



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER
3833 SOUTH DEVELOPMENT AVENUE
BOISE, IDAHO 83705-5354

August 18, 2010

To: All Regional Directors, All Regions
Attention: Forestry/Fire Management

From: **ACTING** Director, Branch of Wildland Fire Management

Subject: IFPM Responsibilities and Consequences

Attached is the May 21, 2010 memorandum from the Department of Interior (DOI) Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget regarding the responsibilities of management and employees in the attainment of Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Qualification Standards by the October 1, 2010 deadline. The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the consequences associated with failure to obtain minimum qualifications standards for key fire management positions.

The six year IFPM implementation period began officially on September 2, 2004 with the issuance of a directive from the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Since this implementation date, the DOI, the BIA, and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group have issued numerous directives, clarifications, decision notices and errata sheets pertaining to IFPM implementation.

As specified in the attached memorandum, the BIA's 347 IFPM employees have made excellent progress in meeting IFPM minimum qualification standards; regrettably a few employees remain unqualified. BIA employees who do not meet the standards by October 1, 2010 cannot remain in their positions. Consequently, these employees will need to be reassigned to another position, reduced in grade, or removed from federal service, pursuant to policy and implementation procedures.

Following the end of the implementation period on October 1, 2010, all IFPM position vacancy announcements will include IFPM qualification standards as selective factors.

The IFPM initiative represents a significant workforce development effort which began as a result of the investigation of the South Canyon Fire in 1994 where 14 firefighters died in the line of duty. An interagency team was formed to investigate the fatalities and contributing factors which influenced the subsequent *1995 Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review*, signed by both Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, which directed Federal wildland fire agencies to establish fire management

qualification standards to improve firefighter safety and increase professionalism in fire management programs.

I very much appreciate the support of Regional staff, Superintendents, Unit-level Supervisors and the Office of Human Capital Management during the implementation of this pivotal fire management policy.

If you have any questions please contact the BIA IFPM Implementation Leader, Dave Koch, Assistant Director, Training at 208.387.5577, or david.koch@bia.gov.

Attachments



United States Department of the Interior


OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240



MAY 21 2010

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, National Park Service
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

From: Rhea S. Suh 
Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards Implementation Responsibilities and Consequences

To date, fire managers and their employees have made exceptional progress towards meeting the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) minimum qualification standards prior to the implementation deadline of October 1, 2010. These minimum qualification standards include the National Wildfire Coordinating Group incident management qualifications, any additional required training, and applicable positive educational requirements.

As we move closer to the deadline of October 1, 2010, we must be prepared to handle situations where employees have been unable to meet the IFPM minimum qualification standards. Managers should review the status of each of their employees and provide assistance to those who do not meet the minimum qualification standards. Employees who do not meet these standards by October 1, 2010, cannot remain in their positions. They will need to be reassigned to another position, reduced in grade, or removed from Federal service. These remedies have been carefully developed in consultation with the Solicitor's Office, and it is the expectation of the Department that management will consistently fulfill their responsibilities.

Starting immediately, managers need to identify non-qualified employees and establish communication with their servicing Human Resources Office (HRO) to ensure HROs have adequate time to provide necessary guidance and support. Further, managers must be very cautious in the selection of new employees for IFPM positions who do not currently meet the IFPM minimum qualification standards. Prior to making a selection, the manager must develop a written plan of action to ensure that the selectee meets qualifications by the deadline. This plan must be submitted to the bureau Fire Director for approval. Fire Directors must submit plans by July 1, 2010, which address actions the Fire Directors are taking to help employees meet qualification requirements by October 1, 2010, and actions they will take to address situations in which employees who do not meet qualifications requirements by that date.

For additional questions related to IFPM implementation, please contact your Bureau IFPM Implementation Lead.

cc:

**HR Director, U. S. Department of Agriculture,
Deputy Assistant Secretary – Business Management and Wildland Fire
Assistant Director, Workforce Management, National Park Service
Director, Office of Wildland Fire Coordination
Director, Fire Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation Management, Bureau of Land Management
Chief, Branch of Fire Management, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division Chief, Fire and Aviation Management, National Park Service
Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USDA, U. S. Forest Service**



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BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Washington, D.C. 20240

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

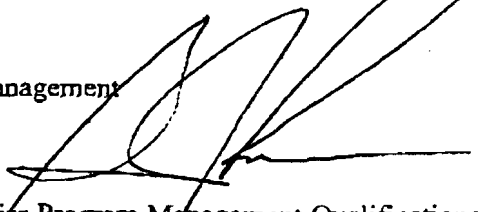
Division of Forestry

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors
Attention: Fire Management
Human Resources Management

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: Implementation of the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide



Studies of wildland fire incidents for a number of years highlighted the fact that more stringent, uniform qualification standards were needed for certain fire management positions to assure firefighter safety. The lengthy collaborative effort between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish uniform fire management qualifications standards to improve firefighter safety and increase professionalism in the fire management program has been completed.

In the attached memorandum dated June 18, 2004, Assistant Secretary – Office of Policy, Management and Budget, P. Lynn Scarlett established October 1, 2004, as the date to officially begin implementing the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standard and Guide (IFPM Standard). A subsequent memorandum was issued on July 2, 2004, by Carolyn Cohen, Director, Office of Personnel Policy to all Bureau Human Resources Directors reaffirming this implementation date.

The National Fire and Aviation Executive Board through the Federal Fire Training Task Group, chartered an interagency IFPM Implementation Team consisting of human resources, training and fire management personnel. The Implementation Team met on August 5-6, 2004 to begin their work on an interagency basis. Their first task is to develop an implementation plan which will be issued on October 1, 2004. This plan will provide guidance on the implementation process.

Since October 4, 2002, the BIA has been implementing the Supplemental Qualification Standard for the GS-401 Fire Management Position. This new guidance does not contradict the 2002 policy related to the GS-401 Supplemental Qualification Standard. There are procedural

differences in the new policy and we will wait for interagency implementation guidance prior to making any changes.

The key differences between the existing Bureau guidelines and this new policy are:

- The requirement of compliance by October 1, 2009.
- All of the positions deemed professional in IFPM guide will be converted to the GS-0401 series. This would include any GS-0460 series employees currently employed in one of the 14 Key Positions.
- Technicians (GS-0462/0455) currently occupying positions that will be converted to the professional GS-0401 series will have the opportunity to pursue the required education, skills and competencies before the deadline.
- Between October 1, 2004, and October 1, 2009, all vacant or newly-created positions determined to be professional may be classified and advertised in separate announcements as both professional (GS-0401) and technical (GS-0462, GS-0455). If a well-qualified GS-0401 candidate cannot be hired for the position, it may be filled with a GS-0462/GS-0455 who meets the IFPM Standard requirements. This is contingent upon this individual completing the positive education requirement of the Supplemental Qualification Standard for the GS-0401 Fire Management Specialist before October 1, 2009. Notwithstanding this flexibility, every effort will be made to hire qualified GS-401 applicants. After October 1, 2009, professional fire positions will only be classified and advertised as a GS-0401.

Pursuant to the Indian Affairs Manual, Part 90, Wildland Fire Management, Chapter 2, Section 2.5(a), "Adherence to the ... IFMQ Guide (IFPM Guide) is mandatory for fire program officers, fire specialists and fire project leaders." Furthermore, Section 2.5(b) states that "Self-governance compacts, contracts or mutual aid agreement standards ... will not be less than NWCG and IFMQ (IFPM Guide) standards. Consequently, IFPM is addressed in existing BIA policy, and will be observed when developing or reviewing qualification standards for new or existing positions, in order to meet or exceed IFPM requirements.

Once this office has guidance from the Interagency Implementation Team, it will be essential that Human Resource Departments be involved in this implementation process as plans to transition and convert encumbered GS-460/462 key positions to the GS-401 series by the deadline must be made. The Interagency Implementation Group will develop guidance to assist Servicing Personnel Offices in this task.

An implementation subgroup has also been developed to define a consistent interagency procedure for determining Program Complexity, a key element in defining appropriate staffing and grade levels. The Bureau already has complexity ratings but some adjustment to the match Interagency Standards may be necessary. People in the key positions at a unit that changes Program Complexity will have until the 2009 deadline to meet any new standards.

The above mentioned memorandums, the IFPM Standard and related information may be found on the internet at http://www.nifc.gov/training_qual/IFPM/ifpm.htm.

If you have further questions, you may contact Dave Koch, National Training Officer at (208) 387-5577 or via email at dave_koch@nifc.gov.

Attachment