



United States Department of the Interior

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Instruction Memorandum No. FA IM 2007-023, Change 1
Expires: 09/30/08

To: State Directors
From: Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation
Subject: Revision of the Firing Boss (FIRB) Position

Program Area: Fire Management

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) transmits the reclassification of the National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (NWCG) FIRB position into two positions; the current FIRB position with modifications and a new *Firing Leader (FIRL)* position.

Policy/Action: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will implement additional standards for the current NWCG FIRB position and will implement a new BLM specific *FIRL* position.

All BLM personnel qualified as FIRB will meet the new BLM standards, qualifications and training (see requirements below). The BLM will accept other agency personnel FIRB qualifications for firing or ignition operations on BLM managed wildland fires.

The use of the *FIRL* position on higher complexity wildfire or wildland fire use firing operations is not required. However, when a firing boss is assigned to a wildfire or wildland fire use incident, the type of firing boss assigned should be based upon the complexity of firing operations, the firing objectives, type, and number of firing resources and firing activities required.

Qualification criteria for the BLM specific FIRB position:

Required Training: Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (S-290), Crew Boss (single resource) (S-230), Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130), Ignition Operations (S-234) (BLM additional training requirement).

Required Experience: Satisfactory performance as a firefighter type 1 (FFT1) plus successful position performance as a single resource FIRB on a wildland fire incident.

Physical Fitness Level: Arduous

Other Position Assignments that will Maintain Currency: Any single resource boss, incident commander type 4 (ICT4) and any higher position for which this position is a prerequisite.

Other Training Which Supports Development of Knowledge and Skills: Basic Incident Command System (I-200), Leadership (L-280), Basic Air Ops (S-270), Interagency Incident Business Management (S-260), Ignition Operations (S-234), Introduction to Fire Effects (RX-310).

Qualification criteria for the new BLM *FIRL* position:

Required Training: Introduction to Fire Behavior Calculations (S-390), plus required training for FIRB.

Required Experience: Satisfactory performance as a strike team leader (STL) or task force leader (TFLD) or prescribed fire burn boss (RXB2) and FIRB; plus successful position performance as a *FIRL*, Attachment 1: *FIRL* Position Task Book (PTB).

Physical Fitness Level: Moderate

Other Position Assignments that will Maintain Currency: STL, TFLD, RXB2, FIRB.

Other Training Which Supports Development of Knowledge and Skills: Introduction to Fire Effects (RX-310), Prescribed Fire Plan Preparation (RX-341), Smoke Management Techniques (RX-410), and training in appropriate aerial ignition devices.

Note: The *FIRL* PTB stands alone. Completion of the tasks is required to demonstrate proficiency in implementing complex wildland fire ignition operations.

The table below identifies the position requirements for prescribed fire ignition operations when assigned by the prescribed fire plan. The requirements are based on levels of complexity or type/number of resources assigned to the prescribed fire.

POSITION	COMPLEXITY		TYPE/NUMBER OF RESOURCES ASSIGNED
<i>FIRL</i>	Required: Prescribed fire moderate and high complexity,	With	Multiple ignition resources/types or more than two firing locations or aerial ignition
FIRB	Required: Prescribed fire low and moderate complexity,	With	Single ground ignition firing resource/type or no more than two firing locations

The BLM fire management staffs will ensure that the following transition to the FIRB and *FIRL* positions takes place:

FIRB to BLM FIRB

Current FIRB qualified employees must complete the additional training (S-234) and achieve the physical fitness rating (arduous) to qualify as a BLM FIRB. Current FIRB trainees must complete the BLM additional training and achieve the arduous physical fitness rating to qualify as a BLM FIRB.

FIRB to *FIRL*

If all the current FIRB PTB elements, prerequisite qualifications (STL or TFLD or RXB2), and training (S234 and S390) of current FIRBs have been completed in the past and the employee and local Red Card Committee are satisfied with the employee's skills, then a *FIRL* PTB must be completed to qualify as a BLM *FIRL*.

RXI1 to *FIRL*

If all the current FIRB PTB elements and prerequisite qualifications (STL or TFLD or RXB2) and training (S234 and S390) of a former prescribed fire ignition specialist 1 (RXI1) have been completed in the past and the employee and Red Card Committee are satisfied with the employee's skills, then the BLM *FIRL* position will be awarded. However, if the employee or Red Card Committee finds deficiencies in the employee's skills or incomplete tasks, then a *FIRL* PTB will be initiated.

RXI1 (T) to *FIRL*(T)

An employee who meets the prerequisite qualifications (STL or TFLD or RXB2) and training (S234 and S390) for *FIRL* and who has an initiated and partially completed RXI1 PTB prior to February 2006¹ will be given credit for those tasks which correspond to those in the BLM *FIRL* PTB. A BLM *FIRL* PTB will be initiated for these employees.

An employee who does not meet the prerequisite qualifications (STL or TFLD or RXB2) and training (S234 and S390) for BLM *FIRL* and who has initiated and partially completed RXI1 PTB prior to February 2006¹ **will not** be given credit for those tasks nor have a BLM *FIRL* PTB initiated until the prerequisite qualifications have been met.

Those employees have a maximum of 3 years from the date of the RXI1 PTB initiation to obtain the required qualifications before their RXI1 PTB expires.

Timeframe: This guidance takes effect on the date of issuance.

Budget Impact: There is minimal impact to State and Field Offices.

¹ Reference NWCG 310-1 Transition Memorandum; June 1, 2006. The memorandum can be accessed electronically at: <http://www.nwcg.gov>: NWCG Publications, Qualifications link.

Background: In January 2006, the NWCG Incident Operations Standards Work Team (IOSWT) dropped the ignition specialist (RXI1 & RXI2) positions and merged them into the single resource firing boss (FIRB) position.

The BLM field prescribed fire practitioners and fire management officers, state fire management officers and agency administrators expressed concerns with the creation of the FIRB position.

- The new single classification did not adequately address the various complexities of firing operations on wildland fires.
- Experience and training with multiple ignition operations and/or complex firing equipment (e.g., terra torch and aerial firing equipment) is not required for the current FIRB qualification.
- The ignition operations on prescribed fire as compared to a wildfire may be very different (i.e., meeting resource objectives vs. control).
- Skills and abilities to implement complex firing patterns and manipulation of fire behavior to meet resource and control objectives need not be exhibited to qualify as an FIRB.

As a result, a group of national, state, and local BLM personnel met to develop BLM specific qualifications and standards which adequately recognize ignition complexities inherent in prescribed fire and wildfire ignitions and better fulfill the requirement for firefighter safety and mission accomplishment. The implementation of additional standards for the FIRB and the new *FIRL* position will ensure that wildland fire ignition operations are implemented by qualified and experienced personnel.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: Manual Section 9214; Prescribed Fire Management, Manual Section 9215; Training and Qualifications, Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, (January 2007).

Coordination: This IM is the result of coordination with Fire and Aviation (FA100), BLM Fire Operations (FA300), Department of the Interior, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, and State Offices.

Contacts: Questions regarding this subject should be addressed to David Mueller, Fuels Management Specialist, Fire and Aviation, at 208-387-5151.

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1 Attachment

1 – *FIRL*, Position Task Book (13 pp)

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