



## TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-NWCG ENTITIES

It is the position of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group ([NWCG](#)) that only qualified personnel are authorized to participate in duties associated with wildland and prescribed fire incidents, regardless of whether these personnel are NWCG members. It is also the position of NWCG that consistent application of training and qualification requirements is essential to the safety and health of all fireline personnel.

With the expanded use of private sector contractors in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire, NWCG must revise the guidelines regarding training, qualifications, and certification for non-NWCG entities.

This NWCG position paper provides guidance to member agencies, non-member agencies, private sector contractors, and educational institutions to help ensure fair and equitable application of the *NWCG Standards For Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, [PMS 310-1](#).

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

NWCG member agencies require that contracts with private sector contractors may include provisions that ensure compliance with [PMS 310-1](#) and this position statement. The [PMS 310-1](#) maintains the standards for wildland fire position qualifications, while the *NWCG Standards for Course Delivery*, [PMS 901-1](#), maintains standards for course delivery. This requirement does not affect local mutual aid agreements for initial and extended attack operations.

The [PMS 310-1](#) is developed and maintained by the Incident and Position Standards Committee ([IPSC](#)). The [PMS 901-1](#) is developed and maintained by the Training Delivery Committee ([TDC](#)).

NWCG is the sole source for the publications. The user of this information is responsible for confirming that they have the current versions.

Currently the [PMS 901-1](#) states, “Non-member agencies or entities (e.g., educational institutions, contractor associations) may deliver NWCG training courses when the standards established in this publication are met. Non-member agencies or entities are encouraged to establish formal agreements with local or geographic area member agencies when delivering NWCG training. Such cooperative efforts are beneficial to the cooperators and to all students.”

### A. TRAINING

1. For a course presentation to be considered as qualifying toward fulfilling “required training,” [PMS 901-1](#) states, “Instructors and coordinators must ensure fidelity to course design, structure, and materials of the base course. NWCG courses are aligned with established practices and

*Revision to 1994 NWCG training memo; approved in September 2003; updated in August 2023*

position requirements; deviation from course materials will weaken this connection. Instructors are encouraged to enhance course materials to reflect the conditions, resources, and policies of the local unit and area, but the base course elements must be adhered to.”

2. Non-member agencies or entities (e.g., educational institutions, contractor associations) may deliver NWCG training courses when the standards established in [PMS 901-1](#) are met.
3. Prerequisite position qualification and/or training requirements can be found in [PMS 901-1](#).
4. See [PMS 901-1](#) for NWCG instructor qualification standards.
5. Guidance for issuing an *NWCG Training Course Completion Certificate*, [PMS 921-1](#), by educational institutions, contractor associations, and non-member agencies is available in [PMS 901-1](#).
6. A course certificate indicates an individual has completed classroom requirements for a given position. Completion of classroom training does not necessarily qualify an individual for a position.
7. Students should be encouraged to retain personal training records permanently. NWCG does not retain or have access to training records.

## B. POSITION CERTIFICATION

1. Proper use of performance based NWCG position task books (PTBs), as outlined in the PTB instructions of [PMS 310-1](#), is required by all entities using [PMS 310-1](#) standards to obtain recognition of fireline qualifications.
2. As consistent with [PMS 310-1](#), qualified evaluators sign off on individual tasks of a properly initiated and recognized trainee’s PTB, regardless of NWCG affiliation, membership, or agency.
3. NWCG member agencies will never certify the qualifications of private contractors. Where formal agreements exist, NWCG member agencies can formally recognize and acknowledge the training and qualifications of a contractor as permissible and officially acceptable.

## II. CONTRACTORS

- A. For purposes herein, "private contractors" includes private sector individuals, companies or corporations who provide training, suppression, or prescribed fire services for financial reimbursement.
- B. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) which specify training advisory and support arrangements between NWCG members and “recognized contractor associations” or other contractor entities are recommended. These MOUs should be developed at the geographic coordinating group level.
- C. Geographic Area Coordination Groups (GACG) entering into a MOU with associations or contractors will authorize, through the agreement, the association or contractor’s ability to certify the

*Revision to 1994 NWCG training memo; approved in September 2003; updated in August 2023*

qualifications of their employees. Through the MOU, the GACG will recognize contractor qualifications as authentic for all wildland and prescribed fire positions up to and including the Single Resource Boss level.

- D. Firefighting Contractor Associations (FCA) wishing to enter into a MOU with a GACG will submit documentation to the GACG and will include:
1. Documentation from the appropriate State or Federal agency that verifies they are a registered association in either State or Nationally. Documentation must show the recognized name of the association.
  2. The policy document that describes the organization, policies, and Code of Ethics of the FCA.
  3. The procedures document that describes the processes for:
    - Ensuring National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards will be met.
    - Evaluating instructor applications.
    - Certifying course instructors are qualified to instruct as a Unit or Lead Instructor.
    - Method of monitoring instructor performance.
    - Disciplinary process for sub-standard instructor performance.
    - Maintaining electronic and/or hard copy records systems the FCA will use to track. instructor qualifications and certifications, courses, and roster of courses presented by FCA instructors.
- E. Contractor associations or individual contractors wishing recognition and MOU eligibility will use the latest national MOU template included in these guidelines as a means of complying with the requirements needed for recognition.

### III. PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDERS

- A. NWCG encourages member agencies, at the local level, to assist educational institutions and other training provider businesses in an advisory and support capacity. This will include the enforcement of the requirement to ensure that all "Wildland fire training" programs are consistent with [PMS 901-1](#), applicable laws, regulations and policies, and this position statement.
- B. Educational institutions or private training provider businesses will not certify qualifications of students, and only have the authority to coordinate, administer, and instruct training courses.
- C. Educational institutions or private training provider businesses have the authority to issue "certificates" of course completion (not to be confused with the certification of qualifications), which bear the logo or insignia of that institution or company.
- D. MOUs to formalize training advisory and support arrangements between NWCG members and private training providers are recommended. These MOUs should be developed at the local level with private training providers, and at a GACG level with educational consortiums.