

CHAPTER 40

NATIONAL INTERAGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

40 – NATIONAL INTERAGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. All wildland fire protection agencies are organized to manage forest, brush, and grass fires within their jurisdictions. Where they are unable to manage large, complex fires with their own resources, additional or substantial outside assistance is required. To address this need, a nationwide multi-agency management system has been adopted, called the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS), which provides the total systems approach necessary for response in emergency situations involving a wide range of natural or human-caused incidents.

NIIMS consists of five major subsystems, which together provide a total approach to incident management. The subsystems and their functions are as follows:

1. Incident Command System (ICS). An on-scene structure of generic management-level positions suitable to manage any incident.
2. Training. Development and delivery of training courses.
3. Qualifications and Certification. National standards for qualifications and certification for ICS positions.
4. Publications Management. Development, control, sources, and distribution of NIIMS publications are provided by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).
5. Supporting Technology. Technology and systems used to support an emergency response, such as orthophotography. National Fire Danger Rating System, remote automatic weather stations, automatic lightning detection systems, infrared technology, and communications.

41 - QUALIFICATION CHARTS FOR THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM. The NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, displays the Position Qualification Flow Chart and the progression from one position to another in the system.

42 – QUALIFICATION FOR INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM POSITIONS.

This section sets out the additional requirements for skills, training, and prerequisites for contractor employees for the wildland and prescribed fire positions outlined in the NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1. Qualifications for each position include the minimum acceptable levels of training, experience, physical fitness, and/or currency requirements. Job descriptions and duties for these positions are listed in the NWCG Position Catalog.

The PMS 310-1 defines a performance-based qualification system. In this system, the primary criterion for qualification is individual performance, as observed by an evaluator using approved standards, identified in a Position Task Book (PTB) for the position. Qualification is based on performance on the job, physical fitness, and classroom training identified in PMS 310-1.

NWSA Instructors and Contractors must comply with the requirements specific to their Geographical Area Coordinating Group and meet or exceed appropriate NWCG prerequisite qualifications and currency requirements.

Additional training, which supports the development of knowledge and skills, may be acquired in a variety of ways, including on-the-job training, work experience, and formal training. It is suggested that formal training be provided where applicable to ensure that knowledge and skills are acquired. A Trainee must meet the required position experience for PTB initiation. PTB can be initiated without the Trainee first completing all required training. All required training must be completed before position Certification.

43 – INCIDENT COMPLEXITY. The line officer or designated official shall determine the complexity of an incident and assign qualified personnel as needed. More than 95 percent of all wildland fires fall within the low complexity range and are controlled with initial attack and limited reinforcements. These fires are referred to as Type 3, 4, and 5 incidents.

The remaining 5 percent of fires, which fall into high complexity, are referred to as Types 1 and 2. Qualifications for Incident Commanders and General Staff have been established for Type 1 and 2 incidents (including Area Command) because they are normally more complex and can require resources from outside the local area.

43.1 – Guidelines for Determining Incident Complexity. The guidelines assist the line officer or designated official in determining incident complexity. The guidelines are presented in order of ascending complexity and describe the fire response with the appropriate fire organization. A Type 5 incident is the lowest level, and Type 1 is the highest level of complexity. The Type 1 incident combines the multi Division and multi-branch classifications as described in the PMS 310-1.

44 – ANNUAL REFRESHER TRAINING. Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training is required for those positions identified in the NWCG PMS 310-1. Refresher training shall consist of the following core topics: Entrapment Avoidance, Current Issues, Fire Shelter, and Other Hazards and Safety Issues. These core topics must be sufficiently covered. NWSA has a minimum training requirement of 6 hours. Training time may be extended to effectively meet the Geographical Area training requirements. Incident Qualification Cards will not be issued until supervisors certify that the annual Fire Safety Refresher Training has been completed and the person has passed the WORK Capacity Test.

44.1 - National Annual Fire Safety Refresher Website. This site provides a centralized resource for instructors doing refresher training to get pertinent policy guidance and identify interagency materials used throughout the nation. These sites will link You to “WESTAR Website Tutorial” and “RT-130 Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher”.

There is also a WFSTAR Catalog.

www.nifc.gov/wfstar/index.htm

www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/rt-130

45 – RE-CERTIFICATION. Management evaluation of an individual's competency is key to recertification where qualifications have expired. If currency has lapsed, the individual shall revert to the trainee level, be issued a position task-book for the position, complete on-the-job training if needed, and re-qualify in a position performance assignment. By returning to the trainee level, the person re-certifying is introduced to new technology that assists with recalling position duties and responsibilities.

46 – PHYSICAL FITNESS STANDARDS. In addition to training and experience, physical fitness standards, when applicable, must be met for ICS position certification.

46.1 - Physical Fitness Requirements. Requirements for physical fitness are identified as arduous, moderate, light, and none. The definitions for these categories can be found in the PMS 310-1.

47 – DESCRIPTION OF THE PERFORMANCE-BASED SYSTEM. The Wildland Fire Qualifications System is a "performance-based" qualifications system. NWCG uses a performance-based approach that focuses on verifying the capabilities of personnel to perform as required in the various incident positions. This approach incorporates education, training, and experience as the primary qualification criteria. In this system, the primary criterion for qualification is individual performance as observed by an evaluator using approved standards. This system differs from previous wildland fire qualifications systems, which have been "training-based." Training-based systems use the completion of training courses or a passing score on an examination as a primary criterion for qualification.

A performance-based system has two advantages over a training-based system:

1. Qualification is based upon real performance, as measured on the job.
2. Personnel who have learned skills from sources outside wildfire suppression, such as agency-specific training programs or training and work in prescribed fire, structural fire, law enforcement, search, and rescue, etc., may not be required to complete specific courses to qualify for a wildfire position.
 - a. The components of the wildland fire qualifications system are as follows:
 - (1) Position Task Book (PTB) contains all critical tasks that are required to perform the job. PTB's have been designed in a format which will allow documentation of a trainee's ability to perform each task. Successful completion of all tasks required of the position, as determined by an evaluator, will be the basis for recommending certification.
 - (2) Training courses and job aids provide specific skills and knowledge required to perform tasks as prescribed in the PTB.
 - (3) NWSA Certification is issued in the form of an incident qualification card certifying that the individual is qualified to perform in a specified position.

b. Certification Responsibilities

The contractor or company owner is responsible for selecting trainees, properly using task books, providing proper training, and certification of trainees.