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# NWCWG Incident Position Standards for Initial Attack Dispatcher

PMS 350-60

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# NWCG Incident Position Standards for Initial Attack Dispatcher

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The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Initial Attack Dispatcher* establishes national interagency standards for operating as an Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP) on wildland fires. These standards are meant to ensure safe, efficient, and effective operations in support of interagency goals and objectives and should serve as a guide to promote effective and consistent on-incident training. By definition, NWCG standards encompass guidelines, procedures, processes, best practices, specifications, techniques, and methods.

The Initial Attack Dispatcher Position Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/positions/initial-attack-dispatcher>, in the NWCG position catalog, includes the Incident Position Description (IPD) and Position Qualification Requirements, as well as links to standards and references needed to perform the duties of an Initial Attack Dispatcher.

Tasks that are identified by a (\*) are those tasks included for evaluation in the Position Task Book (PTB). Tasks not identified for evaluation in the PTB still represent standards for successful performance in the position and should be included in a comprehensive training assignment.

Where references are identified by a (\*\*), refer to your home unit, agency, or organization for specific guidance and policy documentation. For example:

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

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The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, Tribal, territorial, and local partners. NWCG operations standards are interagency by design; they are developed with the intent of universal adoption by the member agencies. However, the decision to adopt and utilize them is made independently by the individual member agencies and communicated through their respective directives systems.

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## General References

- *NWCG Position Task Book for Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP)*, PMS 311-60, <https://www.nwcg.gov/position-taskbooks/pms311-60>
- *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, PMS 461, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms461>
- *NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*, PMS 503, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms503>
- *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms600>
- *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms902>
- Incident Command System (ICS) Forms, <https://www.nwcg.gov/ics-forms>
  - Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF)
- Job Aids, <https://www.nwcg.gov/job-aids>
  - *Initial Attack and Aircraft Dispatcher Job Aid*, J-602
- After Action Reviews (AARs) web page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/aars>
- Automated Flight Following (AFF), <https://www.aff.gov/>
- Integrated Reporting of Wildland Fire Information (IRWIN) System, <https://irwin.doi.gov/observer/>
- National Weather Service (NWS), <https://www.weather.gov/>
- NWS Spot Forecast Request, <https://www.weather.gov/spot/request/>
- Risk Management Assistance (RMA) Dashboard, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/f9d7f7f920494c3db43a23a8dffe4664>
- SAFECOM, <https://www.safecom.gov/>
- SAFENET, <https://safenet.nifc.gov/>
- SIT-209, <https://www.wildfire.gov/application/sit209>
- U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Travel Page, <https://www.gsa.gov/travel>
- Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) System Dispatch Priority Lists (DPLs), [https://www.fs.usda.gov/business/incident/dispatch.php?tab=tab\\_d](https://www.fs.usda.gov/business/incident/dispatch.php?tab=tab_d)
- Wildland Fire Application Portal, <https://iwfirp.nwcg.gov/>

## Agency-Specific References

- *\*\*Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)*, <https://www.nifc.gov/standards/guides/red-book>
- *\*\*National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents>

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## **\*Leadership Level 2, New Leader (Convey Intent)**

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A new leader begins transitioning from a follower to a leader of small groups to achieve a common goal. They begin to implement team cohesion, accept responsibility for self and team, and apply effective communications. For additional information, review the Level 2 description, expected behaviors and knowledge, suggested development goals, and self-study opportunities

<https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee/leadership-levels>.

### **Description**

- Proficient at leadership values and principles.
- Understand transition challenges for new leaders, situational leadership, team cohesion factors, ethical decision-making, and debriefing techniques.
- Lead by example.
- Lead small groups to achieve common goals, objectives, and tasks.

### **Behaviors**

- Demonstrates accountability for personal and team performance to build trust and establish a positive team environment.
- Applies knowledge of leadership traits to lead small teams.
- Promotes inclusion for new and existing team members to build team cohesion and create an environment for effective communication.
- Solicits questions, both up and down chain of command, in order to learn from others.
- Applies a risk management process to ensure safety of self and team members.

### **Knowledge**

- Utilize leadership traits to identify developmental needs in self and others.
- Describe situational leadership to understand application of appropriate leadership styles.
- Understand how wildland fire leadership values, principles, and traits inform ethical decision-making.
- Understand how task, purpose, and end state are used to deliver leader's intent.
- Apply self-assessment tools to identify improvement gaps.
- Practice self-care and team-care.
- Knowledge of basic format to conduct a post-incident debriefing.
- Knowledge of the components of an operational briefing to deliver a simple assignment briefing.
- Knowledge of human factors and environmental barriers to communication.
- Knowledge of organizational structures (ICS and agency).
- Identify the sources of power which enable leadership influence.

## Prepare and Mobilize

### Ensure individual readiness.

**When to start task:** Prior to assignment.

**Resources to complete task:** *NWCG Position Task Book for Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP)*, PMS 311-60; *IRPG*; *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600; Wildland Fire Application Portal; **\*\****Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)*; **\*\****National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

### How to accomplish task:

- Build a kit.
  - Kit contents
    - Office supplies (e.g., pens, pencils, and highlighters)
    - Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card)
    - *NWCG Position Task Book for Initial Attack Dispatcher (IADP)*, PMS 311-60
  - Documentation forms
    - Resource order
    - Rental/National Emergency Rental Vehicle (NERV)/agency-owned vehicle (AOV)/privately owned vehicle (POV) documentation
      - ❖ Travel log (if applicable)
      - ❖ Accident forms
    - Agency-specific forms (e.g., Injury and Workers' Compensation)
  - Suggested items
    - Cell phone with chargers
    - Laptop
    - Phone list
    - Credit card with a sufficient credit limit
    - Pocket calendar
    - Pocket notepad
- Pack red bag/suitcase for 14–21 days.
  - Gather information on dress code requirements.
- Ensure access to FireNet, Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC), computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, email(s), and any additional local programs.
  - IROC and WildCAD-E require FAMAAuth login through the Wildland Fire Application Portal.
  - If needed, request access to any of these resources.
- Obtain assignment approval from your supervisor.
- Verify your data/status is current in IROC.
- Prepare to be absent from home/family. Refer to *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600.

## **Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment.**

**When to start task:** Upon receipt of resource order.

**Resources to complete task:** Local dispatch center standard operating procedures (SOPs); *\*\*National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

### **How to accomplish task:**

- Acquire the resource order.
  - Review the contents.
    - Incident/project name
    - Incident/project order number
    - Financial codes
    - Incident base/phone number
    - Request number
    - Reporting date/time and location
    - Special instructions (authorized equipment, such as laptop, cell phone, etc.)
  - Ensure the resource order has correct spelling, home unit, phone numbers, and all other information.
  - Coordinate with home dispatch to fill the resource order.
- Obtain a travel itinerary.
  - Mode of travel
  - Estimated time of departure (ETD) and location of departure
  - Estimated time of arrival (ETA) and location of destination
  - Location for rest overnight (RON) if you are unable to make the end destination within that operational shift
  - Lodging information
- Gather situational awareness.
  - Contact the requesting dispatch center to receive the following:
    - Incident Action Plan (IAP), if available
    - Weather information
    - Geographic area intelligence reports
    - Website, if available
    - Local dispatch center SOPs

## **Travel to and check in at assignment.**

**When to start task:** Upon receipt of resource order.

**Resources to complete task:** Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization – geographic area; local dispatch center SOPs; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902 or agency-specific policy; *\*\*National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

### **How to accomplish task:**

- Follow agency-specific air and ground travel guidelines.
  - Air travel considerations
    - Use the agency travel arranger to book flights.
    - Comply with baggage limitations.
      - ❖ Refer to Chapter 10 of the *\*\*National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.



- ❖ Check bags for hazardous materials.
- Ground travel considerations
  - Use the agency travel arranger to book a rental car, etc.
  - Follow time limitations/driver duty day limitations.
  - Ensure your rental/NERV/AOV/POV is on the resource order, if applicable.
  - Reference GSA for per diem and lodging rates.
    - ❖ Check with the local Dispatch Center Manager if the rate exceeds per diem allowances.
- Model professionalism for both internal and external customers.
  - Wear attire that reflects positively on the agency you represent.
    - Refer to the local dress code policy.
  - Consistently demonstrate a positive and flexible attitude.
- Ensure check-in procedures are complete.
  - Upon your arrival at the incident, check in with the incident/dispatch supervisor to receive a placement.
- Be prepared with your resource order and Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card).





## Build the Team

### **\*Obtain briefing from supervisor and/or previous shift/assignment position as necessary.**

**When to start task:** When check-in is complete and the dispatch supervisor or coordinator has been located.

**Resources to complete task:** *Initial Attack and Aircraft Dispatcher Job Aid, J-602; Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization – geographic area; IROC quick reference cards; local dispatch center SOPs; IRPG; \*\*National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization.*

#### **How to accomplish task:**

- Introduce yourself to your dispatch supervisor or coordinator.
- Request a briefing from your supervisor and/or the current IADP. During this briefing:
  - Confirm the incident SOPs and protocols.
  - Identify the chain of command, reporting procedures, and risk management processes.
  - Request any necessary equipment to establish your functional area.
  - Set up and ensure your workstation is functional.
  - Identify the number of incidents and their prioritization and complexity.
  - Ensure access to incident dispatch, FireNet/shared email, IROC, and the CAD system.
  - Use maps to familiarize yourself with the dispatch area.
  - Identify assigned resources and their home bases.
- Obtain a briefing on the radio program.
  - Obtain the frequency plan.
  - Identify the repeater locations and response areas.
  - Identify the dispatch frequency zones.
  - Identify how to transmit on single and multiple repeaters (simulcast).
  - Identify how to adjust volumes.
  - Identify how and when to use alert tones.
  - Identify how to clear frequencies for emergency traffic.
- Identify contacts.
  - Local center contacts
  - Duty officers
  - Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC)
  - Neighboring dispatch centers
  - Cooperating dispatch centers
  - Incident contacts, if applicable
    - Incident Command Post (ICP)
    - Incident Commander (IC)
    - Command and General Staff (C&G)
- Ask about the following to get fully oriented to the dispatch environment (if not included in the briefing):
  - Work schedule
  - Logistical information
  - Specific duties/assignment/decision-making authority
  - Meeting times and requirements



- Status of ordered resources
- Location of plans and guides (e.g., Service and Supply Plan, Daily Operations Guide)
- Frequencies being used
- Points of contact (POCs)
- Review the IAP(s) for the following, if applicable:
  - Incident objectives
  - Leader's intent
  - Incident information
  - Current incident status
  - Incident jurisdiction



## Perform Initial Attack Dispatcher-Specific Duties

### **\*Perform daily non-incident tasks.**

**When to start task:** Upon receipt of a briefing and assignment.

**Resources to complete task:** Local Fire Danger Operating Plans (FDOPs); local dispatch center SOPs; AFF; Wildland Fire Application Portal; NWS.

#### **How to accomplish task:**

- Establish, display, and maintain the current resource status.
  - CAD system
  - IROC
  - Wall maps and whiteboards, if applicable
  - Other resource tracking methods per local protocols
- Retrieve, distribute, and maintain appropriate intelligence products.
  - AM/PM weather forecasts
  - Current weather conditions
  - Situation report (SIT)
  - National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) indices
- Monitor shared email accounts and respond as appropriate.
- Monitor AFF for situational awareness.
- Receive phone calls and monitor radio transmissions.
  - Prioritize urgent transmissions before administrative traffic.
  - Respond in a timely manner and accurately to various radio traffic from the field.
- Monitor and process non-local resource requests.
- Maintain open communications with partners and cooperators.

### **\*Receive and document initial incident information.**

**When to start task:** Upon receipt of incident information.

**Resources to complete task:** Local dispatch center SOPs; Wildland Fire Application Portal; NWS Spot Forecast Request; IRWIN system.

#### **How to accomplish task:**

- Receive the incident sizeup.
  - Verify the point of origin to confirm jurisdiction.
  - Document the incident sizeup in the CAD system following local protocol.
- Initiate follow-up actions.
  - Plot the actual incident location.
  - Indicate the status of incident resources in the CAD system.
  - Ensure incident information has been integrated into the IRWIN system.
  - Assign fire codes.
  - Gather observations for spot forecast requests.
    - Submit NWS spot forecast requests.
    - Relay forecasts to resources.
- Continuously monitor for hazardous weather conditions (e.g., red flag warnings, thunderstorms)



and relay information to resources.

- Mobilize or cancel additional resources.

### **\*Mobilize an incident response.**

**When to start task:** Upon receipt of an incident report.

**Resources to complete task:** Local dispatch center SOPs; local FDOPs; Wildland Fire Application Portal; AFF.

**How to accomplish task:**

- Receive phone or radio communications reporting potential incidents.
  - Determine the nature of the report (e.g., wildfire, law enforcement, and all risk).
  - Determine if the report is a new or existing incident.
    - Plot the new report in the CAD system and determine the jurisdiction.
    - If it is an existing incident, add the report to the previously created incident in the CAD system.
- Dispatch adequate resources to the new incident.
  - Identify radio frequencies.
  - Utilize local response plans (e.g., run cards) and procedures.
- Dispatch the requested tactical aircraft following local, regional, and national procedures.
  - Plan, implement, and monitor flight following procedures (e.g., AFF, flight strips, kneeboards).
  - Deconflict airspace in the absence of an aircraft dispatcher.
  - Monitor aircraft operations for adherence to regulations and safety procedures.
- Notify the appropriate personnel about the new incident (e.g., CAD system text notification, email, phone).
  - Initial Attack supervisor
  - Duty officer
  - GACC, if applicable

### **\*Manage incident requests.**

**When to start task:** Upon receipt of incident information.

**Resources to complete task:** Local dispatch center SOPs; IROC quick reference cards; CAD system user guide; VIPR DPLs; *\*\*Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)*.

**How to accomplish task:**

- Receive, prioritize, and process incident requests.
  - Create resource orders in IROC.
  - Fill and/or place pending requests.
  - Release and/or reassign resources.
  - Follow local, GACC, and national protocols.
- Coordinate logistical support.
  - Coordinate with purchasing authorities.
    - Micro-purchasers
    - Buying Teams (BUYTs)
  - Identify and coordinate with the servicing cache (local or national), if applicable.
  - Utilize IROC to order additional resources.



- Utilize contracts, agreements, and other sources, according to local procedures, to obtain resources.
  - VIPR DPLs
  - Emergency Equipment Rental Agreement (EERA)
- Identify resources that can be reassigned.
  - Coordinate reassignments with local personnel, neighbors, and the GACC.
- Plan for demobilization.
  - Brief assigned resources on demobilization procedures and responsibilities.
  - Ensure incident and agency demobilization procedures and work/rest guidelines are followed.

**\*Track incident intelligence.**

**When to start task:** Upon receipt of incident information.

**Resources to complete task:** SIT-209; CAD system user guide.

**How to accomplish task:**

- Collaborate with fire managers and ICs to compile, enter, and update information in the SIT-209 application.
- Update appropriate incident fields in the CAD system.



## Communicate and Coordinate

### **\*Establish and maintain communication with frequent contacts.**

**When to start task:** Throughout the assignment.

**Resources to complete task:** *Initial Attack and Aircraft Dispatcher Job Aid, J-602*; dispatch phone directory; local dispatch center SOPs.

#### **How to accomplish task:**

- Familiarize yourself with daily logs/shift briefs.
- Establish communication and working relationships with frequent contacts.
  - Other dispatch centers, including the GACC and National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC)
  - Expanded dispatch, if applicable
  - Members of the public (reporting wildfires)
  - Contractors
  - Incident Management Team (IMT)
  - BUYT
  - Interagency Resource Representative (IARR)
- Maintain communication with the dispatch supervisor and seek guidance relative to:
  - Requests for national resources.
  - Specialized equipment and supplies.
  - Challenging customers.
  - Unusual and unfamiliar requests.
- Answer phones and emails.
- Foster positive interagency relationships.
- Brief coworkers to maintain situational awareness.

### **\*Participate in briefings and/or After Action Reviews (AARs).**

**When to start task:** Briefings occur regularly. AARs should be conducted when appropriate.

**Resources to complete task:** AARs web page; *IRPG*.

#### **How to accomplish task:**

- Participate in shift briefings.
- Participate in AARs.
  - Identify successes and opportunities to improve.
  - Demonstrate clear dialogue and open communication.
  - Engage in active listening.
  - Provide and receive constructive feedback.
  - Provide context and perception based on your individual experience/perspective.
- Apply lessons learned in the AAR to future work.

## Manage Risk

### **\*Implement risk management strategies.**

**When to start task:** Throughout the assignment.

**Resources to complete task:** Local dispatch center SOPs; AFF; Wildland Fire Application Portal; NWS; RMA Dashboard; SAFENET; SAFECOM; *IRPG*; *NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*, PMS 503; *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600.

### **How to accomplish task:**

- Apply the Risk Management Process as stated in the *IRPG*.
  - Identify hazards.
  - Assess hazards.
  - Develop controls and make risk decisions.
  - Implement controls.
  - Supervise and evaluate.
- Locate and review emergency guides, such as:
  - *NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*, PMS 503.
  - Medical Incident Response Plan.
  - Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
  - Hazardous materials.
- Review Incident Within an Incident (IWI) procedures.
  - IWI SOPs
  - Local emergency contact numbers
  - Hospital locations
  - Coordination of hospital liaisons, etc.
- Identify, assess, and communicate hazards to appropriate personnel.
- Monitor and mitigate physical and mental fatigue.
  - Be familiar with the signs and symptoms of fatigue, illness, and injury.
- Submit accident/incident reports as needed.
  - SAFENET
  - SAFECOM



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## Document

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**\*Complete all administrative tasks and documentation in an accurate and timely manner.**

**When to start task:** Throughout the assignment.

**Resources to complete task:** *Initial Attack and Aircraft Dispatcher Job Aid, J-602*; local dispatch center SOPs.

**How to accomplish task:**

- Complete forms as outlined by agency policy, instructions provided with the forms, and/or specific instructions as provided by the dispatch supervisor.
- Complete documentation as applicable, such as:
  - Incident logs.
  - Shift briefings.
  - Daily logs.
  - Extension request form.



## Demobilize

### **Prepare for and implement demobilization.**

**When to start task:** Throughout the assignment.

**Resources to complete task:** *Initial Attack and Aircraft Dispatcher Job Aid, J-602*; Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF); IROC; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management, PMS 902* or agency-specific policy.

### **How to accomplish task:**

- Notify frequent contacts of your imminent departure and an incoming replacement.
- Obtain your Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF) from the dispatch supervisor.
- Arrange and document travel to your home unit or reassignment.
- Ensure you are released or reassigned from the incident in IROC.
- Generate and deliver a briefing to the incoming IADP and/or supervisor.
- Complete agency finance and time records for approval. Refer to *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management, PMS 902*.
- Communicate and coordinate with your home unit on travel times and rest and recuperation (R&R).

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