

NWCG POSITION PAPER

Training and Qualifications Requirements for Non-NWCG Entities

It is the position of NWCG that only qualified personnel are authorized to participate in duties associated with wildland and prescribed fire incidents, regardless of whether these personnel are NWCG members. It is also the position of NWCG that consistent application of training and qualification requirements is essential to the safety and health of all fireline personnel.

With the expanded use of private sector contractors in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire, NWCG must revise the guidelines regarding training, qualifications and certification for non-NWCG entities.

This NWCG position paper provides guidance to member agencies, non-member agencies, private sector contractors and educational institutions to help ensure fair and equitable application of the NWCG PMS 310-1 "Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification and System Guide" (further referred to as PMS 310-1).

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

NWCG requires that all contracts with private sector contractors include provisions that ensure compliance with PMS 310-1 and this position statement. This requirement does not effect local mutual aid agreements for initial and extended attack operations.

A. TRAINING

1. For a course presentation to be considered as qualifying toward fulfilling "required training" the instructor qualifications and presentation standards must meet or exceed those outlined in NFES 2226, "NWCG Course Coordinators Guide". Any course presentation that does not meet the presentation standards or instructor qualifications will be considered as non-qualifying by NWCG member agencies. Any qualifications based on the course would be considered invalid.
2. Any instructor or entity deleting NWCG training materials from a course package cannot represent that course as an NWCG certified training course. In addition, the course shall not be considered as fulfilling the "required training" under PMS 310-1 standards.
3. The approved NWCG course completion certificate will only be issued to students completing courses sponsored by NWCG members. Educational institutions, contractor associations, and non-member agencies will not utilize the NWCG course certificate. (Exceptions may occur under Section II.D.)
4. A course certificate indicates an individual has completed classroom requirements for a given position. Completion of classroom training does not qualify an individual for a position.

B. POSITION CERTIFICATION

1. Proper use of performance based NWCG Position Task Books (PTB), as outlined in the PTB instructions and Appendix "A" of PMS 310-1, is required by all entities using PMS 310-1 standards to obtain recognition of Fireline qualifications by NWCG member agencies.
2. As consistent with PMS 310-1, qualified evaluators should sign off on individual tasks of a properly initiated and recognized trainee's Position Task Book, regardless of NWCG affiliation, membership, or agency.
3. NWCG member agencies will never certify the qualifications of private contractors. Where formal agreements exist, NWCG member agencies can formally recognize and acknowledge the training and qualifications of a contractor as permissible and officially acceptable.

II. CONTRACTORS

A. For purposes herein, "private contractors" includes private sector individuals, companies or corporations who provide training, suppression or prescribed fire services for financial reimbursement.

B. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) which specify training advisory and support arrangements between NWCG members and "recognized contractor associations" or other contractor entities are recommended. These MOU's should be developed at the geographic coordinating group level.

C. Geographic Area Coordination Groups (GACG) entering into an MOU with associations or contractors will authorize, through the agreement, the association or contractor's ability to certify the qualifications of their employees. Through the MOU, the GACG will recognize contractor qualifications as authentic for all wildland and prescribed fire positions up to and including the Single Resource Boss level.

D. For a contractor association or contractor to gain the recognition of the GACG as identified in II.C. above, the association or contractor will provide to the GACG:

1. Written procedures explaining how all components of PMS 310-1 will be followed.
2. Written procedures to meet the guidelines of this position paper.
3. Written authorization permitting the GACG to annually review the procedures and documentation of the association or contractor to insure compliance with these guidelines.
4. Written explanation to the GACG regarding the association or contractors' procedures to ensure quality control and monitoring of internal procedures related to the training and certification process.

E. Contractor associations or individual contractors wishing recognition and MOU eligibility will use the latest national MOU template included in these guidelines as a means of complying with the requirements needed for recognition.

III. PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDERS

A. NWCG encourages member agencies, at the local level, to assist educational institutions and other training provider businesses in an advisory and support capacity. This will include the enforcement of the requirement to insure that all "Wildland fire training" programs are consistent with PMS 310-1, applicable laws, regulations and policies, and this position statement. Programs can include both classroom and field performance-based training.

B. NWCG Member agencies will not certify private training provider instructors.

C. Educational institutions or private training provider businesses will not certify qualifications of students. They only will have the authority to coordinate, administer and instruct training courses.

D. Educational institutions or private training provider businesses have the authority to issue "certificates" of course completion (not to be confused with the certification of qualifications), which bear the logo or insignia of that institution or company.

E. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) to formalize training advisory and support arrangements between NWCG members and private training providers are recommended. These MOU's should be developed at the local level with private training providers, and at a geographic area coordinating group level with educational consortiums.

Approved by NWCG September 2003

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