

Chapter 13

Training and Qualifications

The Service Fire Management Handbook incorporates, by reference, all guidance in the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#) (Redbook, NFES #2724) Chapter 13 in addition to Service specific clarifications contained in this chapter. All personnel funded with fire funds who are hired under a position description containing firefighting duties will meet requirements for the appropriate fire position. Individuals will not be assigned to duties for which they lack training and qualification. All personnel hired as primary firefighters must meet the arduous fitness standard to maintain full fire funding and if the position is career status, arduous is required to meet special retirement considerations for fire.

Qualification Standards

The *Incident and Position Standards Committee* ([IPSC](#)) provides strategic management of operational and qualification standards for NWCG agency members in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Input on current qualification standards or requests for changes to current standards should be channeled through Service representatives to the [IPSC](#).

Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (NWCG PMS 310-1) - The [National Incident Management System Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide](#) (NWCG PMS 310-1) establishes minimum requirements for training, experience, fitness, and currency for interagency wildland fire positions. Refuge personnel will meet PMS 310-1 standards for wildland fire qualifications unless otherwise specified in this handbook. State, local cooperators and contractors working on federal agency prescribed fires must meet the PMS 310-1 standards unless local agreements and/or contracts specify otherwise.

Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement - Minimum requirements for agency specific wildland fire positions not included in the PMS 310-1 can be found in the [Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement](#). FWS personnel may not use supplemental positions that are not endorsed by the FWS.

DOI Incident Positions Qualification Guide (IPQG) - The Department of Interior *Incident Positions Qualification Guide* ([IPQG](#)) establishes minimum qualification standards for incident personnel mobilizing beyond their home unit to respond to non-wildland fire incidents. The [DOI Incident Management Implementation Guide](#) provides direction for implementation of the IPQG. USFWS specific guidance for implementation of the DOI IPQG and the DOI Implementation Guide can be found by referencing the [USFWS Incident Response Implementation Guide](#).

Training Program and Processes

The IPSC provides vision and strategic direction for the development and delivery of NWCG training products and interagency wildland fire workforce development initiatives. Input on current interagency training and workforce development products or requests for changes should be channeled through the Service representative to the [IPSC](#).

Fire Management Instructors - Each Region is responsible for the selection, training, and certification of an adequate number of Service instructors for fire management training. Funding for course instructors and subject matter participation is a local or Regional fire management responsibility.

Fire Management Curriculum - Curriculum supporting fire management qualifications and position certification is explained in the Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (NWCG PMS 310-1). Details relating to course descriptions and trainee/instructor qualifications are provided in the NWCG Field Manager's Course Guide (NWCG PMS 901-1).

Needs Analysis and Delivery - Training needs analyses are developed each year at local, regional/geographic and national levels. Complexity and organizational level descriptors for entry, mid-level, and advanced course delivery can be found in the PMS 901-1. NWCG approved training packages and course materials are available through the Publications Management System at the National Interagency Fire Center. NWCG National Fire Equipment System Catalog Part 2: Publications (NWCG PMS 449-2, NFES 3362), identifies materials and ordering procedures.

Attendance at national level (500 and 600) courses and attendee prioritization will follow local geographic area processes. Regional Fire Management Coordinators will forward priority candidates for these courses through their geographic area training representatives. Nominations should be consistent with regional or geographic board direction. Regions shall follow established Geographic Area and National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute ([NAFRI](#)) protocol when nominating employees for any NAFRI courses.

NWCG Course Equivalency – An equivalent course is determined by agency identified “evaluators” to be equal to a NWCG approved course. Awarding course equivalency is an agency specific responsibility. Only agencies have the authority to certify their employees meet NWCG training requirements when alternative course offerings are used. Guidelines for course equivalency can be found in the [PMS 901-1](#).

Regions seeking course equivalency should conduct a detailed analysis and document their findings on the [FWS Course Equivalency template](#). Proposed equivalent courses must be submitted to the Branch of Fire Management for approval. A new analysis must be completed when the equivalent NWCG course is revised to ensure course equivalency continues. All course equivalency determinations will be posted on the [Fire Management Fishnet site](#).

FWS Course Equivalencies

FWS Course Name	Course Name	Equivalent to
FW402 FWS Fire Instructor I	Fire Instructor I (National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1041 standard)	M-410, when both FW 402 and FW 403 completed
FW 403 FWS Fire Instructor II	Fire Instructor II (NFPA 1041 standard)	M-410, when both FW 403 and FW 402 completed

Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS)

New user accounts, user account changes, and proposed system changes must be approved by the respective regional IQCS representative and the agency IQCS representative. User account related forms and requirements can be found on the [IQCS website](#).

Oversight – The Zone Fire Management Officer (ZFMO) is responsible for oversight, input and maintenance of pertinent fire employee data and for ensuring that employees are trained, qualified, and certified at levels which meet preplanned needs for incident management response, initial attack and prescribed fire, and for ensuring the accuracy of annual Incident qualification cards. The Certifying Official (i.e. Refuge Manager or Project Leader) confirms through the issuance of an Incident Qualification Card that an individual is qualified to perform in a specified position. Certifying officials should delegate the authority to complete certifications of agency employee qualifications in IQCS to Account Managers and/or ZFMO who have the responsibility to maintain IQCS records. Authority can be incorporated into an annual operational delegation of authority (DOA) or granted separately (see [IQCS sample DOA](#)).

Position Recertification – Responders who lose currency in a position, will automatically be converted to trainee status. A responder can regain qualified status by demonstrating proficiency in the position at the discretion of the certifying official. Proficiency for recertification is typically gained by successful completion of one or more evaluation assignments as a trainee supported by an adequate performance evaluation(s). Certifying officials may also require responders to attend new or additional training as deemed necessary.

IQCS Training – Authorized users must receive IQCS user training, appropriate to their anticipated system role, prior to accessing the system. Training can be obtained on-line through the IQCS website.

The IQCS allows individuals to track experience gained on severity assignments where wildfires do not occur. Individuals will use the event code PP (Preparedness/Preposition/Mobilization) in IQCS to track experience gained on severity assignments. All wildfire experience gained while on a severity assignment will be coded to the appropriate incident identifier in IQCS.

Trainees may complete appropriate tasks in a position task book while on a severity assignment. Consult the PMS 310-1, *Wildland Fire Qualification Guide*, for event code definitions. A severity assignment is not a wildfire assignment until an actual fire occurs.

Service employees may only use positions listed in the following sources:

- Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1
- Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement
- DOI Incident Positions Qualification Guide (IPQG)

Approved agency positions are identified in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize agency specific positions available under other agency specific SetID's. Employees that are no longer employed by the Service should be placed in INAC upon termination of duty.

Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Requirements

Service personnel in IFPM covered positions must meet the NWCG qualification and additional training requirements identified for their positions. Information regarding specific position requirements is available at <http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov/>.

Employee Development

The [Service Fire Management Employee Development Program](#) is based on the following core mission principles:

- Develop leaders to meet Service Fire Management needs
- Build and maintain an operationally and technically proficient workforce
- Promote innovation
- Enhance communications of best management practices
- Promote workforce development opportunities that support the Service mission

The Employee Development Program supports local and regional needs by providing supplemental funding for certain training and development opportunities. The program seeks to support Service mission objectives by providing funding for development activities that fall under three broad strategic focus areas including:

- Improving operational leadership and effectiveness
- Developing effective management skills
- Building foundational and advanced technical skills

Interested employees can find additional details on the program site: (<https://sites.google.com/a/fws.gov/fws-fire-employee-development/>).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Specific Position Standards and Criteria

Position taskbooks can be initiated prior to the completion of the required training, however supervisors and trainees should carefully consider trainee experience history and training needs before allowing them to start work on a position task book. All position training requirements must be completed prior to position certification.

Experience and/or training requirements that exceed minimum standards identified in the *Wildland Fire Qualification Guide* (PMS 310-1) for certain incident qualifications are identified below. Service personnel must adhere to these additional requirements for these qualifications. Certifying officials at zone and regional levels have the authority to enforce standards that exceed minimum requirements, however the requirement(s) should be documented to ensure program consistency.

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 (RXB2)

REQUIRED TRAINING

Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)

Prescribed Fire Implementation (RX-301)

Prescribed Fire Burn Plan Preparation (RX-341)

Smoke Management Techniques (RX-410) *

Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations (S-390)

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

Satisfactory performance as a Firing Boss, Single Resource (FIRB)

+

Satisfactory performance as an Incident Commander Type 4 (ICT4)

+

Completion and Certification of PTB as a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 (RXB2) on a prescribed fire incident.

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL

Moderate

THESE POSITIONS MAINTAIN CURRENCY FOR RXB2

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1 (RXB1)

Prescribed Fire Manager Type 1 (RXM1)

Prescribed Fire Manager Type 2 (RXM2)

Strategic Operational Planner (SOPL)

RXB2 MAINTAINS CURRENCY FOR THESE POSITIONS

Firefighter Type 1 (FFT1)

Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2)

Incident Commander Type 4 (ICT4)

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1 (RXB1)

Prescribed Fire Manager Type 2 (RXM2)

Any Single Resource Boss (ENGB, FELB, FIRB, HEQB, CRWB)

Strategic Operational Planner (SOPL)

Strike Team Leader Crew (STCR)

Strike Team Leader Engine (STEN)

Strike Team Leader Heavy Equipment (STEQ)

Task Force Leader (TFLD)

OTHER TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE ANDSKILLS

Fireline Leadership (L-380)

Introduction to Fire Effects (RX-310)

Additional Information:

The RXB2 position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's when agency requirements exceed interagency standards.

* As of January 1, 2016, all new RXB2's (trainees with active PTBs) are required to successfully complete RX-410 Smoke Management training. All other qualified RXB2's will remain qualified based on previous training requirements.

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1 (RXB1)

REQUIRED TRAINING

Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)

Advanced Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations (S-490)

Smoke Management Techniques (RX-410) **

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

Satisfactory performance as a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss (RXB2))

+

Completion and Certification of PTB as a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1 (RXB1) on a prescribed fire incident

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL

Light

THESE POSITIONS MAINTAIN CURRENCY FOR RXB1

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 (RXB2)

Prescribed Fire Manager Type 1 (RXM1)

Strategic Operational Planner (SOPL)

RXB1 MAINTAINS CURRENCY FOR THESE POSITIONS

Firefighter Type 1 (FFT1)

Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2)

January 2020

Incident Commander Type 3 (ICT3)

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 (RXB2)

Any Single Resource Boss (ENGB, FELB, FIRB, HEQB, CRWB)

Strategic Operational Planner (SOPL)

Any Strike Team Leader (STCR, STEQ, STEN)

Task Force Leader (TFLD)

OTHER TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Advanced Fire Effects (RX-510)

Fire Program Management (M-581)

Additional Information:

The RXB1 position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's when agency requirements exceed interagency standards.

** Smoke Management Techniques (RX-410) is now required for all RXB1's. Individuals who have achieved this qualification but lack the training, have until January 1, 2021 to successfully complete the course. Trainees must complete RX-410 prior to position certification.

Non-Wildland Fire Incident Positions

The Department of the Interior Incident Positions and Qualifications Guide establishes the minimum standards for incident personnel responding to or managing non-wildland fire incidents. Updated copies of the guide can be found at the DOI Office of Emergency Management website; <https://www.doi.gov/emergency/ipqg>.

Annual Chain Saw Refresher Training:

All authorized chain saw operators, including fire personnel, must complete RT-212 Annual Chain Saw Refresher Training, as described in 241 FW 12.7 B, [Exhibit 1](#). Project Leaders/Supervisors/Facility Managers must keep refresher training documentation in the employee's training records.