

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

November 29, 2000

In Reply Refer To:
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EMS Transmission 11/30/00
Instruction Memorandum No. OF&A 2001-002
Expires: 09/30/02

To: All Field Officials
From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation
Subject: Fire Fighting Requirements for Dispatchers

Program Area: Fire Management

Purpose: To define a realistic fire experience requirement which would insure BLM career dispatchers have the knowledge necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the position. To insure this requirement is met, this policy will apply when hiring a career seasonal or permanent full time dispatcher and will be applicable for any position in the BLM where the major duty of the position is to dispatch personnel, equipment, or aviation resources to wildland fire. This policy will not be retroactive and will not apply to our temporary workforce. We would expect dispatchers in temporary positions to be working under close supervision. The policy is as follows:

"Experience on an organized crew where an individual received training and experience on a variety of initial attack, extended attack or project fires which would provide an understanding of the support requirements provided by the dispatch function." This is the type of experience that could typically be met by serving in a temporary fire position in a BLM or other wildland fire management organization for one season.

Timeframe: Immediately on issuance of this Instruction Memorandum.

Budget Impact: None

Background: Based on State Office responses and combined with the firm belief that fire dispatchers in career positions are required to make decisions in support of wildland fire management objectives and often these decisions have to be made with little if any management involvement, it is imperative dispatchers have an understanding of wildland fire operations that can only be acquired from direct fire operations experience. BLM career dispatchers must be able to operate not only from preplanned responses but also improvise based on a rapidly changing wildland fire scenario. We require these people to anticipate and react to an ever-changing situation and understand what may be a critical resource or critical information that must be provided to the on-the-ground firefighter.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None

Coordination: State Offices have had the opportunity to comment and the Office of Fire and Aviation has coordinated on this issue with personnel specialists and personnel with fire dispatch experience at the national and geographic level.

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