

M-581 Fire Program Management - An Overview

May, 2019

The M-581 Design Criteria offers an alternative approach to training. There is no standing course package available through the NWCG Publication Management System. Agencies have the authority to develop lesson plans based on the course criteria outlined below. The purpose of establishing course criteria is to give agencies the latitude to deliver training that fits their organizational needs and geographic nuances while meeting a nationally accepted set of learning outcomes.

Target Group

Current or Future Agency Administrators and future Fire Program Managers who have direct responsibility to plan, organize, budget, manage and evaluate Fire Management Programs.

Intent

The M-581 training will provide Agency Administrators and Fire Program Managers with knowledge required to safely and effectively administer low to moderate complexity wildland fire programs. Essential guiding principles for imparting this knowledge include: enhancing the students' understanding of the wildland fire culture; ensuring an understanding of their role in decision making in all areas of the wildland fire program; an understanding of the risks inherent in their decisions; utilizing experiential training techniques that will engage students in ways that challenge them to explore the policy, social, political, environmental and human elements of wildland fire program management and oversight.

Minimum Course Length

36-40 course hours

Instructor Qualifications

The combined cadre must have career or educational backgrounds and an expert level of knowledge in risk management, wildland fire policy, budget, legal liability, wildland fire response, fuels management, aviation management, and agency administrator responsibilities. All instructors must be well prepared to present complex subject matter and lead classroom activities in order to achieve the learning objectives outlined in this course criteria. The *NWCG Standards for Course Delivery*, PMS 901-1, instructor requirements should be waived for Agency Administrators, College Professors and other experienced subject matter experts who may have extensive experience presenting, but may not have attended the formal M-410 course.

Instructional Design Guidelines:

- **Wildland Fire Program Components** - The course content areas generally follow the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* document outline; this document should be included as primary course material.
- **Roles and Responsibilities** - Reference agency performance elements in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* tables as the foundation for roles and responsibilities.
- **Training in Context** - Utilize group exercises, simulations, panels and small group discussion to apply concepts that are presented during instructor presentations. Exercises, discussion and simulations should comprise 40% of the overall course presentation.
- **Student/Instructor Ratio** - In order to conduct effective exercises and simulations, cadres should be structured to provide student to instructor ratios which fit with each unit's learning objectives.
- **Coaches**: Coaches are critical to the success of the course to facilitate effective interactions between the AA and FMO during scenarios, lectures, and small group discussions or breakouts. Coaches serve two roles: serve as experienced FMO/AA's to provide context to students and to answer questions that may not be covered during presentations. It is recommended students be broken into groups of five to ten with an AA and FMO coach assigned.
- **Case Studies** - Provide classroom case studies and references from the local geographic area or relevant incident type, which present current and/or critical performance elements for both Agency Administrators and FMOs.
- **Instructional Delivery** - Presentations should be designed to not only meet the learning outcomes outlined below from a content perspective, but also to utilize the coaches to facilitate small group discussions which reinforce the presentation content and engage participants in dialogue and peer learning.
- **Assessment** - Integrate the After Action Review process into the exercises and simulations to allow opportunity for group learning.

- **Prewrite**
 1. Read Chapter 1 and student's agency specific chapter (chapters 2-6) of the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*.
 2. PMS 494-2. *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*.

Course Materials:

1. *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*
2. PMS 484, *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide*
3. *2009: Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management*
4. *2001 Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy*
5. *1995: Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review*
6. PMS 494-2. *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*

Content Guidelines

The unit objective information included below is a template for course evaluation or design. The intent of the NWCG M-581 course is to provide Agency Administrators and Fire Program Managers a foundation for wildland fire program administration by focusing on the policies and procedures which govern the management of program elements in federal land management agencies. Course outcomes include:

1. Familiarity with the policies which govern fire management programs.
2. An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an Agency Administrator in fire program oversight at the unit level.
3. An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Fire Management Officer in fire program oversight at the unit level.
4. An understanding of the critical nature of communication between Agency Administrator and Fire Management Officer in fire program administration.

Unit Objectives:

Wildland Fire Organizational Culture and Leadership

Intent: To identify defining elements of wildland fire culture and how the culture or subculture may align or differ from the parent agency culture. The desired outcome of this unit is to allow FMO's and AA's to understand the opportunities and barriers organizational culture presents, particularly as it relates to effective communication.

Delivery Considerations: Consider the influence on culture of the following: leadership, risk, and operational environment. Utilize a review of the NWCG Leadership Development program as prework(e.g., values and principles and the *Leading in the Wildland Fire Service* "yellow book")

Learning Outcome: List and describe critical elements of wildland fire and land management agencies organizational cultures.

Learning Outcome: Describe the differences between land management agency culture and the wildland fire culture.

Learning Outcome: Discuss the implications of cultural differences to leading and providing oversight to a wildland fire organization.

Wildland Fire Management Policy:

Intent: To provide a basic understanding of the laws, policies and practices which govern fire management activities in wildland fire agencies.

Delivery Considerations: none

Learning Outcome: Describe the laws and policy framework for implementing wildland fire management activities on federal lands.

Learning Outcome: Describe how the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy guides the implementation of wildland fire management activities.

Learning Outcome: List and describe the guiding principles and elements of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Learning Outcome: Understand how policies tier to and dictate the wildland fire program from guiding Wildland Fire Policy to unit Fire Management Plan.

Wildland Fire Budget:

Intent: Provide a foundational understanding of how an agencies fire budget is requested, and administered and how the federal budget process can impact field operations.

Delivery Considerations: Utilize state/geographic budget experts to highlight federal and specific agency processes. Utilize coaches for agency specific groups for Q&A discussion. Consider agency specific breakouts for this section.

Learning Outcome: Describe agencies budget cycles.

Learning Outcome: Identify the laws, policies, and business rules which govern use of wildland fire funds.

Learning Outcome: Describe the appropriate use of different wildland fire fund types.

Fire Management Planning and Decision Making:

Intent: Provide a common understanding for Agency Administrators and FMO on how plans and decision making processes are developed and maintained and tied to land management plans.

Delivery Considerations: This section may lend itself to utilize coaches for separate FMO and Agency Administrator discussion for roles and responsibilities.

Fire Management Planning:

Learning Outcome: Identify the department and agency policies governing fire management planning.

Learning Outcome: Describe the agency differences in fire management planning.

Learning Outcome: Describe an Agency Administrator's and FMO's role in the development, review and revision process of a fire management plan or other guidance document

Learning Outcome: Describe methods to evaluate existing fire management plans and the process recommending changes.

Learning Outcome: Describe the role of an Agency Administrator and FMO in the implementation of a fire management plan and its components.

Learning Outcome: Identify methods to ensure fire management employees understand how fire management plans and activities related to land management objectives.

Decision Making:

Learning Outcome: Describe the importance of integrating fire management activities across jurisdictions, program areas, and activities.

Learning Outcome: Demonstrate an understanding of the decision processes specific to wildland fire management.

Learning Outcome: Describe the use of WFDSS as a decision support tool.

Learning Outcome: Describe the roles required within WFDSS to pre-load local data, objectives, and publish a wildfire decision.

Coordination and Cooperation:

Intent: Provide an overall understanding of the importance of relationships with different cooperators/stakeholders and importance of agreement with internal and external partnerships

Delivery Considerations: Recommend a panel discussion with different local, state, private, and federal stakeholders.

Learning Element: Describe the importance of stakeholder support to maintaining an effective fire management program.

Learning Element: Identify the different types of fire management meetings and their purpose.

Learning Element: Understand an Agency Administrators and FMO role in the various types of fire management meetings.

Learning Element: Identify the elements of a unit fire communication plan, use of communication tools, and the importance of collaboration with external partners.

Learning Element: Identify the purpose in visiting outstations, incidents, projects, and prescribed burns.

Learning Element: Describe the purpose of annual fire meetings (internal/external) and how to address management controls and safety issues.

Learning Element: List the elements of national and local Agreements and Annual Operating Plans (AOP) and discuss their importance.

Preparedness:

Intent: Provide an understanding of Agency Administrators and FMO's roles and responsibilities for overseeing preparedness activities.

Delivery Considerations: Consider delivering a portion of this unit together and then break into the two audiences (AA and FMO) to address the differences in knowledge and level of detail needed for each audience.

Learning Element: Describe the importance of maintaining awareness of seasonal and daily fire danger.

Learning Element: Identify when fire conditions will impact other program areas and describe the implications.

Learning Element: Identify the elements included in the annual Fire Management Officer delegation of authority and describe the implications.

Learning Element: Describe the role of an Agency Administrator and FMO in development of local fire management Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs/SOGs).

Learning Element: Describe the roles and responsibilities in the development, review, and revision process of annual operating plans for cooperators agreements.

Learning Element: List the purpose of and describe the function of a Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP), and associated plans (Response, Staffing, Preparedness, Prevention, Restriction/Closure, etc.).

Objective: Recognize the importance in maintaining a coordinated, and effective interagency wildland fire response.

Objective: Explain your agency Fire Severity request process and identify how the funds may be utilized.

Fire Prevention, Education, Mitigation and Trespass

Intent: Provide an understanding of policies and actions of a fire prevention, trespass, and communication program.

Delivery Considerations: Ensure to reference agency specific authorities as most agencies differ on policies governing cost recovery.

Fire Prevention, Education and Mitigation:

Learning Element: Identify methods which evaluate the effectiveness of reducing unwanted fire ignitions, and trespass actions.

Learning Element: Describe the role of a Fire Management Officer in ensuring fire safe communities.

Trespass and Cost Recovery:

Learning Element: Understand the laws and policies governing cost recovery.

Learning Element: Understand an Agency Administrator's decision space on pursuing cost recovery.

Firefighter Training and Qualifications:

Intent: Provide Agency Administrators and FMOs an overview of the unique human resources and workforce planning requirements associated with oversight and management of fire and aviation programs.

Delivery Considerations: None.

Learning Element: Identify the policies, and standards documents, which govern wildland fire training and workforce development activities for fire and non-fire personnel.

Learning Element: Describe the Agency Administrator's and FMO's role in wildland fire qualifications management for wildland fire and non-fire personnel.

Learning Element: Describe the policy requirements for training and qualifications of line officers and their designated acting's.

Learning Element: Review the IFPM and FS-FPM standards and describe the implications for succession planning.

Learning Element: Describe the benefits of an Incident Qualification Review process.

Learning Element: Identify what "certifying official" means in IQCS.

Learning Element: Describe the process and purpose of conducting individual training/qualification audits.

Learning Element: Identify agency specific workforce development programs.

Safety and Risk Management:

Intent: Provide an understanding of wildland fire policy for safety, risk management, response to serious accidents and Line of Duty Death (LODD), and the importance of pre-planning.

Delivery Considerations: Utilize case studies, table top scenarios or staff rides.

Learning Element: Describe risk management processes utilized at the strategic and tactical level in the wildland environment.

Learning Element: Describe the importance of emphasizing agency safety policies when engaging with Fire Management Staff.

Learning Element: Describe the pre-planning and response actions to a serious accident or LODD.

Learning Element: Identify what is in a unit safety plan as it related to fire management.

Learning Element: Describe the role in the development, review, and revision and implementation process for:

- Unit Safety Plan.
- Emergency Medical Response Plan including Air ambulance Coordination and Burn Injury Protocol.
- Agency Administrator's guide to critical incident management.

Learning Element: Understand the role of the FMO for reporting accidents in the SAFENET and SAFECOM systems.

Learning Element: Describe the process for identifying and mitigating high risk scenarios (i.e., oil/gas, UXO, HCN).

Learning Element: Identify the elements of local briefing packages and describe their importance.

Learning Element: Review the agency policy on incident work/rest guidelines and length of assignment.

Fuels and Vegetation Management:

Intent: Provide an understanding on fuels management policy and the significance to implementing fuels reduction and the implementation associated with signing a prescribed fire burn plan.

Delivery Considerations: Utilizing case studies, a local staff ride or reviewing actual prescribed fire burn plans.

Learning Element: Identify agency and interagency policies that govern fuels management.

Learning Element: Describe the Agency Administrator's and FMO role in overseeing a fuels and vegetation management program.

Learning Element: Describe the methods available to implement fuels reduction.

Learning Element: Demonstrate an understanding of decision processes tied to fuels management.

Learning Element: Discuss the cost-benefit of implementing a hazardous fuels reduction program.

Learning Element: Explain the FMO and Agency Administrator roles in preparing and implementing prescribed fire plans.

Learning Element: Review a prescribed fire burn plan and assess the critical elements.

Learning Element: Describe the different fuels management reporting tools and their purpose (e.g., NFORS, FTEM).

Incident Management and Response:

Intent: Provide an understanding of the Agency Administrator's and FMO's roles and responsibilities of various aspects of incident response from initial attack, extended attack, hosting a large incident management team, and post fire activities.

Delivery Considerations: Consider using a current local/geographic incident to use as a case study to highlight the different decision points an FMO and Agency Administrator would be responsible for.

Dispatch/Mobilization:

Learning Element: Identify policies guiding national, geographic, and local mobilization through the national dispatch system.

Learning Element: Describe the role and function of NMAC, GMAC and local MAC.

Initial Attack and Incident Management Teams:

Learning Element: Distinguish between an Agency Administrator and FMO's responsibilities during initial attack, extended attack, and large or long-term incident management.

Learning Element: Understand the importance of providing expectations for all incident commanders.

Learning Element: Describe the importance of providing guidance and direction to an incident management team.

Learning Element: Describe the Agency Administrator and FMO roles and responsibilities when hosting a Type I, II, or III incident organization.

Learning Element: Identify the critical elements of a delegation of authority for incident commanders.

Learning Element: Demonstrate an understanding of the decision processes specific to wildland fire management response.

Learning Element: Describe the use of READ's and other incident advisors on wildland fire incidents.

Incident Business:

Learning Element: Describe pre-incident planning activities including service/supply plans, local incident support, agreements, and casual hiring.

Learning Element: Describe incident business needs and considerations during an incident including using Incident Business Advisor (IBA), cost effective fire operations, cost shares, land use agreements, support units, claims, incident replacement, and as it applies specifically to Type 3 Incidents.

Learning Element: Describe incident business needs and considerations post-incident including large fire review, financial and confidential records, and post incident reviews.

Post Fire Activities:

Learning Element: Identify agency guidance for incident transfer of command.

Learning Element: List and describe potential post-fire activities.

Learning Element: Identify reporting requirements for the use of wildland fire chemicals.

Learning Element: Understand the policy and procedures for wildland fire reporting and managing incident records.

Investigations and Reviews:

Intent: Provide an understanding of the general purpose for various reviews, investigations, and to make programmatic changes based on findings and recommendations.

Delivery Considerations: Utilize current case studies.

Learning Element: Understand the different types and purposes of agency reviews; describe the role and responsibilities in the review process.

- Preparedness Review
- After Actions Review
- FAST Review
- Safety Assistance Team (SAT)
- Aviation Safety Assistance Team (ASAT) Review
- Large Fire Review
- Individual Fire Review
- Lesson Learned Review (LLR)
- Rapid Lesson Sharing (RLS)

- Declared Wildfire Reviews

Learning Element: Understand the different types and purposes of agency investigations; describe the role and responsibilities in the investigation process.

- Serious Wildland Fire Accident
- Wildland Fire Accident
- Near-miss
- Entrapment
- Burnover
- Fire Shelter Deployment
- Fire Trespass

Learning Element: Discuss the responsibility to develop strategies on implementing programmatic changes based on outcomes of reviews and investigations.

Aviation:

Intent: Provide an understanding of the complexities of managing and utilizing aviation assets for fire and non-fire missions.

Delivery Considerations: Utilize local and state aviation managers to review what elements of an aviation plan the FMO and Agency Administrators need to know.

Learning Element: Identify the policies governing aviation use by land management agencies.

Learning Element: Identify National, State/Regional, and local responsibilities for aviation management.

Learning Element: Discuss the critical elements of an aviation plan.

Learning Element: Describe the role in the development, review, and revision process for a unit aviation plan.

Learning Element: Describe the different types of aviation assets used in fire and land management activities.

Legal and Liability

Intent: Provide an understanding of the potential criminal and civil liabilities associated with administering a wildland fire program.

Delivery Considerations: Utilize an agency solicitor to deliver content.

Learning Element: Understand the personal liabilities associated with the FMO and Agency Administrator positions.

Learning Element: Demonstrate an understanding of agency liability associated with wildland fire management decisions (NEPA and Tort).

Learning Element: Understand the inherent protection one has as a federal employee and how you are covered under acting under the “scope of your employment.”

Preparing for Unintended Outcomes

Intent: Provide a basic understanding to prepare an organization to respond to critical incidents, accidents, or fatalities.

Delivery Considerations: None

Learning Element: Identify products and actions that can be done to prepare an organization to respond to a critical incident, accident, or fatality.

Learning Element: Describe the tools, programs, and processes that can be utilized during a response to a critical incident.