



WILDFIRE INCIDENT RESPONSE PREMIUM PAY

AN IMPLEMENTATION AND FIELD GUIDE

AS OF JUNE 2025

DEPARTMENT OF THE
INTERIOR

Background

On March 15, 2025 the FY 2025 full-year continuing resolution authorized the Interior and Agriculture departments to provide a new category of premium pay to federal employees who respond to wildfire incidents and meet specific criteria, which are described in detail within this guide.

This new category of premium pay—referred to as Incident Response Premium pay (IRP) permanently adds to current federal compensation policy, a fixed daily rate for responders who participate in the qualified wildland fire activities below:

- Wildfire Suppression Activities (after 36 hours)
- Prescribed fire
- Severity incidents
- Any activity designated as qualifying by the Secretary of the Interior or Secretary of Agriculture

IRP will be applied to any deployment of qualifying suppression incidents, prescribed fires, or a severity incident; this does not include an initial response in which a wildfire is contained within 36 hours. Severity incident refers to an incident in which a covered employee is pre-positioned in an area in which conditions indicate there is a high risk of wildfires. Wildland firefighters, and other employees (e.g., militia), will receive this premium pay for a qualifying incident outside their official duty station or for an eligible incident within their official duty station when they are assigned to a fire camp or other designated field location.

Key Features of IRP:

Daily Fixed Rate: Employees receive an additional fixed daily rate equal to 4.5 times their hourly rate of basic pay, rather than a percentage-based overtime calculation, currently capped at \$9,000 for 2025.

Expanded Scope: For the first time, prescribed fire is included in the premium pay provision, recognizing that they often involve long deployments, hazardous conditions, and intense workloads.

Personnel Coverage: Applies to all other federal personnel meeting specified criteria described within this document.

Compensation parity: The provision is another step to reduce compensation disparities amongst personnel across various types of fire response work and ensures more equitable treatment across wildland fire-related deployments for all who participate and meet the qualifications within this guide.

Intended Audience:

This is a Department of Interior (DOI) field guide; intended to aid in the implementation of the IRP provisions and to provide current interpretation of the law, clarification and technical guidance for employees of the DOI.

The contents within this guide will be updated as changes or additional determinations are made by DOI leadership and a digest of any changes will be listed in Chapter 6.

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Glossary

Assignment: A task given to a person or team to perform based on operational objectives defined in the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER): BAER assessments are emergency wildland fire suppression activities in response to the wildfire incident.

Containment: Outstanding Item.....Need a consensus from Fire Director or OPM definition of intent of bill, and how it will be handled for calculating IRP. OWF indicates they does not have direction....*OPM gave Interior and USDA the ability to have agency management determine the starting time for an incident response and the end point when the incident is considered to be contained.*

Deployed/Deployment: To apply the IRP pay provision, OPM defines the terms “deployed” and “deployment” as the temporary positioning of personnel at a designated location or locations for the purpose of responding to a qualifying incident that requires the employee to have at least one overnight stay at such designated location(s).

A work assignment in connection with a qualifying incident that is accomplished in one day without the need for an overnight stay is not a deployment for IRP pay purposes.

Incident Assignment: An assignment to an incident that requires a length of commitment.

Initial Attack Zone: As deemed appropriate, the Agencies may, by agreement in Operating Plans, establish reciprocal initial attack zones for lands of intermingled or adjoining protection responsibility. Within such zones, a Supporting Agency will, upon request or voluntarily, take initial attack action in support of the Protecting Agency the Agencies may, by Agreement in Operating Plans, establish reciprocal initial attack zones for lands of intermingled or adjoining protection responsibility. Within such zones, a Supporting Agency will, upon request or voluntarily, take initial attack action in support of the Protecting Agency.

Local Area: Geographic response area where people can reasonably be expected to travel to their workplace daily for management, response and resource responsibility and activities.

Orders: An assignment given to a resource(s) for an incident related response.

Examples of order documentation include, but are not limited to: Resource Order, Burn Plan, eGov Travel Authorization, written Supervisor and/or Rx Burn Boss approval

Office Worksite/Duty Station/Local unit: The DOI uses the definition from the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) duty station determinations. Per 5 CFR, § 531.605(a), your official worksite (e.g., duty station) is defined as:

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the official worksite is the location of an employee's position of record where the employee regularly performs his or her duties.

(2) If the employee's work involves recurring travel or the employee's work location varies on a recurring basis, the official worksite is the location where the work activities of the employee's position of record are based, as determined by the employing agency, subject to the requirement.

(3) An agency must document an employee's official worksite on an employee's Notification of Personnel Action (Standard Form 50 or equivalent).

On site: Personnel assigned to work at their primary incident location such as an Incident Command Post (ICP), Dispatch Center or any other camp where they are expected to interact "in-person" with other incident personnel on a day-to-day basis. These individuals are typically in travel status.

Prescribed Fire: A wildland fire originating from a planned ignition in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations to meet specific objectives.

Prescribed Fire Treatment/Burn Plan: A plan required for each fire application ignited by management. Plans are documents prepared by qualified personnel, approved by the agency administrator, and include criteria for the conditions under which the fire will be conducted (a prescription). Plan content varies among the agencies.

Remain Overnight (RON): Used to indicate that personnel are authorized or required to stay overnight at a location, typically while assigned to an incident. This could be in fire or spike camp, field location, hotel, or other lodging and employees' home/residence, and it often ties into pay, per diem, and logistical planning.

Remote Work: An individual, group, or team who are in travel status to a remote location such as an office or hotel and are required to interact with incident personnel electronically or in-person in support of one or more incidents. These individuals are typically in travel status unless the incident is at their home unit.

Rest and Recuperation (R&R): R&R refers to a period of leave granted to DOI responders, often for a period of 3 days, to relax and recuperate from their duties.

R&R In place and/or On Incident: Obtained an extension to remain at incident or away from home for the duration of the R&R period. *ref. NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management (SIIBM, "Yellow book"); ch10, p14*

Severity Incident: An incident where an employee is pre-positioned in an area where conditions indicate there is a high risk of wildfires.

Training (Classroom and preplanned controlled event): An event dealing with a scheduled activity in a classroom setting or other controlled environment that provides instruction so as to make attendees fit or qualified for incident support activities.

Training Assignment (On the job or at incident): An event dealing with a person's experience and proficiency while performing assigned duties.

Virtual Assignment: Individuals assigned to an incident that may work independently in a location like a home or work office. No face-to-face interaction is expected other than electronic interface. These personnel may work full time or part time in support of an incident. These individuals are not in travel status.

Ch. 1

Qualifying Events: Suppression & Severity

Initial Attack (IA)

Qualifying Action	Reference	Entitled to IRP
Deployed to a local area qualified IA incident (within 36-hours rule)	On local unit, singular incident and RON at residence or quarters	No
Responding to consecutive local area incidents (after 36-hour rule)	On local unit AND assigned to a fire camp or designated field location	Yes, after 36-hours.
Deployed to an out of area qualified IA incident <i>*36-hour IA window does not apply to out of area resources or on severity orders away from local unit.</i>	Away from local unit OR under severity orders	Yes
Responding to consecutive off unit IA incidents <i>*36-hour IA window does not apply to out of area resources or on severity orders away from local unit.</i>	Away from local unit OR under severity orders	Yes
Assigned to a fire camp or designated field location	At local unit, singular incident, less than 36-hours	No
IA Zone/Local Area/Local Unit (incl. other protection areas)	RON at residence or quarters	No
Virtual/Remote Support	At local unit	No
Duty Officer	At local unit	No

Full Suppression/Extended Attack

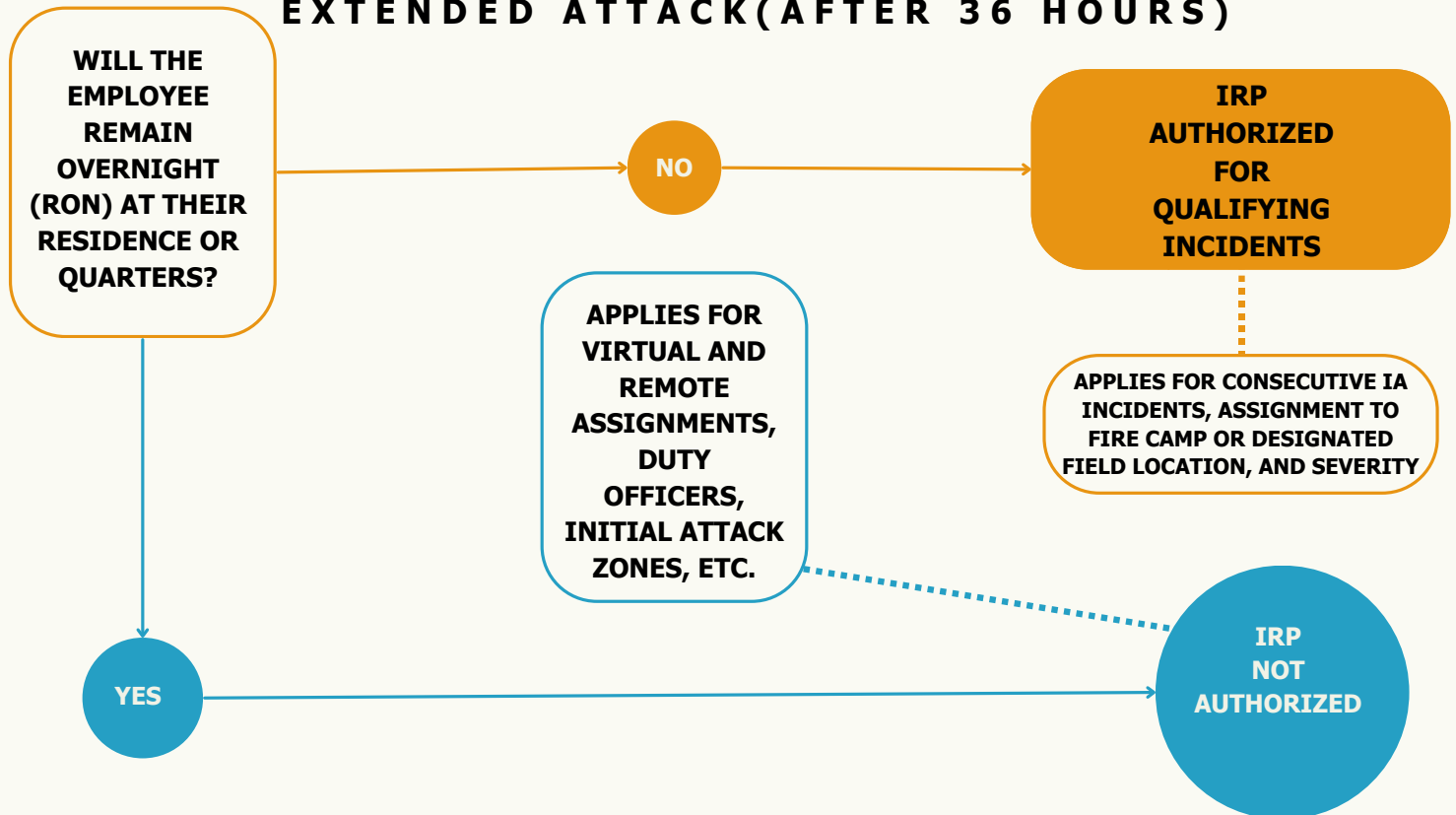
Qualifying Action	Reference	Entitled to IRP
Deployed to a qualified incident	RON away from local unit	Yes
Deployed to a local area qualified incident	RON at residence or quarters	No
Responding to consecutive incidents, assigned to a fire camp or designated field location	At local unit	Yes
Responding to consecutive incidents, assigned to a fire camp or designated field location	Away from local unit, under severity orders	Yes
Virtual/Remote Support	At local unit	No
Duty Officer	At local unit	No

Severity/Pre-position

Qualifying Action	Reference	Entitled to IRP
Deployed on severity orders	Away from the local unit	Yes
Deployed to a qualified incident while on severity assignment	Responding to Initial Attack incidents	Yes
Deployed to a local area severity order	RON at residence or quarters	No
Assigned to a camp or designated field location while on Severity or orders	On local unit, and RON at designated field location	Yes
Assigned as a duty officer	At local unit	No
Staged at local unit office	At local unit	No
Virtual/Remote Support	At local unit	No

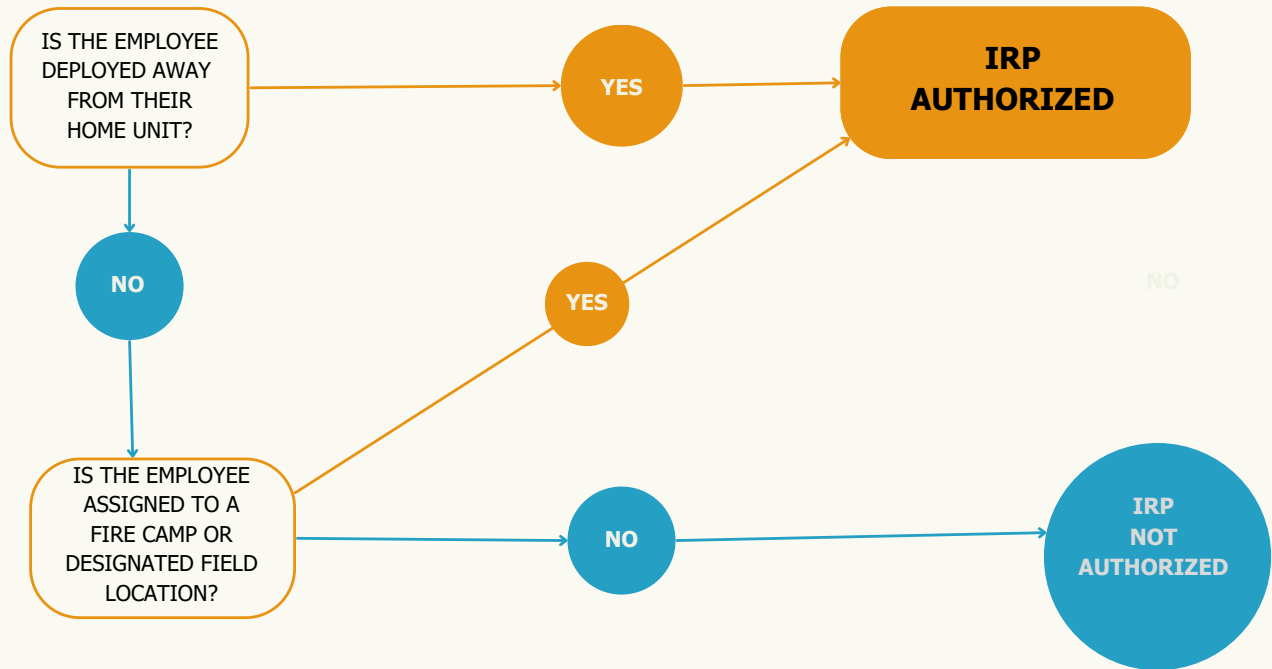
INCIDENT RESPONSE PAY

SUPPRESSION - INITIAL AND
EXTENDED ATTACK(AFTER 36 HOURS)



INCIDENT RESPONSE PAY

SEVERITY



Ch. 1

Qualifying Events: Prescribed Fire (Rx) and Training

PRESCRIBED FIRE (Rx)

Qualifying Item	Reference	Entitled to IRP
<p>Deployed to a qualifying Rx–</p> <p>Rx assignment includes all activities planned within a given treatment window and must include active ignition.</p> <p>Does NOT apply any portion of a separate window where ignition isn't planned within the same timeframe (<i>example: prep work done 6mo in advance of ignition would not qualify for IRP, etc.</i>)</p>	Away from the local unit	Yes
<p>Deployed to a local area qualifying Rx–</p> <p>Rx assignment includes all activities planned within a given treatment window and must include active ignition.</p> <p>Does NOT apply any portion of a separate window where ignition isn't planned within the same timeframe (<i>example: prep work done 6mo in advance of ignition would not qualify for IRP, etc.</i>)</p>	On local unit, and RON at designated field location	Yes
<p>Deployed to a local area qualifying Rx–</p> <p>Rx assignment includes all activities planned within a given treatment window and must include active ignition.</p> <p>Does NOT apply any portion of a separate window where ignition isn't planned within the same timeframe (<i>example: prep work done 6mo in advance of ignition would not qualify for IRP, etc.</i>)</p>	On local unit, and RON residence or local quarters	No

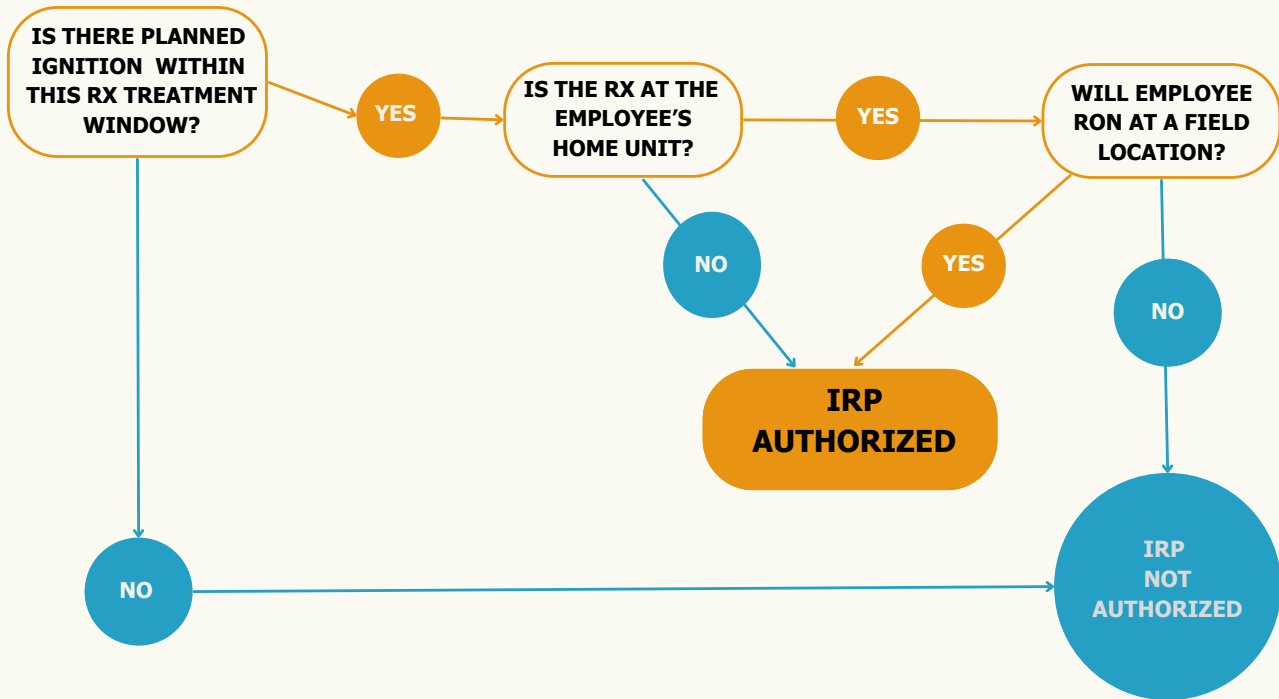
Mechanical Fuels Treatment	At or away from local unit	No
Biological/Chemical Fuels Treatments	At or away from local unit	No
Virtual/Remote	At local unit	No

PRESCRIBED FIRE TRAINING

Qualifying Item	Reference	Entitled to IRP
Rx Fire Training: Classroom or Training Center with no ignition	At or away from local unit	No
Rx Fire Training: Classroom or Training Center with controlled ignition exercises	At or away from local unit	Yes, only on days including ignition qualify for IRP
Trainee Assignment on qualified Rx project	Away from local unit	Yes
Trainee Assignment on qualified Rx - designated field location	At local unit, and RON at designated field location	Yes

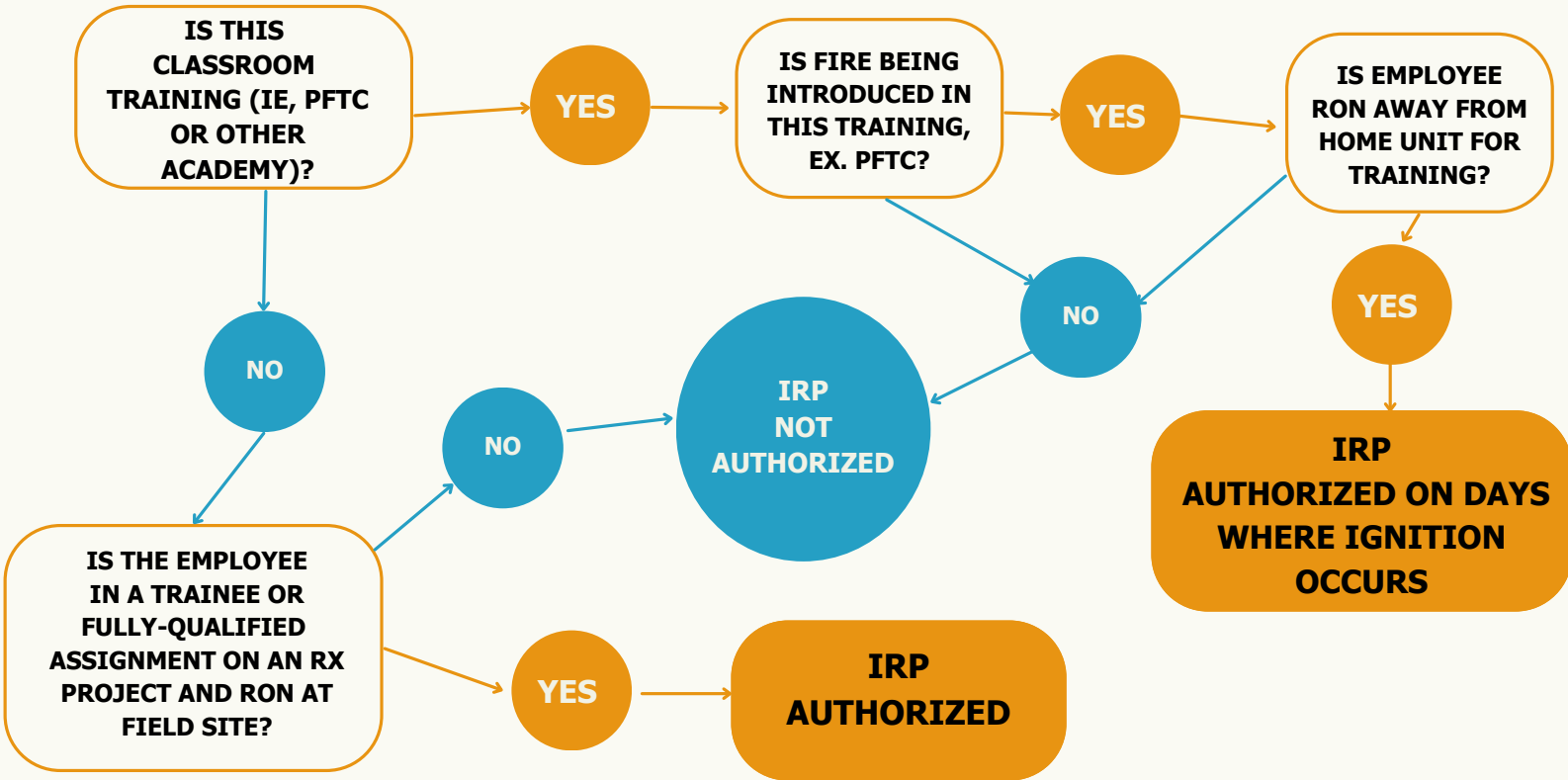
INCIDENT RESPONSE PAY

PRESCRIBED FIRE RX



INCIDENT RESPONSE PAY

PREScribed FIRE TRAINING



Ch. 1

Qualifying Events: Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) & Other Designations

BAER Team

Qualifying Item	Reference	Entitled to IRP
Deployed to a qualified incident - Emergency Stabilization	IRP would apply if the BAER assignment is an initial assessment on an extended wildfire incident (after initial attack 36-hour period) and the employee is prevented from going to their residence or quarters at the end of their shift.	Yes
Deployed to a qualified incident - Suppression	IRP would apply if the BAER assignment is an initial assessment on an extended wildfire incident (after initial attack 36-hour period) and the employee is prevented from going to their residence or quarters at the end of their shift.	Yes
Deployed on a BAER order to an incident at or past containment	BAER assignments post containment will not qualify for IRP. (BAR related)	No

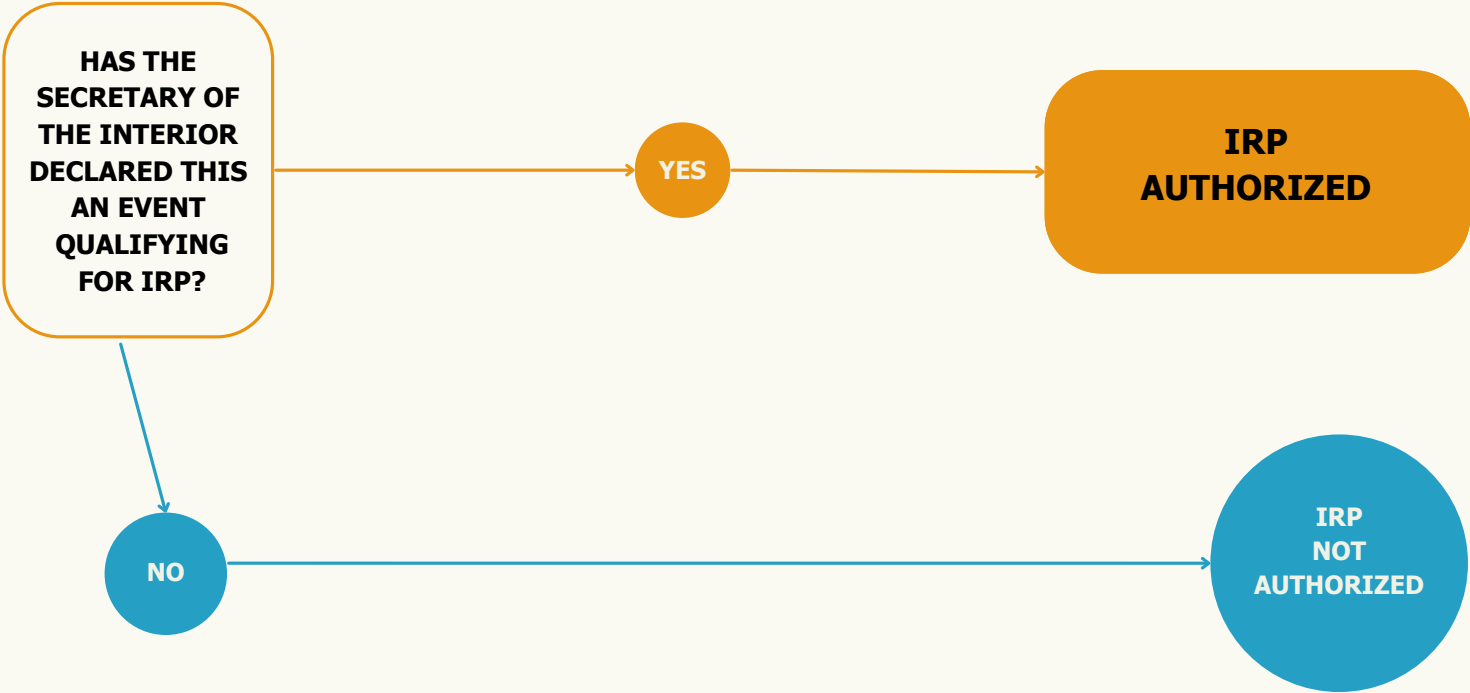
Other Designations

Qualifying Item	Reference	Entitled to IRP
All Hazard/All Risk	ESF Activation	No (Yes*)

IRP on FEMA and All Risk/ESF activations may only be approved by the Secretary of DOI on a case-by-case basis.

INCIDENT RESPONSE PAY

ALL-RISK/ESF

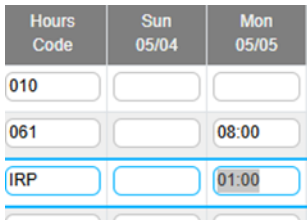


Ch. 2 Travel and R&R

Travel and IRP

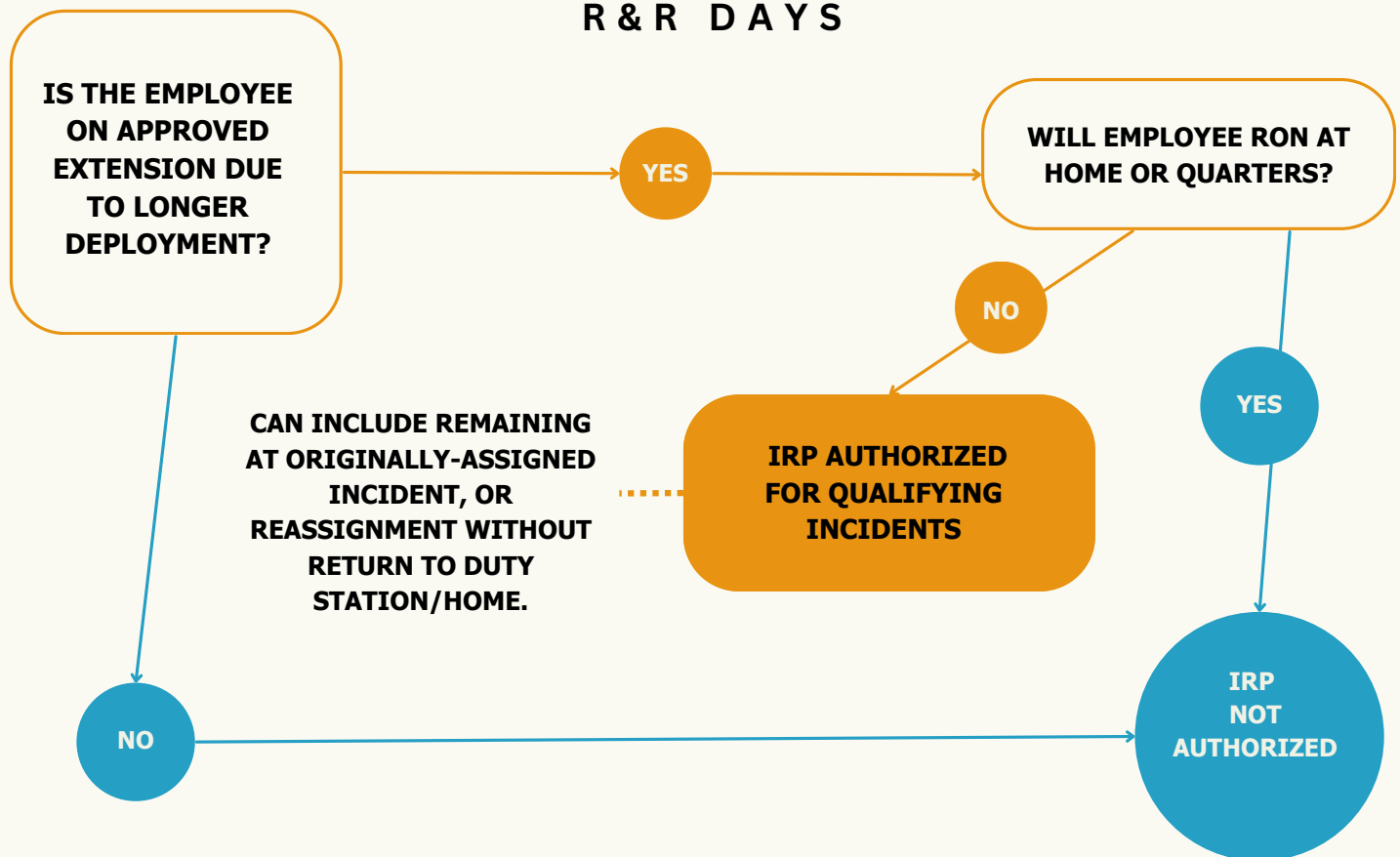
Qualifying Item	Reference	Entitled to IRP
Travel time	On qualifying suppression incidents after the initial 36-hour period, includes travel time home from to an incident.	Yes
Travel related to a qualified incident listed in Ch.1 (excluding the IA 36-hour example rule)	Travel time, starts on mobilization day	Yes
Rx incident	Travel time, starts on mobilization day	Yes
Return travel authorized	Travel day(s) to return home from a qualified incident	Yes
Travel between incidents	Only eligible for qualifying incidents	Yes
Travel time between your official duty station and the qualifying incident	Travel time counts as covered time on a calendar day that triggers eligibility for the daily IRP payment	Yes

R&R and IRP

Qualifying Item	Reference	Entitled to IRP
Deployed to a qualified incident	RON away from the local unit	Yes
R&R at incident	On an approved extension due to longer deployment	Yes
Employee should document R&R days to provide clarity to auditors and reviewers.		061 code through PP17 06R code beginning PP18
Returned home from deployment	At local unit	No
Deployed to a qualified incident	RON away from the local unit	Yes

INCIDENT RESPONSE PAY

R & R DAYS



Ch. 3 Timekeeping

QuickTime

Employees should enter eligible IRP pay in QuickTime on a daily basis for each calendar day IRP is authorized.

Input the quantity "1:00" associated with each day of IRP qualified day, as depicted below. IRP is a daily rate, and only 1 hour per eligible day is needed.

For example, if you're eligible for IRP pay each day of a week, your timesheet would look like this:

Hours Code	Sun 05/04	Mon 05/05	Tue 05/06	Wed 05/07	Thu 05/08	Fri 05/09	Sat 05/10	Total
IRP	01:00	01:00	01:00	01:00	01:00	01:00	01:00	7:00

Containment provision

OPM gave Interior and USDA the ability to have agency management determine the starting time for an incident response and the end point when the incident is considered to be contained. IRP is not authorized after the incident is considered to be contained.

Documentation of IRP

Employees should document which days they are entitled to IRP on their locally approved timesheet.

In general, locally approved fire timekeeping documents are acceptable for recording IRP such as, IRP i.e. CTR, OF-288, etc.

Employees should also ensure that they or their timekeeper have a system in place to store documentation showing they were on a qualified incident.

Backup documentation, in addition to local time keeping documents can include, but are not limited to:

Resource Order, Burn Plan, eGov Travel Authorization, written Supervisor and/or Rx Burn Boss approval, and other approved orders

Employees should always defer to their local timekeeping policies established by each local unit.

Additional resources for established personnel pay provisions:

[Yellow Book - NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management](#)

Ch.

Calculating Pay

Calculating IRP

Incident Response Premium pay is calculated on a daily basis.

The daily rate is a lump sum and is equal to 4.5 times your hourly rate of basic pay (including locality pay), subject to a daily rate limit. It is payable for each day that you meet eligibility requirements. **The yearly limit for IRP is currently capped at \$9,000.**

There are no partial payments for IRP pay; if eligibility requirements are met for part of the day, the full daily rate is paid. While IRP pay is available to all federal employees, the rate of pay cannot exceed that of a GS- or GW-10, Step 10 hourly rate or WG 10 step 2 based on your official duty station location and the pay schedule that applies to you (i.e. locality pay).

Below is a link to a calculator to assist in projecting an employee's daily rate IRP pay for GW, GS and WG employees using the Rest of U.S. (RUS) pay scales.

[2025 WLFF Pay Calculator](#)

Links to new Wildland Firefighter Pay Scales can be found here:

[2025 WLFF\(GW\) Locality Pay Tables](#)

[Federal Wage System \(FWS/WG\) WLFF Salary Tables](#)

[2025 General Schedule Pay Scales](#)

Ch. 5 Budget and Coding

The budgetary examples below are the most common, but changes and updates are possible.

Employees should always confirm with their local budget office as to what code is being use at any given time.

In general, an ordering entity for the assignment will dictate where you charge IRP line item. Where reasonable, IRP should be charged to the qualifying event.

FY25 DOI Agency Budget Codes:

ACTIVITY	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	DOI/OS
Suppression	AF200; AF240	LF200, LF240	FF200, FF240	PF200, PF240, PF260	DF200
Severity	AF210	LF210	FF210	PF210	N/A
Emergency Stabilization	AF220	LF220	FF220	PF220	N/A
Fuels (Rx)	AF310; AF312	LF310, LF312	FF310, FF312	PF310, PF312	DF310

Ch. 6 FAQs

DOI FAQs as of May 2025:

Who can receive IRP pay?

All federal employees are eligible for IRP pay. This includes permanent, temporary-seasonal, support, and collateral duty employees. While IRP pay is only available to federal employees, Tribal wildland firefighters will receive a permanent pay increase through funding provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Will Administratively Determined (AD) employees receive IRP pay?

No, AD employees are emergency hires and are not considered federal employees. Therefore, they do not qualify to receive IRP pay.

Does travel time to or from a qualifying incident count toward my eligibility for the IRP pay daily rate?

Yes. Travel time between your official duty station and the qualifying incident counts as deployment time for the purpose of applying the IRP pay provision. Such travel time counts as covered time on a calendar day that triggers eligibility for the daily IRP payment.

If I am deployed to two different qualifying incidents in one day (e.g., two wildfires), do I receive IRP pay twice?

No, IRP pay is a one-time payable daily rate.

Can I receive multiple premium pay rates per shift?

Yes, employees will all receive premium pay they are entitled to in addition to the IRP. Example, Night Differential, Hazard Pay, Overtime, etc.