



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354



April 16, 2013

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors, All Regions  
Attention: Regional Fire Management Officers

From: Director, Branch of Wildland Fire Management

Subject: 2013 Fire Season Planning and Preparedness

The 2013 wildland fire season is upon Indian Country and I wanted to take time to encourage local units, as part of their pre-season planning and preparedness, to focus on the following items to ensure firefighters and support personnel are ready for the challenges associated with the upcoming fire season.

**Firefighter & Employee Wellness**

As all of you are aware, physical fitness is essential to firefighter performance. Agency Administrators are responsible for ensuring all personnel are capable of meeting the essential functions of a firefighter prior to being dispatched on a wildland fire assignment. This includes Tribal, Administratively Determined (AD), and Bureau employees.

I want to highlight that all Agency Administrators have the authorization to allow one hour a day of physical conditioning to all preparedness funded firefighters assigned to arduous duties on the fireline. Employees with a moderate or light fitness rating can use up to three hours per week at agency discretion. For more information, refer to the "Blue Book" in Chapter 13 for this guidance, <http://www.bia.gov/nifc/bluebook/index.htm>.

To assist all BIA firefighters in meeting the fitness expectations in the wildland fire environment, the Bureau has created the "BIA Fitness Challenge," <http://www.bia.gov/nifc/training/fitness/index.htm>. This program is not only for wildland firefighters but can be used by all units to create a wellness program. Benefits such as increased productivity, less lost time due to injuries, the ability to handle stress better, improved morale, and crew cohesion are just a few of the intangibles from improved fitness.

All units are encouraged to participate in the challenge, the Agency with the greatest participation will be rewarded and all participants shall receive recognition with a patch documenting the level achieved through the Fitness Challenge.

To assist units with creating a fitness and wellness program, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) has sponsored "FireFit" to assist firefighters and support personnel with an easy

to use comprehensive fitness and wellness program. FireFit provides all users with easy to follow fitness programs designed to prepare individuals to meet the expectations of their positions. FireFit can be accessed at, <http://www.nifc.gov/FireFit/index.htm>.

**Emergency Planning at Local Units:** Is your unit ready should an emergency occur? Please take time to review and update your emergency accident protocols if necessary. *The Agency Administrators Guide to Critical Incident Management*, <http://www.bia.gov/nifc/safety/index.htm> can assist as a pre-planning document should a serious accident or fatality occur, this document will assist the affected unit during this event. Other emergency planning documents on this site can be useful to assist units in pre-planning.

In closing, I would like to stress that all decisions made by leadership at both the management and operational level should be driven by the Guiding Principles of Safety and Risk Management. These include common sound risk management concepts using the five step process, and working within your knowledge, skills, and abilities as part of a crew or leadership. For more information on these topics refer to the Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG).

For questions or help with completion of emergency planning documents, or the BIA Fitness Challenge please contact Tony Beitia, National Wildland Fire Safety Specialist, at 208-387-5177 or via email at: [juan.beitia@bia.gov](mailto:juan.beitia@bia.gov) .