



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Coordination System Committee

NCSC Memorandum 26-02

May 13, 2026

TO: Chris Wilcox, Chair, Fire Management Board (FMB)

FROM: Sean Peterson, Chair, National Coordination System Committee (NCSC)

SUBJECT: Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Requirement Recommendations for Dispatch Center Manager and Assistant Center Manager

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend that the FMB change the IFPM requirements for the Dispatch Center Manager and Assistant Center Manager standard position descriptions (SPD).

Background and Coordination: In 2024, the FMB tasked the standing IFPM working group with revising the current qualification standards for key fire management positions, resulting in *FLT_Tasking_148_2024-02-04_IFPM_Review_DG*.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fire Leadership Team (FLT) tasked the BLM Dispatch working group with reviewing and determining the most appropriate required qualifications for the Center Manager and Assistant Center Manager SPDs. The working group presented its recommendations to BLM FLT.

NCSC met on February 24-25, 2026, and considers this recommendation in alignment with the work completed by the BLM Dispatch working group at the direction of the BLM FLT.

Issue/Action: The 2021 IFPM core requirements for both the Center Manager and Assistant Center Manager are currently the same: Expanded Dispatch Support Dispatcher (EDSD). In addition, completion of the Intermediate Fire Danger Rating System, S-491 course is currently required for the Center Manager position.

The S-491 requirement was implemented when dispatch centers were responsible for entering weather data from Weather Information Management System (WIMS), which has since been decommissioned. Weather data functions are now largely automated through the Fire Environment Modeling System (FEMS), and responsibility for fire weather data inputs has transitioned to unit Fire Planners and Land Management Leadership (refer to the NWCWG Fire Danger Subcommittee Issue Paper 2021).

The Expanded Dispatch Supervisory Dispatcher (EDSP) and Aircraft Dispatcher (ACDP) qualifications provide Center Managers with the knowledge of standard fire dispatch procedures, operating guides, and safety practices necessary to effectively and safely manage the dispatch of aircraft, crews, overhead, equipment, and supplies.

NWCWG 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.

The Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP) is not currently a required qualification for the Assistant Center Manager position. However, IADP provides the incumbent with the knowledge of pre-defined initial attack response zones, dispatch procedures, and interagency coordination needed to provide dispatch floor oversight.

Recommendation: NCSC recommends the following position-based changes.

Dispatch Center Manager:

- Remove the requirement to complete the Intermediate Fire Danger Rating System, S-491 course
- Add Aircraft Dispatcher (ACDP) as a required qualification
- Replace EDSD with Expanded Dispatch Supervisory Dispatcher (EDSP) as a required qualification
- Add Incident Leadership, L-381 and Fire Program Management, M-581 as employee developmental training
- Designate updated Fire Danger curriculum, once available, as recommended training

Assistant Center Manager:

- Add Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP) as a required qualification in addition to EDSD
- Add Facilitative Instructor, M-410, Fireline Leadership, L-380, and Aircraft Dispatcher, D-312 as employee developmental training

Contact: For additional information or questions, please contact Sean Peterson, NCSC Chair, at speterson@blm.gov or 208-387-5400.

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