A publication of the
National Wildfire Coordinating Group

NWCG Incident Position Standards for Field Observer

PMS 350-30 SEPTEMBER 2026



NWCG Incident Position Standards for Field Observer

September 2026
PMS 350-30

The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Field Observer* establishes national interagency standards for operating as a Field Observer (FOBS) 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 Field Observer Position Page, https://www.nwcg.gov/positions/field-observer, 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 Field Observer.

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 2
***Leadership Level 2, New Leader (Convey Intent)** **3**
Description 3
Behaviors 3
Knowledge 3
Prepare and Mobilize **4**
*Ensure individual readiness. 4
Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment. 5
Travel to and check in at assignment. 6
Review Incident Action Plan (IAP) and obtain briefing, objectives, and intent from supervisor. 6
Build the Team **8**
*Follow chain of command and reporting procedures. 8
*Establish a common operating picture with supervisors and adjacent resources. 8
Participate in briefings and debriefings as directed. 8
*Establish and maintain positive interpersonal and interagency working relationships. 9
Perform Field Observer-Specific Duties **10**
*Obtain supplies and current information for operational period. 10
*Travel to and from assigned work area. 10
*Assess project or assigned work area. 11
*Record relevant or appropriate features on a map. 11
*Report weather and fire behavior data. 12
*Report atmospheric characteristics and changes that influence fire behavior. 13
*Report smoke characteristics and impacts. 13
Communicate and Coordinate **15**
*Establish communications and exchange necessary information with other resources. 15
Communicate effectively using multichannel radios. 15
Conduct and/or participate in After Action Reviews (AARs) 15
Manage Risk **16**
*Apply the Risk Management Process. 16
*Ensure Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones (LCES) are established and known. 16
Document **17**
Complete all administrative tasks and documentation in an accurate and timely manner. 17
Demobilize **18**
Prepare for and implement demobilization. 18

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 Standards for Electronic Documentation (eDoc)*, PMS 277, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms277
- *NWCG Smoke Management Guide for Prescribed Fire*, PMS 420-3, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms420-3
- *NWCG Guide to Fire Weather Forecasts*, PMS 425, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms425
- *Fire Weather*, PMS 425-1, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms425-1
- *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms431
- *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms437
- *NWCG Guide to Fire Behavior Assessment*, PMS 437-1, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms437-1
- *Fire Weather Cloud Chart*, PMS 438, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms438
- *NWCG Fire Environment Poster*, PMS 439, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms439
- *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, PMS 461, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms461
- *Basic Land Navigation*, PMS 475, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms475
- *Smoke and Roadway Safety Guide*, PMS 477, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms477
- *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms484
- *Prescribed Fire Plan Template*, PMS 484-1, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms484-1
- *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms494-2
- *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
- *NWCG Data Standards*, PMS 910, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms910
- *NWCG Standards for Geospatial Operations*, PMS 936, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms936
- Incident Command System (ICS) Forms, https://www.nwcg.gov/ics-forms
  - Assignment List (ICS 204)
  - Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205)
  - 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
  - Incident Time Report, OF 288
  - Property Loss or Damage Report – Fire Suppression, OF 289
- Job Aids, https://www.nwcg.gov/training/job-aids
  - J-001, *How to Correctly Fill Out the Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261 (PSM-001)*
  - J-101, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Fireline Personnel*

  - J-102, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*
  - J-301, *Thinking Skills for Risk Management*
- Enterprise Geospatial Portal (EGP), https://www.wildfire.gov/application/egp
- National Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) Website Portal, https://gacc.nifc.gov/
- National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) Standards, https://www.nifc.gov/standards
- *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model*, RMRS-GTR-153, https://gacc.nifc.gov/oncc/docs/40-Standard%20Fire%20Behavior%20Fuel%20Models.pdf

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

*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 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 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 the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431; *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437; *NWCG Guide to Fire Behavior Assessment*, PMS 437-1; *IRPG*; *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; General Message (ICS 213); Activity Log (ICS 214); Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF); Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261; J-101, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Fireline Personnel*; J-102, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*; agency-specific contracts and agreements; agency-specific forms; EGP; incident contact numbers; Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS); Incident Qualification System (IQS); NIFC Standards website; Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) injury documentation; personal gear; personal protective equipment (PPE); radio equipment and programming accessories; *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model*, RMRS-GTR-153; ***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
        - *IRPG*
        - *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431
        - *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437
        - *NWCG Guide to Fire Behavior Assessment*, PMS 437-1
        - *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model*, RMRS-GTR-153
        - Laptop, tablet, and/or cell phone with charging cable
        - Multichannel radio and cloning cable
    - Documentation forms
        - Resource order
        - Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card)
        - Rental, National Emergency Rental Vehicle (NERV), agency-owned vehicle (AOV), or privately owned vehicle (POV) documentation
        - Travel log (if applicable)
        - Accident forms
        - Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261
        - General Message (ICS 213)
        - Activity Log (ICS 214)
        - Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF)
        - Agency-specific forms
- Pack suggested items, as applicable, from the J-101, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Fireline Personnel* and J-102, *NWCG Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*.
- Pack additional suggested items specific to FOBS personnel, including:
    - Office supplies (e.g., pens, pencils, highlighters).
    - Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation device (e.g., tablet).
    - Power bank (mobile charging unit).

  - Pocket notepad.
  - Mobile computer monitor.
  - USB flash drives and external hard drives.
  - Electronic weather instrument (e.g., Kestrel) or belt weather kit.
  - Flight helmet, flight gloves, and flight bag.
  - Camera or video recording device with case.
  - Power strip.
- Ensure your access to all modeling and mapping programs and applications is current, including:
  - Passwords (known and accessible).
  - Multifactor authentication (MFA).
- Prepare to be absent from home and family. Refer to *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600.
- Follow home unit protocol to confirm your status and contact information are current in resource ordering applications (e.g., Interagency Resource Ordering Capability [IROC]).

Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437; home unit standard operating procedures (SOPs); Incident Action Plan (IAP); maps; resource order; ***National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization.*

How to accomplish task:

- Obtain complete information from dispatch upon receipt of the resource order.
  - Ensure the resource order contains the following information as a baseline:
    - Incident/project name
    - Incident/project order number
    - Request number
    - Financial/cost codes
    - Descriptive location/response area
    - Coordinates (latitude and longitude)
    - Incident radio frequency, if available
    - Phone number of incident contact or supervisor
    - Reporting date/time and location
    - Authorization for devices (e.g., laptop, tablet, cell phone)
    - Authorization for mode of transportation, as applicable
- Confirm your travel itinerary with dispatch, including:
  - Mode of travel.
  - Estimated time of departure (ETD) and location of departure.
  - Estimated time of arrival (ETA) and location of destination.
  - Remain overnight (RON) location if unable to arrive at the destination within that operational period.
  - Contact procedures during travel.
- Gather current and forecasted weather conditions using available tools and resources.
- Gather initial data on the current fire environment for the incident area using tools and resources, such as:
  - GACC Website Portal (e.g., fire/fuels advisories).
  - Online fire environment risk dashboards.

    - Online mapping tools, applications, and systems.
        - Fire danger trends
        - Live and dead fuel moistures
- Gather spatial and/or narrative fire history, including:
    - Observation data.
    - Local thresholds.

Travel to and check in at assignment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; agency-specific travel policy information; incident-specific SOPs; ***National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization.*

How to accomplish task:

- Travel following agency-specific guidance.
- Upon arrival, complete the incident check-in process.
- Check in with the Planning Section or incident contact (e.g., Situation Unit Leader [SITL], incident supervisor, dispatch).
    - Confirm access to the incident geospatial group.
    - Request a mapping device, if needed.
    - Refer to team-specific SOPs for incident geospatial data reporting procedures.
- Collect incident supplies (e.g., belt weather kit, hand tool, cooler) from the Supply Unit.

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

When to start task: Upon assignment and throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP; local/team SOPs.

How to accomplish task:

- Receive an in-brief from the appropriate incident supervisor. Identify the number, prioritization, and complexity of incidents.
- Identify contacts, including:
    - Local unit contacts (e.g., biologist, archaeologist, forester).
    - Pertinent incident contacts (e.g., Incident Meteorologist [IMET], Fire Behavior Analyst [FBAN], Long Term Fire Analyst [LTAN]).
- Determine when products are due and to whom, including:
    - Time of day to synchronize geospatial edits.
    - Weather and fire observations.
    - Atmospheric characteristics and changes.
    - Smoke characteristics and impacts.
- Ask about the following (if not included in the briefing):
    - Shift start/end times
    - Logistical information
    - Area hazards
    - Specific duties/assignment
    - Local plans and guides
    - List of radio frequencies being used
    - Expectations and end state

- If working remotely, confirm:
    - Points of contact.
    - Communication methods, including:
        - Status update procedures with the incident supervisor.
        - How you will be linked into meetings and briefings.
    - How, when, and to whom you should deliver products.
- Shadow the outgoing FOBS if possible.

Build the Team

*Follow chain of command and reporting procedures.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP.

How to accomplish task:

- Apply the ICS.
  - Identify and contact your assigned supervisor.
  - Follow the chain of command.
  - Use appropriate ICS forms.
  - Use appropriate ICS terminology.
- Contact and coordinate with the Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS) when entering or leaving a division/group.
- Follow established protocols for sharing and storing files, including:
  - Documented observations.
  - Media (e.g., images, video recordings).
  - Activity Log (ICS 214).
  - Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261.

*Establish a common operating picture with supervisors and adjacent resources.

When to start task: Upon assignment and throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; Assignment List (ICS 204); IAP; incident maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Validate existing products with key personnel (e.g., Geographic Information System Specialist [GISS], DIVS, Operations Section Chief [OSC]), including:
  - Maps.
  - Assignment List (ICS 204).
- Distribute relevant documentation, as requested (e.g., maps, IAPs).
- Participate in digital group communications (e.g., text, team chat).

Participate in briefings and debriefings as directed.

When to start task: Upon assignment and throughout the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP.

How to accomplish task:

- Participate in incident briefings, including:
  - Operational period briefings.
  - Division and/or group breakouts.
- Participate in debriefings and communicate relevant information, such as:
  - Safety concerns.
  - Weather, smoke, and fire behavior observations.

- First order fire effects.
- Unidentified values at risk.

*Establish and maintain positive interpersonal and interagency working relationships.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Conduct yourself in a professional manner. Be respectful and courteous.
- Demonstrate initiative in the absence of direction.
- Maintain communication with adjacent resources and the public as applicable.
- Provide leadership and guidance for a professional workplace.
  - Ensure documentation is completed.
  - Provide support to all resources.
  - Address questions and concerns.
  - Assist with problem solving.
  - Resolve challenges and conflicts as they occur.
  - Relay issues through the chain of command as needed.
- Promote effective teamwork.
- Provide feedback as needed (e.g., division/group After Action Review [AAR]).

Perform Field Observer-Specific Duties

*Obtain supplies and current information for operational period.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

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

How to accomplish task:

- Obtain maps for the operational period.
    - Refer to the IAP for current geospatial map products.
    - Access and navigate the online mapping database.
    - Download the offline area and synchronize the device with the current mobile mapping platform daily.
- Coordinate with the supervisor (e.g., the SITL) to confirm the assignment for the operational period.
- Ensure an adequate supply of food, water, ice, flagging, batteries, etc.
- Verify radio frequencies are current (e.g., Incident Radio Communications Plan [ICS 205]).

*Travel to and from assigned work area.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP; relevant travel maps.

How to accomplish task:

- Consider travel routes, modes of transportation, communication procedures, and accountability.
    - Consider vehicle and driver capabilities.
    - Consider road conditions.
        - Weather impacts
        - Road surface types
        - Washboard roads
        - Dust
        - Operational impacts (e.g., traffic, Wildland Urban Interface [WUI], firing operations)
    - Follow agency standards for appropriate modes of transportation (e.g., All-Terrain Vehicle [ATV], Utility Terrain Vehicle [UTV]).
    - Identify ingress and egress routes.
    - Identify escape routes and safety zones and flag routes to ensure awareness when necessary.
- Ensure the multichannel radio is functioning prior to travel.
- Notify the DIVS when you enter and leave their assigned area.

*Assess project or assigned work area.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP; incident maps; online mapping platforms.

How to accomplish task:

- Gather situational awareness for the current work area, assessing:
  - Hazards (e.g., snags, power lines, wildlife).
  - Values at risk (e.g., improvements, cultural resources, natural resources).
  - Incident features (e.g., drop points, water sources, proposed helispots).
  - Control features (e.g., dozer lines, hand lines).
  - Incident perimeter.
- Familiarize yourself with adjacent incident resources.
- Communicate with the public and landowners as applicable.

*Record relevant or appropriate features on a map.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431; *IRPG*; *Basic Land Navigation*, PMS 475; *NWCG Data Standards*, PMS 910; *NWCG Standards for Geospatial Operations*, PMS 936; IAP; online mapping platforms.

How to accomplish task:

- Use a mobile mapping device and other tools or applications to collect and record information relevant to daily incident objectives, including:
  - Hazards.
  - Values at risk.
  - Incident features.
  - Control features.
  - Incident perimeter and potential changes.
  - Structure assessments that support development of a Structure Protection Plan.
  - Structure triage.
  - Accountable property coordinated with the Logistics Section (e.g., pumps, water tanks).
  - Ingress/egress:
    - Road surface type
    - Road grade (e.g., percent slope)
    - Load limits (e.g., bridge)
    - Turnarounds
    - Clearances (e.g., width, height)
    - Ground approach (e.g., railroad crossing, water crossing, rolling dips)
    - Turning radius (e.g., switchback corners)
- Review maps and overlays of reported data to ensure accuracy (e.g., location, symbology) per *NWCG Standards for Geospatial Operations*, PMS 936. Synchronize and update the mapping device.
- Assist in validating incident map products.
- Assist the local agency and/or assigned Resource Advisor (READ) with safeguarding natural, cultural, and other resources. Note relevant suppression repair needs or impacts.

*Report weather and fire behavior data.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Guide to Fire Weather Forecasts*, PMS 425; *Fire Weather*, PMS 425-1; *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431; *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437; *NWCG Guide to Fire Behavior Assessment*, PMS 437-1; *Fire Weather Cloud Chart*, PMS 438; *NWCG Fire Environment Poster*, PMS 439; *IRPG*; *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484; *Prescribed Fire Plan Template*, PMS 484-1; *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model*, RMRS-GTR-153; agency-specific fuels and fire effects monitoring guide; IAP.

How to accomplish task:

- Complete weather observations.
  - Include data such as:
    - Temperature.
    - Relative humidity.
    - Dew point.
    - Wind speed and direction.
    - Sky weather (e.g., cloud cover percentage, cloud types).
  - Recognize the differences among wind types (e.g., general, local, eye-level, 20-foot).
  - Document the location and rationale for weather sampling site(s).
  - Track trends throughout the operational period.
- Complete fire behavior observations.
  - Include characteristics such as:
    - Fire type (e.g., head, flanking, backing).
    - Rate of spread.
    - Flame length.
    - Flame zone depth.
    - Residence time.
    - Fire spread type (e.g., smoldering, creeping, running, spotting, torching, crowning).
      - Spotting (e.g., frequency, distance)
      - Torching (e.g., single, group)
      - Crowning (e.g., active, passive, independent)
  - Calculate the probability of ignition and fine dead fuel moistures.
  - Characterize and report first order fire effects (e.g., scorch height, burn severity, range of variability, smoke observations).
  - Track trends throughout the operational period.
- Document weather, fire behavior, fuel conditions, and fire effects.
  - Take photos and/or videos as needed.
  - Coordinate with the appropriate recipients (e.g., Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1 [RXB1], Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 [RXB2], IMET, FBAN) for preferred formatting.
- Report daily observations to the appropriate recipients (e.g., DIVS, IMET, FBAN).

*Report atmospheric characteristics and changes that influence fire behavior.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Guide to Fire Weather Forecasts*, PMS 425; *Fire Weather*, PMS 425-1; *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431; *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437; *NWCG Guide to Fire Behavior Assessment*, PMS 437-1; *Fire Weather Cloud Chart*, PMS 438; *NWCG Fire Environment Poster*, PMS 439; *IRPG*; *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484; *Prescribed Fire Plan Template*, PMS 484-1; IAP; *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model*, RMRS-GTR-153.

How to accomplish task:

- Complete atmospheric observations.
    - Include characteristics such as:
        - Indications of an unstable atmosphere (e.g., fire whirls, dust devils).
        - Winds associated with thunderstorm cells.
        - Wind speed changes and directional shifts.
        - Mixing heights.
        - Transport winds.
        - Smoke dispersal.
        - Inversion.
    - Track trends throughout the operational period.
- Document atmospheric characteristics.
    - Take photos and/or videos as needed.
    - Coordinate with appropriate recipients (e.g., RXB1, RXB2, IMET, FBAN) for preferred formatting.
- Report daily observations to the appropriate recipients (e.g., DIVS, IMET, FBAN).

*Report smoke characteristics and impacts.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Smoke Management Guide for Prescribed Fire*, PMS 420-3; *NWCG Guide to Fire Weather Forecasts*, PMS 425; *Fire Weather*, PMS 425-1; *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431; *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437; *NWCG Guide to Fire Behavior Assessment*, PMS 437-1; *Fire Weather Cloud Chart*, PMS 438; *NWCG Fire Environment Poster*, PMS 439; *IRPG*; *Smoke and Roadway Safety Guide*, PMS 477; *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484; *Prescribed Fire Plan Template*, PMS 484-1; IAP; *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model*, RMRS-GTR-153.

How to accomplish task:

- Complete smoke observations.
    - Include characteristics such as:
        - Color.
        - Volume (e.g., very light, light, moderate, heavy, very heavy).
        - Column direction.
        - Column shape.

        - Visibility distance.
        - Height, estimated using the relationship to topographic features.
    - Utilize lookouts as needed.
    - Identify other factors influencing smoke characteristics (e.g., inversions, transport winds, topography).
    - Identify possible smoke sensitive areas (e.g., roads, communities, schools, hospitals).
    - Recognize and report visibility problems to the supervisor, Air Resource Advisor, or Safety Officer (SOF).
    - Track trends throughout the operational period.
- Document smoke characteristics.
    - Take photos and/or videos as needed.
    - Coordinate with the appropriate recipients (e.g., RXB1, RXB2, IMET, FBAN) for preferred formatting.
- Report daily observations to the appropriate recipients (e.g., DIVS, IMET, FBAN).
- Maintain communications with the local air quality contacts and National Weather Service (NWS).

Communicate and Coordinate

*Establish communications and exchange necessary information with other resources.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; IAP.

How to accomplish task:

- Follow the chain of command and reporting processes.
- Ensure you have a clear understanding of expectations. Ask if you do not know.
- Share relevant information in a timely manner.
- Communicate effectively with the supervisor and incident personnel.
    - Inform the supervisor of progress, results, and issues.
    - Request assistance as needed to meet objectives.
- Report noteworthy events (e.g., property loss or damage, accidents, sickness) to the supervisor.

Communicate effectively using multichannel radios.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Guide for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 431; *IRPG*; Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205); IAP; radio manufacturer's user guide.

How to accomplish task:

- Obtain, review, and verify the Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205).
    - Review the appropriate radio frequencies daily.
    - Clone or manually program radio frequencies in appropriate groups and channels.
    - Conduct radio checks to confirm positive communication and identify any mistakes.
    - Ensure frequencies and channels are used correctly.
- Use plain language and ICS terminology. Be clear and concise.

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

When to start task: When directed to complete, as outlined by the agency, or tasked by a direct supervisor.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2.

How to accomplish task:

- Identify successes and opportunities to improve. Focus on the what, not the who.
- Demonstrate clear dialogue and open communication.
    - Engage in active listening.
    - Contribute to an open discussion.
    - Avoid interrupting.
    - Provide and receive constructive feedback.
- Apply lessons learned in the AAR to future work.

Manage Risk

*Apply the Risk Management Process.

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; J-301, *Thinking Skills for Risk Management*; IAP.

How to accomplish task:

- Implement the Risk Management Process as stated in the *IRPG*.
    - Identify hazards.
    - Assess hazards.
    - Develop controls and make risk decisions.
    - Implement controls.
    - Supervise and evaluate.
- Utilize SOF personnel to assist with the Risk Management Process.
- Immediately report any unsafe conditions.

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

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

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

How to accomplish task:

- Implement the LCES guidelines in the *IRPG*.
- Use the Look Up, Down, and Around section of the *IRPG* to help maintain situational awareness.
- Refer to *10 Standard Firefighting Orders*, PMS 110 and *18 Watch Out Situations*, PMS 118.
- Review and understand emergency and contingency plans.
- Recognize trigger points.

Document

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

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Standards for Electronic Documentation (eDoc)*, PMS 277; *Fire Behavior Field Reference Guide*, PMS 437; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; General Message (ICS 213); Activity Log (ICS 214); Demobilization Check-Out (ICS 221); Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF); Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261; Incident Time Report, OF 288; Property Loss or Damage Report – Fire Suppression, OF 289; J-001, *How to Correctly Fill Out the Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261 (PSM-001)*; agency-specific forms; geographic information system (GIS) data and field observations; IAP; incident-specific check-out forms; OWCP injury documentation; Resource Extension Request Form; resource orders; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).

How to accomplish task:

- Obtain, complete, and submit required documentation based on agency, form, and/or incident-specific instructions.
- Review and complete PTBs as needed.

Demobilize

Prepare for and implement demobilization.

When to start task: Upon notification of demobilization from the incident.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; General Message (ICS 213); Activity Log (ICS 214); Demobilization Check-Out (ICS 221); Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261; Incident Time Report, OF 288; Property Loss or Damage Report – Fire Suppression, OF 289; J-001, *How to Correctly Fill Out the Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261 (PSM-001)*; agency-specific forms; IAP; incident-specific check-out forms; resource orders; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).

How to accomplish task:

- Coordinate the efficient transfer of position duties (e.g., Incident Management Team [IMT] or host agency).
- Complete the demobilization check-out process before being released from the incident.
    - Follow the steps in the incident-specific demobilization process/checklist.
    - Return equipment and supplies to the appropriate unit.
    - Check out with the Incident Training Specialist (TNSP) as needed.
    - Determine logistical needs.
        - Assess flights in advance (e.g., 72 hours prior).
        - Coordinate travel to your home unit.
        - Follow work/rest guidelines.
    - If reassigned, obtain a new resource order at check-out.
- Report your status change to local dispatch and/or the home unit, including:
    - Reassignment.
    - ETA.
    - Estimated RON location.
- Follow agency-specific guidelines for returning to the home unit.
- Retain and submit all travel documentation and receipts based on agency direction.

An entity of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), the Fire Planning Management Committee (PMC) oversees the development and maintenance of the *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Field Observer*.

Previous editions: first.

This publication is available electronically at https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms350-30.

Submit comments, questions, and recommendations to the appropriate agency program manager assigned to the PMC using the NWCG Publication Review Form, https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/publication-review-form. View the complete roster at https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/fire-planning-management-committee/roster.

Publications and training materials produced by NWCG are in the public domain. Use of public domain information, including copying, is permitted. Use of NWCG information within another document is permitted if NWCG information is accurately credited to NWCG. The NWCG logo may not be used except on NWCG authorized information. “National Wildfire Coordinating Group,” “NWCG,” and the NWCG logo are trademarks of NWCG.

The use of trade, firm, or corporation names or trademarks in NWCG products is solely for the information and convenience of the reader and does not constitute an endorsement by NWCG or its member agencies of any product or service to the exclusion of others that may be suitable.

This NWCG publication may contain links to information created and maintained by other non-federal public and/or private organizations. These organizations may have different policies from those of NWCG. Please note that NWCG does not control and cannot guarantee the relevance, timeliness, or accuracy of these outside materials.