG  
LINDA GOODMAN  
State Director  
Regional Forester  
OR/WA  
Region 6  
Bureau of Land Management  
Forest Service  

Authenticated by  
Mary O'Leary  
Management Assistant

1 Attachment(s)  
1 - Memorandum Minimum Age Requirement (2 pp)

BLM Distribution  
WO FA-100  

cc: WO
National Interagency Fire Center  
3838 S. Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705  

August 6, 2003

To: Agency Personnel

From: Fire and Aviation Directors  
Bureau of Land Management  
Forest Service  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
National Park Service  
National Association of State Foresters  
U.S. Fire Administration

Subject: Minimum Age Requirements for Hazardous Duty Assignments on Wildland Fire Management Operations on Federal Jurisdictions

Federal fire management operations have used State Forestry youth crews with persons under 18 years old in hazardous and arduous duties during fire suppression operations. This has been done through agreements with the state and federal agency partners. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook states that 16 and 17 year old persons may be hired and assigned only non-hazardous or non-arduous duties. Although the handbook does not specifically reference state youth programs, the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act state that 18 is the minimum age for employment in hazardous occupations.

Persons under 18 years old will not perform hazardous or arduous duties during wildland fire management operations on federal jurisdictions. Federal offices that have agreements with State Forestry fire programs that include youth programs should work with their state counterparts to update the agreements so that persons under 18 years old are not used in hazardous or arduous duties on lands under federal jurisdiction.

State laws apparently vary on this issue. On incidents under state jurisdiction, states may use youth crews with persons under 18 years old if their respective state laws so allow.

Adjustments to this direction may be made pending a full review by the NWCG in the near future. Until that time, the direction applies as stated.

This direction supplements the NWCG Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook.
/s/ Alice Forbes
Alice Forbes
USFS Assistant Director of Operations

/s/ Phil Street
Phil Street
USFWS Fire Director

/s/ Jim Stires
Jim Stires
BIA Fire Director

/s/ Larry Hamilton
Larry Hamilton
BLM Fire and Aviation, Director

/s/ Sue Vap
Sue Vap
NPS Fire Director

/s/ Don Artley
Don Artley
NASF Fire Director

/s/ Mike Dougherty
Mike Dougherty
FEMA/USFA Representative