

Development of Position Competencies

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), working on behalf of the National Integration Center Incident Management Systems Integration Division (Department of Homeland Security), have identified and compiled the core competencies and behaviors (C&B) for each ICS position identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and in the *National Interagency Incident Management System Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide* PMS 310-1.

The NWCG developed core competencies and behaviors for all additional (non-ICS) NWCG positions.

These competencies and behaviors form the basis for position specific training, position task books, job aids, and other performance-based documents.

There are three primary benefits of identifying competencies:

1. competencies are a national “benchmark,” they standardize qualifications without interfering with local decision making about training;
2. shared competencies make interagency crossover and collaboration easier;
3. competencies are a critical component for the development of performance based training.

The following brief descriptions will help distinguish between the terms “competencies,” “behaviors,” and “tasks”:

Competency—a broad description that groups core behaviors necessary to perform a specific function;

Behavior—a general description of an observable activity that is a logical and necessary action in the performance of a behavior; how the behavior is demonstrated or performed in a particular context;

Task—a specific description of a unit of work activity that is a logical and necessary action in the performance of a behavior; how the behavior is demonstrated or performed in a particular context;

Competencies and behaviors among positions are similar. This similarity may hide critical differences in proficiency level and the environment or type of incident in which the position is expected to perform. These critical differences are typically captured in the tasks of each position.

NWCG determined that some of the core behaviors (for certain positions) were already demonstrated and evaluated at lower level positions. Therefore, those behaviors are indicated in the list of Competencies & Behaviors with the words “proficient – not in the PTB.” This means that the trainee is already proficient in this behavior; therefore, the behavior will not be in the respective PTB. This helps ensure the wildland fire community stays aligned with the Department of Homeland Security national competencies and behaviors.