

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
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Instruction Memorandum No. OF&A 2002-020
Expires: 09/30/02

To: All Field Offices

From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Subject: Guidance for Providing Assistance for Hazardous Fuels Reduction Activities
[Hazardous Fuels (2823), WUI Fuels (2824)]

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum provides Fuels program guidance for providing assistance to other agencies or to other BLM Offices.

Policy Action: This Instruction memorandum including the guidance outlined in Attachment 1, "Providing Fuels Treatment Assistance," replaces all previous guidance addressing providing assistance for the Hazardous Fuels Reduction program (Subactivities 2823 and 2824). Offices responsible for updating and maintaining applicable Handbooks and Guides, such as the national and state Fuels Management Handbooks and the Fund Code Handbook, should complete the necessary revisions to be in compliance with this Instruction Memorandum and disseminate them to the using community.

Time frame: This guidance takes effect on the date of issuance of this Instruction Memorandum. Revisions to other relevant policy and guidance documents to make them compliant should be completed by October 1, 2002 (e.g., Prescribed Fire Handbook, etc.).

Background: The FY 2002 Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Management appropriation funded the five Federal agencies' Hazardous Fuels Reduction program. Funding was provided for the regular Hazardous Fuel Program and for Wildland Urban Interface Fuels. The Congressional intent for the fuels management program is that, "Interior Agencies and the Forest Service should not charge each other for personnel and other resources."

All five fire directors concur that the general policy of not cross billing is appropriate and meets Congressional intent. Fuels management projects are considered regular planned land management activities as opposed to emergency activities, therefore, offices have the right to turn down requests from other offices to assist in fuels management activities. Offices should not consider providing personnel and resources at the expense of their own target accomplishments, and no office should be placed in a position of subsidizing another office's fuels management activities. However, the fire directors also concurred that there are some unique situations where reimbursement (cross billing) might be warranted.

Coordination: Fire managers, fuels managers and relevant resource specialists should be aware of this fund coding guidance.

Contacts: Questions regarding this subject should be addressed to Shari Stewart (208-387-5357), Roy Johnson (208-387-5163) or Andy Smith (208-387-5161).

Signed by:
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1 - Attachment

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Providing Fuels Treatment Assistance

We support assisting our interagency neighbors, but it is important to remember that our first priority must be to accomplish the Bureau's prescribed fire workload. Assistance cannot be an excuse for not meeting our annual Performance/Workload Measures. But in most cases if reciprocal cooperation exists, the program is more efficient and the goal of cross-boundary landscape-scale treatments can be achieved. Interagency assistance activities should not be used to expand our workforce numbers or extend the length of our workforce season more than a full pay period. We are still accountable to the 1,039 hour length-of-season limitation on seasonals. Assistance workloads should not be any part of the consideration to convert seasonals to career seasonals or career seasonals to permanents. Interagency assistance will not be considered when assessing the local workload for the purpose of establishing a permanent full time fuels management position.

- < ***Assistance to Other Wildland Fire Management Agencies:*** When BIA, FWS, NPS, or FS request BLM assistance on a fuels treatment project, the request should always go to the local BLM Field Office. The assistance for fuels treatment project work should parallel the suppression process. The local BLM office will determine if they can provide any or all of the assistance. If they can provide all of the requested assistance all activities are handled strictly between the two Federal neighbors. The BLM Office providing the assistance will issue the appropriate project number pertaining to the agency requesting assistance. Specific project numbers for each agency are as follows: BIA: GA01, FWS: GA02, NPS: GA03, FS: GA04, and Non-Federal: GA05. All BLM Offices providing assistance are to use their **individual office organization code** along with the appropriate agency project number when providing assistance. Note, this assistance does not count against the individual office or state 2823 or 2824 ceiling established fuel treatment cost targets.

The Interior Agencies have agreed they will track the amount of funds expended for fuels treatment projects and make adjustments between agencies at the Appropriation level. At the end of the year the National Office of Fire & Aviation will query the assistance fire project codes from the MIS and settle at the national level with the other Interior agencies that we assisted. Temporaries and Career Seasonal employees should not have their planned employment period, based on BLM's workload, extended to meet non Bureau activities. Interagency work is strictly on a project by project basis and not a planned extension of anyone's work year.

- < ***Assistance Between BLM Offices:*** Offices in need of assistance in accomplishing their target should try to work out arrangements with neighboring BLM offices where sharing personnel and/or resources throughout the year will be offsetting and there will be no need for reimbursement. Offices anticipating the need for assistance in accomplishing normal workloads should coordinate with their local fire management cooperators early in the planning of the project and ascertain if their Federal neighbors can assist. If not, consider tribal, state, local,

and private sector resources for contract. It is very important not to overlook this source of personnel and resources.

The policy for assistance between BLM Offices will be that all charges will be made to the **requesting office organization code** and the appropriate fuels treatment project number. When BLM Offices are planning fuels treatment projects, the cost estimate should include all costs necessary to complete the project regardless of who completes the work (e.g., contractor, local BLM Office, National Office, adjacent BLM Office, other agency resources, etc.).