

# **Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum PMS 316**

## **MODULE 1 CURRICULUM ORIENTATION**



**REFERENCE TEXT  
OCTOBER 2001  
NFES 2671**



CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

on behalf of the

NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

*The following training material attains the standards prescribed for courses coordinated by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. The instruction is certified for interagency use and is known as:*

Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualifications System  
National Training Curriculum  
Certified at Level III

Member NWCG and Training Working Team Liaison

Date

10/14/01

Chairperson, Training Working Team

Date

9/25/01

## Description of the Performance Based System

The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System is a “performance based” qualification system. In this system, the primary criteria for qualification is individual performance as observed by an evaluator using approved standards. This system differs from previous wildland fire qualification systems which have been “training based.” Training based systems use the completion of training courses or a passing score on an examination as a primary criteria for qualification.

A performance based system has two advantages over a training based system:

- Qualification is based upon real performance, as measured on the job, versus perceived performance, as measured by an examination or classroom activities.
- Personnel who have learned skills from sources outside wildfire suppression and prescribed fire, such as agency specific training programs or training and work in structural fire, law enforcement, search and rescue, etc., may not be required to complete specific courses in order to qualify in a wildland or prescribed fire position.

1. The components of the wildland and prescribed fire Qualification system are as follows:

- a. Position Task Books (PTB) contain all critical tasks which are required to perform the job. PTB's have been designed in a format which will allow documentation of a trainee's ability to perform each task. Successful completion of all tasks required of the position, as determined by an evaluator, will be the basis for recommending certification.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Training requirements include completion of all required training courses prior to obtaining a PTB. Use of other courses or job aids providing additional training which supports development of knowledge and skills is recommended to prepare the employee to perform in the position.

- b. Training courses and job aids provide the specific skills and knowledge required to perform tasks as prescribed in the PTB.
- c. Agency Certification is issued in the form of an incident qualification card certifying that the individual is qualified to perform in a specified position.

2. Responsibilities

The local office is responsible for selecting trainees, proper use of task books, and certification of trainees. See PMS-310-1, Appendix A, Position Task Book Administration, for further information.

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**October 2001**

Additional copies of this document may be ordered from: National Interagency Fire Center, ATTN: Great Basin Cache Supply Office, 3833 S. Development Ave., Boise, ID 83705. Order NFES 2671.

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# PREFACE

This module is one of six modules which comprise the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. The curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. Development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, National Fire & Aviation Training Support Group.



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# STUDENT INFORMATION

## INTRODUCTION TO THE REFERENCE TEXT

Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System: Curriculum Orientation is designed to give the user an overview of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. The module provides practical information intended to familiarize the user with the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System and its application.

The majority of the reference text is to be used as a note-taking guide, but other practical information and questions are included that will replicate situations that may occur during the qualification process.

## DELIVERY METHOD

The material in this module is designed to be used in two ways to facilitate learning. The first and recommended method is **to have the material presented by agency personnel that have working knowledge of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System**. This method will facilitate discussion and ensure student understanding. To further stimulate learning, it is recommended that the information be presented in groups so discussions may be held. The second way this material can be used is as a self paced (study) guide. The student, equipped with the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1, and a position task book, can work through the material in this module and increase their understanding of the subject.

We hope you have a good learning experience which helps you to accomplish your job more effectively.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Although this module is intended primarily as an introduction and information source for those personnel who are new to the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System, there is valuable information for all users of the qualification system.

Three primary target groups have been identified for the six modules of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. They are:

Entry Level (Modules 1-3) - Those personnel who are new to the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System. Included in this group but not limited to are: entry level firefighters, agency personnel seeking incident qualifications, those personnel who may have an interest in acquiring incident qualifications.

System Administrators (Modules 1-5) - Those personnel who are responsible for administration and application of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System. A general characteristic of this group is supervisors with delegated responsibility for ensuring that personnel qualifications are appropriately acquired and maintained. The group may include but is not limited to: training specialists (geographic, local area, and incident), fire management officers, fire control officers, crew supervisors, crew superintendents, station managers, agency helicopter managers, etc.

Agency Administrators (Module 6) - Those personnel that are commonly referred to as line officers and agency executives. Often times these individuals are not directly involved in the qualification process but delegate the authority for agency qualification.

## CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The curriculum consists of six modules of instruction. Each module covers a part of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System or related applications. The following description of Module 1 and the remaining five modules is provided so that the user may see where they are in the process and plan additional modules accordingly.

Module 1 - Curriculum Orientation contains information on the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System, this training curriculum, and the objectives of the training curriculum. The information contained in this module is intended for all users of the system.

Module 2 - Components and Guide provides information on the system components and key guide utilized in administration of the qualification system. Descriptions and exercises in this module help the user identify and use the components and guide. This module is intended for entry level personnel and those personnel who have responsibility for administration and application of the system.

Module 3 - Qualification Requirements provides the user with more in depth information on the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1. Exercises aid the user in determining how personnel become qualified in a target position. Problem solving items include: training, experience, physical requirements for various positions; certification and recertification issues. This module is intended for entry level personnel and those personnel who have responsibility for administration and application of the system.

Module 4 - Roles and Responsibilities provides the user with more in depth information on use of Appendix A, Position Task Book Administration. Exercises help the user to identify key roles and responsibilities identified in this guide, and how these roles are tied into use and administration of the position task book(s). This module is intended for those personnel who have responsibility for administration and application of the system.

Module 5 - Interactions and Partnerships provides knowledge on how different participants of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System interact with each other and the importance of that relationship. Exercises are intended to display these interactions and provide more in depth information on how the PMS 310-1 and Appendix A, Position Task Book Administration, must be used interchangeably. This module is intended for those personnel who have responsibility for administration and application of the system.

Module 6 - Agency Administrator Roles and Responsibilities provides Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System information to the agency administrator or delegating official. The module is intended to provide information that will help decision making and support employee wildland and prescribed fire qualification. This module is intended for agency administrators or executives who have responsibility for establishing policy and guidelines within their agency.

Users are encouraged to review all modules regardless of what level they may currently be at in the qualification process. The modules provide exercises on how to utilize the components and guides of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System. This information can be helpful in determining how to obtain personal qualification. More importantly, this information is helpful in a supervisory, training, and mentor role.

Each module contains the following:

- Instructor guidance and lesson plans
- Reference Text
- Questions and scenarios for module exercises (as appropriate)
- Self-Evaluation (open book)

## SUGGESTED PREREQUISITE MODULES

This is the first of six modules of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. No prerequisites are necessary.

## DETAILED LESSON PLAN OUTLINE

Course: Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System—National Training Curriculum

Module: 1 - Curriculum Orientation

Suggested Time: 30 Minutes

Training Aids: Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1, a position task book.

### Module Objectives:

1. Provide student with a historical overview of the NWCG Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.
2. Describe the performance based qualification system.
3. Describe the purpose of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System: Curriculum Orientation is the first of six modules of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. The module provides a historical overview of the evolution of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System, and the purpose of the training curriculum.

This training curriculum is not intended to replace the established guidelines and direction. It is designed to increase user understanding and application of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.

This module provides the foundation of information for the five subsequent modules of the training curriculum.

## II. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The following historical overview of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System is provided so that the user can have a better understanding of where we have been in the evolution of the current qualification system, and how we got to where we are today.

Prior to 1973 common standards did not exist among agencies for wildland fire qualification and training. Each agency established independent standards and limited national courses existed. This resulted in an inability to exchange resources above the crew level.

In 1972, the BLM conducted a study that showed an extensive duplication of effort and lack of standardization even within a single agency. Every year partner agencies faced common problems:

- Widely dispersed field areas
- Limited staff
- Wildland fire activity

An umbrella organization was needed to facilitate the development of practices, standards, and training to bond the wildland fire community.

In 1976 the first of three major efforts would occur to help unite the wildland fire community in their effort to respond to increasing fire activity nationwide.

### A. Establishment of the NWCG

On March 18, 1976, an Interagency Memorandum of Understanding between the secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture officially formed the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). NWCG fills the interagency need by contributing towards the cost-effective execution of each partner agency's programs to benefit agency mandates, resources, and the taxpayer.

The NWCG includes representatives from the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fire Administration and representatives from the National Association of State Foresters. In June of 1994, the original agreement was modified to include the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U.S. Fire Administration.

Detailed products are produced by Working Teams and Advisory Groups working under the direct coordination of the NWCG. The products are approved by a consensus of the NWCG. Agreed policies, standards, and procedures are then implemented by each agency through regular channels.

The NWCG Working Teams are grouped to reflect the concerns of the interagency wildland fire community. Currently, the NWCG Working Teams are:

- TWT**—Training Working Team
- IOSWT**—Incident Operations Standards Working Team
- WFEWT**—Wildland Fire Education Working Team
- FUWT**—Fire Use Working Team
- FEWT**—Fire Equipment Working Team
- SHWT**—Safety and Health Working Team
- IBPWT**—Incident Business Practices Working Team
- IRMWT**—Information Resource Management Working Team
- National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Protection Advisory Group

The IOSWT and the TWT are key to the development and maintenance of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System and appropriate training curriculum. The IOSWT is responsible for all qualification and standards while the TWT is responsible for training issues and curriculum.

The Fire Use Working Team (FUWT), the former Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team (PFFEWT), has provided subject matter expertise and oversight in the development of the prescribed fire system's qualification and training curriculum. Their work has been coordinated with that of the IOSWT and the TWT, and incorporated into the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1.

B. National Interagency Fire Qualification System (NIFQS) and the Incident Command System (ICS)

Between 1973 and 1982, two additional major efforts were conducted that would allow agencies to cooperate, and share personnel and resources.

1. The National Interagency Fire Qualification System (NIFQS) was developed between 1974 and 1977 and implemented in 1978. NIFQS established minimum standards based on:

- Experience
- Training
- Physical fitness

NIFQS later became known as a training based system, due to its reliance on completion of required courses to enable an individual to qualify for a position.

NIFQS training courses were developed between 1974 and 1982. These courses were developed through an interagency effort led by the former BLM Division of Training at the former Boise Interagency Fire Center (BIFC). BIFC used:

- New instructional system development technology,
- Interactive instructional methods, and
- A concept of centralized development and decentralized instruction.

The resulting suppression courses (S-Courses):

- Provided a common training standard acceptable to all NWCG agencies.
- Were developed by wildfire agencies for wildfire.
- Were based on the large fire organization (LFO).
- Were performance based and contained wildfire suppression skills.
- Were certified by the NWCG and published through the National Audiovisual Center.

2. During this same period of time the Incident Command System (ICS) was being developed in Southern California through FIRESCOPE (Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies). ICS was developed for much the same reasons as NIFQS, however its focus was on:

- Cooperation of wildland fire
- Structural fire
- Law enforcement
- Other emergency response agencies in an all-risk environment

While ICS provided many common elements acceptable to both wildland fire and emergency response agencies, it did not include training and qualification components.

### C. National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS)

In 1982 the NWCG adopted ICS for national implementation and combined the best of both the ICS and NIFQS. The result was the NIIMS which includes the ICS plus the training and qualification of NIFQS and a publications management component.

The adoption of ICS meant that most of the NIFQS S-Courses could no longer be used, since they were based on the Large Fire Organization (LFO) and procedures.

The FIRESCOPE agencies, led by the California Department of Forestry (CDF), were tasked with developing the ICS training curriculum using the S-Courses as a model and adapting to the new courses as much as possible. Unfortunately the resulting courses (I-Courses) did not meet all user needs.

In August 1987, the TWT, assisted by the former BIFC Division of Training, conducted an analysis to determine why the I-Courses were not working. This analysis revealed differences between FIRESCOPE agencies and NWCG agencies that were contributing to the problems with the I-Courses.

As a result of the analysis, the TWT and the current IOSWT submitted a joint proposal to the NWCG calling for major modifications to the training and qualification system. NWCG approved this proposal in January 1988 and tasked the former BIFC Division of Training to develop a specific proposal for a new suppression qualification and training system.

This proposal was developed with extensive input and review and recommended a performance-based qualification system and a new curriculum composed of:

- All Risk courses (I-Courses)
- Suppression skill courses (S-Courses)
- And job aids.

The NWCG approved this proposal in September 1991, and funded it for implementation over a ten-year period.

The former BIFC Division of Training was assigned the lead in development of the training courses, position task books, and other components which make up the system in use today. Funding and resources for development of the training curriculum and job aids was established through an interagency agreement.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PERFORMANCE BASED SYSTEM

The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System is a “performance based” qualification system. In this system, the primary criteria for qualification is individual performance as observed by an evaluator using approved standards. This system differs from previous wildland fire qualification systems which have been “training based.” Training based systems use the completion of training courses or a passing score on an examination as a primary criteria for qualification.

A performance based system has two advantages over a training based system:

- Qualification is based upon real performance, as measured on the job, versus perceived performance, as measured by an examination or classroom activities.
- Personnel who have learned skills from sources outside wildland fire suppression and prescribed fires, such as agency specific training programs or training and work in structural fire, law enforcement, search and rescue, etc., may not be required to complete specific courses in order to qualify in a NWCG position.

A. The components of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System are as follows:

1. Position Task Books (PTB) contain all critical tasks which are required to perform the job. PTB’s have been designed in a format which will allow documentation of a trainee’s ability to perform each task. Successful completion of all tasks required of the position, as determined by an evaluator(s), will be the basis for recommending certification.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Training requirements include completion of all required training courses and prerequisite experience prior to obtaining a PTB. Use of other courses or job aids providing additional training which supports development of knowledge and skills is recommended to prepare the employee to perform in the position.

2. Training courses and job aids provide the specific skills and knowledge required to perform tasks as prescribed in the PTB.
3. Agency Certification is issued in the form of an incident qualification card certifying that the individual is qualified to perform in a specified position.

B. Responsibilities

The local office is responsible for selecting trainees, proper use of task books, and certification of trainees; see Appendix A, Position Task Book Administration in the PMS 310-1.

IV. PRESCRIBED FIRE TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION

A. Approval of the Prescribed Fire Training and Qualification System

In 1993, at the request of the currently named Fire Use Working Team (FUWT), the NIFC National Fire and Aviation Training Support Group (NFATSG) was tasked with development of the prescribed fire training and qualification system. A proposal was completed and approved by the NWCG in 1995.

In March, 1999 prescribed fire and fire use training and qualifications were added to the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1. The 1999 guide was revised and published as a NWCG certified version in 2000.

<b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WILDLAND AND PRESCRIBED FIRE QUALIFICATION SYSTEM</b>	
1976	National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) established
1974-1978	National Interagency Fire Qualification System (NIFQS) developed and implemented
1974-1982	NIFQS training courses (S-courses) developed
1974-1982	Incident Command System (ICS) developed through FIRESCOPE
1982	National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) developed and adopted by the NWCG. Combined ICS and NIFQS
1991	NWCG approved a proposal for a performance based qualification system, and a new curriculum composed of; all risk courses (I-courses), suppression skill courses (S-Courses), and job aids and funded it for implementation over a ten-year period.
1993-	Proposal for the Prescribed Fire training and qualification system approved for implementation by the NWCG.
2000-	Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide published.
2001-	Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum completed.

## V. PURPOSE OF THE WILDLAND AND PRESCRIBED FIRE QUALIFICATION SYSTEM NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM

### A. Curriculum Objectives

The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum is designed to provide users with more in depth knowledge in use of the components, application of the system, and aid continual implementation. The curriculum will:

- Identify the major components of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.
- Demonstrate the use of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1 and the Position Task Books.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities outlined in Appendix A, Position Task Book Administration.
- Describe the interactions necessary for certification in the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.

### B. Delivery Method

Modules have been developed so that they can be taken as self paced (study) or presented by those with subject matter expertise. It is beneficial for the modules to be instructor-led so that interactions and sharing of information may be facilitated.

The material in the training curriculum is designed to be used in two ways to facilitate learning:

1. The first and recommended method is **to have the material presented by agency personnel that have a working knowledge of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System and the components contained in that system.**

To further stimulate learning, it is recommended that the information be presented to groups so interactive discussions of the material may be held.

With this method it is recommended that students are allowed to complete the module questions and exercises. This can be

accomplished in groups or individually. When the module is completed, facilitate discussion of solutions to ensure student understanding.

2. The second way this material can be used is as a self-paced (study) guide. The student, equipped with:
  - The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1
  - A position task book

can work through the material in this module and increase their understanding of the subject.

The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System has been designed for interagency use for the participants of the NWCG. It is based on acceptable minimum standards for national mobilization purposes. Because agencies may augment the minimum standards for their own purposes it is beneficial to include any agency specific information in any module presentations.

#### C. Self Evaluation

Module information is presented through a series of scenarios, questions, and exercises. Exercises and information have been developed based on user questions and input on the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System, generated over the initial implementation period (1993 to present).

Exercises are based on information contained in the components of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide. References are provided to aid the student with problem solving. Textbook answers are provided in an attached appendix contained in each module.

#### D. Duration

It is the intent that the time necessary for completion of all modules take four hours or less. Modules may be presented in any combination or order as appropriate for the user.

### VI. QUESTIONS

The following questions have been included as a review for the students and to reinforce key points. Answers are provided in Appendix A of this Module.

**QUESTION 1: What interagency group was established to facilitate the development of practices, standards, and training in the wildland fire community?**

**QUESTION 2: Name the three NWCG working teams most responsible for the development and maintenance of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.**

**QUESTION 3: Who, at your home unit, is an administrator of your qualification system? Or, who is your system administrator?**

**QUESTION 4: The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum was designed to?**

**QUESTION 5: Identify the three target groups for this training curriculum.**

# **MODULE 1**

## **CURRICULUM ORIENTATION**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Solutions to Questions**



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## SOLUTIONS: QUESTIONS

**QUESTION 1: What interagency group was established to facilitate the development of practices, standards, and training in the wildland fire community?**

Answer: The NWCG. On March 18, 1976, an Interagency Memorandum of Understanding between the secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture officially formed the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

**QUESTION 2: Name the three NWCG working teams most responsible for the development and maintenance of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.**

Answer:

IOSWT—Incident Operations Standards Working Team: Responsible for qualification and incident operations standards. Was formerly know as the ICSWT—Incident Command System Working Team.

TWT—Training Working Team: The TWT is responsible for training issues and oversight of NWCG curriculum. The work of these two teams is coordinated by the NWCG.

FUWT—Fire Use Working Team: Responsible for subject matter expertise and oversight of the prescribed fire certification and training curriculum. Work is coordinated with the IOSWT and TWT.

**QUESTION 3: Who, at your home unit, is an administrator of your qualification system? Or, who is your system administrator?**

Answer: FMO, Training Specialist, Crew Superintendent, etc. This normally is a delegated authority to agency managers (supervisors) by the agency administrators.

**QUESTION 4: The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum was designed to?**

Answer: Increase knowledge in use of the components, application of the system, and aid continued implementation.

**QUESTION 5: Identify the three target groups for this training curriculum.**

Answer: Under Student Information - Entry Level, System Administrators, Agency Administrators.

# **MODULE 1**

## **CURRICULUM ORIENTATION**

### **Appendix B**

#### **Module Evaluation**





