



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

Risk Management Committee

RMC Memorandum 25-02

Aug 6, 2025

TO: Wildland Fire Community

FROM: Mack McFarland, Chair, Risk Management Committee (RMC)
Michael Guarino, Chair, Hazard Tree and Tree Felling Subcommittee (HTTFS)

SUBJECT: Transition Plan for Implementing Updates to the Basic Faller (FAL3) Position Qualification

Purpose: The standards, position qualification pathways, and training for the FAL3 position has been updated. This memorandum outlines the transition plan to ensure the effective implementation of these revisions. Please distribute this information through your agency channels.

Issue/Action: In 2019 HTTFS established an interagency group of subject matter experts (SMEs) to revise the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Chainsaw Operations*, PMS 212. In addition, this group updated the Incident Position Descriptions, developed a Next Generation Position Task Book (Nex Gen PTB), and finalized a course for the Basic Faller (FAL3) position.

In January 2026 changes for the FAL3 position will take effect upon the publication of updates to the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1:

- **Basic Faller (FAL3):** Currently qualified FAL3 responders will not be required to complete the new S-112 training. Trainees who have completed the previous S-212, *Wildland Fire Chainsaws (2012)* course and have at least one documented experience should continue to use their current PTB. Those who have completed the previous S-212 (2012) course without any completed tasks in their PTB will transition to the updated *NWCG Position Task Book for Basic Faller (FAL3)*, PMS 311-119. New trainees must complete the S-112 course and utilize the updated Next Gen PTB starting January 2026.
- **S-112, Introduction to Chainsaw Operations:** This course was certified in 2025 and is now available on the Wildland Fire Learning Portal. *The previous S-212, Wildland Fire Chainsaws (2012) course will remain available for use through December 2025, at which point it will be archived.*

New courses for Intermediate Faller (FAL2) and Advanced Faller (FAL1) are currently in development. S-212, Intermediate Faller is anticipated to be available to the field by 2026. S-312, Advanced Faller is anticipated to be available to the field by 2027.

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.

In addition to these courses, Next Gen PTBs are being developed for the FAL2 and FAL1 positions. Upon certification of S-212 and S-312, additional transition plans and information will be released to address changes to the position qualification pathways for FAL2 and FAL1. Anticipated future updates to the FAL2 and FAL1 positions are as follows:

- Intermediate Faller (FAL2): The new S-212, Intermediate Faller course will be specifically designed for FAL2 trainees, and the existing S-212 (2012) course will not serve as an adequate substitute. All trainees must complete the new S-212 course upon its release and inclusion in the PMS 310-1, and transition to the updated *NWCG Position Task Book for Intermediate Faller (FAL2)*, PMS 311-XX once available.
- Advanced Faller (FAL1): The new S-312, Advanced Faller course will be specifically designed for FAL1 trainees. All trainees must complete the new S-312 course upon its release and inclusion in the PMS 310-1, and transition to the updated *NWCG Position Task Book for Advanced Faller (FAL1)*, PMS 311-XX once available.

Historical recognition for FAL3, FAL2, and FAL1 will be applied to all currently qualified responders. As new training courses are released, currently qualified fallers must follow their agency's direction and policy to retain their certifications.

Background and Coordination: In July 2019, the NWCG Executive Board tasked HTTFSC to address the Captain Brian Hughes Fatality Joint Corrective Action Plan (TM-19-003). In response, HTTFSC submitted a Request for Change (RFC-2022-06) to the Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC) to transition from the existing S-212, Wildland Fire Chainsaws (2012) course to three new chainsaw instruction courses. This request was approved by the IPSC in August of 2023 (IPSC-2023-06).

Contact: For additional information please contact your agency RMC or HTTFSC representative. The member rosters can be found at <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/risk-management-committee/roster> or <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/hazard-tree-and-tree-felling-subcommittee/roster>.

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