

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

## **MODULE 6 AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**



**REFERENCE TEXT  
OCTOBER 2001  
NFES 2676**



## 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

10/11/01

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 2676.

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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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# CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	i
CONTENTS .....	iii
STUDENT INFORMATION .....	1
Introduction to the Reference Text .....	1
Delivery Method .....	1
Target Audience .....	1
Curriculum Description .....	2
Suggested Prerequisite Modules .....	4
AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	5
I. Introduction .....	5
II. Agency Administrator Role In The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System .....	5
III. Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System—National Training Curriculum .....	8
IV. Conclusion .....	13
MODULE EVALUATION .....	A-3



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# **STUDENT INFORMATION**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE REFERENCE TEXT**

Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System: Agency Administrator Roles and Responsibilities provides agency administrators knowledge on utilization of the system guide for proper administration and application of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.

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 qualifications process.

## **DELIVERY METHOD**

The material in this module is designed as self-paced (study) guide for the agency administrator. The agency administrator, 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**

This module is intended as an introduction and information source for agency administrators. For those who have had experience with the system and/or would like refresher training, there is valuable information contained in this module.

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 qualifications.

## 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 6 and the remaining five modules is provided so that the user may see where they are in the process and plan additional modules accordingly.

<p><u>Module 1 - Curriculum Orientation</u> 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.</p>
<p><u>Module 2 - Components and Guide</u> provides information on the system components and key guide utilized in administration of the qualifications 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.</p>
<p><u>Module 3 - Qualification Requirements</u> 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.</p>
<p><u>Module 4 - Roles and Responsibilities</u> 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.</p>
<p><u>Module 5 - Interactions and Partnerships</u> 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.</p>
<p><u>Module 6 - Agency Administrator Roles and Responsibilities</u> 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 qualifications. This module is intended for agency administrators or executives who have responsibility for establishing policy and guidelines within their agency.</p>

Users are encouraged to review all modules regardless of what level they may currently be at in the qualifications 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 qualifications. 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 sixth of six modules of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. This module is intended to give agency administrators an overview of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System. More detailed information can be found in modules 1 thru 5.

## DETAILED LESSON PLAN OUTLINE

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

Module: 6 - Agency Administrator Roles and Responsibilities

Suggested Time: 15 Minutes

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

### Module Objectives:

1. Define the Agency Administrator's role in application of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System.
2. Describe three major responsibilities of the agency administrator related to wildland and prescribed fire qualifications.
3. Identify the information contained in modules 1 thru 5 of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum.

### I. INTRODUCTION

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 direction that will help decision making and support the employee in acquiring wildland fire qualifications.

It is not the intent to cover material that has been covered in the previous five modules, but to provide brief information and examples of what is contained in each. With that information, it is hoped that the agency administrator can easily locate information needed in everyday decision making and planning for their respective wildland and prescribed fire programs' qualifications.

## II. AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN THE WILDLAND AND PRESCRIBED FIRE QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

Examples of agency administrators are personnel that have been 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 qualifications.

For that reason, it is important that training is fully supported and employee qualifications are met as outlined in the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1.

Recent documents that illustrate the importance of training and qualifications are listed below.

### A. The “**Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study**”, Tri-Data (March 1998)

The Executive Summary of Phase III of the Wildland Firefighter Safety Awareness Study, identifies the following categories for improving safety. They are:

- **Leadership**
- Retention of Experience
- **Improved Training and Certification**
- Human Communications
- Human Factors
- **Professional Attitudes about Safety**
- Safety Incident Reporting
- External Factors

For each category a major principle was identified. Some can be directly related back to training and qualifications and the role that agency administrators play. Those principles that help to illustrate the need and importance of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System are as follows:

Principle #1: Assure that people in leadership positions are qualified.
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Major headings under this principle are:

- Require stronger fire qualifications for FMO's and other managers.
- Train all agency administrators in fire management basics.

Principle #4: Realistic, high quality training must be used to compensate for lack of experience. Proper training also is critical for safety by teaching safe practices and developing proper attitudes.

Major headings under this principle are:

- Foster on-the-job training.
- Make training more realistic.
- Provide more refresher training, especially for seasonals.

Principle #5: Ensure the integrity of the of the red card qualifications system.

The major heading under this principle is:

- Enforce the requirements of the red card qualifications system.

There are a number of items in this report that relate to agency administrators and wildland and prescribed fire program managers. The direction is clear that the integrity of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System needs to be reinforced and maintained. Full support and enforcement is integral to it's success.

B. Wildland Fire Management Policy

The **Wildland Fire Management Policy** states as one of it's "Guiding Principles of Fire Policy":

**Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity. No resource or property value is worth endangering people; all of our actions and our plans must reflect this commitment and this principle.**

C. Management Roles

The Tri Data study and the Wildland Fire Management Policy comment on the need to improve the qualifications and safety for our wildland firefighters. Planning, application and administration from all levels of management will help to meet this goal.

### III. WILDLAND AND PRESCRIBED FIRE QUALIFICATION SYSTEM—NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM

As stated previously, this module is not intended to repeat the information contained in Modules 1 thru 5. The following information will provide the Agency Administrator with: a summary of modules 1 thru 5 and an example of questions that are required of the students for each of those modules. This information can help direct the user to those locations that would best benefit their needs.

#### A. Module 1: Curriculum Orientation

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.

This 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 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.

A sample of a question found in Module 1 is:

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

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

B. Module 2: Components and Guide

This module is an introduction to the components and guide of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System. The student will be introduced to the design and use of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1, and a position task book through a series of questions and/or scenario exercises.

Students will build familiarity with the guide and how they apply it to the functions of the system components. Students will be asked to support their responses to questions with references from the identified components and guide.

A sample of a question found in Module 2 is:

**Question 1: How do the training courses and job aids relate to qualifications?** (Reference: PMS 310-1, Section B)

***Answer:** In the performance based system the primary means of earning and maintaining one's qualifications is through demonstrated performance. To satisfactorily perform in a position one has to have the necessary knowledge and skills.*

*Additional training courses and job aids are two tools designed to prepare the individual for a position by providing the knowledge and skills required to successfully perform in a particular position.*

*Job aids differ somewhat from training courses. Job aids are intended to be used as an on-the-job reference for both qualified personnel and trainees in conjunction with the position task book to meet the recommended performance requirements of the position.*

*On-the-job training is not intended to replace formalized training. On-the-job training is utilized in the same manner as training courses and job aids, to provide the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve satisfactory position performance. If quality on-the-job training is not available, training courses and job aids should be considered to ensure the trainee's success.*

*Section L in the PMS 310-1 lists the suggested training for each position and represents the knowledge and skills identified as necessary to perform satisfactorily. This list can be used as a tool to plan and assess the best combination of on-the-job training and formalized training courses to ensure fully qualified personnel.*

### C. Module 3: Qualification Requirements

Qualification Requirements is the third of six modules of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. The information in this module provides the student with information needed to continue with the three subsequent modules of the training curriculum.

The module provides more in depth knowledge on the process for qualification using the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System PMS 310-1. The student will be introduced to the design and use of the guide through a series of questions and/or scenario exercises.

Students will be asked to support their responses to questions with references from PMS 310-1.

The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1, provides guidance to participating agencies and organizations to establish minimum standards for wildland firefighting and prescribed fire personnel for national mobilization purposes. The system is designed as a performance based system where the primary criteria for qualification is the performance of the individual, observed and evaluated, using approved standards outlined in this guide.

A sample of a question found in Module 3 is:

**Question 1: Who is responsible for re-certification?**

*Answer: According to the PMS 310-1, the agency manager at the home unit is responsible for certifying and re-certifying qualifications of its personnel based upon the requirements of the guide. Refer to the glossary definition of the home unit for further definition of the “agency manager.”*

D. Module 4: Roles and Responsibilities

The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System is designed to provide a flexible process for use by all agencies' personnel to ensure only qualified persons receive certification in a specified position.

The backbone of this system is the application and administration of the position task book. The integrity of the position task books (PTB), and therefore the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System, rest heavily on the actions of the individuals involved in carrying out their roles as they pertain to the PTB.

In this module, Roles and Responsibilities, the student will have the opportunity to examine the various critical roles and responsibilities of the participants in the administration of the position task books, as illustrated by Appendix A, Position Task Book Administration.

A sample of a question found in Module 4 is:

**Question 1: Under Section B, PMS 310-1, identify the document used for selecting trainees, proper use of task books, and certification of trainees.**

*Answer: On page 2, of the PMS 310-1, it refers to Appendix A, Position Task Book Administration for complete information concerning responsibilities.*

## E. Module 5: Interactions and Partnerships

Interactions and Partnerships is the fifth of six modules of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum. This module uses exercises and scenarios to explain and demonstrate the interactions and partnerships of the different individuals participating in the qualifications and certification process. Students will be required to use their qualification guides to provide solutions to the module exercises.

Module 4 provided information on the roles and responsibilities of the various individuals identified in the qualifications and certification process. Module 5 is intended to demonstrate the importance of interactions and partnerships among those individuals.

Understanding interactions and using partnerships to facilitate the certification process helps all participants to focus on a quality certification process. The formation of partnerships between individuals involved in the certification process will improve the focus on specific positions, and result in a quality experience. It is hoped in turn, the number and quality of personnel reporting for interagency incident assignments will improve.

The student will be introduced to the importance of interactions and partnerships in the qualifications process through the use of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1, the position task books, and a series of questions and scenario exercises.

Students will be asked to support their solutions with references from the PMS 310-1.

A sample of a question found in Module 5 is:

**Question 1: What are the different situations under which a qualified person may be a trainer/coach and what agreements should be made?** (Refer to PMS 310-1, Appendix A, p. A-8)

**Answer:** *The PMS 310-1, it lists the different situations in which a qualified individual may serve as a trainer/coach such as: in the classroom, on-the-job, or on an incident.*

**Important note:** *when one is functioning as a trainer/coach, working with a trainee, training and task evaluation must remain separate (PMS 310-1, Appendix A, p. A-8). This must be made clear to the trainee so they know when they are in the learning phase and when in the task evaluation phase.*

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Agency Administrator has an essential role in the success of wildland and prescribed fire programs. The information in this module will guide the Agency Administrator to those areas that will: aid them in increasing their knowledge of the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System; and provide them with direction for their employees, so that they can do the same.

The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System was implemented in 1993 and implementation was designed over a ten-year period. Users of any system can always get better as time goes on. The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System National Training Curriculum is designed to continue implementation and to improve use of the qualifications system as a major goal.

# **MODULE 6**

## **AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Module Evaluation**





