



**United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Fire Management Branch  
National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705**



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To: Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8  
From: Chief, Fire Management Branch /s/ *Brian McManus*  
Subject: 2009 FWS Fire Management Handbook Update

The FWS Fire Management Handbook (Handbook) has been updated for 2009 and attached for your use and distribution. This version replaces the 2008 Handbook. A limited number of bound copies of the Handbook will be mailed to each Regional office in the future. The Handbook can also be downloaded from <http://www.fws.gov/fire/handbook/index.shtml>.

The Handbook is intended to be a program reference guide that documents the standards for operational procedures and practices for fire management activities in the Service. These standards and practices are based on current Service, Departmental, and Interagency policy, and are intended to provide program guidance to ensure safe, efficient, and effective wildland fire operations.

The Handbook is formatted similarly to the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook](#) which should be familiar to all involved in fire management. To minimize duplication, the Handbook references, instead of restating, supplemental guidance in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook (NFES #2724) and other common sources.

Significant changes in the 2009 FWS Fire Management Handbook are described in the attached list. The FWS Fire Management Handbook will be updated annually in January to coincide with the annual update of the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook. Please contact your Region's representative on the FWS National Fire Operations and Safety Team if you have suggestions for improving the Handbook.

cc:  
Regional Chiefs  
Chief, Division of Natural Resources  
Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System  
Fire Management Branch staff

Attachments

## **Attachment: 2009 FWS Fire Management Handbook Update**

Significant Changes in the 2009 Fire Management Handbook (FMH) include:

- **General Changes**
  - Double checked internet links throughout handbook.
- **Chapter 1 – Federal Fire Program Policy and Guidance Overview**
  - Reworded description of the FMH and relationship with the Redbook.
- **Chapter 4 – FWS Program Organization and Responsibilities**
  - Deleted requirement for RXB refreshers.
  - Added RAWS maintenance requirements.
- **Chapter 7 – Safety**
  - No Change
- **Chapter 8 – Interagency Coordination and Cooperation**
  - No Change
- **Chapter 9 – Planning**
  - Updated to include a list of common authorities.
  - Clarified unit, regional and national roles in fire management planning.
  - Updated to include regional dispatch and preparedness planning responsibilities.
  - Updated to include NFLT direction on FMP updates.
  - Updated and clarified FMP template and language in response to AMR policy clarification and other suggestions.
  - Changed “Project Leader/Refuge Manager” to Agency Administrator throughout the document.
  - Took out the glossary and inserted a link to the NWCG Glossary.
  - Clarified the requirements for the NEPA Compliance Checklist on page 6.
- **Chapter 10 – Preparedness**
  - Added additional prevention guidance regarding goals, priorities, planning and training.
  - Clarified wording for first bullet under Fire Prevention to reflect the desire to mitigate spread of wildfires resulting from natural ignitions such as lightning.
  - Inserted new Step-Up Plan on page 1 so as to allow wider use of NFDRS indices.
  - Fire Prevention section re-written to remove circular reference.
  - Removed section regarding Preparedness Level/Step-Up Plans since it already resides in the Redbook and referred users to the Redbook.
- **Chapter 11 – Incident Management**
  - Provided more detailed guidance on fire reporting.
  - Added NFPORS data entry to FMB ESR responsibilities.
  - Updated links for ES and BAR templates.
  - Clarified ES and BAR reporting requirements.
  - Clarified use of DI-1202 and referred users to the FMIS system.
- **Chapter 12 – Suppression Chemicals and Delivery Systems**
  - No Change

- **Chapter 13 – Firefighting Training and Qualifications**
  - Clarified that exceptions were applicable on service managed lands.
  - Clarified use of RXCM position.
  - Restricted entry in IQCS of experience for positions not in 310-1 or approved by FWS.
  - Added NIMS training requirement per DOI and Service guidance.
  - Added IFPM requirements and link to additional info.
  - Added information regarding LE officers and the firefighter medical exams.
  - Added Physical Training guidance from the Director’s memo dated 9/11/07.
  - Added M-581 training requirement for FMOs.
  - Clarified requirements for Agency Administrator training.
  - Deleted service specific requirements for ICT5
  - Clarified initiation of taskbooks prior to the completion of required training.
  - Updated Service specific training requirements for RXB3.
  - Added FALA/B/C qualification standards
  - Added a Service specific DZOP and TPOP position to address FWS specific heavy equipment operator requirements.
  - Changed language for Fire Management Leadership Course to reflect what is found in 232 FW 6.
  
- **Chapter 14 – Firefighting Equipment**
  - No Change
  
- **Chapter 15 – Communications**
  - No Change
  
- **Chapter 16 – Aviation Operations/Resources**
  - No Change
  
- **Chapter 17, Prescribed Fire**
  - Update to clarify a need for quantifiable objectives and implementation plan for any hazardous fuel treatment.
  - Removed requirement for RXB2s to technically review any plan prepared by a RXB3 because this is no longer required.
  - Clarified interpretation of 310-1 qualification requirements for prescribed fire implementation.
  - Removed expired exceptions for prescribed fire plan to meet *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Reference Guide* requirements
  - Used Agency Administrator terminology instead of referencing refuge manager and/or project leader.
  - Clarified wording for” Prescribed Burning Off-Service Lands” to reflect changes made in 310-1.
  - Reworded section on “Prescribed Fire and Hazardous Fuels Planning” clarifying that NHPA and ESA are not part of the NEPA process.
  - Adopted wording for qualifications of contractors on pages 17-2 and 17-7 consistent with the Rx Fire Guide.
  - Clarified wording in third bullet from bottom of page 17-2 by adding “cultural clearances”.
  - Removed circular reference for Escaped Rx Fires and added reference to page 29 of Rx Fire Guide.
  
- **Chapter 18, Reviews and Investigations**
  - No Change