



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Division of Forestry

JUN 19 2006

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: Clarification of Motor Vehicle Operation Policy for the Wildland Fire Program

A new Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Motor Vehicle Operation Policy was issued on May 3, 2006. This memorandum provides clarification regarding implementation of that policy within the BIA Wildland Fire Program.

The BIA Motor Vehicle Operation Policy provides direction for Indian Affairs motor vehicle operators. There have been recent questions from the field as to whether this policy applies to our non-BIA federal and non-federal cooperators that respond to wildland fires in Indian Country. Each year a large number of our cooperators respond to assist with our wildland fires. These individuals are "resource ordered" through the interagency wildland fire dispatch system. These cooperator individuals include and are not limited to non-federal partners such as state wildland fire personnel and rural or volunteer fire departments; other federal agencies such as Bureau of Reclamation and United States Geological Survey; international firefighters such as Canadian and Australian individuals; Administratively Determined (ADs) hires from non-BIA agencies, and; other agency federally retained contractors such as helicopter pilots and fuel truck drivers. Individuals assist from throughout the nation and the number of individuals required each year is dependent on the fire situation. There is no way to identify in advance which individuals will respond to assist on a particular incident. Therefore, it is impractical to secure a driving record for these responders and issue a BIA Motor Vehicle Operator Authorization Card. Without the aid of these cooperators each year, the BIA would not be able to fulfill its trust responsibility for wildland fire protection.

With respect to the BIA Wildland Fire Program the BIA, Motor Vehicle Operation Policy applies only to individuals that are Indian Affairs employees as defined in the policy. It does not apply to our federal and non-federal cooperators that respond to wildland fires on Indian lands.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Lyle Carlile, Chief, Branch of Fire Management at 208-387-5575