

**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Forest Service R-6

OR/WA

**Bureau of Land
Management**

**United States Department of
Interior**

Reply Refer To: 5100 (FS)/ 9210 (BLM) (OR-934) P

Date: August 28, 2003

FS-Memorandum

**EMS TRANSMISSION 08/29/2003
BLM-Information Bulletin No. OR-2003-236**

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)
ELAINE M. BRONG
State Director
OR/WA
Bureau of Land Management

/s/ Mike Ash (for)
LINDA GOODMAN
Regional Forester
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Forest Service

Authenticated by
Mary O'Leary
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1 Attachment(s)

1 - [Memorandum Minimum Age Requirement](#) (2 pp)

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WO FA-100

cc:
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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
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NASF Fire Director

/s/ Mike Dougherty
Mike Dougherty
FEMA/USFA Representative