



Complex Incident Management Team (CIMT): Action Plan for Implementation

The adoption of Complex Incident Management (CIM) as the new business model for wildland fire requires systemic changes to be implemented by the subgroups under the authority of the Fire Management Board (FMB), NWCG Executive Board, and National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC). Existing Type 1 and Type 2 Incident Management Teams (IMTs) are transitioning to CIMTs, resulting in one configuration of IMT for all large, complex fires above the Type 3 complexity level. This change requires commitment and coordination among the agencies, partners, and cooperators to align qualifications, expectations, and standards and to more efficiently manage the IMTs and their individual members.

This Action Plan is intended to identify the key components requiring direct modification to support the implementation and subsequent use of CIMTs. Formal taskings will be drafted by IWDG for issuance by the appropriate channels. Recommended timelines are based upon a target of full implementation by April 2024.

These changes apply specifically to the following NWCG Command and General Staff (C&G) positions: Incident Commander Type 1 (ICT1) and 2 (ICT2), Safety Officer Type 1 (SOF1) and 2 (SOF2), Public Information Officer Type 1 (PIO1) and 2 (PIO2), Operations Section Chief Type 1 (OSC1) and 2 (OSC2), Planning Section Chief Type 1 (PSC1) and 2 (PSC2), Finance/Administration Section Chief Type 1 (FSC1) and 2 (FSC2), Logistics Section Chief Type 1 (LSC1) and 2 (LSC2). Additionally, the changes affect Type 3 and Area Command positions but do not specifically change them at this time.

For additional background and supporting documents, please refer to the IWDG webpage: <https://www.nwcg.gov/partners/iwdg>.

This Action Plan was initially developed in April 2021 and revised in September 2021 and January 2023 to reflect accomplishments and additional actions identified.

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Phase 1

Training and Qualification

NWCG Executive Board issued Tasking Memo 22-001, <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/memos/eb-tm-22-001-amended.pdf>, to the Incident and Positions Standards Committee (IPSC) in April 2022 to address the following:

S-420, Command and General Staff, and S-520, Advanced Incident Management

IWDG recommends piloting a new course blending existing objectives, content, methodology, and best practices from S-420 and S-520. Request current S-520/620 steering committee and cadre assistance in the development of geographic area steering committees and cadres to facilitate this new training. Emphasize simulations, sand table exercises, and strategic planning sessions. In near term, rely heavily on experienced personnel to assist in training and mentoring less experienced personnel; however, encourage a focus on overall knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience, rather than a focus on current qualification as either Type 1 or Type 2.

Development of a basic IMT course targeting personnel desiring qualification as Type 3 C&G

IWDG recommends review of existing courses, including O-305 and O-325 as well as S-420 and L-481 for applicable options and content. A basic IMT course should focus on understanding the planning P, producing ICS Forms, and working as a C&G.

Complex Incident Management Course (CIMC)

IWDG recommends coordination and discussion with CIMC Steering Committee to ensure realignment as appropriate to match NWCG course revision.

NWCG Executive Board issue tasking to NIMS Integration Committee (NIMSIC) and other committees as appropriate to coordinate with US Fire Administration to establish IMT standards which reflect team capability and support evolving and devolving incidents.

The NWCG Incident Business Committee must update the Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan to include the CIM C&G positions.

Timeline:

Revised Advanced IMT Course: January 2025

AD Pay Plan: May 2023

IMT Standards: January 2024

Basic IMT Course Availability: January 2024

Completed:

The following items from NWCG Executive Board Tasking Memo 22-001 have been accomplished:

NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1 – Completed January 2023

Identified Short-Term CIMT Course – Completed January 2023

Revised Incident Position Descriptions (IPD) and Position Task Books (PTBs) for all C&G positions – Completed January 2023

C&G Position Mnemonics – Completed May 2022

CIM Field Evaluation – Completed May 2022

CIMT Mobilization

NMAC task the Coordinating Group Advisory Council (CGAC) to establish standardized Preparedness Level (PL) criteria, drawdown levels, IMT operating procedures, and other operating plans for all Geographic Areas. This includes:

- One metric for priority ranking.
- One form of CIMT allocation.
- One set of factors to help ensure support and interoperability throughout the fire community.
- One set of rules and procedure for all agency and executive support.

In coordination with NWCG Executive Board and the National Coordination System Committee (NCSC), NMAC issue taskings to Coordinating Group Advisory Council (CGAC) and National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) by February 2023 to address necessary changes to the following:

- Determine a sustainable number of teams necessary to meet the needs of the geographic area.
- Provide more direct coordinating group oversight to IMTs and all aspects of IMT succession.
- Actively recruit and retain more ICs.
- Efficiently manage IMT rotations to reduce fatigue and create more equitable distribution of assignments.
- Ensure an interagency and intergovernmental composition of IMTs.
- Review of IMT extension process to reduce inefficiencies.

Provide criteria for Geographic Area implementation in 2023, with report outs by October 2023 to ensure adjustments can be made for final implementation in 2024.

Timeline:

Standardized PL criteria, drawdown levels, IMT operating procedures, and other operating plans for all Geographic Areas: June 2023

Expanded Geographic Areas Participation in Implementation Phase: 2023

Require use of ICAP by all Geographic Areas: 2024

Completed:

In December 2021, the Fire Executive Council issued a memo directing the combination of Type 2 qualifications and Type 1 qualifications (and subsequently IMTs) into a single qualification level (and single, scalable IMT type).

In January 2022, the Incident Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) system was updated to include CIMTs as a resource. In May 2022, IROC was updated again to include CIM C&G positions.

In June 2022, NMAC issued Letter 2022-09 to CGAC to request recommendations for a national CIM rotation process that ensures equitable assignment of all teams with parameters for inclusion in the National Mobilization Guide. CGAC provided a response in September 2022.

Rocky Mountain Geographic Area piloted CIM with all three RMA IMTs in 2022 and provided feedback for expanded implementation in 2023.

NMAC issued Memo M2022-10 providing direction on the use of one system, Incident Command Application Process (ICAP), for all IMT applications and selections, beginning with recruitment for 2024.

CIMT Configuration

NMAC issue tasking to ICAC to:

- Develop successional strategies that address IMT trainee needs and identify the necessary coordination and interaction with coordinating groups to enable ICs to succeed in managing IMTs.

Timeline:

Expanded Geographic Areas Participation in Implementation Phase: 2023

Completed:

In August 2022, NMAC issued Letter 2022-14 tasking the Incident Commander's Advisory Council (ICAC) to recommend the appropriate CIMT configuration and length of assignment and availability periods. ICAC provided a response in November 2022, and NMAC decisional correspondence is forthcoming.

Additional Systems and Documents

FMB must task responsible groups with review and updates to the following:

Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)

<https://www.nifc.gov/standards/guides/red-book>

NWCG Tasking Memo 22-001 tasks IPSC with review and revision of the NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Analysis (RCA), PMS 236.

<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/236>

IWDG recommends review of the document and its components to validate its accuracy and determine whether CIMT adoption will cause any necessary revisions.

IWDG recommends maintaining Type 1 and Type 2 incidents to avoid contradiction with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). CIMTs would be capable of responding to either type of incident.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)

Align to revised RCA, PMS 236, once complete.

FMB must consider participation incentives for ICs and IMT members, to include a review of:

- Days off policies and practices.
- Pay incentives.
- Performance incentives for employees and supervisors.

Timeline:

Revisions of *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*: December 2023

Revision of RCA, PMS 236: November 2024

Revision of WFDSS: April 2024

Completed:

Establish Responsibility for Annual Data Review – Completed January 2022

Provide Annual IMT/CIMT Data Analysis – Completed February 2022

Agency Purview, Policy, and Directives

Updates and revisions will be required from a cursory standpoint to replace references to Type 1 and 2 IMTs with CIMTs. Some support groups or teams (such as Fire Prevention and Education Teams [FPET], Serious Accident Investigation Teams [SAIT], and other groups or teams) rely on Type 2 or 1 qualifications to complete their rosters. Additionally, agency policies and practices must be updated to reflect the systemic changes.

FMB must ensure agency communications and leadership support implementation of change by disseminating IWDG Memo 21-02, The Agency Role in Adoption of Complex Incident Management Teams, <https://www.nwccg.gov/sites/default/files/docs/eb-iwdg-m-21-02.pdf>, through issuance of agency-specific communication to ensure this change is widely understood and supported at all levels. See CIMT Communications Plan outline on page 6.

Agency administrators and agency executives play a strategic role in creating an environment favorable to successful incident workforce management. Several critical actions were identified:

- Create Agency Administrator and supervisor incentives for employee participation on IMTs.
 - Agency executives should commend Agency Administrators for allowing and even encouraging participation on IMTs. Achieving other priority resource management objectives should fall to a lower priority during critical fire response times. This should be a clear change in priorities supported at all levels.
 - Set IMT participation as a possible way to achieve performance goals for all employees.
 - Incentivize participation and qualifications for non-fire employees, and identify opportunities to recognize fire qualifications and fire management positions as successional crosswalks within the agency.
- Rebuild local capacity that will support IMTs.
 - Agency decisions to centralize finance, acquisition, fleet, and other support services force IMTs to bring that capability with them. This puts IMTs in direct competition for agency resources, particularly during the western fire season when agency fourth quarter accounting occurs.
 - CGAC is already investigating virtual situation units, virtual decision support units, and other functional modules that can reduce capability gaps on IMTs. Incorporating this sort of management capability into local workforce planning will strengthen and sustain this effort.
 - It takes several years to reach C&G level, resulting in employees also holding high-level management positions in their day job while committing to IMTs. The competing demands and responsibilities make participation challenging. Mandatory retirement ages compound this situation for permanent fire employees.
- Develop the skills and tool sets necessary for scaling incident management appropriate to the incident.
- Build agency administrator capacity for managing a changing incident management/incident workforce environment.
- Collaborate with IMTs to establish mutual standard expectations for operations and engagement.

FMB must work with non-fire management federal agencies and non-federal entities to establish agreements and processes for paying employees while working on CIMTs and federal wildland fires.

Timeline:

Active Agreements with Non-Fire and Non-Federal Agencies: December 2023

Completed:

Full-Time Position Support to IWDG and CIM Implementation – Completed June 2022

CIMT Communication Plan

Broad communication with all stakeholders and audiences is necessary for the successful change to CIMT. Stakeholders must be educated on the system weaknesses, the intent of the change, and the benefit to them. Established agency and interagency/intergovernmental communications methods and systems should be used for formal direction and guidance. Personal contacts, through briefings and meetings, are particularly important in the near term. Less formal methods, such as email announcements and social media, are appropriate for secondary audiences and general updates. As systems components change, the revised standards and processes will make up a considerable portion of communication avenues to secondary audiences. (For example, revisions to the Mobilization Guides are communicated to users annually.)

| Primary Audience/ Stakeholder | Intent | Method of Delivery | Responsible | Target Deadline | Status |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------|-----------------|--------|
| Agency Executives | Support and Direction | Memo/Formal Communications Paths | FMB | | |
| Agency Administrators | Support and Adoption | Agency communication channels – IWDG Memo 21-02 | FMB | | |
| Incident Commanders | Implementation | Tasking Memo | NMAC | | |
| Geographic Area Coordinating Groups | Implementation | Tasking Memo | NMAC | | |
| NWCG Committees | Implementation | Tasking Memo | NWCG | | |

| Secondary Audience/ Stakeholder | Intent | Method of Delivery | Responsible | Target Deadline | Status |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------|
| Incident Management Team Members | Support and Implementation | IMT Meetings – CIMT StoryMap | NMAC | | |
| Dispatch Centers | Information | | NMAC/ | | |
| General Audience | Information | Announcement | NWCG | | |

Phase 2

Progress and dates on proposed Phase 2 actions will be defined as Phase 1 actions are complete. These actions are not fully implementable until then.

CIMT Mobilization

NMAC issue taskings to Coordinating Group Advisory Council (CGAC) and National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) to discuss and pursue the potential utilization of a geographic area pool to fill necessary positions on IMTs that are not part of the IMT's roster of core positions.

Multiple Geographic Areas may participate in pilots of IMTs with core membership and utilization of a membership pool to build the rotation roster:

- Option 1: Build rotation roster with master roster core members plus other positions/individuals name selected from geographic area pool.
- Option 2: Build rotation roster with master roster core members. Use mobilization order/pre-order to fill all other positions needed from the pool.
- Additional options may be proposed for consideration and pilot.

CIMT Composition

NMAC issue taskings to Incident Commanders Advisory Council (ICAC) to discuss and pursue defining the core members of an IMT roster to focus on C&G and key Unit Leader positions with a goal of limiting rosters to critical positions necessary for efficient team function and interaction. Utilize a pool concept to access additional individuals with skill sets needed for specific incidents. And identify when name requests are an appropriate avenue for filling orders.

Multiple Geographic Areas may participate in pilots of IMTs with core membership and utilization of a membership pool to build the rotation roster based on each Geographic Area's Coordinating Group decision and direction.