



NWCG Incident Position Standards for Public Information Officer, Technician

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The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Public Information Officer, Technician* establishes national interagency standards for operating as a Public Information Officer, Technician (PIOT) 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 Public Information Officer, Technician Position Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/positions/public-information-officer-technician>, 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 Public Information Officer, Technician.

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

- *NWCG Standards for Electronic Documentation (eDoc)*, PMS 277, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms277>
- *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>
- *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>
 - General Message (ICS 213)
 - Activity Log (ICS 214)
 - Demobilization Check-Out (ICS 221)
 - 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>
 - *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*, J-102
- Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR), <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/incident-information/imsr>
- Incident Qualification System (IQS), <https://www.vdatasys.com/index.htm>
- Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS), <https://iqcsweb.nwcg.gov/>
- Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC), <https://www.wildfire.gov/application/iroc>
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers, https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_nims-basic-guidance-public-information-officers_12-2020.pdf
- National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) Standards, <https://www.nifc.gov/standards>
- NWCG Public Information Officer Social Media References and Guidance, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/public-information-officer-subcommittee>
- U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Travel Page, <https://www.gsa.gov/travel>
- Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS), https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS_Home.shtml

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>
- ****Public Information Officer (PIO) Incident Organizer**, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/public-information-officer-subcommittee>
- ****PIO Toolbox**, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/public-information-officer-subcommittee>

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: Resource order; Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card); master forms (electronic and paper); *IRPG; A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600; *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*, J-102; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book); ***National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*; ***PIO Incident Organizer*.

How to accomplish task:

- Build a PIO kit.
 - Refer to the ***PIO Incident Organizer* for kit contents.
 - Ensure electronic devices (e.g., laptop, tablet, mobile) are in proper working order with current updates.
 - Maintain access to incident-related systems.
 - Collect the documentation needed to perform position duties.
- Pack personal items for up to 14 days.
- Verify your data and status is current in resource ordering applications (e.g., IROC).
- Prepare to be absent from home and family. Refer to *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600 and *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*, J-102.
- Stay apprised of position-specific advancements in technology and communication.

Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; Incident Action Plan (IAP); transition plan from outgoing Incident Management Team (IMT); local unit information strategy; Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card); resource order; incident information websites; NIFC Standards; social media platforms; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book); ***PIO Incident Organizer*.

How to accomplish task:

- Notify your supervisor of the assignment and receive travel authorization if required.
- Acquire the resource order and review the following:
 - Incident/project name
 - Incident/project order number
 - Financial codes
 - Incident base/phone number
 - Request number
 - Reporting date/time and location
 - Special instructions (e.g., authorized equipment such as laptop, cell phone)
 - Home unit, phone numbers, and other information for accuracy
- Confirm your travel itinerary, including:
 - 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 your end destination within travel regulations.
- Gather situational awareness by:
 - Obtaining the current incident status.
 - Gathering weather information.
 - Collecting intelligence on incidents in the area.
 - Contacting the existing incident point of contact.
- Advise the incident supervisor when you will be in place.

Travel to and check in at assignment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: GSA per diem rates; *IRPG*; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book); ***National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

How to accomplish task:

- Follow agency-specific travel guidelines.
 - For air travel, comply with baggage limitations and check bags for hazardous materials.
 - For ground travel:
 - Follow time and/or driver duty day limitations.
 - Ensure your rental, National Emergency Rental Vehicle (NERV), agency-owned vehicle (AOV), or privately owned vehicle (POV) is on the resource order, if applicable.
 - Reference the GSA website for per diem and lodging rates and check with the local Dispatch Center Manager if the rate exceeds allowances.
- Model professionalism for both internal and external customers.
- Wear professional attire appropriate to the incident.
- Maintain a professional attitude.
- Ensure incident check-in procedures are complete.
- Locate a workspace.

Obtain briefing from incident supervisor.

When to start task: Upon arrival at the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; ***PIO Incident Organizer*.

How to accomplish task:

- Introduce yourself to the appropriate personnel.
- Obtain the current incident status.
- Identify the scope of your incident responsibilities.
- Confirm expectations with the incident supervisor.



Perform Public Information Officer, Technician-Specific Duties

Support the implementation of information strategy.

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; NWCG Information Strategy Best Practices; ***PIO Incident Organizer*; ***PIO Toolbox*.

How to accomplish task:

- Follow the incident supervisor's direction regarding the dissemination of information through appropriate channels.
- Clarify assigned tasks and deadlines.
- Provide current, accurate, and timely information to appropriate audiences.
- Use effective communication skills for various audiences.
- Communicate the incident objectives.
- Use designated protocols for communicating with incident personnel.
- Establish and maintain positive interpersonal and interagency relationships.
- Assist in public awareness of incident-specific hazards and safety procedures.
- Identify and/or investigate rumors and take appropriate action as directed.
- Assess personal skill or experience needs or gaps and work to meet those needs.

Support office operations, community relations, media relations, and digital operations.

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: PIO Daily Assignments Checklist; *IRPG*; NWCG Information Strategy Best Practices; ***PIO Incident Organizer*; ***PIO Toolbox*.

How to accomplish task:

- Follow the incident supervisor's direction regarding gathering, disseminating, and evaluating information through appropriate channels.
- Provide support as needed for:
 - Office operations, including:
 - Answering phones to help address concerns and needs.
 - Filing documentation.
 - Administrative duties, including drafting incident products.
 - Community relations, including:
 - Posting information at locations along the trapline.
 - Providing updates and answering questions at community trapline locations and staffed information boards.
 - Assisting with community briefings, meetings, and tours.
 - Media relations, including assisting with and/or participating in:
 - Media interviews.
 - Briefings.
 - Conferences.
 - Media monitoring.



- Digital operations, including drafting content for internal and external distribution via:
 - Websites.
 - Social media.
 - Email.

Foster and maintain positive relationships.

When to start task: Throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: NWCG Information Strategy Best Practices; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; *IRPG*; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book); ***National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*; ***PIO Incident Organizer*; ***PIO Toolbox*.

How to accomplish task:

- Communicate status and situation changes to the incident supervisor.
- Support audience needs (i.e., translation, low tech/high tech, accessibility).
- Relay feedback to the incident supervisor on social, economic, and political dynamics.
- Respect and maintain general awareness of cultural sensitives.
- Be aware of jurisdictional boundaries and all agencies involved.

Manage Risk

Demonstrate safety and a healthy work environment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; personal protective equipment (PPE); ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).

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.
- Wear PPE appropriately.
- Follow safety precautions.
- Account for the health, safety, and welfare of yourself and those around you by:
 - Following work/rest guidelines.
 - Maintaining personal hygiene.
 - Maintaining nutrition.
 - Staying hydrated.
 - Following driving guidelines.
- Attend safety briefings as applicable (i.e., geographic, incident specific).
- Ensure communication products (photographs, videos, and other media) reflect appropriate safety guidelines by:
 - Showing appropriate PPE.
 - Demonstrating approved and applicable safety messages.



Document

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

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: Daily unit log; Activity Log (ICS 214); *NWCG Standards for Electronic Documentation (eDoc)*, PMS 277; General Message (ICS 213); agency records retention policy.

How to accomplish task:

- Complete and route the following as required:
 - General Message (ICS 213)
 - Activity Log (ICS 214)
 - Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF)
 - Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261
 - Agency-specific forms
- Know the procedures for documentation and follow the current standards.



Demobilize

Prepare for and implement demobilization.

When to start task: When informed by the incident supervisor.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; Demobilization Check-Out (ICS 221); ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book); ***PIO Incident Organizer*.

How to accomplish task:

- Plan for demobilization and follow demobilization instructions from the incident supervisor.
- Break down and return equipment and supplies to the appropriate unit.
- Complete the demobilization check-out process before being released from the incident.
- Follow travel regulations/guidelines and report your status to the home unit, including reassignment or ETA to the home unit.
- Report your status to the home unit, including reassignment or ETA to the home unit.
- Notify dispatch upon arrival at the home unit.

The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Public Information Officer, Technician* is developed and maintained by the Public Information Officer Subcommittee (PIOSC) under the direction of the Communication Education and Prevention Committee (CEPC), an entity of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

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