

Inclusion of the Infrared Interpreter Position and Taskbook in the PMS 310-1 Transition Plan

Background

The Infrared Interpreter (IRIN) position was listed in the Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide PMS 310-1 under the Planning section from 1993 through 2006. In 2006, the IRIN position was dropped from the 310-1, as there were no NWCG requirements listed for the position. While the IRIN reports to the Situation Unit Leader (SITL), the SITL typically is not trained in the skills of interpreting and mapping and does not directly oversee the work being performed. This necessitates that the IRINs be highly qualified since there is little to no oversight while they are working an incident. Re-inclusion of the IRIN position requirements in the 310-1, and NWCG adoption of the IRIN taskbook would help to ensure that established standards of performance are maintained across all agencies and geographic areas.

At the fall, 2011 Operations and Workforce Development Committee (OWDC) meeting, it was proposed and approved to add the Infrared Interpreter position to the PMS 310-1, and develop a NWCG-approved IRIN position taskbook.

Qualification and Training Standards for the IRIN Position:

The following identifies the experience or training requirements associated with the position

- Required Training:
 - I-100, Introduction to ICS
 - IS-700, NIMS: An Introduction
- Required Experience: Successful Position Performance as an Infrared Interpreter on a wildland fire incident.
- Physical Fitness Level: None
- Other Position Assignments That Will Maintain Currency: None
- Other Training Which Supports Development of Knowledge and Skills:
 - S-110, Basic Wildland Fire Orientation
 - S-443 Infrared Interpreter

Existing Qualified IRINs: Not affected by new taskbook requirement. Existing standards for maintenance of currency remain unchanged.

Outstanding Taskbooks (IRIN Trainees): Agency specific taskbooks are valid until completed or expired. Individuals with an open PTB that have not completed any tasks may have a new PTB issued. Individuals with tasks completed should finish the current PTB rather than initiating a new PTB.

IQCS/IQS Changes: Require the NWCG-approved (IRIN) taskbook of all new IRIN trainees in IQCS.

Addition of Infrared Taskbook:

The Forest Service IRIN taskbook, last updated in 1999, is very much out of date and does not reflect the way Infrared Interpreters complete their mission today. The primary duty of the IRIN, to “interpret imagery and post findings on maps”, has not changed. However, what has changed is the way IRINs fulfill this mission. It has evolved from a hardcopy map with a mylar overlay, to the Interpreter being required to demonstrate skill in interpreting thermal imagery, and possess a suite of GIS and IT skills not previously required.

A new IRIN taskbook, reflecting this structure, has been developed and submitted for approval by the NWCG OWDC committee in October of 2011.

Training:

The Infrared Interpreter course (S443) has been revised to bring it in line with NWCG-approved course standards. S443 is a 32 hour training course, taught annually by highly skilled and experienced interpreters, which provides students with the knowledge and skills required of an IRIN. The instructors meet NWCG 400 level instructor requirements. When IRIN is included in the PMS 310-1, S-443 training should be recommended, but not required. This will allow the cadre to update and adapt the course as needed reflecting changes in technology and business processes. It is currently, and would remain, required for Forest Service personnel in the Forest Service Fire and Aviation Qualifications Guide (FSFAQG).

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