

## **Attachment A: Chronology on the use of the GS-0401 series for Fire Management Specialists Positions**

- **March 19, 1992** – OPM sends the Director, Boise Interagency Fire Center an options paper on “qualification and classification for wildland fire positions”. One of the options was:
  - Leave fire management specialist positions in the GS-401 series. Develop an internal qualification standard for these positions that allows technicians to qualify more easily for specialist positions
- **December 2, 1996** – BLM Wildland Fire Positions Team submits a memorandum (Final Report) to BLM Director of Fire and Aviation
  - One of the conclusions in the Final Report states: “The GS-0401 series, Natural Resource Specialist (Fire Management), was chosen as the target series for Fire Management Officer Positions. This was a result of considering a variety of options laid out by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in a letter dated March 19, 1992 and addressed to Mr. Steve Robinson, former Director of the Boise Interagency Fire Center. The choice was also responsive to a stated desire of the top managers in the fire program that Fire Management Officers be “professional” natural resources related positions, but not necessarily limited to personnel who could qualify in the Forester (GS-0460) or Range Conservationist (GS-0454) series.”
  - One of the products submitted with the Final Report was a draft Supplemental Qualification Standard for the Bureau of Land Management, US Department of Interior GS-0401 Fire Management Specialist
- **June 25, 1997** – BLM issues final Supplemental Qualification Standard for the Bureau of Land Management, US Department of Interior GS-0401 Fire Management Specialist
- **November 10, 1999** – BLM issues memorandum releasing a new version of the BLM Supplemental Qualification Standard for GS-401. This supersedes the previous BLM standard dated June 25, 1997.
- **December 1, 1999** – The Federal Fire & Aviation Leadership Council (FFALC) sends memorandum to Dept. of Agriculture and Interior requesting approval to use the supplemental standard for interagency use. This is the same standard that the BLM had adopted for internal use.
- **March 28, 2000** – USDA Director, Personnel Policy and Partnership Division issues an advisory opinion: GS-401 vs. GS-460 Series for Fire Program Management Positions
  - The advisory states: “We have carefully reviewed occupational information for fire program managers and find that the GS-401 classification series is fully appropriate for fire program management positions. We find that fire program management positions now require incumbents to demonstrate knowledge and skill in biological and physical sciences that extend beyond the science of forestry. Additional professional knowledge and skill in the sciences of ecology, wildlife biology, fishery biology, and range management are now needed to complement the traditional scientific knowledge of forest fire suppression contemplated by the current GS-460 classification series. Accordingly, Forest Service classification delegates may correctly allocate fire program management positions to the GS-401 classification series at any time.”
- **May 25, 2000** – FS Director, Human Resources issues Draft Supplemental Qualification Standard for Fire Management Positions

- “The Supplemental qualification standard was developed under the sponsorship of the Federal Fire and Aviation Leadership Council (FFLAC), composed of representatives from the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Park Service. The goal of the supplement is to ensure consistent application of the GS-401 qualification standard in hiring employees to key fire management positions.”
- **October 10, 2001** – Job analysis at the GS-7, 9, and 11 level for the Wildland Firefighter GS-401 Qualification Standard submitted to OPM
- **July 29, 2002** – OPM approves the Supplemental Standards for GS-0401 Fire Manager Series
  - “This letter approves the Supplemental Standard for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service for GS-401, Fire Manager Series. With this approval, the standard can be used immediately within your agencies.”
- **September 4, 2002**- FS implements the Supplemental Qualification Standard for GS-0401 Fire Management Specialists
- **October 1, 2002** – DOI implements the Supplemental Qualification Standard for GS-0401 Fire Management Specialists
- **May 13, 2004** – OPM issues memorandum on Strengthening Oversight of the Use of Diploma Mill Credentials in Federal Employment
- **June 27, 2005** – DOI issues a Policy Interpretation of the Supplemental Qualification Standard for the GS-0401 Fire Management Specialist
- **August 2, 2006** – OPM issues memorandum on Chronology of Changes to Qualification Standards
- **March 16, 2007** – OPM letter to DOI and FS that they would not sanction the practice of specifying the number of hours for upper or lower level courses
- **April 17, 2007** – Recognized that on February 15, 2005, OPM revised Part E.4-E.4(a) of the General Policies and Instructions dealing with positive education requirements
  - Required that all education be on an official transcript; statement from the institution’s registrar, dean, or other appropriate official; or equivalent documentation from an accredited college or university
- **June 21, 2007** – DOI releases letter rescinding attachments 2 and 3 of the GS-0401 Supplemental Standard and directs all Bureaus to review positive education of GS-401 fire employees.
- **July 27, 2007** – OPM denies DOI request to use a blanket certification from the American Council on Education (ACE) to credit NWCG and other fire related courses toward the positive education requirements for the GS-0401 series.
- **December 4, 2007** – DOI issued Personnel Bulletin 07-13 guidance on interpreting GS-401 qualification requirements which includes the GS-401 Supplemental Qualification Standards
- **October 23, 2008** – Forest Service Chief sends out an email directing all units to “stand down” further implementation of the GS-0401 series
- **November 5, 2008** – Forest Service Deputy Chief for Business Operations issues a letter providing direction on the “stand down”
  - All vacant GS-0401 fire management positions GS-9 through GS-12 will be advertised will be advertised concurrently as GS-0462. If there is a well qualified candidate on the GS-0401 referral list they must select from that list.

- **December 3, 2008** – Forest Service Chief responds to official OIG Management Alert on “Unnecessary Education Requirements Compromise FS Firefighting Force” confirming the interim direction provided in the November 5 letter.
- **May 29, 2009** – Forest Service Chief issues further guidance on “stand down” on use of the GS-0401 Series for Fire Management Specialist Positions.
  - The FS will work on developing two new series, one technical and one professional to replace the GS-462 and GS-0401 series. The technical series would blend the knowledge, skills and abilities required of modern wildland fire suppression and natural resource management. The second series would be a professional wildland fire management series that provides leadership and management for wildland fire management programs in a natural resource organization.
  - To comply with Office of Personnel Management direction the FS will not concurrently advertise 401 and 462 series. Position up to and including the GS-12 will be classified in the GS-462 series.
  - The Forest Service will also develop a succession plan that will support both the technical and professional job series.
- **July 8, 2011** – Forest Service Chief issues a memorandum (Occupational Series for Fire Management Positions) rescinding the May 29, 2009 and November 5, 2008 memoranda.
  - A long-term strategy to pursue the creation of a unique occupational series for wildland fire management that is consistent with the action item in the agency’s Cultural Transformation Plan.
  - Until a new occupational series can be developed the Forest Service is developing an interim strategy to resolve a number of on-going issues the agency has been experiencing with their previous practice of using the GS-0462 and GS-0401 occupational series for the majority of FAM managerial positions.
    - Grades GS-02 through GS-08 will continue to be classified in the GS-0462 Forestry Technician series.
    - Fuels Specialists at the GS-09 and GS-11 level will continue to be classified in the GS-0401 series.
    - Fire management positions at the GS-09 and above grade levels that are primarily administrative and managerial in nature will be reclassified in the GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series.