



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705

## MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#005-2009

To: Members of the Federal Fire and Aviation Safety Team and the Interagency Medical Standards Program Office

From: NWCG Chair *Brian McManis*

Date: February 13, 2009

Subject: Change in Oversight of Interagency Medical Standards Program Office

The Interagency Medical Standards Program (IMSP) has been in operation at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) since 1999 for Interior Agencies, with the Forest Service participation beginning in 2003. The program currently services over 16,000 employees annually, with a total investment of about \$4.5mm in FY2009. When the program is fully implemented by the Forest Service in FY2010, it will cover over 30,000 employees in the five (5) agencies, with an annual budget of about \$6mm. Current approved staffing includes six (6) personnel (three agency personnel and three contractors).

Historically, the IMSP received oversight from the National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB). In June of 2007, oversight of the IMSP was moved from NFAEB to the Federal Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FFAST). In October of 2007, the NFAEB was merged with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). FFAST and IMSP are now under the auspices of the NWCG. The IMSP is a critically important program to the interagency wildland fire program.

Recently, a number of issues have been brought before the members of the NWCG Executive Board (Board) concerning the operations and capacity of the IMSP and the oversight of the IMSP Office by FFAST. These issues are wide ranging and require immediate attention.

To facilitate and support efforts to address operations, capacity, and oversight issues, the Board has decided to implement an immediate change in oversight of the IMSP.

Effective Tuesday, February 17, 2009, the IMSP will cease to be under the direction of the FFAST. As of this date, the IMSP Office will be under the direction of a new oversight

body termed the IMSP Council. The Council will be a two (2) person body comprised of Tim Blake, NWCG Branch Coordinator for the Preparedness Branch, and Dick Bahr, Special Liaison to the Executive Board for the IMSP.

This is an interim measure that is expected to be in place for a period of 30 days. This period may be extended as needed by decision of the Board. By this Memorandum, the Board members grant the Delegation of Authority for day-to-day supervisory responsibilities specific to the IMSP Office to the members of the Council for the duration of this process, or until rescinded by the Board.

During this time, the Board will implement an administrative review and additional fact finding measures to determine the best options for a corrective organizational realignment of oversight of the IMSP. The Executive Board will also explore options for streamlining IMSP operations and enhancing communication and coordination between the IMSP and FFAST.

The Board understands the importance of the IMSP and the need for professional and effective communication between the FFAST and the IMSP and its customers. We expect all members of the IMSP and FFAST to embrace this process with an open mind and to work with us to develop the very best solution possible to ensure effective continuance of this program into the future.

Please contact Council members Tim Blake (208) 387-5796, or Dick Bahr (208) 387-5217 if you have questions.

cc: NWCG Executive Board