



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

NWCG Memorandum 21-004

September 28, 2021

TO: NWCG Executive Board Members, NWCG Committee and Steering Committee Chairs

FROM: Frank Guzman, Chair, NWCG Executive Board

SUBJECT: Leaders Intent Regarding Training Delivery for the 2021-2022 Training Season

The NWCG Executive Board strongly encourages the interagency community to categorize training and its development and coordination as mission critical and to work with the local, geographic, and national training centers to deliver planned training for the upcoming 2021-2022 training season. This is essential to ensure NWCG member agencies continue to develop and maintain the capacity to effectively manage fuels and respond to wildland fires.

Training provides a mission critical foundation in managing wildland fires. During the past several training seasons, many training deliveries were cancelled or postponed due to the government furloughs or the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the training community has made significant strides in developing tools to support virtual delivery while also establishing guidelines for in-person training where appropriate to meet the most current safety guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local agencies.

The recommendation to categorize training and its development and coordination as mission critical is not intended to imply a departure from the advancements made in distance learning during the 2020-2021 training season. Rather, the NWCG Executive Board strongly encourages member agencies to continue providing safe and effective distance learning opportunities.

However, some critical training has been deemed most suitable for in-person delivery, such as staff rides and leadership curriculum. The NWCG Executive Board strongly encourages local, geographic, and national training centers to pursue safe, creative, and innovative solutions to overcome the challenges presented by COVID-19 while committing to the delivery of critically important in-person training.

Cancelling planned training at the local, geographic, and national levels during this training cycle will exacerbate the implications already being experienced. Ultimately this will impact the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of our fire management organizations and our ability to manage fuels and respond to wildland fires. Potential ramifications of additional training postponements or cancellations include:

- An increased backlog of students in required training courses.
- Lack of qualified responders in positions with a required training prerequisite.
- Delayed skill development of firefighters at all levels of fire management organizations.
- Agency Administrators/Line Officers unable to meet qualifications.
- Transfer of risk from fuels treatments to suppression efforts.
- Lack of completions at the Wildland Firefighter Apprentice Program (WFAP).

Please distribute this information through your agency and committee channels.

For additional information, please contact Heath Cota, heath.cota@usda.gov, or Pete Dutchick peter.dutchick@usda.gov.

Distribution:

Fire Management Board, Chair

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group, Chair

NWCG Staff

National Fire Training Center Directors

Geographic Area Training Representatives (GATRs)