

CHAPTER 30

QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION

30 - This chapter sets out the interagency requirements and additional National Wildfire Suppression Association requirements for the wildland fire management positions outlined by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) in the **NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, the NWCG Standards for Course Delivery, PMS 901-1, and the "Course Coordinator Guide", PMS-907.**

31- CERTIFICATION PROCESS. The Training Coordinator will do the screening of potential new instructors. The instructor candidates who meet the NWCG requirements, NWCG Geographical Area requirements, and NWSA requirements will be approved for certification of the courses they are qualified for. Geographical Areas that do not have an MOU with NWSA will follow the directions outlined in the February 1994 NWCG memo titled, Training, Qualifications and Certification for Non-NWCG Entities.

For those individuals not meeting the certification criteria, a letter will be sent by the Training Coordinator to the individual with an explanation of why they did not receive certification at this time. Instructor Certification is a privilege, not a right.

It is the responsibility of the individual applying for instructor certification to provide the NWSA Training Coordinator with documentation that is complete and accurate. It is not the responsibility of NWSA to gather this documentation for an individual. **If you do not have the required documents and training certificates, please don't apply until you can send a complete file. Correspondence should be signed and dated where appropriate.**

32 – NWCG INSTRUCTOR LEVELS and REQUIREMENTS. NWCG publication **PMS 907, Course Coordinators' Guide**, provides administrative information to training specialists, course coordinators, and instructors who present training courses.

Training Program:

The objective of NWSA is to provide wildland fire suppression resources that meet or exceed all training, experience, and physical fitness standards identified in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Positions Qualifications (PMS 310-1).

In February 1994, NWCG issued a position on Training Qualifications and Certification for Non-NWCG Entities. This NWCG position paper provided guidance to member agencies, private sector contractors, and educational institutions to establish and maintain similar standards within legal and contractual constraints.

Two important NWCG recommendations were the Memorandums of Understanding with the contract associations and the certification of private sector instructors.

NWSA has a Memorandum of Understanding to provide training in the following regions: Region 6 PNWCG, Region 1 NRCG, Region 4 GBCG, and Region 5 (US Forest Service Only). These agreements formalize training and establish standards between NWCG Members and recognized contractors' associations.

NWSA follows the standards established in the NWCG Course Coordinator's Guide (PMS 907) and the NWCG Standards for Course Delivery (PMS 901-1) for the certification of instructors. The NWCG has established the following general instructor levels:

- Lead Instructors
- Unit Instructors
- Adjunct Instructors

Lead Instructors

- Lead Instructors must have sufficient experience in presenting all units of the course to be capable of last-minute substitution for unit instructors. It is recognized that exceptions may occur where courses are of such a technical nature that no one person may be technically competent to instruct all units.
- Lead Instructors must maintain their qualifications and currency within the given time frames.
- Must be qualified at the next higher job level of the course they are teaching.
- In addition, the person must have three years of teaching experience and quality fire experience, documented by individual Incident Performance Ratings.
- Lead Instructors can teach the 100 and 200-level courses, and some are qualified to teach 300-level and higher courses. Lead Instructors are certified for individual courses based on requirements in the **NWCG Training Catalog**.

Unit Instructors

- Unit Instructors must be experienced in the lesson content they are presenting and have sufficient presentation skills to deliver the subject matter for student comprehension.
- Unit Instructors can teach/ assist the Lead Instructors with 100 and 200-level courses. When teaching units of 200-level courses, instructors should have 32 hours of the Facilitative Instructor Course, M-410, or equivalent.

Adjunct Instructors

- Adjunct Instructors may be utilized to provide limited instruction in specialized knowledge and skills at the discretion of the Lead Instructor. They must be experienced, proficient, and knowledgeable of current issues in their field of expertise.
- NWSA adjunct instructors or specialists in specific fields have not met the currency requirements because they have not been involved in a wildfire incident in the last five years. Most of the NWSA adjunct instructors have years of fire experience and teaching experience in fire suppression, fire behavior, and the Incident Command System (ICS).

Duties of Lead Instructors:

- Lead Instructors need to attend annual training and updates to stay current.
- Lead Instructors must notify the NWSA Training Coordinator at nwsatraining@nwsa.us and the MOU provider with written notification of course dates, schedule, location, and Lead Instructor name at least seven (7) working days in advance of the course starting date.
- Lead Instructors must use the NWSA database to document all trained people.
- Formal records will be kept for five (5) years on all individuals trained. Fire records and training records should be kept up to date by the company or contractor.
- All instructors are required to sign the Code of Ethics for Instructors.
- Serve as Course Coordinator if needed.

Training Coordinator:

- The Training Coordinator is responsible for compiling the annual list of current instructors.
- Assist NWSA members with training issues and advise members of changes in the qualification system.
- Monitor the quality of the training program.
- Maintain a professional relationship with agency representatives. Stay current on the latest policy changes and other events that will affect the association and the NWSA members.
- A major emphasis item that is part of all training is promoting safety and a passion that the safe way to perform a task is the only way.
- The Training Coordinator or his/her representative reserves the right to attend all training given by NWSA Instructors.
- The Training Coordinator is supported by a Training Committee of six instructors, elected by the NWSA instructors at the Annual Meeting.

Carding System and Database of NWSA:

- Complementing the training program is a Database and Incident Qualification Card System.
- Incident Qualification Cards are issued yearly, with a photo ID, employee number, incident qualifications, additional skills, physical fitness rating, incident position needs, and years of experience. See agencies' agreements for signing requirements.
- Instructor Records: The database must, as a minimum, contain fields that document Instructor Qualifications and teaching history.
- Firefighter Records: The database must, as a minimum, contain fields that document firefighters' Qualifications, Training, Experience, DOB, SS#'s, Task Books, and Fitness Level.
- Instructors are responsible for database input and the proper issuance of the Incident Qualifications Cards.
- All data entries must be paid for when entered.
- Information is confidential.

Data Entry Fees

- Carded Classes - Members: \$12.00/ person.
- Carded Classes - Non-Members: \$30.00/ person
- Non-Carded Classes - \$5.00/person
- Large groups (100 or more), such as National Guard Training, should contact the NWSA office for price information.
- Government Agencies, through the Database Coordinator, can **only** access firefighters' names, qualifications, and employers.

33 - NWSA INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS. February 1994 NWCG position paper (Appendix A) on Training, Qualifications, and Certification for non-NWCG entities provided an opportunity for contract associations to certify their employees' qualifications. NWSA has adopted the following requirements for certifying Lead, Unit, and Adjunct Instructors.

BECOMING AN NWSA INSTRUCTOR

Process for Becoming an Instructor for the National Wildfire Suppression Association

The Training Coordinator will evaluate potential new instructors and the upgrading of current instructors.

It is the responsibility of the individual applying for instructor certification to provide documentation that is complete and accurate. The Training Coordinator is not responsible for gathering documentation on an individual. If you do not have the required documents and training certificates, please do not apply until you have a complete package. Where appropriate, documents should be signed and dated. You will be charged an additional fee of \$50 for each request for additional documents.

Lead Instructors must have sufficient experience in presenting all units of the course and be qualified at the next level. It is recognized that exceptions may occur where courses are of such a technical nature that no one person may be technically competent to instruct all units.

Unit Instructors must be experienced in the lessons they are teaching. They must be qualified at the job level to which the course is targeted.

NWSA certifies instructors under our MOU, which is recognized in the United States. If an instructor who lives outside the US becomes certified, the Certification is only credible for the United States; we do NOT certify instructors for training that is held in another country, as we do not have that authority. Certificates of training issued in the US may be recognized by foreign entities, but NWSA does not hold MOUs with any foreign entities.

Instructor Certification Checklist

- Complete all required documents and pay the initial instructor certification fee of
- \$250 to the NWSA office (payment can be made by check or by calling 877-676-6972).
 - Meet Currency Requirements as defined by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), including:
 - Compliance with the NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1. - Compliance with the NWCG Standards for Course Delivery, PMS 901-1. - Access these documents at <http://www.nwcg.gov>.
 - Submit a copy of your resume and cover letter (See page 8).
 - Fill out and send a copy of the NWCG Certified Instructor Information Data Form (See page 13).
 - Fill out and send a copy of the Instructor's Letter of Verification form (See page 14).
 - Submit a copy of your most recent Incident Qualification Card.
 - Sign and send in a copy of the Instructor Code of Ethics (See pages 10-12).
 - If employed by a member company, have the company owner submit a letter verifying your employment.
 - Submit Incident Performance Ratings received in the last 5 years, including documentation listing your name or shift tickets with your name.
 - Submit copies of certificates for NWCG courses completed and any other relevant certificates (e.g., manufacturing course in pump repair, chainsaw certification level).
 - Submit Position Task Books (Cover page, Verification/Certification page, and Evaluation Records).
 - Provide a Wildfire History or Summary Record.
 - Submit an Incident Qualifications System Person Master Record.
 - Ensure Lead Instructor requirements are met:
 - Completion of a 32-hour Facilitative Instructor Course: M-410 or an equivalent course. - Equivalent courses include NFPA Fire Instructor 1, a State Teaching Certificate, or a bachelor's degree in education.
 - Submit copies of student evaluation forms and letters of reference from individuals qualified to assess your skills (e.g., teachers or immediate supervisors).
 - Lead Instructor candidates must have at least 3 years of documented experience. -
 - Exceptions: Individuals with less than 3 years of experience may qualify if they are a Single Resource Boss with documented instructor performance as a Unit Instructor.

The potential Lead Instructor can submit other Instructor experience, such as the following:

- Agency Leadership experience
- Field fire experience
- Leading project crews
- Instructing the workforce in field operations, tactics, and safety
- CPR instruction through a certified organization
- Serving as a teacher at their place of worship
- Instructor experience while serving in the Military or ROTC
- Peace Corps service
- Fire Department Volunteer / Explorer service as an instructor
- Scout Leader experience
- Other Instructional experience

These areas of instructional experience will be considered on a case-by-case basis for their validity by the NWSA Training Coordinator.

Unit instructors must have documentation of their instructor capabilities. Submit evaluations from Lead Instructors, student evaluation forms, letters of reference from people in a position to evaluate your skills, such as teachers or immediate supervisors.

Review each course you plan to teach in the NWCG Position Catalog and provide documentation that meets the instructor's requirements for that course. This document can be accessed at: www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses

Your resume of your qualifications should include:

a. Personal Data

Full legal name, present address, and phone number.

b. Education

High School: _____ Graduated? Yes, ___ No ___ Location: _____
College/Univ.: _____ Graduated? Yes, ___ No ___ Degree (s): _____
Other (specify type) _____ Graduated? Yes, ___ No ___ Certificate (s): _____
_____ Graduated? Yes, ___ No ___ Certificate (s): _____

c. Work Experience

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List below all present and previous employment, starting with the most recent.

Company name: _____ from (mo./yr.): _____ Type of work _____
Address: _____ to (mo./yr.): _____ Name of Supervisor _____

d. Other Organizations

List only organizations that pertain to firefighting or resource management, such as a Rural Fire Department volunteer, Society of American Foresters, County Search & Rescue, etc.

e. References

In your cover letter, please add the following statement: **I certify that all documents sent are true and complete, and all training courses have been NWCG certified.** NWCG certificates must have the following information:

- a. Course Title and identifier
- b. Course completion date and course hours
- c. Lead instructors printed name and signature
- d. Agency or organization sponsoring the course

NWSA will only accept NWCG courses taught by approved training providers. A list of the approved training providers by region can be found [here](#).

Submit a complete training package to the Training Coordinator below. You can send a hard copy or scan and email it. Send a check or “PayPal” for the one-time \$250 certification fee made to NWSA at P.O. Box 169, Mill City, OR 97360.

There will be an Annual \$400 Renewal fee charged due by January 1 to retain your Certification through NWSA. You may opt to become a voting member of NWSA by paying the Voting Membership fee in addition to the renewal fee, but it is not required.

Once you have met all the requirements, a certification letter will be issued stating the courses you are certified to teach and your date of currency.

Teresa Widby
NWSA Training Coordinator
P.O. Box 169
Mill City, OR 97360
503-897-6150
nwsatraining@nwsa.us

CODE of ETHICS AGREEMENT

For Instructors of the National Wildfire Suppression Association

Preamble

Wildland fire-fighting agencies have relied heavily on the private sector to supply firefighters to suppress fires and assist with Department of Homeland Security activities for national security. More than half of the firefighters in the US are employees of private contractors who bid their services to the agencies responsible for protection.

The wildland agencies require the contractors to train and certify their people to the standards established in the NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications (PMS 310-1). This guide was developed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) to establish minimum standards for both agency and contract firefighters. Additional requirements for certification for contract firefighters can be found in the geographical area Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and agency contracts.

NWCG has also established instructor levels and requirements. Course coordinators and instructors are the cornerstone for developing qualified personnel. The NWSA Instructor, in their roles as fire suppression experts, seek to not only teach the required courses but also instill a sense of safety awareness both on and off the fire line to all trainees.

The purpose of this **Code of Ethics** is to inspire, guide, and provide standards by which to judge the conduct of NWSA Instructors in their professional teaching lives. Compliance with the code demonstrates members' respect for the trainees, their safety awareness, and mutual respect for all firefighters. On joining NWSA and becoming a certified instructor, a person assumes a special responsibility to the firefighting community by promising to uphold and abide by the following:

Principles and Pledges

1. They should treat all students with respect and in a professional manner.
2. Shall not unfairly exclude any student from participation in any curriculum based on age, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, or sexual orientation.
3. Should not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
4. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.

5. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.
6. Respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law.
7. The instructor exerts every effort to raise professional standards and enhance the Public image of NWSA.
8. The course coordinator and instructor shall adhere to the standards established by the NWCG Instructor's Guide for each specific course. Emphasis will be given to instructor qualifications, course prerequisites, course/unit objectives, testing and evaluation of students, and course evaluations.
9. Instructors shall adhere to guidelines established by the following NWCG publications:
 - a. NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1
 - b. NWCG Standards for Course Delivery, PMS 901-1
 - c. Course Coordinators Guide, PMS 907
 - d. Geographical Memorandums of Understanding
 - e. NWSA Training Manual
10. Instructors using their NWSA Instructor Certification to teach courses must use the NWSA Database to document all trained people. As an NWSA Instructor, I understand that certification from another contract association is not acceptable. The NWSA logo is copyrighted and cannot be used without prior written authorization from the NWSA Board of Directors.
11. Non-Compliance: The Board may terminate an instructor's membership in NWSA, in the event an instructor: (1) violates any provision of this agreement; (2) violates any provision of the Bylaws of NWSA; (3) violates any rule, regulation, or practice duly adopted by NWSA; or (4) engages in conduct injurious or prejudicial to the interests of NWSA. Any such termination shall be made according to a complaint filed by the Board or another MEMBER and shall proceed following the provisions of this agreement. Following the termination of an instructor, the Board may give notice thereof to all other MEMBERS and to agencies and publications to verify such termination.
12. Attorney Fees: Neither party to this agreement shall have a right to attorney fees in case of a breach of this Agreement or a complaint relating to this agreement.
13. All first-year certified instructors must attend the NWSA Instructor's Conference in person or virtually during their first year and then once every three years.

The National Wildfire Suppression Association's Code of Ethics Agreement specifies the process through which a member's violation of the code may lead to expulsion from NWSA or other disciplinary action. No action will be taken unless a written complaint has been filed and submitted to the NWSA Executive Director.

Adopted by the NWSA Board of Directors on December 15, 2003. Revised February 2025

Agree to by: _____, on _____
NWSA Instructor Signature

Instructor Signature (Printed) _____



The National Wildfire Suppression Association

preserving and protecting our environment

NWSA Certified Instructor Informational Data

Please print all information below, except for the legal signature.

Full Name: _____

Legal Signature: _____

Company Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Home Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please put a check next to your instructor status:

Company Instructor Only _____

Company Instructor & Other Contractors _____

Independent Instructor _____

Date: _____

INSTRUCTOR LETTER OF VERIFICATION

By signing this letter of verification, I am confirming that I have read or reviewed the following documents, and I understand my responsibilities as an NWSA Instructor to adhere to the information contained in these documents.

1. NWSA Training website
2. Online webinar titled “NWSA Database Manual for Instructors”
3. NWCG Standards for Course Delivery, PMS 901-1
4. NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1
5. Course Coordinators Guide, PMS-907
6. NWCG Positions Catalog
7. NWCG Training Catalog

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please sign and email your documents to become an NWSA Instructor to nwsatraining@nwsa.us

You can also send a hard copy if needed.

35. DECERTIFICATION of an INSTRUCTOR

Instructor certification is a privilege, not a right. When a course evaluator identifies a questionable situation, or the NWSA Staff is aware that a lead instructor has not followed the “Duties of a Lead Instructor” as outlined in the NWSA Training Manual or the MOUs, the NWSA Instructor Code of Ethics, the NWSA Training
The coordinator will be notified.

The NWSA Training Coordinator will discuss the concerns with the instructor and follow up with a letter to the instructor about their discussions. If necessary, a Performance Correction Notice will be sent with a specified time in which to make the corrections. If the problem has not been resolved, removal from the active instructor's list will be a Board of Directors decision as outlined in the NWSA bylaws.