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BIA WILDFIRE PREVENTION  
TECHNICAL GUIDE # 8  
Version 1.0

**BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
MANAGING WILDLAND FIRE  
PREVENTION EDUCATION  
TEAMS TECHNICAL GUIDE**

OFFICE OF TRUST SERVICES  
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT  
Branch of Wildland Fire Management

## **FOREWORD**

This Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Wildfire Prevention Technical Guide provides standards, background, and guidance, for working with Fire Prevention Education Teams (FPET). It is based on Chapter 8 of the 2018 BIA Wildfire Prevention Handbook (90 IAM 5-H).

Human activity causes many wildfires on Indian Lands each year. The BIA recognizes the need for wildfire prevention and funds wildfire prevention positions across Indian Country to reduce this risk. Occasionally conditions occur that overwhelm these local resources. FPETs offer a surge capacity to deal with temporary increases in fire danger or occurrence.

The intended users of this guide are any Tribal or BIA Agency personnel needing assistance in working with an FPET to conduct wildfire prevention activities.

**Contents**

- I. Introduction..... 1
- II. What an FPET Can Do ..... 2
- III. Virtual FPETs ..... 3
- IV. When to Order a FPET ..... 4
- V. Estimating FPET Funding Needs..... 4
- VI. How to Order a FPET ..... 5
- VII. Getting the Most Out of the FPET ..... 6
- VIII. Cultural Awareness ..... 9
- IX. Participating on a FPET ..... 10
- Appendix A..... 11

# **I. INTRODUCTION**

As extreme wildland fire conditions approach or worsen, wildland fire wildfire prevention education is often overlooked as a tool to increase public safety. Wildland Fire Prevention Education Teams (FPET) can significantly reduce human caused wildfires. The FPET provides a temporary increase in skilled mobile personnel for fire wildfire prevention and education activities. Teams can be ordered to support a variety of situations affecting large or small geographic areas. A FPET may be requested at the local (or zone), state, region, or national levels. These teams are designed to supplement, not replace, local wildfire prevention and education programs/efforts on a short-term basis.

## **WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION TEAM STANDARDS**

Standards are an effective way to communicate what is essential and important for any activity.

### **Timely**

Wildland FPETs are best used in advance of a crisis. Managers should plan ahead so that the FPET has time to travel, organize and analyze the assignment.

### **Truthful**

Wildland FPET products must be founded in truthful communication. They must not use intentionally misleading, exaggerated, or half-true claims to convey their messages. Care is needed when using absolute terms such as “always” and “never”; understanding that there can often be exceptions.

### **Analytical**

Wildland FPETs must do a thorough analysis of the fire problem prior to implementing an action plan. Agencies and Tribes need to provide access to a wide range of data to assist the FPET in developing a clear picture.

### **Inclusive**

FPETs will need to reach out to the Tribes and special interest groups identified by the host in developing their plans and conducting their activities.

### **Collaborative**

There are often interagency partners present in Indian Country. These other organizations are often eager to help, and their participation can greatly increase the effectiveness of the FPET’s activities.

## **Fiscally Responsible**

FPETs should have a clear understanding of the available budget and any restrictions on their activities. This is best communicated in their Delegation of Authority.

## **II. WHAT AN FPET CAN DO**

FPETs can be used to produce specialized wildfire prevention products or conduct accelerated wildfire prevention efforts (such as supporting arson investigations and wildfire prevention messaging campaigns). Some examples of effective ways to use FPETs in Indian Country are to:

- Document, illustrate, and communicate the severity of the situation.
- Communicate with various Tribal stakeholders to gain their involvement in promoting wildfire prevention.
- Facilitate community awareness and education of fire danger and impacts on outdoor burning.
- Coordinate announcement of restrictions and closures.
- Increase awareness of fire danger prior to and during a large event.
- Provide a “surge” workforce prior to and during a large event.
- Coordinate and/or develop special fire wildfire prevention campaigns for Tribal Jurisdictional Areas and Reservations.
- Promote public and personal responsibility regarding fire wildfire prevention in the WUI, such as Firewise community protection efforts.
- Conduct wildfire prevention education training for the home units.
- Develop customized printed materials with general and specific wildfire prevention messages.
- Assist Incident Management Teams (IMT) in accomplishing their objectives.
- Working with the public to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans/Equivalents.
- Promote the public reporting of anonymous tips during periods of increased arson activity.

### III. VIRTUAL FPETS

In 2020, with numerous closed reservations and state quarantine restrictions nationwide, some BIA Regions, Agencies and Tribes experimented with virtual FPETs. This creative solution successfully allowed for the development and delivery of wildfire prevention products and services even though it wasn't possible to be present in a "boots on the ground" status.

With the COVID -19 pandemic still in progress and other pandemics likely in the future, the virtual FPET is a viable tool. The make-up of the virtual FPET is flexible, the only required position is the Prevention Team Leader (PETL). Normally the PETL will need at least one or two Prevention Team Members (PETMs) and possibly an Information Officer (PIOF or PIO2). Other positions that might be useful include a Technical Specialist (Graphics Specialist), Purchasing Officer or Contracting Officer, and possibly a Finance Section Chief (FSC3) or Cost Unit Leader (COST).

The virtual FPET will continue to need a local contact(s) or liaison to provide information and guidance when virtual sources are unavailable. Most of the other standards for FPETs can easily be adapted or used directly for the virtual FPET.

Some of the products and services these virtual FPETs can provide include:

- analyzing opportunities for distributing prevention messages,
- developing products for printing and local distribution,
- social media postings,
- conducting virtual community meetings,
- developing messaging campaigns,
- conducting interviews with local media and
- developing and ordering billboards.

Additional tips for utilizing virtual teams:

- Team members need access to a virtual meeting platform that all members can access. i.e WebEX, Zoom, Microsoft Teams
- Team members need the ability to share and view electronic files
- Each team member will need reliable and consistent internet connection
- The team needs a list of local contacts and resources that they may be reach out to.

## **IV. WHEN TO ORDER A FPET**

To be most effective FPETs should be ordered in advance of a crisis. Regions, Agencies, and Tribes should plan ahead and develop some clearly identified local thresholds prior to needing the team. The Regional WUI/Wildfire Prevention Specialist should be consulted early in the decision-making process.

BIA Regions, BIA Agencies, and Tribes should develop guidelines for ordering FPETs. These thresholds should include a mixture of fire danger indices, significantly elevated human caused fire occurrence, or large outdoor events under very high to extreme fire danger.

Some examples of criteria to include as thresholds are:

- Unique large-scale events when fire danger could be high to extreme.
- Abnormally high number of human-caused ignitions
- Fire danger indices approaching the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Drought indices at a moderate level, with a forecast to worsen.
- Any combination of these

The thresholds should be included in the preparedness plan or Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP).

## **V. ESTIMATING FPET FUNDING NEEDS**

Regardless of the funding source, a budget needs to be developed for the activation of the FPET. The exact dollar amounts will depend on local variables, work to be performed, and length of assignment. The Regional WUI/Wildfire Prevention Specialist must be consulted to develop accurate cost estimates. A Severity Request Wildfire Prevention Planning spreadsheet is available from the Regional WUI/Wildfire Prevention Specialists, and can also be found online at:

<https://www.indianaffairs.gov/bia/ots/dfwfm/bwfm/responding-wildfires>.

The FPET budget must include:

- Base salary, fringe benefits, and overtime for the anticipated FPET staffing configuration including locality pay if applicable. Any personnel costs associated with the team liaison and local support should also be included.
- Costs for mobilization (airfare, local transportation, rental vehicles, and shipment of equipment) during dispatch and demobilization.
- Per diem and lodging estimates.

- All other costs associated with the FPET activation, such as equipment/office rentals, office supplies, phone/fax services, event fees, printing, and wildfire prevention and education materials.

When developing a FPET budget, a standard twelve hours/day should be used. For two-week activations, planners should use ten days at eight hours/day for a base, plus four hours per day of overtime for the ten days. There should be an additional four days planned at twelve hours/day of overtime for each person. Additionally, two days at twelve hours each for travel should be included per person. Overtime for travel may vary by the day of week and time of release. A Superintendent, FMO, Regional Duty Officer, or Tribal Officer may authorize a longer duty day for a limited period of time if justified; however, these additional costs should be closely monitored. The work schedule must be clearly explained to the Team Leader during the initial team meeting with the host unit supervisor. It should also be included in the Delegation of Authority

## **VI. HOW TO ORDER A FPET**

The Regional WUI/Wildfire Prevention Specialist can provide guidance regarding the resource ordering process. Teams may be requested at the local, regional, or national level. The decision about which level of team should be requested is based on the availability of personnel, and the skills and expertise needed. The Regional WUI/Wildfire Prevention Specialist can also help the local unit with determining the level of team to order. If a national FPET is needed, the Geographic Area Coordination Center's (GACC) Wildfire Prevention Liaison will normally coordinate the resource order.

The preferred method of staffing and ordering a FPET is to order the Team Leader (PETL) first. Once the order has been filled, the requesting unit and the PETL discuss the situation and expectations for the assignment. Then, the PETL and host unit coordinate on ordering the remaining team members as needed to address the objectives.

Resource orders for FPETs are handled in the Incident Resource Ordering Capability (IROC). Resource orders are placed through the local dispatch system. Occasionally, local individuals or other trainee candidates may be assigned to the FPET at the request of the ordering unit. If National FPETs are ordered, the National Interagency Fire Center's *National Mobilization Guide*, Chapter 20 - National Fire Wildfire Prevention/Education Teams should be consulted for information on the procedure. The *National Mobilization Guide* can be found online at: <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/mobguide/index.html>.



## **VII. GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE FPET**

For FPETs to be successful, the Regional WUI/Wildfire Prevention Specialist and the ordering unit must actively assist the team before and during the dispatch. FPETs come well trained with a capability of performing a wide range of wildfire prevention work. However, to be most effective they need local assistance.

### **PLANNING**

Prior to ordering the FPET, the host unit should develop at least two or three specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-oriented objectives that will be placed in the Delegation of Authority. Upon arrival, these may be re-negotiated and expanded upon with the PETL. The Regional WUI/Wildfire Prevention Specialist will assist with the development of objectives for the FPET. An electronic copy of a FPET Delegation of Authority may be found online at: [https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dfwfm/bwfm/wildfire-wildfire\\_prevention-and-education/wildfire\\_prevention-resource-library](https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dfwfm/bwfm/wildfire-wildfire_prevention-and-education/wildfire_prevention-resource-library).

### **LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT**

#### **Base of Operations**

FPETs need to have a base of operations for the length of their assignment. It works best if this base of operations is uninterrupted during their activation, as they will have ongoing projects that may last for several days, plus team files.

A large conference room may be acceptable as a base of operations, as long as it has internet access and phone lines. Individual offices are good if available; although, some PETLs will prefer to have all the team personnel in a single room for collaboration and team building.

One option is for the team to operate out of their lodging, particularly if a meeting room and internet access are available.

#### **Internet, printers, copiers and telephones.**

FPETs need access to the Internet, printers, copiers and telephones to be effective. It is best to have these details researched and planned for before ordering the FPET. By pre-planning, the team can avoid long delays in becoming operational.

#### **Internet Access**

Internet access can present challenges when the team members aren't BIA employees. It will be important to coordinate with the local Information Technology (IT) Specialist long before the team is ordered. This coordination should be to gain an understanding of the options available for personnel from different organizations to access the Internet.

## **Printers and Copiers**

Non networked printers should not present an issue from a security point of view; however, the team members may need to have their IT shops install the drivers. The team will need to have access to a copier. The type and capability may be dependent on their objectives.

## **Telephone Access**

The team members may come equipped with their own cell phones; however, cellular access may not be adequate or available in remote areas. The host agency should investigate options for assigning the team phone lines and telephones for the duration of the assignment.

## **Lodging**

The FPET should come prepared to find their own lodging; however, many Reservations are in remote areas and the lodging options nearby may be limited. To help reduce travel time, the local unit should make contact with a nearby approved hotel/motel to secure an agreement to offer rooms to the team at federal government rates.

## **Purchasing**

Occasionally FPETs will need support from a Contract Specialist or warranted purchasing officer with a higher limit. The local unit should make contact with these individuals prior to the arrival of the team to give them advance notice.

## **Government Printing Office**

If any of the anticipated products of the FPET will be printed materials, the local unit should locate the servicing Government Printing Office (GPO) in advance. This will save time for the team.

## **CONFIGURATION**

The number of FPET team members depends on the work to be performed and the available funding. The most common method of determining the configuration of the team is to have a short discussion with the PETL about the assignment and obtain their input for the configuration of their team. Most teams usually consist of three to four members. FPET teams Normally consist of a PETL, Public Information Officer (PIOF/PIO2), and a PETM. Trainees or additional team members may be ordered as the situation dictates. Finance and Logistics personnel may be needed by large teams.

## **Local Liaisons**

In Indian Country, FPETs should have members that are familiar with native cultures or be assigned a readily available BIA Agency/Tribal representative/liaison as a cultural advisor. The local unit is responsible for identifying a BIA Agency/Tribal representative/liaison to work with the team before it arrives. The representative/liaison should be knowledgeable of the current situation, cultural values, expectations, BIA Agency/Tribal objectives, local resources that may be utilized, and so forth. This representative/liaison should also assist the team with identifying acceptable lodging and a temporary office location prior to the team's arrival. To facilitate this, the representative/liaison and the PETL should communicate as early as possible. This representative/liaison must be supported by their chain of command to pursue this duty for the duration of the FPET's tenure in Indian Country.

## **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

Before the FPET arrives, a Delegation of Authority DOA **must** be drafted, and the draft reviewed with the PETL. It is critical to develop clear objectives with the PETL prior to ordering the team. This is a two-way process that allows the PETL to contribute to their needs in the DOA. The FPET should be given a clear briefing with the PETL and an Agency/Tribal representative as to objectives and expectations before they begin their assignment. A DOA template is included in Appendix A. It can be revised as needed and the first page should be printed on Agency/Tribal letterhead.

## **THE IN-BRIEFING**

The FPET members must receive an in-briefing prior to starting their assignment. This in-briefing provides the host organization an opportunity to express their appreciation for the FPET's assistance and to relay their expectations. This briefing also provides the FPET members an opportunity to ask any questions and to explore possibilities for their assignment. The Briefing Checklist will help facilitate the FPET in-briefing process.

The Briefing Checklist can be found online at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dfwfm/bwfm/wildfire-wildfire-prevention-and-education/wildfire-prevention-resource-library>.

A review/monitoring process also needs to be established to verify that the ordering unit's objectives are being met. As a reminder, the FPET works for the BIA Agency or Tribe and the PETL does not override the direction of their assigned BIA Agency or Tribal manager.

Additionally, the following actions should also be taken to ensure FPET success:

- Transfer of command (transition in the event a second team is ordered) and/or close out procedures need to be identified up front. The maintenance of detailed records must be emphasized at all times. The FPET will be able to best meet the ordering unit's objectives when communications are clear and concise.
- Upon completion of the assignment, a close out/exit meeting should be held between the FPET and the ordering unit. This should be a two-way meeting where both the FPET and the ordering unit discuss how effective the assignment was in meeting the ordering unit's objectives, along with a review of all pertinent details. The BIA Agency/Tribal administrators and team liaison should attend the close-out/debriefing meeting.
- A closeout or final report should be required of each team and provided to the BIA Agency/Tribal administrator at the close out meeting. This report should describe the objectives and what was accomplished for each. It should also describe any efforts that worked well as well as those that did not and detail any incomplete projects with recommendations on how to complete them. Finally, it should contain any general recommendations from the FPET for the host unit. A recommended format for this report is provided online at: <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dfwfm/bwfm/wildfire-wildfire-prevention-and-education/wildfire-prevention-resource-library/bia-wildfire-prevention-handbook>.
- The FPET will supply detailed records of the dispatch and generate a close out report. All documents generated (minimum of two electronic and two hard copies) by the FPET should be made available; one each to the host unit and to the Regional WUI Wildfire prevention Specialist. The host unit must maintain all records of the assignment.
- The PETL should be evaluated by the assigned supervisor on the host unit. Likewise, the PETL should evaluate the performance of the team members.

## VIII. CULTURAL AWARENESS

Cultural awareness, which is the sensitivity and respect for traditional local values, is crucial to the success of any FPET, Arson Investigation Team, Firewise Community program, or wildfire prevention activity in Indian Country.

Keep in mind that this may be the first time some members of the FPET have spent any significant time on a reservation or immersed in native culture.

Team and/or project personnel should be briefed by the cultural staff as soon as possible. The members of the Tribal cultural staff are well equipped to identify cultural, legal, technical, administrative, and logistical concerns that might be vital to effective operations. The briefing should include any cultural rules of behavior that need to be respected during the assignment, such as events that are off limits to non-Tribal members, restricted areas, or inappropriate behaviors and activities. A local liaison with cultural knowledge can assist the team throughout the assignment in determining the most effective forms of community outreach and the

communities that will be most receptive to their efforts. If invited, the FPET should attend Powwows, Tribal fairs, softball tournaments, rodeos, and other similar events. Following a few simple guidelines will help increase the acceptance of the FPET, such as:

- Having the PETL attend Tribal council meetings to introduce the team/staff and the purpose and objectives of the visit.
- Setting up visits with the Tribal elders and cultural offices to discuss the team's mission.
- Attaching an interpreter(s) to the team/staff.
- Advising the PETL to include Tribal members and Tribal organizations to assist with team projects.
- Cautioning the team that they are present on the reservation as invited guests and to respect the Tribal culture and residents as they work.

## **IX. PARTICIPATING ON A FPET**

The participation of Tribal or BIA employees on FPETs has historically been low. Fire wildfire prevention and other qualified staff within the BIA and/or Tribal fire programs are encouraged to participate on local, state, regional, and national FPETs. To participate on a FPET, the recommended minimum training is listed below:

- P-101 Introduction to Fire Wildfire prevention

- P-310 Wildfire prevention Education Team Member

Once training is completed, the employee will need the qualification of PETM-Trainee added to their Fire Job Qualifications Card and have a task book initiated. Further experience is documented through the use of the PETM task book.

There are many trainees and qualified PETMs; however, many of these are not available or interested in participating on FPETs. To increase their chances of being selected for an assignment, interested, qualified, and trainee personnel should express their interest to their GACC Wildfire prevention Coordinator, Regional WUI/Wildfire prevention Specialist, and any PETLs they know.

# APPENDIX A

## Sample Delegation of Authority for Fire Prevention Education Teams

*[The following document is provided as a sample or basic template for Federal Agencies. Prevention actions may require many different approaches and delegations may take as many forms. This sample template is provided as a basic guide to developing a delegation, with the intent that the user edits the text to fit their local needs.]*

You, \_\_\_\_\_ are hereby delegated authority to serve as a Fire Prevention Education Team Leader for the \_\_\_\_\_ [Agency], starting on \_\_\_\_\_ and terminating on \_\_\_\_\_.  
The following conditions and expectations apply to this delegation.

### General Team Management

1. All operations are to be conducted in a manner that prioritizes the safety of yourself and your team. All members of your team must observe a "Zero Tolerance" for any careless or unsafe action. As Team Leader, please take appropriate actions to insure that everyone involved in this assignment knows and follows established safety procedures.
2. You are to ensure the team adheres to all federal, state and local laws, regulation and ordinances. These laws include, but are not limited to: state motor vehicle operations regulations, cultural and archaeological protection laws, health and welfare regulations, and environmental protection and hazardous materials laws.
3. You will provide for a harassment-free work environment that treats all team members and contacts with respect.
4. Your team is authorized to make necessary micro - purchases to support the team's work. All purchases must be in accordance with applicable purchasing laws and agency regulations. All purchases must be within the established team budget and are subject to pre- approval by \_\_\_\_\_. Purchases beyond the micro purchase threshold must be made through the designated procurement officer.
5. Team members must be sensitive to local political and social issues related to public land management and use. It is imperative that relations with the public be maintained or improved by the Team and that all actions of the team have positive public relations as an underlying theme. Your team must be sensitive to and respectful of any Tribal customs, issues or concerns.
6. You are authorized to incur expenses for travel, per diem, salary, support, supplies, products, and, prevention materials for your team up to \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Expenses are to be charge to: \_\_\_\_\_ [Accounting Code].
7. The established supervisor for your assignment is \_\_\_\_\_. All reports, team products, and unused supplies are to be left with the assigned supervisor.

## Logistics

1. Your team will work out of the \_\_\_\_\_ office. The on-site supervisor is \_\_\_\_\_. He/she will assist your team with phones, access to printers and copiers, computer connections, and facility access. Lodging is available at \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Established work hours are from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Longer shifts may be authorized by your assigned supervisor as needed. You are to provide the opportunity for a minimum of 1-hour of rest for every 2-hours of work or travel. [*Established work hours should be negotiated with the PETL.*]

## Documentation

1. Establish and maintain a record-keeping process to provide an account of the team's activities, including contacts made; information distributed; recommendations for future needs; lessons learned; and, daily activity logs.
2. Track expenses for the team's operations, including lodging costs; salary estimates; transportation costs; rental vehicle expenses; operational expenditures; and, purchases. Establish and maintain a file for copies of receipts and any other documentation for all expenses.

## Public Information

1. Work closely with Agency Public Affairs Officers and representatives of other agencies and jurisdictions. Keep them informed and work closely and proactively with them. Coordinate all media releases through \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Your team is to handle local and national media contacts in coordination with \_\_\_\_\_. Political contacts and congressional inquiries are to be referred to \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ will identify who will respond to these requests based on the issue(s).
3. Social media accounts for your team [*are or are not*] authorized. If used, all posts to social media must be coordinated with your assignment supervisor and/or the Agency Public Affairs Office.

## **Liaisons and Contacts**

1. The following individuals are designated as Agency contacts for this assignment. [*include phone numbers and e-mail addresses*].

Daily supervision:

On-site needs:

Procurement:

Public Affairs:

Tribal Liaison:

Local Agency Contacts:

## **Expectations and Objectives**

*[This is where the host agency spells out what they want the team to accomplish. The following are some common prevention activities. The objectives used will need to be written clearly and concisely. These should be developed with the Prevention Education Team Leader, keeping in mind the assignment lasts only 14 days. ]*

1. Special events.
2. Printed products.
3. Action plans, Prevention plans.
4. Media campaigns.
5. Risk assessments.
6. Working with local trainees.
7. Many other activities.

## **Close out and Follow up**

1. You are to provide performance evaluations for your team members and any trainees assigned to your team. For trainees, you are to document satisfactorily completed tasks in their position task books.
2. You are to provide your assigned supervisor with a closeout report and copies of any records described under Section C. Documentation, upon demobilization.
3. Your team will conduct a closeout briefing with the assigned supervisor prior to demobilization.



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[Authorizing Official's signature]                      [Title]                      [Date]

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[Add as many other signatures as needed]                      [Title]                      [Date]

The terms of this Delegation of Authority are accepted by:

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[Team Leader's Signature][Title]                      [Date]