

*October 2015  
Draft PMS 310-1  
Frequently Asked Questions*

Please read all available materials (the Draft October 2015 PMS310-1, this FAQ, and other documents) to ensure you have a solid understanding of the proposed changes.

**Q: Why so many “big” changes in this document?**

**A:** The NWCG has directed the Operations and Workforce Development Committee (OWDC) to modify the PMS 310-1 to increase speed to qualification, support capability to manage incidents at the Type 3 complexity level, and provide additional pathways to achieve Type 1 and Type 2 Command and General Staff qualifications. To accomplish this, OWDC is introducing the following changes:

- With the October 2014 release of the PMS 310-1, position standards were included for Finance Section Chief, Type 3 (FSC3), Logistics Section Chief, Type 3 (LSC3), Planning Section Chief, Type 3 (PSC3), and Operations Section Chief, Type 3 (OPS3). Safety Officer, Line (SOFR), and Public Information Officer (PIOF) were previously included in the PMS 310-1.
- The draft October 2015 310-1 will include pathways from the Type 3 C&GS positions to Type 2 C&GS positions, modified prerequisites to become a Type 2 C&GS Trainee (i.e. only one Unit Leader position required instead of two.), as well as options for selectively “bridging” between C&GS positions at the Type 1 and 2 levels. Other changes in the draft October 2015 PMS 310-1 that support increased speed to qualification include the streamlined pathway to Task Force Leader (qualification as Task Force Leader now grants both competencies), and the removal of the requirement for Situation Unit Leaders to be previously qualified as Incident Commander, Type 4.

**Q: Why do NWCG and OWDC want to make so many changes?**

**A:** To meet goals and objectives identified in the Evolving Incident Management Strategic Implementation Plan, and to meet OWDC’s responsibility to maintain the qualifications system as outlined in the PMS 310-1. OWDC, as part of its normal business, looks for ways to reduce redundancy, simplify the system, and ensure the system produces qualified responders to meet incident management needs.

**Q: I thought Type 2 qualifications were going away?**

**A:** NWCG has determined Type 2 incident management qualifications will remain in the PMS 310-1 for now. This allows key parts of the Evolving Incident Management (EIM) project to progress, and allows NWCG to continue working towards the EIM goals without putting the entire project on hold.

**Q: I noticed the October 2014 PMS 310-1 says the new Type 3 positions are required to complete ICS 400, while the ICT3 only requires ICS 300. What’s up with that?**

**A:** The requirement to complete ICS 400 for Type 3 C&G positions is mandated by FEMA under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The ICS 400 requirement for ICT3, SOFR, and PIOF was erroneously omitted from the October 2014 PMS 310-1. This requirement

will be added in the draft October 2015 310-1. A transition plan for qualified and trainee ICT3s, SOFRs, and PIOFs will be used so they will not become unqualified.

**Q: I noticed I can use the FEMA Position Task Book to become qualified as a FSC3, PSC3, or LSC3. How does that work?**

**A:** The newly established positions have three paths to become qualified:

1. Becoming trained and qualified through the “traditional” pathways. For example, anyone qualified as any unit leader within the Finance section can now perform as FSC3;
2. Utilizing the FEMA position task book. For example, someone that is not qualified as a Unit Leader within the Finance section may initiate and complete the FEMA FSC3 position task book (and any required training), and become qualified as FSC3.
3. Qualified Type 3 Incident Commanders can be granted the competencies for all Type 3 C&GS positions within IQCS and IQS.

**Q: What’s up with allowing the FEMA Position Task Books? Does this mean people from “outside wildland fire” can work on our incidents?**

**A:** The competencies and behaviors in the FEMA task books are aligned with the NWCG task books, and are interchangeable under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). And yes, by recognizing these task books in the NWCG system, responders from other agencies/entities outside of our traditional wildland fire community now have an “entry point” into our qualification system. This means we can more effectively utilize personnel that were previously not available to us to meet our incident management needs.

**Q: How do those FEMA task books work? Do I need a FEMA person to sign it off, and can I only work on the task book on a FEMA assignment?**

**A:** Just like the NWCG task books. You may complete the FEMA task book on wildfire assignments, and wildland fire evaluators may be used.

**Q: If I’m qualified in a Type 2 C&GS position, how do I become qualified in other Type 2 C&GS positions?**

**A:** Opportunities for “bridging” have been included in the draft October 2015 PMS 310-1. For example, a qualified OSC2 may complete the E/L 967 *Logistics Section Chief* course, initiate and complete a LSC2 position task book, and become qualified as a Type 2 Logistics Section Chief. “Bridging” opportunities are present for some, but not all, Type 2 C&GS positions.

**Q: What about “bridging” opportunities at the Type 1 level?**

**A:** “Bridging” opportunities exist at the Type 1 level as well; some Type 1 C&GS positions are allowed to “bridge” to other Type 1 positions.

**Q: Doesn’t all of this increase the potential for people to become qualified before they are ready, or without the necessary training and experience?**

**A:** Yes. However, NWCG has used a performance-based system (not a training-based system) for years, and will continue to do so. The PMS 310-1 states:

“In the performance based Wildland Fire Qualification System, **qualification is based on completion of required training and completion and certification of the applicable NWCG**

**PTBs** on wildland fires, events, incidents, job activities, and in simulated exercises or classroom activities.

**The primary criterion for qualification is individual performance as observed by an Evaluator.** Evaluators must be either qualified in the position being evaluated or supervise the Trainee; Final Evaluators must be qualified in the Trainee position they are evaluating.

The successful performance must then be properly documented in an approved position task book (PTB). The PTB contains all critical tasks that are required to perform the job. **The process of demonstrating the abilities to perform the position is the completion of a PTB.**

The tasks in each NWCG PTB have been established by subject matter experts from all NWCG agencies and geographical areas of the United States, and tested and approved by the NWCG. NWCG position task books must be used for wildland fire, incident support, and associated activities position categories. For positions in the ICS category that do not have tasks specific to wildland fire, other all-hazards PTBs may be used as per agency direction. Positions in the ICS category that do have tasks specific to wildland fire must utilize the NWCG task book.

Position task books are formatted to allow documentation of a Trainee's ability to perform each task. **Tasks pertaining to tactical decision making and safety require position performance on a wildland fire. Remaining tasks may be evaluated through other means such as a simulation or performance on an emergency or nonemergency incident/event.**

**The basis for recommending agency certification is successful completion of all required tasks of the position, as determined by the Evaluator(s) and Final Evaluator. Certification and documentation of completed PTBs is the responsibility of the Certifying Official from the home unit/agency (this includes the employing agency when applicable)."**

It is incumbent on all trainees, evaluators, final evaluators, certifying officials, and supervisors to use the performance-based system the way it is designed. We must all ensure that trainees are truly prepared to perform as a trainee, are truly ready for certification, and possess the necessary skills, abilities, and competencies to perform in any position. We must also ensure the need for additional training and experience is identified and provided to all responders, and we must ensure integrity is used at all times.

**Q: The idea of reducing the steps to become qualified in a Type 2 or Type 1 C&GS positions scares me- is there a safety issue?**

**A:** the efforts to increase speed to qualification (such as "bridging", less restrictive prerequisite qualification requirements, and additional pathways) have been selectively applied. For the most part, no changes were made in the Operations Section, Safety Section, or to Incident Commander Standards. Remember we use a performance-based system; this system provides checks and balances to ensure responders are not certified or qualified until they are truly ready to successfully perform in the position.

**Q: I have issues with this draft- I found some errors, and I have some suggestions. What should I do?**

**A:** Comments on the draft October 2015 PMS 310-1 are welcome! NWCG wants to ensure the document is correct prior to release and implementation. The first step is simple- please read the draft October 2015 PMS 310-1 and associated documents thoroughly to ensure you have a good understanding of the proposed changes and how things will work in the future. Please consolidate comments within your agency, and submit them through your agency representative

on the OWDC no later than May 8, 2015. You may also submit comments online here: [draft 2015 PMS 310-1 Comment Form](#)

**Q: Is there anyone that can explain the October 2015 PMS 310-1 in more detail, or brief groups of people (like by Geographic Area Coordinating Group, Operations Board, FMO Team, etc.)?**

**A:** Yes! OWDC and EIM personnel are available to brief these groups in person or via teleconference. If you would like a briefing, contact your agency representative on OWDC. Please read the draft October 2015 PMS 310-1 and associated documents thoroughly to ensure you have a good understanding of the changes and how things will work in the future.

**Q: I have questions about other parts of EIM- who do I go to?**

**A:** Current Evolving Incident Management information including FAQ's, contact list, and a mechanism to provide comments via e-mail is available at <http://www.nwcg.gov/imosp/index.htm> .

**Q: I'd like to propose a new position for inclusion in the PMS 310-1, or changes to existing positions- Can I still do that?**

**A:** Yes. Submit your request for change through the established process. This process, and the request for change form is located at [http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/pre/owdc/form\\_requestforchange.htm](http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/pre/owdc/form_requestforchange.htm)

**Q: Where do I find more information on the FEMA courses that will be required for certain bridging pathways?**

**A:** Information on the FEMA position-specific and ICS training courses can be found at <http://training.nwcg.gov/> under the "FEMA NIMS Training" drop down.