DOI Standard Position Description
PD# DX04000

OPM Official Classification: Wildland Firefighter, GS-0456-04

Organization Classification: Wildland Firefighter Apprentice, GS-0456-04

Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program

INTRODUCTION

This is a standard wildland fire management position description intended for use in the Department of Interior (DOI). The standard position description (SPD) is only to be used for positions enrolled as a Department of Labor registered apprentice in the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program (WFAP). The position is located on a wildland fire module or crew within the fire management organization. The position serves in a developmental trainee capacity at the GS-04 level as a wildland fire apprentice firefighter on one or more of the following module types: dispatch, engine, handcrew (suppression, fuels, or wildland fire module) or helitack.

Under the guidance and direction of a more seasoned journey-level firefighter, the position performs developmental wildland fire related duties which involve fire prevention, dispatch, planning and fuels management. The incumbent receives instructions from journey-level firefighter on the proper maintenance and repair of firefighting tools, equipment, and facilities. As part of the apprenticeship program, the trainee apprentice attends compulsory training in a residential academy setting.

The developmental-trainee apprentice position functions within a training capacity and environment which affords the incumbent to gain the necessary skills and experience to prepare the incumbent for readiness to obtain the wildland fire qualifications for transition and placement into the more skilled apprentice developmental trainee position of Wildland Firefighter, GS-0456-05, DOI SPD#DX04100 Apprentice position.

MAJOR DUTIES

Wildland Fire Apprentice Work (80%)

Serves as a developmental trainee Apprentice on a fire crew, performing recurring fire suppression and fuels management developmental duties which provide orientation and familiarization to the work processes and various functional areas of the wildland firefighting career field. The incumbent serves on a hand crew and/or engine prior to completion of the program; not all types are required.

Operates, moves, inspects, and performs preventative maintenance on vehicles and equipment to include crew carriers, fire engines, command vehicles, pickups, and other specialized equipment. Safely operates, maneuvers, and sets 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.

As an Apprentice and member of a wildland fire module and/or crew in fuels management, fire suppression, monitoring, and post-fire activities, applies basic understanding of firefighter safety, fire behavior, topography of the area, weather, fuels, and training in fire management work to carry out responsibilities utilizing tactical directions on attacking, controlling, or mopping up fires, building or patrolling fire lines, cleaning up burned areas within firelines, suppressing spot fires, felling snags or trees, and cutting brush. Performs and supports chainsaw operations and portable pump operator duties such as pump site selection, set up, and operation. Performs engine operations duties including running the pump, deploying hose lays, completing preventative engine maintenance checks, and effectively using water and additives. Places caches of equipment and supplies at strategic points.

On natural caused fires when applying a strategy other than full suppression, may be tasked to observe, collect, and record fire-related data with regards to fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior, fire effects, smoke, and fire location. Gathers and preserves evidence for possible actions in prosecuting offenders, under the direction of an investigator, in human caused incidents.

Fire Preparedness Apprentice (20%)

Maintains equipment and various hand tools such as shovels, chainsaws, Pulaskis, McLeods, water hose, and backpack pumps. Responsibilities for supplies and equipment include: 1) maintains firefighting tools and equipment assigned to the firefighter and to their module, crew, or unit which includes: servicing and maintaining tools and equipment; servicing automotive equipment, portable pumps, and power equipment; conducting periodic inventories; programming radios and telecommunications equipment; and 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 wildland fire program areas such as fire dispatch, cache warehouse, incident business, and administrative support.

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. Incumbent 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, the Apprentice Wildland Firefighter performs work assignments in accordance with established procedures and seeks advice and assistance from more seasoned firefighters and/or supervisor in controversial, emergency, and/or unusual problem situations and incidents.

Complexity

As a GS-04 level Apprentice Wildland Firefighter, performs a variety of wildland firefighting assignments individually as well as a member of a module and/or crew. The approach exercised while performing work assignments may vary based upon terrain, fire intensity, fuels availability, wind velocity, 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 response to be taken to control/manage small fires; and (4) ascertaining the cause of fires.

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.

Supervision Received

The Wildland Firefighter Apprentice at this level work under the general supervision of more seasoned staff or other supervisory personnel receives general assignments and afterwards performs work independently in accordance with established procedures. The Apprentice suppresses small fires and performs other assigned duties with limited instruction or guidance. The incumbent's work products and practices are subject to periodic observation and inspection for acceptability and compliance with operating procedures and instructions.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

The duties of this position are so rigorous that employment is limited physically vigorous individual who must meet established maximum age and physical qualification requirements.

<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.

Work Environment: 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.

Incumbent is required to sign the apprentice agreement and adhere to the standards established by the National Interagency Joint Apprentice Agreement.

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 may require a valid state driver's license to operate light vehicles and 4X4 vehicles.

When this position description is used in helideck, 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).