

INCIDENT BUSINESS PRACTICES WORKING TEAM
MEETING NOTES
September 11 – 12, 2001

Tuesday, September 11

In Attendance:

Dave Behrens, Western States Rep.
Gary Bowers, Representing Larry Hamilton
Randy Hart, Dispatch Community Rep.
Ginny Heerwagen, USFS

Ed Lewis, BLM
Tory Majors, Chair
Paul Palmiotto, Eastern States Rep.
Brenda Breslin, Executive Secretary

Absent from meeting:

Rod Bloms, FWS
Tony Recker, BIA

Introductions took place and the agenda was reviewed.

1. Review of May Meeting Notes

Reviewed meeting notes from the May meeting for any follow-up items that need to be brought to closure. The items that were under development were accomplished except for:

- The development of guideline language for the rental or purchase of entertainment/recreational items during an incident.

Tory will draft a paragraph for Agency Administrator's to use in their unit's incident business guidelines relative to entertainment/recreational items. Draft will be sent to the working team by September 20 for review. Upon finalization, the information will be sent to the field through a memo from the working team.

Tory will develop language for inclusion in the amendment to the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook relative to the authorities identified for procurement of entertainment or recreational items. Amendment to be drafted by December 31, 2001.

- FEMA final comments are due this month with guidelines to be released on October 30, 2001.

Dave will send Tory a copy of the guidelines upon publication. Tory will distribute to the working team.

- National Guard Agreements have been under revision in some states. Working team members were to obtain copies if possible and forward to Tory.

Randy, Paul and Dave will send copies of agreements. Tory will work to get them posted to the web.

- EMT usage on incidents became an issue during the 2000 fire season. Ed was doing research relative to the legal requirements, licensing, crossing state boundaries, and what are the limitations.

Ed will continue working on the issues in suing EMT's. Tory will draft a memo and invite the Safety and Health Working Team to meet with our working team for one day during our meeting in January to deal with this item, and the Agency Administrator's Guide to Managing a Critical Incident.

2. Review Budget Submission and Operating Plan

Handed out the working team's submission of FY2001-FY2004 strategic budget/goals to NWCG for review, modification, and development of FY2005 needs.

Agreed to submit an amended dollar amount for FY2002 to allow for the completion of the Incident Base Automation Task Group's assignment and the completion of the Incident Business Advisor training course development.

FY2005 budget will carry through Incident Base Automation funding estimate needs and forms rewriting or development of new forms.

Tory will modify the working team's budget and goals document to include the proposed changes and FY2005 program of work. Will send to working team for review prior to submission to NWCG.

3. Web Page Draft Review

Web Page Process:

The working team has agreed that the web page needs to be reformatted. The decision to present similar to the IIBMH chapters has been made. The current web page has two front page buttons: Charter and Information.

The proposed web site template was discussed and the following front page format was agreed upon:

- IBPWT Operations
 - Charter
 - Meeting Minutes
 - Calendar
 - Roster
 - Archives (this will contain information that needs to be kept for reference but is no longer active; e.g. AD Pay Plan from previous years)
- Other Links
- Supplemental Business Practices
 - Personnel
 - Acquisition
 - Property Management
 - Incident Business Management Coordination
 - Interagency Cooperative Relations
 - Accident Investigation and Reporting
 - Claims
 - Cost Accounting
- Link to IIBMH

Items that are annual will be posted under the Supplemental Business Practices in the appropriate area.

Also discussed if there was anything not on line today that we need to add?

- Cooperator Agreements
- Cost Share Information
- Department of Labor OWCP addresses and charge-back codes
- Agency Specific Processing Information for Critical Incidents

Also need to develop a method to identify key issues that are interagency in nature and the rules for posting them to the web..

The WT will also work to establish a process for:

record retention of NWCG files
capturing Lessons Learned for Incident Business Practices
archiving hardcopy material, including location (Chair of each Working Team responsible?)

Target date of March 2002 for new web site to be operational.

4. Identify What We Want to Present to NWCG Meeting in January 2002

Will introduce the new web page design and the basis for the change. Will address the items that the business community deals with on a recurring basis calling this portion of the presentation “Lessons Not Learned”. The items identified at present to develop key points on are:

- Daily guarantees
- R&R, What’s that spell?
- Entertaining the Troops
- Looking at the Big Picture

Incident Base Automation Task Group findings and our recommendation will be presented to the NWCG at this meeting.

Working team members are to submit additional items that would fall within lessons not learned. Tory will work on developing a power point presentation and send to working team for review. Will schedule a conference call once the draft presentation is to the team members. Target is to get draft to team members by mid-November.

5. Set 2002 Meeting Dates and Locations for the Working Team

Since the working team is to do a presentation to NWCG in January, will hold the first 2002 meeting at the same time. The schedule for meetings follows:

- January 14-18, 2002 New Orleans, LA
- May 20-24, 2002 Kansas City
- September 16-20, 2002 Location to be determined
- Conference Calls as needed

6. Discuss National Interagency Business Meeting

Tory shared with the team the dates selected for the meeting, January 29 – 31, 2002, and potential location. Also reviewed the potential agenda topics. The committee working on the meeting discussed the possibility of handling the meeting like an incident and identifying the incident management team. The grouping of agenda topics – issues – would be done by section comparable to the incident management. The working team also discussed using the format of Who Wants To Be a Millionaire to address the questions and answers submitted by the field. The working team sponsors the meeting and will draft a memo to send to the field requesting issues/agenda topics.

Tory will draft a memo to the field requesting agenda topics and send to working team for review by September 19th. Memo to be finalized and then distributed by the working team by September 24th.

Tory will share with the meeting committee the ideas from the working team for the meeting structure.

Tory to send the questions submitted from the field in the Great Basin and Northern Rockies Geographic Areas spring business meeting to working team member.

Wednesday, September 12

In Attendance:

Dave Behrens
Gary Bowers, Representing Larry Hamilton
Randy Hart
Ginny Heerwagen

Ed Lewis
Tory Majors
Paul Palmiotto

Absent from meeting:

Rod Bloms, FWS
Tony Recker, BIA
Brenda Breslin

7. Automation Issues

Discussions covered input received from the field evaluating uses of ISUITE or the applications that make up ISUITE. Stand-alone use was used in most instances with a few using or attempting to use the entire package. Additional evaluations were being gathered by the task group. The task group has not met again to review the evaluations and develop their report.

Tory will contact Paulicia to determine if a memo will be submitted to NWCG for their October meeting informing them of the status. Randy will send the evaluations he received electronically so they can be sent to Paulicia. In addition, the evaluations conducted by the ISUITE group will be submitted to Paulicia.

Tory will reaffirm with the task group the need to meet the elements of the charter and extend their timeline. In addition, one of the working team members will attend the task group's next meeting.

Tory did contact Paulicia and the task group has not been able to meet. Tory will draft a memo and send to the chair of NWCG requesting time on their January agenda for presenting the decision based on the task group's report.

8. Handbook Update Requirement

Identified the areas that are presently known that require an amendment to the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook. The known items are:

- Pay Equity Act language changes
- Rest and Recuperation clarification due to questions
- 14 day assignment, back-to-back assignments at Planning Level V

- Recreation and Entertainment Appropriation Authorities

There was a committee that was to be reviewing Chapter 20 and rewriting the chapter.

Ed will contact Marc Gress to find out status of the committee's work. Will need to include it in the handbook amendment if it is being rewritten.

9. Contractor Usage Issues

Ed raised the concern over the increase use of contractors but still do not have sufficient numbers of equipment time recorders, procurement officials, inspectors, and others to maintain the needed documentation at incidents, or the incident personnel that is available are not trained or do not have much experience.

Tory passed out a memo sent by Marc Gress identifying just one of many issues he dealt with recently.

Several problems with contractors have been raised during the past two months. There is a need to bring a group together to work towards standardization of rates, clauses, eera's, procedures, and training needs prior to next season. Ed proposed that a meeting actually occur with representatives from the geographic areas contracting officer and business community to identify all of the issues and propose solutions. Working towards standardization of any part or all elements related to contracting resources across geographic areas would assist the field in dealing with the resource and resolve most of the problems that are dealt with during or after an incident.

Ed will draft a memo requesting assistance from the geographic areas for establishing a task group to identify the issues relative to contracts and proposed solutions. The working team will review then distribute.

Ed and Tory were also involved in a recent discussion with Paul Rose and the request that all BLM incidents will require the use of the OF-304, Emergency Equipment Fuel and Oil Issue. The concern raised was that a BLM Administrative Officer agreed to the use of an alternative document for fuel and oil issue with the incident management team.

The payment package received by the payment center had an alternative type of document with the fuel and oil issued. They would not process the payment.

Tory and Ed spoke with Marc Gress concerning this requirement. Concern from the BLM is the form that was developed to be used has the required information needed and the number of copies for distribution. Tory mentioned that if the necessary information and original signatures are on the alternative document, then it is a valid

document for supporting the payment. Ed and Tory agreed to present the issue at the working team meeting addressing whether the use of the form should become mandatory for all to use.

The working team discussed and does not support sending out direction that it should be mandatory. There should be an option to the field to use an alternative form or other method of documentation if it contains all of the same information found on the OF-304, has original signatures, and the correct number of copies.

Tory and Ed will contact Marc and discuss this as an alternative so if the payment center receives a package that does not have the OF-304 it will process the payment, however only if the alternative form of documentation contains the required information.

10. General Agency Information Update

Paul – Florida Statistics

Florida's season started around Christmas. During February three fire complexes were declared in the Lakeland, Ft. Myers and Okeechobee areas. The Lakeland Complex, which consisted primarily of the Stagecoach Fire, shut down East/West Interstate 4 between Orlando and Tampa for 10 days. Another three complexes were declared in April in the Orlando, Sarasota and Miami areas. Three more complexes were declared in May in the Panama City, Pensacola and Perry areas. FEMA would not declare four of the nine complexes by geographic areas as they had done the previous three years. Instead those complexes were declared by county. Estimated suppression costs for 2001 will reach \$22 million.

Florida fires statistics – 1/1/01 through 9/9/01 – 4,071 fires, 331,200 acres

Georgia had first complex of fires and air support came from Florida Unified Command that was in place. Worked well together and received support from other areas.

Randy – Great Basin

Main fire of interest this season was the Green Knoll in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Resources were adequate within the Great Basin, Type I helicopters used extensively and were successful, all six Type II teams were out and the Type I teams were out at least once. Issues surrounding dispatching focus on the differences between dispatch centers but the incorporation of the pilot contract for national crews created additional problems. Traditionally dispatchers attempt to use a process to maintain equity in getting contractors out. Solution would be to develop a common system that coordination centers use for dispatching contracted resources and that the contractor would know so crossing into other geographic areas would not be any different.

There are differences in dispatching under initial attack, fuels work, and wildland large fire support. Mixing these areas in the dispatch community creates problems.

The Great Basin was the host for the pilot national crew contract. Have been identifying issues encountered since the contract was awarded. Randy will be part of a task group that will review the use of the contract and work with John Venaglia for developing solutions and incorporating those into the final development of the contract for next season.

Tory will work with John to ensure the task group is an interagency group and not Forest Service only.

Dave – Arizona

Quiet fire season for the geographic area. Did provide assistance to the Pacific Northwest when needed. The State is entering into discussion with the federal agencies for establishing an interagency dispatch center.

Ed – BLM

BLM's fire season was normal. The southwest area was below normal; Alaska had their typical season; Great Basin's season was concentrated in Nevada and it was a normal season.

Tory-FS

Pay Equity Act passage has prompted telephone calls from various individuals as to whether they are entitled to the overtime pay although they work for Department of Defense. Only USDI and USDA Forest Service employees are covered.

Also received several calls and email with issues surrounding different AD rates being used for the same position in different geographic areas (especially air positions). Also questions involving the AD 5 rates.

Working Team agreed to submit suggestions to the AD Pay Plan task group to include all incident command positions by AD rate, establish AD 5 rates for all other positions for all geographic areas, recommend looking at a flat daily rate instead of hourly, and look at establishing the same rate regardless of geographic area for the position. Analysis on the average shift length can be done from data contained in EFF Pay to assist with developing rates.

Tory will draft a memo and submit to the task group with our suggestions, plus do the analysis from EFF/Vendor Pay on hours worked.

11. Agency Specific Issues that Impact All Participants

a. Use of AD's

The use of AD's outside of the actual incident has the appearance of being abused within USDA Forest Service. Potential of the same problem within the BLM. Would like to gather some information from the agencies addressing the actual use of AD's during a 12 month period of time. Discussion focused on identifying the positions, length of time under hire, and what alternatives for hiring individuals exist for the after the incident emergency work that needs to take place.

Decision was to establish a task group to look at this issue independently from the AD Pay Plan task group.

Working team members are to submit nominations for the task group to Tory by mid-November. A memo will be sent to the nominee upon acceptance. The working team will draft a charter at their January meeting for the Use of AD's task group.

b. Performance Problems from Individuals on Incidents

Tony submitted a report to Tory that identified several problems encountered on timesheets from an incident. The timesheets were changed prior to payment. Tony asked if there was a process relative to bringing these types of problems forward and to the attention of the incident management team that was involved. At present time the only process that exists is to forward these types of issues to the geographic area incident administration coordinator for discussion with the incident commander and others involved.

In the future, as problems are submitted to the field, forward those to Tory for review. Tory will submit to the Geographic Area Coordinating Group Board and the Incident Administrative Coordinator (IAC). The IAC can then determine if additional training needs to occur within the area or if it is a limited problem. The Coordinating Group should review the problem and deal with it according to their procedures.