NWCG CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT ISSUE PAPER NUMBER 44
Addition of Position Task Books for Sawyers and Faller
January 21, 2003

BACKGROUND

During the revision of the S-212 Wildland Fire Chain Saws course the subject matter experts determined that many chain saw use safety related problems, including avoidable accidents, occurred because of inadequate training, evaluation and certification of wildland fire chain saw users. Further, it was determined that the lack of an interagency training and certification program of the NWCG agencies did not comply with the requirements of OSHA regulations for chain saw operations. With the exception of the Forest Service and the BIA, the federal NWCG member agencies do not have established guidance or standards for chain saw operators or training requirements beyond the introductory training in the S-212 course. Three levels of chain saw operator are identified in the National Mobilization Guide under "Technical Specialist" with falling qualification for each level based on tree diameter, not on judgment and skill level required to accomplish task complexity.

CURRENT STATUS

The interagency subject matter group tasked with revising the S-212 course has prepared draft task books that will improve certification standards for chain saw users in wildland fire. The task books incorporate tasks from task books created and in use in four geographic area level wildland fire chain saw use certification programs. A change in mnemonics for the three certification levels is encouraged to ensure adherence to the new standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Formalize the position of chain saw operator into three distinct skill and qualification levels matching that used in the private sector under state and national OSHA programs, i.e., Apprentice Sawyer, Intermediate Sawyer, Advanced Faller. It is the recommendation of the subject matter expert group that these draft task books be incorporated into the PMS 310-1, with appropriate adjustments added by the IOSWT.

ACTION REQUIRED

Approval of this recommendation will establish standards for certification of Apprentice Sawyer (SAWA), Intermediate Sawyer (SAWI), and Advanced Faller (FALL).

APPROVED / DENIED
(circle one)

It is a valid proposition to establish better "National" standards to ensure proper training is given and recieved, however, at this time there is considerable variation regionally and there is a factor of complexity associated with private contractor certification that needs to be dealt with.

SIGNATURE

Bob Leverton
IOSWT Chair

2/25/03
Date

cc: Training Working Team
Safety and Health Working Team