

S-260: Interagency Incident Business Management

UNIT 2 - CASUALS

Whether you're fighting a large wildland fire, responding to a devastating hurricane, or dealing with any other major federal emergency, you'll often work with individuals who arrive on the scene from a variety of places and fall into different personnel categories.

In this unit, we'll describe a special type of worker called a casual—a temporary employee hired under U.S. code called the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers.

Specifically, we'll cover these concepts:

- Recruitment sources for casuals
- Situations requiring the hiring of casuals
- Pay plan for casuals
- Conditions of hire for casuals
- Required documentation when casuals are hired

TIP: As you complete this unit you'll need your SIIBM open to Chapter 10 now.

The four personnel categories you may see at an incident are:

- Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (casuals)
- Cooperators
- Contract
- Employed by government

Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals)

A casual is a person hired and compensated under the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers. A casual might also be referred to as an emergency firefighter (EFF), an administratively determined (AD) worker, or an emergency worker.

Cooperators

Federal, state, county, and local jurisdictions often cooperate with one another when they handle a large incident. For example, a county fire department might come to the assistance of a Type 1 fire on nearby U.S. Forest Service lands under a cooperative agreement between the two entities.

Cooperative agreements are described in detail in the Cooperative Relations module.

Contract

A private contractor might arrive on the scene. For example, a truck driver, bulldozer operator, or water tender might work at the incident under a specific contract.

You can find out more about contract employees in the Acquisition unit.

Employed by Government

This category refers to regular federal government employees, such as employees of the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management. You'll find information about paying federal government employees at an incident in the Pay Provisions and Timekeeping/Recording module.

Where do casual hires come from? There are several recruitment sources:

- Organized crews
- Single resource
- Federal sources, such as the Job Corps or federal retirees
- Cooperators under special circumstances

Organized Crews

Examples of organized crews include:

- Native American crews
- Crews from other government agencies

These crews must be managed under an agreement established in advance of the incident. In addition, agreements for organized crews hired as casuals must comply with the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers.

Single Resource Casuals

A single resource (i.e., individuals hired locally or through state employment offices) casual might be hired locally. Or single resource casuals might be hired through state employment offices if a hiring agreement is in place before the incident. Nonresident aliens also can be hired as casuals if they have a valid Social Security number.

This information is all in Chapter 10 of the SIIBM, and you'll also find out more about the hiring and documentation requirements for single resource casuals later in this module.

Federal Sources

Job Corps and Youth Conservation Corps enrollees can work as casuals, but if they are under age 18, they may be assigned only to nonhazardous or nonarduous duties (such as time recording or computer work). Enrollees in the Senior Community Service Employment Program also qualify as potential casuals.

Regular government employees from other federal agencies who are in a nonpay status and federal retirees may qualify for hire as casuals. Volunteers under a formal agreement with a federal agency may be hired as casuals for an incident.

Cooperators

Think of the National Guard as an example of a cooperator. When the National Guard formally orders a unit to an incident, payment is made according to the cooperative agreement with the Guard. However, if National Guard members are hired as individuals, they could be paid either under a previous agreement or as a casual under the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers. Similarly, employees of state and local cooperators could be hired and paid either according to a specific cooperative agreement or as casuals.

Can active duty military personnel, other than the National Guard, be hired as casuals?

The answer is NO, even if they are on leave or furlough.

Match each personnel category with the corresponding correct statement.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • Casual | A person hired and compensated under the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers |
| • Cooperator | State, county, or local jurisdiction personnel are an example |
| • Contract | A bulldozer must have one of these to work at an incident |
| • Employed by government | Examples include U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management employees |

This topic introduced you to a special type of worker called a casual—a temporary, emergency employee hired under the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers.

Specifically, in this topic, you:

- Reviewed the four personnel categories you may see at an incident—casuals, cooperators, contract, and employed by the government
- Discovered the four recruitment sources are organized crews, single resource individuals, federal sources, and cooperators under certain circumstances

In the next topic, we cover the details of how the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers ... works!

In the introduction to this module, we described a category of employees referred to as casuals—temporary workers at an incident hired and compensated under the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers.

Now, let's dig a little deeper. In this topic, you will find answers to the following questions:

- How are pay rates set for casuals?
- When can casuals be hired?
- What conditions of hire must be met for a casual employee?
- Which positions might a casual fill on an incident?

The pay plan is updated once a year for both the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS). In this topic, we use the FS Pay Plan as our example for finding information. It's

just that—an example!

You can download a recent copy at <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/incident-business-committee>

The pay plan's preamble outlines the plan's main concepts. Again, we are in Chapter 10 here.

The preamble states that the pay plan:

- Is also referred to as the Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan
- Pays casuals under the provisions of the AD Pay Plan in effect at the start of the emergency even if a new plan is released during the emergency's duration
- Applies whenever it's necessary to hire temporary workers to:
 - Cope with a sudden, unexpected emergency threatening federally protected property unless brought under immediate control
 - Provide emergency assistance to states under formalized agreements
 - Meet Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assignments
- Indicates the hiring of casuals is temporary and must be terminated when other employment methods can be initiated
- Takes precedence over other policies or regulations that may be in place elsewhere

Every year, casuals' pay rates are reviewed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Incident Business Committee (IBC). Hourly pay rates are set by classification level.

Take a look at the pay rate table for casuals in the FS Pay Plan pages—find it under B. Administrative Determined (AD) Rates of Pay.

There are just a few other casual pay rate concepts to keep in mind. For example, Geographic Area Coordinating Groups may request rates for positions not published in the pay plan.

Also, certain key positions may be filled only by current agency employees, or qualified state or local government employees. These positions include:

- Area commander
- Type 1 and Type 2 incident commander (IC)
- Security specialist Level 1 and Level 2
- Fire investigator
- Buying team leader

Casuals can be hired only when certain specific situations exist. The Circumstances Required for Hiring section in the pay plan pages lists 11 specific situations. We describe six examples here:

- Fight an ongoing fire
- Extreme fire danger
- Support an ongoing incident
- Temporary replacement
- Training exercises
- Cope with other threatening emergency

Fight an Ongoing Fire

If a fire is raging out of control, casuals might be hired to get the situation under control.

Extreme Fire Danger

Casuals might be hired to be at the ready during unusually dry periods or when fire danger is very high to extreme. Other situations posing a high risk for fire could include unusually high lightning activity, incendiary outbreaks, or times when a large number of people are in the area—such as the July 4 or Labor Day weekend.

Support to an Ongoing Incident

Providing support to an ongoing incident could also include post-incident jobs, such as dispatch, warehouse workers, and payment team members. Normally, post-incident administration work should not exceed 90 calendar days.

Temporary Replacement

Casuals might be hired to temporarily replace members of fire suppression crews or fire management personnel who are currently on fires.

Training Exercises

Casuals can attend emergency incident training. In most cases, this should not exceed a total of 80 hours per calendar year and cannot be used to circumvent other hiring authorities, like career seasonal appointments.

Cope With Other Emergency

Casuals might be hired to cope with floods, storms, or any other all hazard emergency that threatens damage to federally protected property unless brought under immediate control.

Can casuals be hired to meet mission assignments issued by FEMA? Find the answer in the AD Pay Plan section labeled Circumstances Required for Hiring.

If you say yes, mission accomplished.

Identify TWO correct statements about the hiring of casuals.

Casuals can be hired even when there is no incident under way, such as during unusually dry periods.

Casuals can temporarily replace members of fire management personnel who are currently on

fires.

Casuals can be hired to circumvent career seasonal employees.

Casuals can be hired before or during an incident, but not post-incident.

Casuals can be hired for nonemergency office work.

Several conditions of hire apply to casuals. By conditions of hire, we mean two things:

- The requirements casuals must meet to be hired
- What casuals are entitled to in terms of pay, benefits, and so on

All fireline personnel need to be 18 years of age or older. You might see younger teenagers performing some nonhazardous duties back at the camp. While we won't cover every requirement here, it's a good start.

In the Conditions of Hire section, you'll find examples such as:

- Armed Forces prohibition
- Physical fitness and other qualifications
- Immigration and Social Security
- Tax withholding

Armed Forces Prohibition

Active members of the Armed Forces cannot be hired as casuals. Remember, we told you that National Guard members may be hired as casuals—and that's true—as long as they are not on active duty!

Physical Fitness and Other Qualifications

Conditions for hire can be set by the federal agency doing the hiring. For example, the agency might set minimum physical fitness standards, security requirements, and health and medical screening requirements. Casuals might need special certifications or licenses to fill the job.

Immigration and Social Security

Casuals must be eligible for hire under current immigration laws and must complete Department of Homeland Security Form I-9, described later in this module. In addition, casuals must have a Social Security number. This requirement applies both to U.S. citizens and nonresident aliens.

Tax Withholding

Federal and state taxes must be withheld from salary payments. Casuals will have the opportunity to fill out a W-4 tax withholding form. If they do not fill it out, taxes will be withheld at the highest rate.

Here are some key points to review:

- Point of hire for starting and ending pay
- On-shift and off-shift hours
- Guaranteed hours

- Travel reimbursement
- Benefits

Point of Hire for Starting and Ending Pay

A casual's employment begins at the point of hire and ends when the casual is returned to the point of hire or is no longer available. "Point of hire" is defined as the location of the unit where hiring documentation is completed or other locations as determined by the hiring unit.

On-Shift and Off-Shift Hours

Casuals are paid for on-shift hours but not for off-shift hours—a fact critical in keeping accurate records of a casual's time. On-shift hours include time working, the time traveling from and to the point of hire, other travel necessary for the job, and ordered standby.

Examples of off-shift hours include sleeping and eating when free from assigned duties (assuming adequate food and lodging are available) or other times when casuals are free from duty and not in an ordered standby status.

Guaranteed Hours

In general, casuals are guaranteed eight hours of paid time per calendar day when they are on an incident away from the point of hire. The eight-hour guarantee does not apply to the first and last day of work when casuals travel to and from an incident. Casuals are also not entitled to guaranteed hours on their days off at their point of hire. The minimum compensable time for each work period is two hours, and casuals' time should be recorded to the closest quarter hour.

Example: If it takes only 1 hour to travel to an incident, the casual would still be paid for 2 hours. If it takes 3 hours and 55 minutes to travel to an incident, compensable time would be calculated to the nearest quarter hour—i.e., 4 hours.

Travel Reimbursement

The government will pay for transportation to get a casual from the point of hire to the incident and back again. However, if casuals deviate from the normal travel route home, they must pay travel costs from the point where the deviation occurs.

If a casual is fired or quits without an acceptable reason, pay will be stopped and a government official will decide if the government will pay for return travel expenses.

Benefits

Casuals are covered by the Federal Employees' Compensation Act for work-related injuries and
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illnesses. But there are no additional benefits, such as health insurance, sick leave, paid leave, and Social Security deductions.

Casuals could be paid for time eating and sleeping, even when free from assigned duties, if food and lodging are not “adequate.” What does “adequate” mean? Find the answer in Chapter 10’s supplemental pay plan pages. (Hint: A hot can of beans and a blanket count as adequate.) Take a look at the section labeled Position Classification in the pay plan pages.

A key point to remember is that casuals’ pay rates (also called AD pay rates) are determined by the job they perform; i.e., their position classification. Length of service, other qualifications, or occasionally performing duties at a higher classification level do not change the pay rate.

Also note:

- Trainees are paid at one AD pay rate lower than the full performance AD rate.
- For most positions, casuals must have a current agency-issued incident qualification card (Red Card).
- If none of the position classifications fit a job needed at an incident, exception positions can be established.

In the AD Pay Plan supplemental pages, you’ll find the Incident Position Matrix. Remember that we are using the FS Pay Plan pages in our example.

Note the following:

- The matrix shows positions that could be found at an incident.
- Column 3 in the matrix, AD Class, indicates the classification level. For example, find Safety Officer Type 1. It’s AD-L, right? Now, flip back to the table of hourly pay rates. Look under AD-L to find the hourly rate for jobs in the classification.
- Column 4 in the matrix, PMS 310-1 indicates if a position’s description and qualifications are found in that document. If you see an asterisk in the column, the answer is yes.

Find the Finance positions in the Incident Position Matrix. What’s the AD class for an equipment time recorder? How do you find the hourly rate for an equipment time recorder?

Match each condition of hire with its corresponding statement.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| • Armed Forces | Under no condition may active members be hired as casuals |
| • Social Security | To work as a casual, an individual must have this number even if a nonresident alien |
| • Travel | Compensable time in general, but there are exceptions |
| • Benefits | Not available to casuals except for workers’ compensation |
| • Eating and sleeping | Examples of off-shift hours |

In this topic, you found information about the following:

- How pay rates are set for casuals

- When casuals can be hired
- What conditions of hire casual employees must meet
- Which positions a casual might fill on an incident

You also had an opportunity to practice using the supplemental pay plan pages in Chapter 10, including the Incident Position Matrix and the pay rates table.

With the basics of the Pay Plan for Emergency Workers under your belt, you're ready to move on.

Whether you're a hiring unit or an administratively determined (AD) employee, there's no short list of required documents when casuals are hired. Eligibility needs to be verified, taxes must be attended to, and PMS 935 and PMS 934 forms need to be filled out. Not only that, but it all needs to be done legibly and accurately.

This topic covers required documentation for hiring casuals:

- Single Resource Casual Hire Information Form, PMS 934
- I-9 employment eligibility verification
- Incident Behavior form, PMS 935
- Federal and state tax forms, W-4 and/or W-5
- Emergency Firefighter Time Report, OF-288
- Other documentation

At the time of hire, hiring officials complete the Single Resource Casual Hire Information Form, PMS 934. The hiring unit retains a copy and attaches the casual's copy to the OF-288—don't worry, we describe the OF-288 later in this topic.

Casuals provide the documentation to the incident time unit.

Hiring officials verify employment eligibility using the I-9. If the I-9 was not previously completed and on file, the hiring unit must prepare and retain it at the time of hire.

The Incident Behavior form, PMS 935, is a required document casuals must read, understand, and sign for EACH incident.

There are two versions of this form: English (PMS 935-1) and Spanish (PMS 935-2).

In order to be paid, casuals need to complete the necessary federal and state tax documents at the time of hire.

Federal taxes are withheld and state taxes will be withheld for the state in which the casual is hired. Casuals may request taxes be withheld from another state by providing the hiring official with the appropriate withholding form.

The following withholding documents are then forwarded to the appropriate payment center:

- W-4
- W-5

W-4

The W-4 is required at the time of hire and if any of the following conditions exist:

- If filing exempt
- If there is a change in legal name
- If there is a change in tax status
- If there is a change of address (permanent or temporary)

If the W-4 is not completed, taxes are still withheld at the highest rate.

W-5

The W-5, or the Earned Income Credit (EIC) Advance Payment Certificate, is required annually for casuals who meet eligibility requirements. The EIC reduces the tax you owe, and you may qualify for a refund even if you don't owe tax.

To determine if you are eligible for the EIC, visit the IRS's Web site and read up on the W-5.

The SIIBM contains detailed instructions for completing the Emergency Firefighter Time Report, OF-288, in Chapter 10 in the Exhibits section.

We recommend reviewing the OF-288 as you go through each section of the form on this screen. Other certification, licensing, or qualification documents may be required for positions.

They include:

- Commercial driver's license (CDL) with current medical certification
- Current state driver's license
- Emergency medical technician (EMT) card
- Other agency-specific documents

Match each form with the MOST appropriate description.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| • OF-288 | Used to record hours on the job |
| • W-4 | If not turned in, taxes withheld will be at the highest rate |
| • PMS 935 | Is also known as the Incident Behavior form |
| • I-9 | Requires proper identification such as a passport or driver's license and Social Security card |

This topic covered:

- Single Resource Casual Hire Information Form, PMS 934
- I-9 employment eligibility verification
- Incident Behavior form, PMS 935

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- Federal and state tax forms, W-4 and W-5
- Emergency Firefighter Time Report, OF-288
- Other documentation