FLAC Planning Considerations

Reference Materials

Refer to the L-280 CD-ROM for a short PowerPoint presentation showing the setup for each of the standard FLAC stations described in this guide.

Refer to the Leadership Tool Box at the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website for an online feature that provides additional FLAC support such as a sample course map, sample medical plan, sample hazard analysis, as well as an example of a station briefing. This feature also provides information and ideas for those instructors that are interested in modifying the standard station problems or developing new station problems.

Go to — http://www.fireleadership.gov/toolbox/toolbox.html

Click on the link — L-280 Leadership Assessment Course

Cadre Requirements

The FLAC has these cadre requirements:

- One FLAC Coordinator

- An Observer-Controller (OC) to proctor each station

For example, if you establish six stations seven cadre members are required to conduct the FLAC. In addition, if you use the Search and Rescue station as described you will also need one role player. Although the EMT or First Responder identified in the Medical Evacuation Plan could be a cadre member, it is recommended they not be attached to the cadre.

It is important to consider the responsibility that the OCs have in the FLAC when recruiting individuals for that role. They must control the pace of action at their station to create a good test of leadership while ensuring student safety. They must also observe the actions of the assigned Team Leader and record their observations using the FLAC Observer-Controller Evaluation Form.

Stations

The recommended team size is four (Team Leader + 3). The maximum class size was established at 24 so that 6 stations would be the most required to run a smooth FLAC. Teams of five would work if your class has just a few more than 24 students. If you have a class significantly larger than 24 students, split the class and run the FLAC in two sessions.

Performance under Pressure

The tasks at most stations are relatively simple, so the intent is to increase the challenge by adding elements of stress and complexity.

- A time limit should be established for each station to create a sense of urgency. Team Leaders should not know the nature of the problem or task until they arrive and receive their private briefing from the OC so that they do not have an opportunity to plan in advance.

- At stations where parts and equipment need to be selected (pump and hose lay, chainsaw assembly, and search and rescue), have more parts or pieces of equipment than are needed to complete the task. Sorting out necessary and irrelevant components adds to the complexity of decision making.

- Additional stress can be added by introducing penalties for infractions such as penalty minutes against a team's total time.

Station Design and Instructions

This facilitation guide includes the setup and instructions for six stations. However, at their discretion, instructors may develop new or different stations that are better suited to students in the class. The last section "How to Design a FLAC Station" provides guidelines and a template for developing new stations.

FLAC Coordinator Responsibilities

This section provides an overview of the FLAC Coordinator's responsibilities.

Day 1 Briefing

At the end of the classroom session the day before the FLAC, brief students about the FLAC intent and go through the FLAC briefing checklist: start time and location, transportation logistics, safety considerations, and what they need to bring.

Instructor notes are included in Unit 8: Putting It in Practice.

Organizing Team Leaders and Members

On the morning of FLAC, select the students who will be the first Team Leaders. These Team Leaders select their crew from the students in the class. The recommended team size is four (Team Leader + 3).

- Bring Team Leaders to the front of class.

- Each Team Leader makes alternating team member selections until all students are assigned to a team.

- Each Team Leader is given a different colored roll of flagging (or other team identification device) that is placed on the hardhat of each of their team members.

- Teams select a team name.

- Teams are visually identified by their flagging color and referred to by their team name.

Assign start times for each team (09:30, 09:45, and so on). Each Team Leader must have their team at the start area five minutes prior to their assigned time. All team members must have PPE, full line gear, a practice fire shelter, and colored identifier on their hardhats.

Issue each Team Leader the following:

- Course map

- Radio

Initial Briefing

The initial briefing covers the FLAC ground rules only; DO NOT provide any information regarding the course map or the nature of tasks for any of the stations. The Team Leaders should not know anything about their assignment until they arrive at the station and receive their briefing.

FLAC ground rules:

- The team's first assigned Team Leader is the leader at the team's first station, but at each subsequent station the Team Leader role rotates. All events must have a new and different Team Leader. The current team leader chooses each subsequent team leader at the end of each AAR and passes on the course map and radio to the next team leader.

- The Observer-Controller (OC) briefs only the Team Leader at the station. The Team Leader subsequently has one minute to recon the task at hand—without other team members present—before engaging their team in the task.

- Each station has a set time limit.

- After completing each station, the team conducts an After Action Review (AAR), answering all four of the AAR questions in the spirit of what right looks like.

- Full PPE and line gear is to be worn during the entire course.

- Explain the course travel route instructions and any special safety considerations.

- Team radios are to be used only in the event of becoming lost or in an emergency.

FLAC Conduct

Begin sending teams out on the FLAC at their assigned times.

Complete the following tasks as teams finish the last station in the FLAC:

- Record each team's finish time.

- Collect radio from final Team Leader.

- Provide each student an "FLAC Student Assessment Form" (found in the "FLAC Forms" section of this appendix).

Post-FLAC Conduct

Notify the OCs that the rotations are complete.

Have the teams take a breather, hydrate, put line gear away, re-fold practice shelters, and change into dry clothes. Instruct the students to review and answer the questions on their FLAC Student Assessment Form as preparation for their participation in the full class AAR.

After all teams have finished, OCs return immediately to the finish area.

FLAC AAR

After all teams have finished, the FLAC Coordinator facilitates a full class AAR with all students and OCs.

For the first AAR question *(What was planned?)*, refer to the end state listed in the Student Workbook, which is copied here.

End State: While completing the assigned tasks at each station, redeem the Five Communication Responsibilities, demonstrate situational leadership, employ a team in accordance with their abilities, and exhibit effective teamwork skills.

Ask each student to briefly discuss team performance *(What actually happened?)* for the particular FLAC station where they were the assigned Team Leader. Keep the discussion in the context of the FLAC end state, which reflects the key concepts of the course. When all students have discussed team performance, have the OCs report what they observed for each team at their respective stations.

Course Close-Out

Close out the course and thank all hands for their participation. Have all cadre members retrieve FLAC equipment and police the area. Put together feedback and certification packages for each student. Return and store all equipment.

FLAC Observer-Controller (OC) Responsibilities

The Observer-Controllers (OCs) have the responsibility for controlling the pace of action at their station to create a good test of leadership while ensuring student safety. Simultaneously, they must also observe the actions of the assigned Team Leader and the rest of the team, recording their observations on the FLAC Observer-Controller Evaluation Form.

OCs also assist in facilitating team travel back to ICP upon completion of the FLAC.

Station Start and Finish

When the team arrives at your station, contact the FLAC Coordinator by radio to notify him or her that you are ready to proceed. Hold team on stand-by; wait for the go-ahead from the FLAC Coordinator. No discussion regarding the FLAC is allowed among team members during stand-by time.

Upon receiving the go-ahead, pull the Team Leader out of hearing distance of team and brief the Team Leader. After the briefing, the Team Leader is allowed a one-minute recon of the assigned task, without the rest of the team present. At this point, give the Team Leader a "start" command.

During the conduct of the task, observe both the leader's and team's behaviors. Intervene only if the team is operating outside your instructions or if there is a safety hazard.

If teams finish task early, spend as much time as possible conducting the AAR and providing leadership feedback. This is the opportunity to drive home the concepts discussed in class.

OCs may need to coach the teams to strike the right balance in the AAR. Teams have two objectives that may compete with each other: keeping the AAR to five minutes while answering all four of the AAR questions in the spirit of what right looks like. Keep students to the four-question format of the AAR, and be sure students answer one question at a time.

Also, encourage members of team to be honest with their leader regarding demonstrated leadership skills with the intent of learning. Never take less time with AAR, and remember to fill out and discuss leadership evaluation with each leader.

Standard Station Timeline

This timeline is suggested for all stations. The FLAC Coordinator notifies OCs of the time tags.

Time	Task
5 minutes	Initial Briefing • 2 minutes for OC briefing to Team Leader • 1 minute for Team Leader to ask OC questions • 2 minutes for Team Leader to brief the Team
Time Tag 5 minutes per stopwatch. FLAC Coordinator: *All FLACs. Briefing period is over; begin FLAC.*	
15 minutes	Accomplish station task • No questions allowed from team • Control instructions from OC allowed
Time Tag 19 minutes per stopwatch. FLAC Coordinator: *1 Minute warning for end of FLAC*	
Time Tag 20 minutes per stopwatch FLAC Coordinator: *End of FLAC—begin AAR*	
5 minutes	Team Leader facilitates AAR with team. OC can mentor and coach during the team AAR
5 minutes	OC provides the Team Leader with immediate verbal feedback on performance
Time Tag 30 minutes. FLAC Coordinator: *End of task; rotate team to next station.*	

Guidelines for the FLAC Observer-Controller Evaluation Form

Record observations for each team on a separate FLAC OC Evaluation form. After the FLAC is completed, all team evaluation forms will be used during the full class AAR.

- After the allotted time for the FLAC problem and team AAR has expired, advise the team leader to prepare for a debriefing and to move away from the rest of the team with note-taking gear.

- Direct other team members to re-set the FLAC problem while the team leader is engaged in the debriefing.

- Have the team leader write observations in four categories: **"SA"** for situation recon and planning; **"BC"** for briefing and two-way communication skills; **"DM"** for decision-making and delegation; and **"AAR"** for learning from the After Action Review.

- Foster self-assessment in the team leader and accountability for their actions by asking, "Of these four areas, where do you think you did well and where do you think you need to improve?"

- After listening to the team leader's self-assessment, give your observations and constructive feedback. Be sure to include recommendations on how to improve. Focus on leader and team behaviors, not on task completion.

Standard FLAC

The following pages have OC instructions for standard FLAC stations that have been used successfully.

Chainsaw Assembly Station—OC Instructions

Intent

Create a situation in which the Team Leader must identify skills among team members and delegate tasks in order to complete the assignment.

Facilitation Suggestions

Intermix dissembled saws and parts to increase complexity.

Situation Briefing for Team Leader Only

Team is tasked with assembling two chainsaws and cutting two rounds off of a log using both chainsaws.

1. Fully assemble both chainsaws.
2. Saw operators must use all required PPE.
3. The log must be placed in the secure position provided at the station prior to cutting.
4. Cut two short rounds off each end of the log for a total of two cuts.
5. Each cut is to be made by a different chainsaw.
6. Disassemble both chainsaws.
7. At completion of exercise, perform an After Action Review.

Coordinating Instructions

-   Communicate the task time limit to the Team Leader.
-   The Team Leader's one-minute recon of the situation is accomplished without team members present.
-   The Team Leader may ask questions of the OC during the recon.
-   After one minute provide a signal for the Team Leader to engage the team in the task.
-   Enforce the time limit and signal the team to begin their AAR.

Safety

-   Observe all chainsaw safety requirements.
-   Check to ensure all participants have been through S-212.
-   Check to ensure all participants have gloves, eye protection, and ear protection in possession.

Station Equipment

-   Tarp/Plastic approximately 8' x 10'
-   1 Stihl 036 chainsaw or other model
-   1 Stihl 046 chainsaw or other model
-   2 Scrench tools (one for each type of saw used)
-   2 Chainsaw chaps
-   Saw fuel and bar oil
-   Saw buck set-up
-   2 or 3 medium diameter logs, 6 to 8 to feet long
-   Misc. extra saw parts and tools
-   Back-up chainsaw