Department of the Interior Standard Position Description
PD Number: DE00800

Classification: Student Trainee (Wildland Fire Management), GS-0499-05

INTRODUCTION

This position is organizationally located on a wildland fire module or crew within one of four fire bureaus within the Department of the Interior (Department); however, this position may be assigned work on interagency crews where the crew leader is from a different bureau or agency.

As a Student Trainee in Wildland Fire Management, the position involves periods of formal education and periods of employment as a Wildland Firefighter. The education and employment are part of the Pathways Intern Program. The level of education and experience completed by the student is a major consideration in establishing the level of on-the-job training and work assignments.

MAJOR DUTIES

As a Student Trainee, performs and receives training and development experience in performing the following major duties and responsibilities.

Fire Suppression, Monitoring, and Post-Fire Activities (60%)

As a more skilled member of and/or leader within a wildland fire module or crew in fuels management, fire suppression, monitoring, and post-fire activities, applies an understanding of firefighter safety, fire behavior, topography of the area, weather, fuels, and training in fire management work to recommend and implement tactical directions on attacking, controlling, or mopping up fires, building or patrolling firelines, cleaning up burned areas within firelines, suppressing spot fires, felling snags or trees, and cutting brush. Places caches of equipment and supplies at strategic points.

On natural caused fires when applying a strategy other than full suppression will observe, collect, and record fire-related data with regards to fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior, fire effects, smoke, and fire location. If human caused, gathers, and preserves evidence for possible actions in prosecuting offenders.

Operates, moves, inspects, and performs preventative maintenance on vehicles and equipment to include crew carriers, fire engines, command vehicles, pickups, and other specialized equipment. Uses judgment to safely operate, maneuver, and set up vehicles and equipment in a variety of environments including urban, grassland, and mountainous terrain. Ensures adherence to vehicle safety procedures when transporting personnel, fuel, and equipment, considering bridge and road limits, equipment weight and length, and weather effects.

In addition, performs the following duties specific to the crew or module assigned:

- **Engine**: May drive and operate a wildland fire engine, positioning the engine for proper use and operation based on an understanding of engine capabilities and weight limitations. As directed, starts pump engine, primes pump, adjusts engine speed and pump valves, lays hose, and uses appropriate nozzles and makes nozzle adjustments for effective use of water and additives. May have specialized duties such as water handling specialist or maintenance of specialized equipment used to respond to wildland urban interface/intermix situations.
- **Crews**: Serves as lookout and as directed, locates fireline and implements appropriate fireline construction methods necessary (e.g., mineral soil scrape, cup trenching, removal of ladder fuels) to stop fire spread, making adjustments based on terrain and other conditions and assessing escape routes and safety zones. Conducts tree felling and chainsaw operations, including appropriate snag mitigation. Monitors weather and smoke conditions and reports observations to the crew. As assigned, ensures proper refurbishing and resupply of tools, vehicles, food, water, and other supplies.
- **Helitack**: Performs helicopter crewmember duties such as: prepares internal and/or external cargo loads, briefs passengers before takeoff, follows proper procedures for loading/unloading the helicopter, constructs helispots or landing areas, monitors dipsites, and prepares sling load sites. Works with higher-graded firefighters and receives on-the-job training, instruction, and orientation in helicopter operations to include accompanying the pilot on flights, providing radio communications to dispatch and/or ground firefighters, navigating with use of maps, and applying aviation safety regulations. May serve as a rappeller or short hauler.

Fire Preparedness (20%)

Maintains and/or coordinates and ensures maintenance of equipment and various hand tools such as shovels, Pulaskis, and McLeods, water hose, and backpack pumps. Responsibilities for supplies and equipment include: 1) manages firefighting tools and equipment assigned to the firefighter and to their module, crew, or unit which includes: servicing and maintaining tools and equipment; oiling, greasing, and servicing automotive equipment, portable pumps, and power equipment; conducting periodic inventories; keeping records of firefighting equipment and supplies; 2) gathers equipment needed to carry out instructions from leaders and supervisors; and 3) maintains proper inventory, refurbishing and resupplying module vehicles with food, water, and supplies.

Participates in physical fitness programs.

May serve as an alternate in other fire program areas such as logistical dispatch, cache warehouse, incident business, and administrative support.

Fuels Management and Prevention (10%)

Leads less-complex fuels management projects or participates in more complex projects that include gathering data for and carrying out prescribed fire, and mechanical and biological treatments that improve current vegetation conditions while reducing flammable materials; inventorying fuel beds; and piling vegetation debris.

Leads and/or participates in fire prevention promotional activities such as attending public education and special events; explaining fire prevention measures to visitors, youth groups, schools, and other public education activities; and distributing and explaining fire prevention literature to cooperators, visitors, and the general public.

Leadership (10%)

May serve as a situational leader on wildland fires by directing the work of a small crew of firefighters in building firelines, burning out, mopping up, and patrolling firelines. During wildland fire and hazardous fuels management assignments, may provide on-the-job training opportunities and mentorship to lower graded firefighters on the use of tools and equipment. Performs administrative leadership responsibilities to include maintaining records, such as supply receipts, and providing feedback to supervisors on performance of firefighters being led.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

FACTORS

Guidelines

A large body of specialized technical firefighting, safety, fire prevention, and fire organization guides exist and must be thoroughly understood and applied. These guides include manuals, handbooks, training aids, maps and charts, and special instructions and practices pertaining to the use of mechanized equipment, aerial techniques, and other procedures related to fire management work. The trainee will learn and be aware of the guidance, as well as the constantly changing nature of guidelines as new or modified techniques emerge.

At this level, performs work assignments in accordance with established procedures, referring only emergency or unusual problems to their supervisors via the most appropriate communication method/device. At this level, uses more skilled judgment when applying procedures and safety protocols to the specific conditions of the assignment.

Complexity

Performs wildland firefighting in a variety of assignments as a member of a module or crew. The approach may vary based upon terrain, fire intensity, fuels availability, wind velocity, smoke, and resource values. Specific tasks, use of tools and methods, and the sequence in which tasks are to be done are determined by evaluation of the situation and issues involved. Consideration must also be given to slope, weather conditions, fuels and other fire behavior factors while performing wildland fire suppression. Decisions made relate to such matters as: (1) selecting routes and methods to reach fires; (2) deciding if fires can be suppressed without additional help or equipment; (3) determining initial action to be taken to control/manage small fires, including water delivery options; (4) ascertaining the cause of fires; and (5) recommending action.

Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts

Contacts include members of the module and crew, including leaders, supervisors, fire management officers, and dispatch; these contacts are to receive and provide instruction, information, and mentorship and to communicate details related to the assignment. Contacts include travelers, campers, visitors, and residents of the area to provide information regarding fire prevention, fire hazards, restricted areas and routes of travel and to secure cooperation and participation in the fire prevention program. Contacts are to ensure that safety rules, protocols, and procedures are followed. Contacts include leading and training lower graded firefighters in the operation and maintenance of tools and equipment and in fire management activities.

Supervision Received

At this level, works under a supervisor who provides general work assignments, instructions, and work schedules. The supervisor periodically checks the readiness of equipment, reviews work performance on fires, and ensures that fire plans, safety rules, and equipment maintenance procedures are being followed. Supervisors furnish advice, assistance, and help in determining action to take on hazardous conditions encountered or unusual work problems that occur; however, during emergency or fire situations, the trainee at this level may be in situations where they have limited opportunity to contact their supervisors for help, assistance, or guidance and must use experienced judgment.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

<u>The duties of this position are so rigorous that employment is limited to physically vigorous individuals who must meet established maximum age and physical qualification requirements</u>.

<u>Physical Demands</u>: Arduous exertion for protracted periods of time such as, but not limited to, extensive running, walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, pulling hoses, jumping and twisting, prolonged standing, walking over uneven ground, and recurring bending, reaching, lifting and carrying of items weighing over 50 pounds and shared lifting and carrying of heavier items, and similar activities requiring at least average agility and dexterity.

<u>Work Environment</u>: Forest, range, and desert environments in steep terrain where surfaces may be extremely uneven, rocky, covered with thick tangled vegetation, smoky conditions, etc. Temperatures commonly exceed 100 degrees F and may fall below freezing. Risks include smoke inhalation, fire entrapment, snake or insect bites and stings, exposure to excessive machinery noise, and falling and rolling material. Employee must adjust and cope with exposure to weather elements, dust and smoke, poor bivouac and eating situations under an unpredictable set of circumstances. Firefighters may be required to live in backcountry camps for extended periods of time. The hazardous nature of the work requires that personal protective equipment be worn (e.g., boots, hard hat, gloves, flame resistant clothing). Work may require travel by fixed-wing or rotor-wing aircraft.

This is a testing designated position (TDP) under the Department of the Interior Drug-Free Workplace Program.

Incumbent is subject to medical examination and must pass the work capacity test for arduous positions.

Position requires a valid state driver's license to operate light vehicles and 4x4 vehicles. May require additional specialized training and certification to operate specialized vehicles and equipment.

Position may require the incumbent to obtain and maintain a commercial driver’s license (CDL).

When this position description is used in helitack, wildland fire module, or hotshot operations specific qualification requirements apply (e.g., Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations, National Wildfire Coordinating Group Guidance).

Qualifications and additional required training specified in the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Qualifications Standards and Guide may apply.