



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354



May 27, 2011

Memorandum

To: BIA-NIFC Employees

From: Director, Branch of Wildland Fire Management

Subject: Telework Policy and Guidelines

In accordance with the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 and Department of the Interior (DOI) requirements, all employees must be notified by June 7, 2011 of their eligibility status in regard to the Federal Telework program. BIA-NIFC, in compliance with this initiative, has made determinations on our employee's designation as eligible or non-eligible. Your supervisor will soon notify you of the determination.

One of the major benefits of telework is the ability to maintain the continuity of U.S. Government operations during emergency situations. An agency may require teleworkers to continue working at their alternative worksites, if they are able to do so, on their telework day or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays during emergency situations when the agency is closed.

There is a distinction between "*eligibility*" and "*participation*". While an employee may be deemed eligible, participation may be limited or restricted based on several factors such as positions involving emergency response (or related), the use of sensitive materials or those requiring daily face-to-face contact, as well as technological issues such as the availability of portable IT equipment or the ability to access databases and programs from remote locations in a secure manner. Participation shall ensure that telework does not diminish employee performance or agency operations.

As for BIA-NIFC, we provide technical expertise on wildland fire operations to the BIA's Washington DC office as well as BIA regional fire programs and our interagency partners. Programs include: Preparedness, Hazardous Fuels, Suppression, Wildland Fire Safety, Indian Hotshot Crews and Equipment Development (M52) to name a few. Many of course are tied to emergency response.

BIA-NIFC program responsibilities include:

- Provides the Washington DC BIA office technical advice, operational oversight, and leadership in all aspects of fire operations.
- Performs annual regional fire management program reviews. Evaluates compliance with policies, objectives, and standards. Assesses operational readiness and provides technical assistance to solve identified problems. Performs other operations reviews as required /requested.
- Assists in the formulation and establishment of national policies and programs pertinent to wildland fire preparedness, suppression, shared national resources, safety, training, and equipment.
- Serves as the BIA technical expert on national interagency mobilization and utilization of fire suppression resources.
- Develops national plans, standards, and technical guides for the BIA and interagency fire management operations.
- Develops and implements safety programs, accident investigation procedures, and safety trend analyses.

The authority for BIA-NIFC employees to telework is provided by Departmental and BIA policy. The following policies and guidelines for BIA-NIFC employees are in addition to requirements found in these policies. Because of the high reliability demands, unpredictable nature of our function (emergency response), and interagency coordination associated with BIA-NIFC; Branch telework policies and guidelines will include the following:

- Individual employee telework will only be approved on a situational basis. An approved work schedule where an eligible employee works on an occasional, one-time, or irregular (non-routine) basis away from the official duty station. Core telework, or the opportunity to work at an alternative worksite on a regular or reoccurring basis will not be authorized.
- Individual telework agreements must be approved by the employee's supervisor with concurrence by the Director, Branch of Wildland Fire Management or Deputy Director.
- Telework will only be authorized for tasks that are easily quantifiable or primarily project-oriented so that progress/productivity can be measure by results rather than by direct observation.
- Telework will not be authorized for periods of time less than four hours.
- Sections with employees requesting telework status must prepare and submit a continuity of operations plan to the Director/Deputy Director ensuring vital services and coordination are met i.e., when all of the employees within the section are out at the same time due to a combination of leave, travel or telework.
- Sections may complete blanket employee agreements to cover emergency continuity of operations, incidental office closures, weather events, pandemics, etc.