



## CHAPTER 4: THE NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP (NWCG) AND ITS TRAINING PROCESS

### POLICY

BLM policy requires that employees work jointly with other federal, state, and local agencies through the NWCG to establish minimum incident qualifications standards acceptable to all agencies. Interagency standards allow a cost-effective exchange of personnel and resources and reduce duplication among agencies. Agency standards for training and qualifications may exceed the minimum standards established by National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). Such additional standards will be approved by the Fire and Aviation Director (F&A Director), and implemented through the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS).

### NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP (NWCG)

The mission of the NWCG is to provide leadership in establishing and maintaining consistent interagency standards and guidelines, qualifications, and communications for wildland fire management. NWCG's goal is to provide more effective execution of each agency's fire management program. The group provides a formalized system of agreed upon standards of **training**, equipment, qualifications, and other operational functions. NWCG will include a Chair, Co-Chair, and Executive Secretary. The Chair and Co-Chair will each be elected from within the NWCG to serve a minimum term of two (2) years.

### NWCG ORGANIZATION

The NWCG organization (also known as the Parent Group) is made up of the USDA Forest Service; four Department of the Interior agencies: BLM, NPS, BIA, and the FWS; Intertribal Timber Council; U.S. Fire Administration; and state forestry agencies through the National Association of State Foresters (NASF). Membership of the organization is limited to one individual organization representative, except the Forest Service which has two representatives: one from Fire and Aviation management and one from fire research. These individuals make up the Executive Board.

The Executive Board has established three branches to carry out the **functional** work of the NWCG. The three branches are Policy, Planning, and Management; Equipment and Technology; and Preparedness. Each branch is headed up by a Branch Coordinator who oversees the work of the branches.

## **NWCG BRANCH COORDINATORS**

The Branch Coordinators are advocates for the current NWCG working committees. Their mission is to improve the connections and coordination between NWCG's committees and the NWCG Executive Board and to streamline the development and implementation of standards and policies across the wildland fire community.

## **NWCG WORKING COMMITTEES**

Each branch has several working committees placed under them. Committee membership is comprised of individuals invited from member organizations and other organizations having the expertise and interest in the particular subject matter. All working committees have a BLM representative.

Working committee reports and recommendations are submitted to their respective branch for review, approval, and further action.

## **NWCG BRANCHES AND COMMITTEES**

### **The Preparedness Branch**

The Preparedness Branch is composed of the following committees:

- Incident Business Committee (formerly the Incident Business Practices Working Team)
- National Response Framework/National Incident Management System (NRF/NIMS) Committee
- Operations and Workforce Development Committee (OWDC; formerly the Incident Operations Standards Working Team [IOSWT] and Training Working Team [TWT])
  - **OWDC is responsible for development and maintenance of the wildland fire qualifications, Incident Command System (ICS), and training systems. Decisions of the OWDC directly impact BLM Training Officers.**
- Risk Management Committee (formerly the Safety and Health Working Team)

### **Policy, Planning and Management Branch**

The Policy, Planning, and Management Branch is composed of the following committees:

- Communication, Education, and Prevention Committee (formerly the Wildland Fire Education Working Team and Wildland Fire Investigation Working Team)
- Fire Policy Committee (formerly the Federal Fire Policy Directives Task Group, AMR Task Group and Wildland Fire Situation Analysis Task Group)
- Fuels Management Committee, Fire Use Subcommittee (formerly the Fire Use Working Team)
- Interagency Fire Planning Committee (formerly the Interagency Fire Planning Team and Federal Wildland Fire Planning and Budget Team under NFAEB)

- Smoke Committee (formerly the Fire and Aviation Coordination Team)
- Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Committee (formerly the Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team)

### **Equipment and Technology Branch**

The Equipment and Technology Branch is composed of the following committees:

- Equipment Technology Committee (formerly Fire Equipment Working Team)
- Fire Environment Committee (formerly Fire Environment Working Team)
- Information Technology Committee (formerly Information Resource Management Working Team)
- National Interagency Aviation Committee (formerly the NFAEB Team).

For further information on NWCG branches and committees visit <http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/committees.htm>.

## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF NNWG WORKING TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Incident Operations Standards Working Team (IOSWT)**

IOSWT establishes job performance requirements for fire positions identified as common among agencies. The team also establishes standards of experience, training, physical fitness, and other qualifications necessary for certification in these positions. The IOSWT maintains the *Fireline Handbook*, PMS 410-1, (<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm>) as well as the *NWCG NIIMS Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide*, PMS 310-1, (<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/docs/docs.htm>). The team works closely with the TWT.

### **Training Working Team (TWT)**

Through the TWT and its member agencies, NWCG identifies interagency training needs, establishes training priorities and standards, and coordinates the development and implementation of courses for the interagency fire curriculum. The team provides guidance to other teams on the development process and standards.

### **Fire Use Working Team (FUWT)**

Through FUWT and its member agencies, NWCG identifies interagency training needs, establishes training priorities and standards, and coordinates with TWT development and implementation of courses for the interagency fire use curriculum. The team also recommends modifications to other qualification and training systems and materials developed by others; and develops non-curriculum materials for PMS distribution.

### **Wildland Fire Education Working Team (WFEWT)**

WFEWT and its member agencies recommend for approval the prevention qualification and training curriculum, coordinate with IOS and TWT to assure overall NWCG consistency and compatibility, and develop prevention and education training materials following the NWCG process. The team also recommends modification to other qualification and training systems and materials developed by others and develops non-training materials for PMS distribution.

### **Fire Equipment Working Team (FEWT)**

FEWT and its member agencies recommend equipment and chemical use modifications to established qualification and training systems, coordinate with appropriate teams to assure NWCG consistency and compatibility, and develop associated training and non-training materials following established NWCG standards.

### **Information Resources Management Working Team (IRMWT)**

IRMWT recommends information and communication area modifications to approved qualification systems and training curricula and coordinates with appropriate teams to assure NWCG consistency and compatibility, and develops training and non-training materials associated with implementation information and communication systems.

### **Safety and Health Working Team (SHWT)**

SHWT recommends qualification and training modifications to approved systems and course materials developed by other teams and develops non-training materials that will support multiple systems or are stand alone products.

### **Incident Business Practices Working Team (IBPWT)**

IBPWT coordinates business practices for wildfire, non-fire, and FEMA emergencies. The team maintains the *NWCG Interagency Business Practices Handbook*, PMS 902, (<http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/ibpwt/documents/index.htm>).

### **Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT)**

The purpose of FENWT is to provide interagency oversight, strategic direction and vision relating to measuring and predicting the wildland fire environment. The FENWT is comprised of the Fire Behavior, Fire Danger, and Fire Weather Committees.

### **Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team (WUIWT)**

WUIWT provides a forum to increase public awareness of the wildland/urban interface problem. They develop local solutions to the issues and form partnerships among problem solvers and interest groups.

### **Wildland Fire Investigation Working Team (WFIWT)**

WFIWT develops policies, methods and procedures, and other actions for systematic and science-based wildland fire investigations to adequately support criminal prosecution and cost recovery.

### **Publication Management System Working Team (PMSWT)**

PMSWT makes available all qualification and training materials produced by the above teams, assures appropriate approvals are obtained, and assures products meet NWCG standards and are distributed appropriately.

## **NWCG COURSES AND TRAINING MATERIALS**

Courses and training materials developed to support qualifications and training needs established by the [NWCG NIIMS Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1](#), will be developed and certified in accordance with the NWCG Publications Management System Procedures Guide, PMS 922, (<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm>).

Certified NWCG training courses will be used to meet the training needs of personnel seeking qualification in wildland fire suppression or prescribed fire positions established in the PMS 310-1. Certified NWCG courses must be taught in their entirety; i.e., all course and instructional objectives must be met. Additional material or information may be added, if necessary. Details relating to course descriptions and trainee/instructor qualifications are provided in the *NWCG Field Manager's Course Guide*, PMS 901-1, (<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/training/training.htm>).

## ORDERING NWCG COURSE MATERIALS

NWCG courses and course materials can be ordered through the Great Basin Cache at NIFC. A complete listing and ordering information of all NWCG courses and training materials can be found in the *NFES Catalog—Part 2: Publications*, PMS 449-2, (<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm>).

When ordering courses and course materials, the order should be sent directly to the Great Basin Cache. All the items listed in this catalog are stocked at the Great Basin Cache. Mail or fax orders (no phone orders accepted) to:

National Interagency Fire Center  
Attn: Great Basin Cache Supply Office  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
Boise, ID 83705  
FAX: (208) 387-5573/5548

The Great Basin Cache performs inventory during January every year. **Please call in early December to verify ordering cut-off date. During inventory, resource orders for active incidents are the ONLY orders processed.** All other orders are processed after inventory in the order they were received.

If you have questions about items listed in the catalog, about the status of your order, or about the ordering procedures, please call the Great Basin Cache Supply Office: (208) 387-5104.

Use the order and/or credit card forms provided or any other order form as long as the essential criteria are stated:

- Correct shipping address (**do not use P.O. Box address**), contact person and phone number
- Payment method: **Do not send any payment (cash, check) with the order.**
  - **Credit card:** All ordering units may use credit cards. The Great Basin Cache requires the use of Visa/Mastercard/Discover/Amex credit cards for orders by *private individuals, university/college bookstores and military units*. Orders from these groups will not be processed without a credit card number, expiration date, and card holder information. *For credit security, Visa/Mastercard/Discover/Amex information needs to be separate from order form.*
  - **Invoice:** *As of October 2003, federal agencies must have a reimbursable work authorization in place before any order can be processed. Questions regarding this may be directed to the NIFC BLM Finance Office at (208) 387-5521/5104.*  
All other agencies/businesses: order number and invoice address are required.
  - **Requisition:** BLM units may use Purchase Requisition/Oral Order (Form 1510-8)
- Shipping method

- For **each** item being ordered, the following information is necessary:
  - NFES (catalog) number
  - Short description/title
  - Quantity ordered **and** unit of issue (e.g., each, package, set)

## **UNDERSTANDING NWCG COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM**

The NWCG has an established alphanumeric course numbering system. Each alphanumeric combination designates a meaning unique to the specified curriculum.

### **Alpha**

The current NWCG endorsed curricula are:

- “D” – Courses developed for the Dispatcher Curriculum
- “FI” – Courses developed for the Fire Investigation Curriculum
- “I” – Courses developed for the all-risk application of the Incident Command System
- “J” – “How to” documents that contain skill material related to the specific position. They are not formal courses and not controlled by an instructor or coordinator.
- “L” – Courses developed for the Leadership Curriculum
- “M” – Courses developed outside a specific curriculum but determined to be supporting more than one, such as managerial type courses.
- “P” – Courses developed for the Fire Prevention Curriculum
- “RT” – Courses developed for the Refresher Curriculum
- “RX” – Courses developed for the Prescribed Fire Curriculum
- “S” – Courses are developed for the Wildfire Suppression Skills Curriculum
- “TS” – Courses and job aids developed for technical specialist positions that are not part of the NWCG curricula

For example, **S**-300, Extended Attack Incident Commander, is in the Wildfire Suppression Skills Curriculum.

### **Numeric Digits**

#### ***First Digit***

The first numeric digit of a course number designates the complexity level at which the course is designed to be presented and also indicates the organizational level at which the course is to be given.

The NWCG Training Development Unit assigns the appropriate complexity/organizational level designation to the course. Assignments are based on the formula listed below, the analysis of the project development team, the target group, the recommendations from the project team leader and input from other NWCG teams that may be involved.

- Entry-Level Course
  - 100 = Local entry-level skills development
  - 200 =
- Mid-Level Course
  - 300 = Mid-level and/or geographic area level management skills
  - 400 =
- Advanced-Level Course
  - 500 = Advanced/national-level management skills
  - 600 =

For example, S-300, Extended Attack Incident Commander, is a mid-level course generally put on at the geographic area level.

### ***Second Digit***

The second digit of a course number designates the subject area of the course.

000	=	Command and General Staff
010	=	Skills
020	=	Organization
030	=	Operations
040	=	Planning
050	=	Logistics
060	=	Finance/Administration
070	=	Air Operations
080	=	General
090	=	Fire Behavior and Fire Danger Rating System

For example, S-300, Extended Attack Incident Commander, is in the subject area Command and General Staff.

### ***Third Digit***

The third digit of a course number is assigned sequentially, or as appropriate to maintain continuity, as courses are certified within a particular subject area.

For example, S-300, Extended Attack Incident Commander, is the first course in this sequence.

### **Index of NWCG Courses**

A complete list of NWCG courses can be found in the *Field Manager's Course Guide* which is available online at <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/training/training.htm>.