



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center
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MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#013-2011

To: NWCG Committee Chairs
Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG) Chairs
National IC/AC Council Chair

From: NWCG Chair *William Ruge*

Date: September 14, 2011

Subject: Procedures for Off-site/Remote Incident Assignments

Advancements in technology have allowed for more efficient and effective use of resources to support incident assignments. In addition, availability of individual incident support resources is becoming more challenging due to home unit responsibilities, workload demands, and personal situations. As a result, the numbers of available resources for on-site support of incident management efforts continues to decline. This guidance for off-site/remote incident assignments is intended to increase capacity and flexibility in logistical and support functions such as buying teams, WFDSS support teams, fire behavior analysts, infrared interpreters, contracting officers, time recording, and other functional support resources.

The following provides guidance to employees and incident management personnel that perform duties in support of an on-going incident while remaining at their home unit. Based on negotiations between the employee, the home unit supervisor, and the incident supervisor, this arrangement may allow for continuation of regular duties while still providing necessary services to an incident.

Definition

An off-site/remote incident assignment is work performed by an employee in support of an incident while remaining at the employee's duty station or other designated off-site location.

Availability

- Federal employees must obtain supervisory approval before engaging in off-site/remote incident assignments.

- State/local/tribal employees must obtain supervisory approval and meet agency specific requirements.
- Administratively Determined (AD) employees are eligible based on agency specific and hiring unit requirements.

Ordering Process

- Employees performing off-site/remote incident assignments will be ordered through the standard dispatch ordering system. A charge code will be provided on the resource order.
 - In the event that the employee is ordered to support multiple incidents or to work with a decision support center supporting multiple incidents, the employee will be provided multiple incident charge codes or a large fire support code by the ordering unit or incident supervisor.
- Resource orders must specify that work will be performed at the official duty station of the assigned individual or other designated off-site location, as appropriate.
- In general, travel is not authorized for off-site/remote incident assignments. Circumstances may exist that require an employee to make a site visit or incur travel in support of the incident assignment. This should be determined on a case-by-case basis and documented on the resource order.
- Individuals should utilize government provided equipment.
- Supplies may be ordered to assist with off-site assignments, following incident procurement guidelines, with incident supervisory approval.
- Individuals will perform incident support duties and tasks under the direction of the ordering incident.

Home Unit Responsibilities

- Incident management team or the incident supervisor will sign all OF-288s. Arrangements may be made by the incident supervisor to allow for an alternate signature, e.g., GACC Center Manager.
- Management and approval of time and attendance will be completed by the individual and the home unit supervisor.
- Performance evaluations should be coordinated between the incident and home unit supervisor, as necessary.
- Employees will comply with length of assignment and work/rest requirements as stated in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH).
- Employees with home unit telework agreements must comply with the conditions of their agreement.
- Employees will adhere to all incident and agency guidelines, policies, and regulations.

Time

- Employees are not entitled to “two-hour callback” while performing an off-site/remote incident assignment.
- If an employee works more than their normal tour of duty, they are entitled to compensation as per guidance in the IIBMH.
- Any time worked in support of the incident will be charged to the incident. Hours worked performing regular home unit duties will be charged to the employee’s home unit funds.

In order to determine the appropriate entitlements that apply to incident personnel, a determination must be made as to whether the individual is assigned to the incident full-time or intermittently. The following scenarios have been developed as guidance. An off-site/remote incident assignment must meet the parameters of one of these scenarios.

Scenario #1 – Employee is physically located at the duty station, or other designated off-site location, and resource ordered to support an incident for 100% of their duties.

- Employee is required to do a spot change in their tour of duty to first 8 (9 or 10).
- Base and overtime hours are coded to the incident as prescribed by agency specific policies.
- Employee is entitled to guaranteed base hours for each work day as prescribed in Chapter 10 of the IIBMH.
- Employee must comply with work/rest requirements.

Scenario #2 – Employee is physically located at the duty station, or other designated off-site location, and resource ordered to support an incident intermittently (after hours, etc.) while still performing home unit duties.

- Resource order must document that the employee is being “ordered to be available for incident response resulting from the emergency.”
- Employee does not do a spot change in tour of duty.
- Employee is required to perform home unit duties and account for base hours against home unit job code, with regular hours or leave.
- Incident support after regular work hours are considered overtime and charged to the incident job code.
- Employee is NOT entitled to guaranteed base hours for each work day as prescribed in Chapter 10 of the IIBMH.
- Employee must comply with work/rest requirements.

Regardless of the type of hire (full-time or intermittent), ADs are not entitled to guaranteed hours at their home unit per the AD Pay Plan.

Federal employees are covered under the Federal Employee’s Compensation Act if injured in the course of performing official duties. The employee will apply approved safeguards to protect Government/Agency records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with the Privacy Act requirements set forth in the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579, codified at Section 552a, Title 5 U.S.C. State/local/tribal employees are covered based on agency specific guidelines.

For more information regarding this process, contact: Ann Marie Carlson, Chair of the Incident Business Committee, at (916) 978-4446 or by e-mail at acarlson@blm.gov.

cc: NWCG Executive Board
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