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NWCG Incident Position Standards for Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss)

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The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss)* establishes national interagency standards for operating as a Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss) (FFT1) 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 Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss) Position Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/positions/firefighter-type-1-squad-boss>, 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 a Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss).

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.

Table of Contents

General References	1
Agency-Specific References	1
*Leadership Level 1, Follower (Provide Action)	2
Description	2
Behaviors	2
Knowledge.....	2
Prepare and Mobilize	3
Ensure individual readiness.....	3
*Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment.	3
*Review Incident Action Plan (IAP) and obtain briefing, objectives, and leader’s intent from supervisor.	3
Build the Team	4
*Assemble and validate readiness of crew, equipment, and vehicles.	4
Supervise and Direct Work Assignments	5
*Brief assigned personnel.....	5
*Identify, analyze, and use relevant situational information to make more informed decisions and take appropriate actions.....	5
*Adjust actions based on changing information/situation.....	5
*Monitor performance and provide immediate and regular feedback.	5
Perform Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss)-Specific Duties.....	7
*Locate and scout the fireline.....	7
*Act as a lookout.	7
*Implement appropriate line construction tactics and methods.	7
*Mentor and train assigned resources in safe firefighting practices.	8
Perform Fireline Duties.....	9
*Coordinate and provide feedback to aerial resources.	9
*Identify spot fires and slopovers.....	9
*Provide status updates on conditions affecting operations, hazardous conditions, air operations, etc. to supervisor.	9
*Follow protocols as directed for the protection of natural, cultural, and other resources.	9
*With limited supervision, execute tasks assigned by the supervisor.....	10
*Participate in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) operations according to guidelines stated in the <i>NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)</i> , PMS 461; incident-specific objectives and guidelines; and agency-specific guidance.	10
Communicate and Coordinate.....	11
*Communicate effectively.....	11
*Use multichannel radios correctly.....	11
*Conduct and/or participate in After Action Reviews (AARs).....	11
Manage Risk.....	12
*Apply the Risk Management Process.....	12

*Ensure Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES) are established and known.	12
*Ensure own and others' safety and welfare in all aspects of the job.	12
Document	13
*Complete all administrative tasks and documentation in an accurate and timely manner.	13
Demobilize	14
Prepare for and implement demobilization.	14

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>
- *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms236>
- *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms431>
- *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, PMS 461, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms461>
- *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms600>
- Incident Command System (ICS) Forms, <https://www.nwcg.gov/ics-forms>
 - Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205)
 - 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
- 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
- WildCAD-E, <https://www.wildfire.gov/application/wildcade>
- Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) Toolbox, <https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/wfldp-toolbox>

Agency-Specific References

- ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)*, <https://www.nifc.gov/standards/guides/red-book>

***Leadership Level 1, Follower (Provide Action)**

Followers have several responsibilities: to become competent in basic job skills, take initiative, learn from others, ask questions, and develop communication skills. For additional information, review the Level 1 description, expected behaviors and knowledge, suggested development goals, and self-study opportunities <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/leadership-committee/leadership-levels>.

Description

- Leadership development starts the first day of the job.
- Followers function as a team member.
- Part of being a leader is exercising good followership and understanding human dynamics.
- Followership begins the journey of becoming a student of fire.

Behaviors

- Performs entry-level incident management tasks, contributing to team mission accomplishment and performance.
- Takes responsibility for personal actions and decisions, demonstrating the core value of integrity.
- Takes initiative to ensure the mission is accomplished and team performance is improved.
- Practices the five communication responsibilities to develop skill and ensure individual contribution to risk management.
- Interacts with team members, in a positive and constructive manner, to build team cohesion.
- Acts with humility and learns from others to improve technical and leadership skills.
- Asks questions to increase individual knowledge and improve the safety of self and team members.

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the wildland fire leadership values, principles, and traits to inform expectations of their behaviors as a team member.
- Knowledge of leadership concepts including courage, compassion, authenticity, humility, and empathy to inform expectations of their behavior as a team member.
- Knowledge of the risk management process to understand their role in accident prevention and decision-making.
- Knowledge of the decision-making process to inform their role in an effective decision process.
- Knowledge of the impacts of cumulative and traumatic stress to assist in ensuring resilience and mental and emotional health.
- Knowledge of the elements of human factors and barriers to situational awareness to understand how human elements can contribute to team performance and fireline safety.
- Knowledge of the value differences of thought and perspective bring to team performance to ensure respectful interactions with team members and to contribute to a positive team culture/command climate.



Prepare and Mobilize

Ensure individual readiness.

When to start task: Prior to assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *Packing List for Wildland Fire Fireline Personnel*, J-101; crew standard operating procedures (SOPs).

How to accomplish task:

- Pack a red bag for 14–21 days.
- Ensure gear and equipment are appropriate for the resource order.
 - Ensure adequate supplies are outfitted on vehicles per the inventory or checklist.
- 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).
- Confirm agency-specific training requirements for defensive driving are current.
- Verify driver/operator qualifications and ensure adherence to safety policy and procedures when transporting personnel, fuel, and equipment.

*Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: Resource order; WildCAD-E; dispatch; maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Become familiar with components of the resource order.
- Review pertinent maps.

*Review Incident Action Plan (IAP) and obtain briefing, objectives, and leader's intent from supervisor.

When to start task: At the beginning of the assignment.

Resources to complete task: IAP; *IRPG*; supervisor.

How to accomplish task:

- Be familiar with the methods of check-in at the assignment.
- Ensure the leader's intent and objectives are understood.
- Review the IAP.
- Establish a common operating picture with your supervisor and subordinates.
 - Assist with the crew-level briefing.
 - Ask questions as needed.
 - Refer to the Briefing Checklist section of the *IRPG* to ensure you receive a complete briefing.
 - Receive your assignment from your supervisor.



Build the Team

***Assemble and validate readiness of crew, equipment, and vehicles.**

When to start task: At the start of the operational period.

Resources to complete task: Crew SOPs; vehicle daily maintenance forms.

How to accomplish task:

- Ensure assigned personnel have the appropriate gear for the assignment.
- Ensure vehicles are fire ready.
- Assist or direct daily preventative maintenance checks.
- Gain an understanding of team members' qualifications and capabilities.



Supervise and Direct Work Assignments

***Brief assigned personnel.**

When to start task: Upon briefing from supervisor.

Resources to complete task: Briefing Checklist section of *IRPG*; IAP; Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205).

How to accomplish task:

- Relay the briefing from the supervisor/overhead.
- Communicate the leader's intent, objectives, chain of command, reporting procedures, risk management processes, and communication plan.
- Establish and communicate performance expectations.
- 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: IAP; *IRPG*; maps; radio; weather observations.

How to accomplish task:

- Constantly evaluate and reevaluate the situation.
 - Recognize and communicate changes in fire behavior.
 - Recognize and communicate trigger points.
- Collect, document, and report weather observations using the belt weather kit or electronic weather meter.

***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.

How to accomplish task:

- Communicate changes in the situation to assigned personnel, adjoining forces, and your supervisor.
- Develop and implement contingency plans.

***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); radios.

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.
- Monitor assigned personnel's performance for:
 - Knowledge to complete assigned tasks.
 - Ability to work as a team member.
- Provide feedback as soon as possible.
 - Give constructive feedback.
 - Stick to facts, not opinions.
- Monitor and train assigned resources in safe firefighting practices.
 - Radio use and cloning
 - Tool maintenance
 - Fireline construction techniques



Perform Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss)-Specific Duties

***Locate and scout the fireline.**

When to start task: Upon being assigned the task.

Resources to complete task: IAP; radio; maps; compass; GPS; supervisor.

How to accomplish task:

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

***Act as a lookout.**

When to start task: Upon being assigned the task.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP; radio; maps; compass; weather kit; strobe or signal mirror.

How to accomplish task:

- Obtain the IAP and a radio, map, compass, weather kit, and strobe.
- Navigate to the lookout spot and communicate to the appropriate personnel that you are in place.
- Take weather, smoke, and fire observations, and communicate information to the relevant personnel.
- Communicate with air resources and fire overhead.
- Account for the crew location.
- Recognize trigger points, escape routes, and safety zones for the work area.
- Identify personal trigger points.
- Provide updates for anything that could compromise safety.
- Function as a human repeater, if necessary.
- Communicate to appropriate personnel that you are leaving the lookout spot.
- Submit documentation when requested and maintain records.

***Implement appropriate line construction tactics and methods.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; supervisor.

**How to accomplish task:**

- Ensure construction methods are appropriate to stop the fire spread.
 - Mineral soil scrape
 - Cup trenching
 - Removal of ladder fuels
- Direct a fireline dig.
 - Determine if a direct or an indirect attack should be used.
 - Identify anchor points.
 - Give clear expectations of line specifications (e.g., line width, depth).
 - Brief sawyers on expectations of the saw line (e.g., width, what is being taken or left).
 - Ensure tools are used in the appropriate order.
- Lead a grid.
 - Line out crew members and ensure they understand spacing, verbal commands, and leader's intent.
 - Use firing devices under supervision on a firing operation according to the firing plan.
- Consider timelines for hiking out and refurbishing.
- Identify and flag or mark a good stopping point at the end of the shift.
- Update the supervisor as needed.

***Mentor and train assigned resources in safe firefighting practices.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: None.

How to accomplish task:

- Ensure appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE) is worn for assigned tasks.
- Handline construction and tool use:
 - Maintain proper tool spacing; adjust for terrain and fuel type.
 - Sharpen tools and saws regularly.
 - Repair or replace damaged tools and equipment.
 - Ensure all tools and equipment are safe and serviceable.
- Hazard awareness and safety distancing:
 - Communicate gravity hazards (e.g., rolling rocks/logs, widow makers, unstable snags).
 - Maintain safe distances.
 - 2½ tree lengths from felling operations
 - Safe working distance from heavy equipment
- Water handling:
 - Open and close gated wyes slowly.
 - Do not leave nozzles open.
 - Secure hose lays and control water pressure on steep terrain.
- Maintenance and logistics:
 - Mix and refill fuel as needed.
 - Ensure all assigned personnel can maintain required tools, equipment, and supplies.
 - Report needed repairs or replacements to the supervisor.
 - Direct the squad to refurbish tools, restock water, and service trucks daily.



Perform Fireline Duties

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

When to start task: When utilizing aerial resources.

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

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.
- Communicate your intentions to the pilot before the drop.
- Provide honest, constructive, and timely feedback to aerial resources.

***Identify spot fires and slopovers.**

When to start task: When fire behavior is increasing.

Resources to complete task: Flagging; GPS; maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Size up spot fires.
- Flag spot fires to the line and mark flagging with the necessary information.
- Communicate all relevant information and resources needed to the supervisor and adjoining forces, if applicable.

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

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Report any changes in tactics, fire behavior, or hazardous conditions to the supervisor.
 - Communicate with adjoining forces when appropriate.
 - Communicate operational plans, hazards, and special situations.

***Follow protocols as directed for the protection of natural, cultural, and other resources.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP; resource advisors; avoidance maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Communicate to the direct supervisor if resources and habitats needing protection are discovered.



- Follow the directions from your immediate supervisor for strategies and tactics in sensitive and protected areas.
 - Minimum impact suppression tactics
 - Rehabilitation
 - Avoidance
- Document suppression impacts.

***With limited supervision, execute tasks assigned by the supervisor.**

When to start task: When assigned the task.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; supervisor; radio; maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Successfully complete tasks independently when assigned by the supervisor, such as:
 - Lookout.
 - Line scouting.
 - Mop up.
 - Leading a grid.
 - Directing air resources.
 - Line construction.
 - Special missions.

***Participate in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) operations according to guidelines stated in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, *PMS 461*; incident-specific objectives and guidelines; and agency-specific guidance.**

When to start task: When assigned the task.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP; *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431; structure protection plans; maps; local knowledge.

How to accomplish task:

- Follow agency-specific policy for WUI operations.
- Follow/perform the directions delegated by the supervisor, such as:
 - Structure triage.
 - Structure protection.
 - Assist with evacuations.
- Recognize hazards related to WUI, such as:
 - Ingress/egress.
 - Propane tanks.
 - Defensible space.
 - Smoke inhalation/fumes.
 - Public.



Communicate and Coordinate

***Communicate effectively.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Use correct terminology and verbiage as defined by NWCG terms and glossary.
- Demonstrate strong verbal communication skills.
- Act as a communication link for assigned personnel.
- Adhere to the chain of command.
- Contribute to the planning process by providing accurate information and recommendations.

***Use multichannel radios correctly.**

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: Radio; owner's manual; *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431.

How to accomplish task:

- Have the proper equipment for radios.
- Prepare, program, and clone radios for the assignment.
- Ensure you have proficiency using multichannel radios.
- Follow radio procedure.
- Use clear and concise language.

***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*; *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236.

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: LCES section of the *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Apply the Standard Firefighting Orders.
- Recognize all Watch Out Situations listed in the *IRPG* and mitigate appropriately.

***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 crew; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).

How to accomplish task:

- Follow work/rest ratio guidelines.
- Follow driver duty limitations and policy as outlined in the ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).
- Monitor for signs and symptoms of fatigue, illness, or injury, and mitigate appropriately.
- Account for the location, health, safety, and welfare of assigned personnel.



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; General Message (ICS 213); Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF); *PSM-001, How to Correctly Fill Out the Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261*, J-001.

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
 - Fill out form and have it signed by the designated supervisor.
 - General Message (ICS 213)
 - 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 the end of the assignment.

Resources to complete task: IAP; cell phone; calendar; documents.

How to accomplish task:

- Be familiar with your agency's methods of demobilization.
- Assist in the incident demobilization process, if available.
- Return incident-accountable property.
- Ensure the refurbishment of supplies, equipment, and vehicles.

The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Firefighter Type 1 (Squad Boss)* is developed and maintained by the Incident Operations Subcommittee (IOSC), under the direction of the Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC), an entity of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

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