



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

NWCG Memorandum 24-006

August 16, 2024

TO: NWCG Committee/Subgroup Chairs
FROM: Aitor Bidaburu, NWCG Executive Board Chair
SUBJECT: NWCG Pause on New Incident Positions and Courses

Purpose: This memo outlines a tactical pause for new incident positions and training course requests. Additionally, it defines Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM) position criteria and describes exceptions to this tactical pause. Based on feedback from the field, the Executive Board (EB) is strategically prioritizing and balancing NWCG committee/subgroup and staff workloads. The EB recognizes the ongoing levels of effort and hard work needed to implement multiple national initiatives and wants to thank all NWCG representatives.

Please distribute this information through your agency channels.

Issue/Action: In 2023, NWCG officially kicked off the IPTM effort and continues to support implementation of Complex Incident Management (CIM). Given the systematic impacts these large-scale projects are placing on NWCG committee/subgroups and staff, there will be a tactical pause on new positions, major qualification changes (any proposed changes adding more than the current system requirements), new courses, and substantial course changes outside of approved IPTM or CIM position-specific efforts. This temporary moratorium will allow NWCG committees/subgroups and staff to focus on priority work. Workloads will be re-evaluated in 12 months by the EB and further direction will be provided at that time.

The direction below outlines the roles and responsibilities and follows the linear progression for NWCG committee/subgroup chairs and staff, during this tactical pause for requests to change incident positions and/or trainings.

IPTM Position Criteria:

The intent of IPTM is to transition to a sustainable and effective, performance-based training system. To meet this intent, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration when the IPTM process is implemented for an incident position:

- Any task that can be learned effectively on-the-job will be incorporated into the Incident Position Standards and/or the Next Generation Position Task Book (Next Gen PTB).
 - Tasks in the Next Gen PTB coded as simulation (S) should be referenced to support field-day training to support skill development.
- Where formal training (Online Training [OLT]/Instructor Led Training [ILT]) is determined necessary and appropriate for performance-based learning, NWCG will review and support only if the training hours are less than, or equal to, what currently exists.
- If an existing training is recommended for incident position qualification and is then requested to be required during the IPTM analysis, a written justification from the position steward committee

NWCG standards are interagency by design; however, the decision to adopt and utilize them is made independently by the individual member agencies and communicated through their respective directives systems.

must be approved by NWCG Managers prior to Incident & Position Standards Committee (IPSC) and Training Delivery Committee (TDC) review. If needed, the decision may be elevated to the EB for final approval.

- If there is a deviation from the recommendations derived from the IPTM analysis process that results in an increase in overall position-specific training hours, a written justification must be provided by the position steward committee, approved by the associated parent committee, and then approved by NWCG Managers prior to IPSC and TDC review. If needed, the decision will be elevated to the EB for final approval.
- NWCG committee priority workloads, NWCG staffing, wildland fire responder needs, and the costs to implement and maintain the training will be taken into consideration when reviewing recommendations from the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and committees.
- If it is unclear whether training recommendations meet the intent of this memo, the NWCG Managers should be consulted on systematic impacts to determine if the proposed position changes would adversely impact the NWCG system.

The NWCG Executive Board recognizes that changes may need to be made for the safety of wildland responders (such as for serious accident investigations and corrective action plans), as well as other rare circumstances. When positional/course changes are brought forward that meet such criteria, it is expected that the Executive Board will be briefed and decide, then subsequently NWCG staff, IPSC, and the appropriate committees will work together to find implementable solutions.

New Position and Training Course Requests:

New *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1 incident positions, major qualifications changes, or new course steering committees/curriculum management units may only be requested during this pause when responder health/safety or other rare circumstances occur.

- New Requests for Change (RFC) may continue to be submitted to IPSC utilizing their current RFC process.
 - The Position Steward must provide specific justification on how the proposed change will immediately impact the safety and health of responders.
 - The submission will need to reference any accident investigations, lessons learned reports, and/or rapid lesson sharing reports, and the number of qualified and trainee responders impacted.
 - Additionally, the request must include a draft transition plan for implementation of proposed changes.
- If the requested change is significant IPSC will request a determination from NWCG through their Coordinator, the NWCG Managers, and EB if consensus cannot be reached. Exemption criteria may include:
 - Changes to requirements for positions in the 310-1 that reduce training or requirements.
 - Training, experience, or fitness level changes that have an immediate impact on the safety and health of responders within the positions (both qualified and trainee responders).
 - If a request is to replace (not rename) a position with a like position (e.g., PIO1 to PIOC).
 - Support implementation of approved CIM decisions, which may include adding, removing, or changing position standards to improve CIM pathways.

Contact: For questions, please contact Aitor Bidaburu, NWCG Chair, jose.bidaburu@fema.dhs.gov, or Katherine Wood, NWCG Program Manager, kwood@blm.gov.

Distribution:

NWCG Committee/Subgroup Chairs

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