



United States Department of the Interior

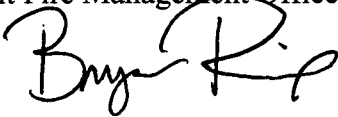
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FEB 13 2013

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors
Attention: Agency Superintendents
Regional and Local Unit Fire Management Officers

From: ^{for} Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs 

Subject: Bureau of Indian Affairs Wilderness First Responder, Wildland Fire First Aid
Minimum Guidelines & Protocols

Purpose:

This memorandum is to provide guidance and directions to all Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal wildland firefighters on the Wilderness First Responder (WFR) course and Wildland Fire First Aid Minimum Guidelines & Protocols (attachment).

Background:

Wildland fire crews work in a dynamic and constantly changing environment in remote locations, with limited equipment, extreme weather, and rugged terrain. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is not always available; response times for ground transportation can be up to 2 hours for fire crews. Wilderness Medicine is focused on the logistical transport, prolonged patient care, extreme environmental conditions and improvised equipment.

Therefore, the Fatality Accident Review Board recommends first aid medical training for fire crews. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) best practice guide for a workplace first aid program is:

“First aid is emergency care provided for injury or sudden illness before emergency medical treatment is available. The first-aid provider in the workplace is someone who is trained in the delivery of initial medical emergency procedures, using a limited amount of equipment to perform a primary assessment and intervention while awaiting arrival of EMS personnel.”

Policy:

WFR is the level of certification administered under a Wilderness Medical Associate's (DMA) 80 hour WFR curriculum. Protocols and Guidelines have been developed with a physician advisor, utilizing best practices in Wilderness Medicine. BIA/Tribal employees may only perform the skills, procedures and medication administration in which they have been trained, in addition to a current WFR certification.

Bureau/Tribal Employees:

After completion of the 80 hour WFR course, responders will work within their scope and adhere to the BIA First Aid Minimum Guidelines and Protocols.

For instance, two of the proposed wilderness protocols for severe asthma and anaphylaxis use prescription and over the counter medications for airway management.

- Epinephrine works quickly and directly to open the airway and constrict vessels for use in Asthma patients to allow for the patients prescribed inhaler to be administered. Epinephrine is used in anaphylaxis to allow for the administration of an over the counter antihistamine (Benadryl) to control swelling that is the underline concern with anaphylaxis.
- Prednisone is a corticosteroid that prevents a secondary episode of anaphylaxis.

In 2010 the Wilderness Medical Society (the world's leading organization devoted to wilderness medical challenges) published a position on the "Recommendation on the Use of Epinephrine in Outdoor Education and Wilderness Setting." This position paper supported properly trained, non-medical professionals, to appropriately administer epinephrine for the first aid treatment of anaphylaxis especially in remote settings where transportation to definitive care could be delayed.

Ultimately, when wildland firefighters encounter emergency medical response situations, their effort should be limited to immediate care (e.g. first aid, first responder actions they are trained and qualified to perform).

Attachment – First Aid Minimum & Protocols