



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



To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators

From: *JG* Chief, Branch of Fire Management *JG*

Subject: Department of Interior 2009 Pay Plan for Emergency Workers

Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to authorize and provide direction, using the attached Department of the Interior (DOI) 2009 Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan, to hire emergency workers (casuals).

Timeframe: The attached DOI AD Pay Plan became effective May 21, 2009 for immediate implementation and is valid until the 2010 AD Pay Plan is released.

Policy/Action: This attached pay plan applies wherever and whenever it becomes necessary to hire persons

- To cope with a sudden and unexpected emergency caused by a fire, or extreme fire potential, flood, storm, or any other all hazard emergency that threatens damage to federally protected property unless brought under immediate control.
- To provide emergency assistance to States under formalized agreements.
- To meet mission assignments issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- To supplement regular personnel assigned to prescribed fire projects (*this authority does not include Mechanical or Chemical Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects*).

The AD Pay Plan is complete within itself; therefore, for any hiring under this plan, the provisions herein take precedence over any other policies or regulations that may be prescribed elsewhere.

Units may hire only those individuals within their 'local area of responsibility' who are qualified for the position and certified to assist in fire suppression operations and/or other emergencies that threaten damage to federally protected property.

Changes

The 2009 AD Pay Plan includes the following changes from the plan previously in effect for 2008:

- Incorporates new rates of pay for all positions. (Section B.1)
- Includes tribal government employees as agency personnel who may serve in key positions. (Section B.4)
- Clarifies that lodging and other subsistence required for the casual should be obtained by a

procurement official whenever feasible. (Section F.15)

- Adds Deputy Incident Commander, Tractor Plow Operator, Intelligence Support, GACC Meteorologist, and Military Installation Logistics Coordinator. Changes CRNW from Contract Representative Northwest to Contract Representative Nation Wide. (Incident Position Matrix)

Issues

A number of issues surface each year as a result of misinterpretation and incorrect use of the pay plan. General examples of issues include:

- Hiring casuals for non-NWCG positions or positions not identified in the incident position matrix, e.g., Prescribed Fire Crew Member – RXCM.
- Hiring casuals for work that is not appropriate under the plan. The AD Pay Plan applies when it is necessary to hire persons to cope with sudden and unexpected emergencies caused by fire, extreme fire potential, flood, storm or any other all hazard emergency that must be brought under immediate control.
- Using the AD Pay Plan to hire individuals for long term and, by doing so, circumventing more appropriate hiring authorities.
- Exceeding 90 calendar days following the end of a natural emergency for post-incident administration and emergency stabilization work.
- Hiring casuals as instructors when agency or contract personnel were available.

Casuals hired outside AD Pay Plan authority **will not** be paid through the DOI Casual Payment Center and timesheets will be returned to the hiring unit. If the pay plan was not the proper mechanism for hire, other means of employment, such as “de facto”, will need to be explored through Human Resources.

Hiring Unit Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the hiring unit to:

- Maintain casual hiring documents in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a, the Privacy Act.
- Coordinate with Human Resources for application of HSPD 12 as it applies to hiring casuals.
- Ensure training and qualification standards are met and coordinate with Human Resources for retention of required medical documentation.
- Process Workers Compensation claims. Casuals are covered under the Federal Employee’s Compensation Act (5U.S.C. 81) which authorizes medical care and compensation for periods of disability for casuals who sustain traumatic injuries and occupational diseases in the performance of duty.
- Process personal property loss/property damage claims.
- Issue authorization to travel and process claims for travel expense reimbursement.
- Review time report (OF-288) and approve for payment.
- Ensure cost accounting code shown on the time report (OF-288) includes the ABC Code.

Seasonal employees, who are not in pay status, may be hired as casuals whenever it becomes necessary to hire individuals as outlined in the AD Pay Plan. However, hiring as a casual can not be used to extend a time limited appointment, e.g., a 1039 appointment.

Hiring Forms

Hiring units are required to complete the required forms when hiring a casual including the Single Resource Casual Hire Information Form, the Employment Eligibility Verification, Form I-9, and the Incident Behavior Form. These forms will be maintained at the hiring unit. Blank forms along with an example of the Form I-9 can be found at the following website:

<http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/ibpwt/forms/index.htm>

Hiring Casuals to Attend Emergency Incident Training

Units may hire casuals to attend training in preparation for emergency incidents, e.g., ICS courses and Refresher Training. This should not exceed a total of 80 hours per calendar year, regardless of hiring agency. Required annual refresher courses and travel to and from the training is included in the 80 hour limitation. It is the hiring unit's responsibility to monitor training hours.

Compensation will be made for casuals attending mandatory courses required for the position(s) in which they are expected to be hired. Suppression operation funds are to be used for operational costs directly associated with the preparation, delivery or support of emergency incident related training for emergency firefighters and support personnel. Allowable operational costs are limited to:

- Wages for attending emergency incident training.
- Training materials.
- Transportation of casual including commercial transportation, contract transportation, government aircraft.
- Travel expenses including per diem.

Hiring units will charge training costs to their office organization number, sub activity **9141**, project code **AZA1**, ABC Code **93**.

Hiring Casuals to Instruct Emergency Incident Training

Units may hire casuals to instruct emergency incident training **only** when all other methods of hiring and contracting instructors have been exhausted; not to exceed a total of 120 hours including travel per calendar year, regardless of hiring agency. It is the hiring unit's responsibility to monitor instructor hours to ensure this limitation is not exceeded. Salary, travel and per diem may be charged to 9141-AZA1-92 when a casual is hired to conduct emergency incident training.

Hiring Casuals to Carry Out Emergency Stabilization (ES) Work

In reference to using the AD Pay Plan for emergency stabilization, the "emergency" phase occurs during the incident, and for a period of time directly after. Casuals may be hired using the AD Pay Plan, not to exceed 90 calendar days, directly following a natural emergency to develop plans and manage an emergency stabilization effort only until regular employees can handle the situation or other employment methods can be initiated. However, if there is a break in activities, e.g., the fire was contained in August and additional stabilization is needed in December, units **may not** utilize the AD Pay Plan authority as efforts should be made to contract or detail regular government

employees to accomplish the work.

Hiring for Prescribed Fire Projects

The AD Pay Plan may be used to provide temporary support to prescribed fire activities. **This does not include Mechanical or Chemical Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects.** The term of hire is restricted to no greater than the period beginning 24 hours prior to planned ignition and extending through 24 hours after the perimeter is secured and no greater than 300 hours per calendar year per person, regardless of agency. It is the hiring unit's responsibility to monitor prescribed fire hours. The time record should only reflect charges to sub activities 9263 and 9264 and the given project code. This authority may not be used to circumvent normal hiring and contracting procedures. Casuals should not be hired by the Fish & Wildlife Service for prescribed fire projects conducted by other agencies. The benefiting agency is responsible to hire the casual.

Exception Positions

If none of the positions listed in the Incident Positions Matrix fit the scope of duties needed an exception position may be established to meet a local need (for use within the local/geographic area). The AD Pay Plan provides classification guidelines for determining what level an exception position may be established. A brief description of duties must accompany the Emergency Firefighter Time Report, Form OF-288, for audit purposes.

The Branch of Fire Management must review/approve any exception positions established.

Payment Procedures for Casuals Hired Under the AD Pay Plan

The processing of Emergency Firefighter payroll for casuals hired by the Fish & Wildlife Service will be done out of the DOI Casual Payment Center located at 1249 Vinnell Way, Suite 108, Boise, Idaho, 83709. Payment procedures and forms can be found at the following website:
<http://www.nifc.gov/CPC/index.htm>

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: This Pay Plan replaces all previously approved plans found in Exhibit 01 of Chapter 10 of the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook.

Coordination: The 2009 AD Pay Plan was coordinated with the other DOI Wildland Fire Management Agencies and the USDA Forest Service.

Contact: Questions should be addressed to Sarah Fisher at (208) 387-5536 or Amy Kishpaugh at (208) 387-5502.

Attachment:
DOI Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals)