Department of the Interior Standard Position Description
PD Number: DX00500

Classification: Wildland Firefighter, GS-0456-07

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.

The Wildland Firefighter (firefighter) at this level is an experienced leader and member of a wildland fire module or crew, exercising leadership for and executing fire management activities in fire preparedness, fuels management and prevention, and fire suppression, monitoring, and post-fire. Work may also include all hazard and emergency response activities. Fire modules or crews include Hand Crews, Engine Crews, and Helitack Crews. Specific specialty areas of work within fire modules or crews include aviation, fire engine operation, fire management planning, fuels management, helitack, and prevention.

MAJOR DUTIES

Fire Suppression, Monitoring, and Post-Fire Activities (50%)

As an experienced 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: 1) mentor and instruct lower graded employees on crewmember duties; 2) plan action and direct utilization of fireline resources on less complex fires; and 3) for more complex fires, direct assigned suppression operations and recommend and implement tactical strategy 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. Adjusts actions based on changing information and evolving situational awareness. Uses firing devices on a firing operation according to the ignition/firing plan (verbal or written). Coordinates with aircraft for aviation support missions. Coordinates module or crew logistics and 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**: Drives and operates a wildland fire engine, positioning the engine for proper use and operation. Performs/conducts engine operations techniques, including tandem operations, mobile attack, pump and roll, firing and holding operations, stationary attack, engine protection, simple and progressive hoselays. Ensures adequate supply of water and chemical agents are maintained to the fire, particularly on critical areas of the fireline. Locates water sources and checks for volume and cleanliness for engine resupply. Performs specialized duties such as water handling specialist or maintenance of specialized equipment used to respond to wildland urban interface/intermix situations.
- **Crews**: Identifies lookout locations and assigns lookout. Scouts fireline in critical areas and patrols fireline for spot fires and slop overs, leading fireline construction implementation and determining adjustments based on current conditions. Reassesses and adjusts escape routes and safety zones. Directs water handling logistics and operations for crew (e.g., portable pumps, hoses, fold-a-tanks). Leads mop-up and suppression repair efforts on assigned portion of line. Gathers intelligence, independently scouts and assesses fuels, and leads suppression crews. Leads and assesses complex tree felling operations.
- **Helitack**: Directs 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. Leads aviation mission planning in coordination with pilot to include evaluation of environmental conditions, application of aviation safety plans, and briefing mission objectives. Participates in and may direct helicopter operations to include accompanying 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%)

Directs the operation and use of special tools and equipment such as, but not limited to power saws, portable pumps, firing devices, and communication equipment (e.g., programming radio frequencies), and makes decisions as to when, where, and how equipment can be utilized to the greatest advantage. Directs and ensures proper assembly of equipment and supplies needed for fire assignments or daily work assignments. May serve as a subject matter expert on regional, state, and/or national interagency committees.

Ensures assigned crew members and equipment for the specific fire assignments or daily work assignments are in a state of readiness for the assignment or initial attack. Participates in or leads physical fitness programs.

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

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

- **Engine**: Ensures Normal Unit Stocking (NUS) inventories are current. Checks for missing or damaged items and replaces as appropriate. Ensures pump tests and daily engine preventative maintenance equipment checks are completed. Ensures the engine is kept in a full state of readiness for emergency fire dispatch and other fire management activities and project work.
- **Crews:** Ensures vehicles are kept in a full state of readiness for emergency fire dispatch (e.g., safety gear is ready, vehicles are fueled and ready, equipment is loaded, firing devices are loaded).
- **Helitack**: Directs the readiness and assembly of helicopter support accessories and helicopter safety equipment. Coordinates with pilot for helicopter performance capabilities. Coordinates and participates in completion of helicopter planning documentation (e.g., load calculations, aviation safety plan, daily logs). Under the guidance of a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), participates in contract administration activities.

Fuels Management and Prevention (10%)

Directs moderately complex fuels management projects or participates in more complex hazard fuel reduction projects by conducting project assessments and gathering data (e.g., fuel quantity and conditions), planning (e.g., drafting or reviewing fuels management plans, assessing and recommending fuel treatment alternatives), preparing (e.g., ensuring proper training, placement, and instruction of crews), and implementing (e.g., ignition, holding, mop-up, and rehabilitation) treatments. Fuels management projects include prescribed fire, and mechanical and biological treatments; inventorying fuel beds; and piling vegetation debris. May be required to use/operate specialized firing equipment.

Leads and/or participates in fire prevention promotional activities such as conducting educational field trips; attending and presenting for 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 (20%)

Leads firefighting personnel by directing their activities when suppressing wildland fires or by serving 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 fuels management assignments, directs and provides on-the-job training opportunities to lower graded firefighters on the use of tools and equipment. Accounts for crewmembers' location, health, safety, and welfare. Briefs situational assessments to higher level leadership and crews and modules. Performs administrative leadership responsibilities to include timekeeping, travel administration, government credit card management, maintaining records such as receipts for supplies; training firefighters; ensuring that work is carried out safely; reporting on work accomplishments of the crews being led; and reporting on employee performance concerns. May serve as back-up or assistant to the first level supervisor or lead in their absence.

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, Wildland Firefighters carry out their functions completely and independently according to established procedures, referring only emergency or unusual problems to their supervisors via the most appropriate communication method/device. Firefighters at this level must use experienced judgment when applying procedures and safety protocols to the specific conditions of the assignment. At this level they are also applying experienced judgement to independently lead crews on fire suppression activities that require judgement to safely prepare for and implement suppression strategy; this may involve developing incident action plans and directing fireline resources. They are also using experienced judgment to draft fuels management plans and to direct moderately complex hazard fuel reduction projects.

Complexity

As an experienced firefighter, performs wildland firefighting in a variety of assignments either individually or as a leader of a module or crew. The approach 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, smoke, and other fire behavior factors while performing wildland fire suppression. A myriad of considerations must be weighed and evaluated when drafting and reviewing plans for and preparing and executing hazard fuel reduction projects. Firefighters at this level must identify, evaluate, and consider the interrelationships of fire and the physical environment in order to select the most appropriate methods from among varied alternatives.

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 plan, direct, and communicate details related to the assignment. Contacts also include visitors, private landowners, tribal representatives, utility industry, or local residents. Contacts with the general public during incident operations may be with landowners to resolve operational tactics, encourage and/or require evacuation, or to ensure the safety of others including the public. 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 firefighters in the operation and maintenance of tools and equipment and in fire management activities.

Supervision Received

Wildland Firefighters at this level work under general supervision. Firefighters at this level follow standard procedures and practices and perform their work assignments with limited supervision or guidance. They plan and carry out program objectives without detailed instructions. They function independently in the field, relying on their own experience, expertise, and judgment; supervisors provide assistance on difficult or unusual problems only. The supervisor checks work for overall adequacy, compliance with policies and procedures, accomplishment of program objectives, and the effectiveness of overall implementation.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

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.

Physical Demands: 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.

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 modules, 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.