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NWCG Incident Position Standards for Incident Commander Type 5

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The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Incident Commander Type 5* establishes national interagency standards for operating as an Incident Commander Type 5 (ICT5) 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 Incident Commander Type 5 Position Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/positions/incident-commander-type-5>, 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 Incident Commander Type 5.

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)*

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

- *10 Standard Firefighting Orders*, PMS 110, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms110>
- *18 Watch Out Situations*, PMS 118, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms118>
- *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms206>
- *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms236>
- *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, PMS 461, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms461>
- Incident Command System (ICS) Forms, <https://www.nwcg.gov/ics-forms>
 - Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205)
 - Medical Plan (ICS 206)
 - General Message (ICS 213)
 - Activity Log (ICS 214)
 - Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF)
- Standard (SF) and Optional (OF) Forms, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms902>
 - Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261
 - Incident Time Report, OF 288
- Job Aids, <https://www.nwcg.gov/training/job-aids>
 - *PSM-001, How to Correctly Fill Out the Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261*, J-001
 - *Packing List for Wildland Fire Fireline Personnel*, J-101
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Complexity Guide, <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nims-incident-complexity-guide.pdf>
- Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) Toolbox, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-toolbox>

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

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/committees/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 positive team environment.
- Applies knowledge of leadership traits to lead small teams.
- Promote team cohesion for new and existing team members 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: *IRPG; Incident Commander's Organizer, PMS 206; Packing List for Wildland Fire Fireline Personnel, J-101.*

How to accomplish task:

- Build a kit.
 - *Incident Commander's Organizer, PMS 206*
 - Agency-specific incident organizer
 - Belt weather kit
 - *IRPG*
- Pack a red bag for 14–21 days.
- Ensure your gear and equipment are appropriate for the transition into a fireline leadership role.
- Know where to access and how to use maps.
 - Read a paper map with topographical lines.
 - Use a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit or equivalent (e.g., cell phone, tablet, laptop).

*Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment.

When to start task: Upon notification from dispatch.

Resources to complete task: Briefing Checklist section of the *IRPG; Incident Commander's Organizer, PMS 206; radio; cell phone; maps.*

How to accomplish task:

- Take note of pertinent information from the initial dispatch using the elements of the Briefing Checklist section of the *IRPG*.
- Identify ingress and egress.
- Identify incoming and available resources.
- Obtain and review the smoke report and possible coordinates.

*Obtain briefing, objectives, and leader's intent from supervisor/Duty Officer/dispatch.

When to start task: Upon dispatch to the incident.

Resources to complete task: Briefing Checklist in the *IRPG; Incident Commander's Organizer, PMS 206; in-briefing packet.*

How to accomplish task:

- Follow local check-in procedures.
- Ensure the leader's intent and objectives are understood.
- Review the in-briefing packet, if available.
- Establish a common operating picture with the supervisor.
 - Refer to the Briefing Checklist in the *IRPG* to ensure you receive a complete briefing.
 - Ask questions as needed.



Supervise and Direct Work Assignments

***Brief assigned personnel.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: Briefing Checklist in the *IRPG*; *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205); Medical Plan (ICS 206).

How to accomplish task:

- Communicate the leader's intent, objectives, chain of command, reporting procedures, risk management processes, and radio frequency management.
- Establish and communicate performance expectations.
- Review the Medical Plan (ICS 206).
- Ensure resources have the appropriate gear for the assignment.
- Ensure resources understand the task, purpose, and end state to accomplish the incident objectives.
- Delegate tasks as appropriate.

***Identify, analyze, and use relevant situational information to make more informed decisions and take appropriate actions.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; radio; belt weather kit or electronic weather meter.

How to accomplish task:

- Constantly evaluate and reevaluate the situation.
 - Document and communicate changes in fire behavior.
 - Establish and communicate trigger points.
- Gather and document weather observations.

***Adjust actions based on changing information/situation.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *10 Standard Firefighting Orders*, PMS 110; *18 Watch Out Situations*, PMS 118; *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Develop and implement contingency plans based on the resources assigned, weather, fire behavior, and effectiveness of current tactics.
- Communicate changes in the situation to assigned resources, adjoining forces, and dispatch.

Monitor performance and provide immediate and regular feedback.

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF).



How to accomplish task:

- Evaluate the performance of assigned personnel for safety and effectiveness.
 - Complete inspections during and after work on the line and ensure objectives are being met.
 - Ensure personnel account for all assigned equipment.
 - Evaluate fatigue, taking into consideration the work shift and the point of time within the fire season.
- Monitor assigned personnel's performance for their ability to:
 - Complete assigned tasks.
 - Work as a team.
- Provide feedback as soon as possible.
 - Give constructive feedback.
 - Stick to facts, not opinions.
- Provide training opportunities, as appropriate.



Perform Incident Commander Type 5-Specific Duties

***Identify oneself as the Incident Commander (IC) and take command of the incident.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG; Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; radio.

How to accomplish task:

- Communicate your role as the IC to resources and dispatch.
- Clearly and professionally communicate intent and objectives to assigned resources.
- Organize and mobilize assigned resources based on established objectives and resource capabilities.

***Locate and scout the fireline.**

When to start task: Upon arrival at the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG; Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; radio; maps; compass; GPS.

How to accomplish task:

- Locate the fire.
 - Maintain Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES).
 - Navigate to the assigned area.
 - Use maps, a compass, GPS, and other tools and applications to gather information and navigate on the incident.
- Scout the fire.
 - Assess the area to determine tactics.
 - Identify potential water sources.
 - Identify the potential workload and duration.
 - Identify and communicate hazards.
 - Gain situational awareness of what the fire is doing.
 - Relay information to dispatch.
 - Recognize potential safety zones and escape routes.

***Complete incident sizeup.**

When to start task: Upon arrival at the incident and after scouting the fireline.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG; Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; radio; maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Conduct an initial sizeup and relay to dispatch when you will have a complete sizeup. Initial sizeup information includes the following:
 - IC name
 - Confirmed or updated coordinates
 - Fire activity
 - Resources needed



- Estimated size
 - Values at risk
 - Jurisdiction
- Follow the host unit incident organizer to complete a full sizeup in a timely manner.
- Provide regular updates to dispatch.

***Monitor incident complexity.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; host unit incident organizer; NIMS Incident Complexity Guide.

How to accomplish task:

- Complete a complexity analysis, when applicable. Refer to the Indicators of Incident Complexity section of the *IRPG* or the *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206 for a full list of indicators. Examples include:
 - General indicators
 - Resources vary from two to six firefighters.
 - Written Incident Action Plan (IAP) not needed.
 - Minimal effects to population immediately surrounding the incident.
 - Span of Control indicators
 - Single resources are directly supervised by the IC.
 - Command and General Staff (C&G) positions not needed to reduce workload or span of control.
- Identify the need for a transfer of command to a higher level if the incident complexity exceeds the General and Span of Control indicators.
 - Prepare for the transfer of command, if needed.
 - Maintain control of the incident until a more qualified IC arrives.

***Declare status of the incident.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; host unit incident organizer; dispatch.

How to accomplish task:

- Per local guidance, notify dispatch of the fire status:
 - Contained
 - Controlled
 - Patrolled
 - Monitored
 - Out



Perform Fireline Duties

***Determine appropriate fireline strategies.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Assess whether you can engage the fire safely.
- Develop strategies based on fuels, weather, topography, fire behavior, LCES, Duty Officer expectations, and assigned resources.
 - Per agency standards, assist with the protection of natural and cultural resources.
 - Document suppression impacts.
- Familiarize yourself with local strategies and tactics.
- Analyze feedback from resources to adjust the strategies, if needed.
- Monitor strategic progress and modify the objectives for risk versus value.

***Coordinate and provide feedback to aerial resources.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; radio; strobe; panel.

How to accomplish task:

- Evaluate the need for aerial resources.
- Ensure aerial resources have a dedicated ground contact and can communicate with them.
- Identify any flight hazards.
- Finalize the location of the drop.
- Describe the target location and explain the mission.
- Know the pilot's intentions prior to the drop.
- Provide honest, constructive, and timely feedback to aerial resources.

Provide status updates on conditions affecting operations, hazardous conditions, air operations, etc., to dispatch.

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; radio; cell phone; maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Report any changes in the fire environment or hazardous conditions to dispatch or the Duty Officer.
 - Spot fires
 - Fire behavior
 - Weather
- Update assigned resources on operational plans, hazards, and special situations.



Communicate and Coordinate

***Communicate effectively.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; radio; cell phone.

How to accomplish task:

- Use plain language and ICS terminology.
- Demonstrate strong verbal communication skills.
- Act as a communication link between assigned personnel when necessary.
- Utilize the appropriate communication tools (e.g., satellite communication device, radio, cell phone).
- Use multichannel radios correctly.
 - Prepare and program radios for the assignment.
 - Ensure you have proficiency using multichannel radios.
 - Follow radio procedure.

***Communicate with dispatch throughout the operational period(s).**

When to start task: Before, during, and after the incident.

Resources to complete task: Radio; cell phone.

How to accomplish task:

- Routinely update dispatch of changes in:
 - Fire behavior.
 - Personnel.
 - Time considerations.
 - Fire status.
 - Fire needs (supplies and resources).
 - Estimated contain and control times.

***Conduct and/or participate in After Action Reviews (AARs).**

When to start task: At end of shift and assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; WFLDP Toolbox.

How to accomplish task:

- Identify successes and opportunities to improve.
- Ensure clear dialogue and open communication.
 - Engage in active listening.
 - Facilitate an open discussion.
 - Avoid interrupting.
 - Allow all voices to be heard.
 - Provide and receive constructive criticism.
- Provide context and perception based on your individual experience/perspective.
- Apply lessons learned in the AAR to future work.

Manage Risk

***Apply the Risk Management Process.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: Risk Management Process section of the *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Use Look Up, Down, and Around to help maintain situational awareness and adjust actions accordingly.
 - Identify hazards.
 - Assess hazards.
 - Develop controls and make risk-informed decisions.
 - Implement controls.
 - Supervise and evaluate.
- Ensure assigned personnel comply with all safety practices and procedures.

***Ensure Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES) are established and known.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Ensure the Standard Firefighting Orders are in place.
- Recognize all Watch Out Situations listed in the *IRPG* and mitigate appropriately.
- Communicate a predetermined contingency plan.
- Use lookouts, line scouts, and the radio to collect pertinent information.
- Reevaluate LCES throughout the operational period.
- Adjust actions accordingly.

***Ensure own and others' safety and welfare in all aspects of the job.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; observations of assigned personnel.

How to accomplish task:

- Ensure the work/rest ratio per agency guidelines is followed.
- Monitor for signs and symptoms of fatigue, illness, or injury, and mitigate appropriately.
- Account for the location, health, safety, and welfare of assigned personnel.

***Plan for medical emergencies.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; Medical Plan (ICS 206); local medical plan.



How to accomplish task:

- Communicate the medical response plan to all assigned resources.
- Ensure assigned resources are prepared to execute the agency-specific Medical Plan (ICS 206).
- Ensure familiarity with medical responders, communication procedures, and the transportation plan.
- Review and become familiar with the Medical Incident Report (MIR).
- Manage the medical emergency based on agency-specific procedures.

Document

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

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261; Incident Time Report, OF 288; *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; host unit incident organizer; General Message (ICS 213); Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF).

How to accomplish task:

- Follow the steps for completing forms as outlined by the agency, instructions provided with the form, and/or specific instructions provided by the supervisor for the assignment.
 - Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261
 - Incident Time Report, OF 288
 - *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206
 - General Message (ICS 213)
 - Activity Log (ICS 214)
 - Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF)
 - SAFECOM
 - SAFENET
 - Agency-specific forms

Demobilize

Prepare for and implement demobilization.

When to start task: At end of the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *Incident Commander's Organizer*, PMS 206; dispatch; radio.

How to accomplish task:

- Abide by your agency's methods of demobilization.
- Communicate the demobilization plan with assigned resources.
- Notify dispatch when resources have been released.
- Ensure incident personnel travel after getting the appropriate rest.
- Communicate and recommend a demobilization timeline to dispatch.
- During the transfer of command:
 - Ensure the continuity of operations.
 - Exchange critical safety information.
 - Communicate the transfer of authority through the established chain of command.

The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Incident Commander Type 5* is developed and maintained by the Incident Command Subcommittee (ICSC), under the direction of the Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC), an entity of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

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