

# DAKOTA INTERAGENCY TYPE 2-IA HANDCREW



## OPERATIONS GUIDE

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## **MISSION**

The Dakota Interagency crew will provide safe, effective support for wildland fire operations as well as other all-risk incidents within the qualifications and skills of crew personnel. The crew will provide a quality learning experience for all personnel involved in leadership skills, technical skills and positive interpersonal communication. The crew will be composed of personnel from multiple agencies and/or organizations across North and South Dakota. It should serve to improve interagency cooperation and communication, as well as establish positive professional relationships among fire managers.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Members of the crew are expected to maintain a high standard of honesty, integrity and respect. Crewmembers will avoid any actions that: 1) may reflect negatively on the Dakota Interagency Crew and the agency that they represent, or 2) which would jeopardize the employee's fitness for duty and ability to perform their job effectively. A crew member represents not only themselves and their agency, but all individuals and agencies represented on the crew.

It is imperative that supervisors support one another. We must have honest and direct communications within the leadership ranks to act as professionals and resolve disagreements or frustrations at any level of leadership. All discussions will be professional and respectful.

Disagreements will not be discussed on the radio under any circumstances. Negative comments about others will not be tolerated. Whining or complaining about an assignment given to the crew in front of others will not be tolerated.

Supervisors are expected to stop any type of inappropriate behavior. Failure to do so implies approval through lack of action. Each supervisor is responsible to identify and resolve conflicts or disagreements between crewmembers. If you need help, follow the chain of command to get issues resolved.

## **DRUGS AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

The possession and/or use of controlled substances, in violation of the law, is strictly prohibited while on duty, on government property, in government vehicles, or while in travel status. Any person who violates this policy or who has knowledge of a violation and fails to report it to their supervisor will immediately be removed from their duties on the crew. There will be no warnings or second chances.

## **ALCOHOL**

No alcohol may be transported in a crew vehicle. Any crewmember who reports to work showing signs of intoxication will be subject to disciplinary action. While in travel status, the opportunity to have an alcoholic beverage during off duty hours may arise but any alcohol consumption is strongly discouraged. Crewmembers will follow the policy of their individual home units/agencies. The following crew policy applies:

- The crew vehicles will not be used to transport alcohol or to transport people to a place that serves alcohol.
- Alcohol consumption is discouraged when the crew is in travel status, this includes off-duty hours while traveling to, from, and on assignments. If the crew boss or crew boss trainee determines an individual is unfit for duty, the individual may be sent home immediately to face disciplinary action. Professionalism requires the crew to be fully prepared for work at all times.

### **SMOKING/TOBACCO USE**

Use of all tobacco products will be restricted to those areas where it is allowed. In addition, as policy dictates, smoking in a US Government vehicle is prohibited.

### **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

Sexual harassment and other offensive or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. This includes offensive comments or conversations relating to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and disability. Violating this policy will result in removal from the crew and may lead to disciplinary action.

### **CREW RULES**

- Think first, then act responsibly.
- Respect others as well as yourself.
- Hold yourself and those around you accountable
- Give your best effort and expect the same from others.
- Honesty and attitude are valued above all else.
- Take pride in your work and the work of the crew.

If these rules cannot be followed, then demobilization or suspension may occur on an individual or the entire crew. We will constantly strive to attain an outstanding crew reputation. In order to achieve that goal, the entire crew must respect others, not only on the crew, but also any other individuals we interact with.

### **SAFETY**

Commitment to safety is a top priority of the Dakota IA crew. Wildland firefighting is an inherently dangerous business. We are committed to using safe and appropriate strategies and tactics. This crew will not accept unsafe assignments. Safety is the primary responsibility of all members of the crew. The Dakota crew will adhere to the ten standard fire orders at all times. The crew boss, crew boss trainee and squad bosses will continually evaluate LCES and the 18 watch out situations during all phases of an assignment. If an assignment is deemed unsafe the crew boss will follow proper procedures as outlined in the Incident Response Pocket Guide, (pages 18 – 19), to properly refuse risk.

- **Situational Awareness:** Observe surroundings, weather, topography, fire behavior and fuels. Maintain awareness to recognize changes in fire behavior and/or potential fire behavior.
- **Hazard Assessment:** Evaluate fire behavior and tactical hazards before you make a move. You are looking for what can hurt you. Learn to recognize it.
- **Hazard Control:** Eliminate or reduce risk to an acceptable level before you take action. Mitigate all known hazards before starting work.
- **Decision Point:** If hazards can be mitigated, then proceed. Do not accept any assignment if hazards have not been mitigated. If you see something speak up! It may save your life.
- **Evaluate:** What has changed? Are the tactics working? Do new hazards exist? Any negative response to one of these questions may require a change in what you are doing.

The following will help to minimize the risk of an accident to yourself or others:

- Stay physically fit.
- Know your limitations.
- Think before you act.
- Listen attentively and contribute to safety briefings.
- Ask questions and clarify instructions.
- Wear your personal protective equipment.
- Drink plenty of water to stay properly hydrated.
- Report unsafe conditions immediately.
- Inform others of hazards.
- Learn from near misses.
- Tell your supervisor if you are not feeling well.
- Look out for your fellow crewmembers.
- Know and apply the 10 Standard Fire Fighting Orders and 18 Watch Out Situations.
- Maintain situational awareness.
- Know your escape route and safety zone locations at all times.
- Never assume the obvious.

## QUALIFICATIONS

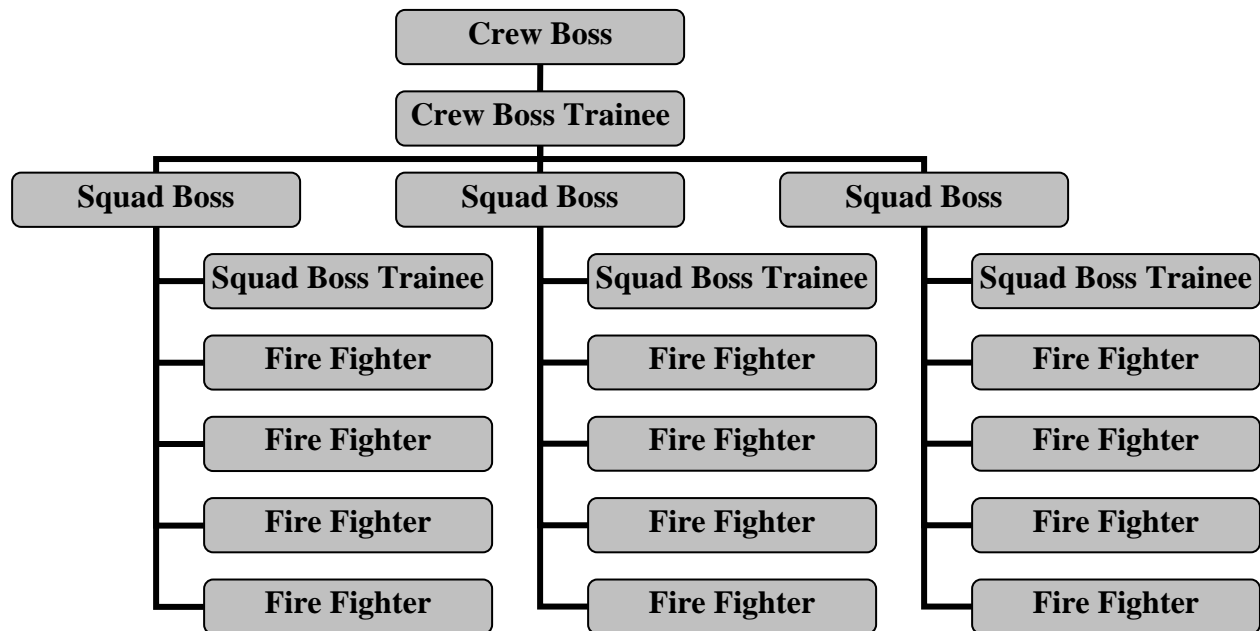
All supervisors will meet minimum National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards for the position they are in as well as those identified below. All crewmembers will be certified at a minimum as a Firefighter Type II under the NWCG standards. Crewmembers are encouraged to keep a personal record of their training. All taskbooks must be issued by their home unit prior to assignment. No task books will be issued during an assignment. It is the responsibility of each agency to ensure their personnel meet minimum qualifications for each position in which they are certified. The incident qualification and certification of each individual will be checked by the crew boss prior to mobilization.

## ORGANIZATION

The crew will generally consist of 20 people, although it may occasionally be dispatched with as few as 18 or as many as 21. The crew can be dispatched with 21 if there is a crew boss trainee. The structure of the crew will include a crew boss, crew boss trainee, 3 squad bosses, and 13 to 15 firefighters.

The Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book) states that the minimum standards for a type 2-IA crew are as follows:

- Crew Boss (CRWB)
- 3 Type 5 Incident Commanders (ICT5)
- 60% of the crew with at least 1 season experience
- 4 programmable radios
- 3 sawyers



## CHAIN OF COMMAND/COMMUNICATION

There exists a formal chain of command on the crew. Every employee has one supervisor and except under unusual circumstances, should only receive direction from that one person. The dangerous nature of wildland firefighting creates a need for regimentation that may exceed what is expected with other professions. Questions, concerns and suggestions should flow both directions, up and down, the chain of command.

Follow the chain of command. If your immediate supervisor cannot address your issue, they will forward your questions and concerns to their immediate supervisor to be addressed. There is some flexibility, but most issues should follow the identified procedure. Chain of command will

be reversed to provide direction and information to crewmembers. Stop the operation or briefing and ask for clarification if you are unclear or confused about your assignment or do not understand information that was given to you. Timely communication may require short cuts during critical fire situations. Communications will be a closed loop. Questions will be answered and statements will be acknowledged. This is especially important when communicating by radio. Input from all crewmembers helps maximize our overall potential and creates a healthy work environment. Supervisors cannot deal with a problem they do not know about.

## **CONFLICTS**

At times it may seem difficult to maintain good relations with all of your fellow crewmembers. Stressful environments, close quarter living and working arrangements, fatigue, competitive spirit, and lack of emotional outlets can all contribute to strained relationships. If you cannot amicably resolve intra-crew personnel conflicts, get help from your supervisor. If your supervisor is the problem go to the next higher authority in the chain of command.

## **DUTIES**

The duties of the crew are to suppress wildland fires or respond to any other all-risk incident while providing a safe first environment. The crew must be flexible in order to adapt to an ever-changing environment. That being said, this crew will have the capability to perform initial attack (IA) duties. The crew may be asked to break down from a standard crew configuration to squad IA configuration. However, even in IA modules, the span of control and chain of command will be followed. Each IA module will have one Faller A (FALA) at a minimum.

## **CREW BOSS**

The crew boss will have sufficient fire experience to provide capable leadership to the crew. The crew boss is responsible for the overall safety and management of the crew. The crew boss may serve as IC or fill other positions as needed on an incident, if capable leadership is identified prior to taking the position. He or she must be qualified as at least crew boss. Desired qualifications are Incident Commander Type 4 and Firing Boss (FIRB). Type 2-IA crews should be capable of performing burnout operations.

Duties include:

- Responsible for providing a safe work environment.
- Identify strategy and tactics to accomplish mission objectives.
- Identify and mitigate risks associated with changing fire environment.
- Communicate hazards, risks and mitigation using the chain of command.
- Direct and lead crew operations.
- Provide for crew safety and welfare.
- Reward positive attitudes and behaviors; correct deficiencies.
- Provide a positive learning experience for all trainees.

## **CREW BOSS TRAINEE**

The assistant must be qualified to supervise the crew in the absence of the crew boss. The assistant may serve as Incident Commander in initial attack configuration and must be qualified as at least a Single Resource Boss trainee and Incident Commander Type 5.

Duties include:

- Assume full crew responsibility in absence of the Crew Boss if qualified.
- Provide supervision of Squad Leaders.
- Implement tactics designated by the Crew Boss. Provide suggestions and alternatives whenever necessary.
- Communicate hazards, risks and mitigation using the chain of command.
- Reward positive attitudes and behaviors; correct deficiencies.
- Ensure that parity exists between squads regarding duties, responsibilities and discipline.
- Ensure respectful interaction between all levels within the crew.

## **SQUAD BOSSES**

Three Squad Bosses provide day-to-day leadership for squad members. It is their responsibility to keep the crew boss and assistant informed on all aspects related to safe and effective crew operations. They may serve as IC on initial attack fires if qualified and must be qualified as at least Firefighter Type 1 and ICT 5.

Duties include:

- Maintain situational awareness to help provide a safe work environment.
- Take immediate corrective action when necessary to ensure crew safety.
- Operate within the intent of given instructions and inform supervisors of minor tactical changes.
- Directly supervise and lead squad to implement assigned work.
- Communicate instructions and concerns within the chain of command.
- Orient, instruct and train crewmembers in basic fire behavior and safe operational tactics, to accurately assess the fire environment so they can safely implement assigned tactics.
- Ensure personal protective equipment is provided and used by all crewmembers.
- Ensure work areas, vehicles and equipment are clean and maintained.
- Report injuries and accidents. Recommend action to prevent recurrence.

## **FIREFIGHTERS**

Firefighters are the members of the crew whose primary mission is to suppress wildfires or serve in other capacities during other emergency or natural resource assignments. The minimum qualification is firefighter type 2.

Duties include:

- Responsible for personal safety.
- Look out for other crewmembers safety.



- Stay alert to hazardous conditions. Make them known to others.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Maintain clean work areas, vehicles and equipment.
- Participate in briefings and tailgate safety sessions.
- Ask questions if assignment or information is unclear.
- Report all accidents and injuries to immediate supervisor.

Additional desired qualifications will be to have at least one helicopter crewmember, 3 Faller Bs, and an EMT on the crew (in any position) for each assignment. In many cases we will be working with helicopters, possibly building sling loads, or landing in unimproved helispots, and working around hazardous trees that may need to be felled.

## **TRAINEES**

An important purpose of the Dakota IA Crew is to provide training and leadership opportunities. The crew will strive to have a minimum of one crew boss trainee and two squad leader trainees on each assignment. However, if the trainee positions cannot be filled, the crew may remain available. Other trainee positions may also be accepted and are subject to the nature of the assignment. The priority will be to provide trainee opportunities as established for those qualified individuals from agencies or organizations represented on the crew. If no trainees are identified from those agencies or organizations making up the crew, North Dakota or Great Plains Interagency Dispatch Center will be notified of a possible trainee opportunity for any individual within their sphere of influence.

## **INJURIES AND ILLNESS**

Crewmembers will report existing health conditions, allergies (medication, insects, etc.) to their supervisors and the crew EMT's at the beginning of any dispatch.

Injuries and illness contracted on the job must be reported to the immediate supervisor and documented immediately, no matter how inconsequential they may seem. Without proper attention, little problems can often develop into serious health threats. Compensation for medical treatment is unlikely for injuries that are not documented within 48 hours of the time they were incurred. Reporting of injuries and illness is the responsibility of the individual Firefighter.

## **GOING THE EXTRA MILE**

This crew will “go the extra mile” in all dealings with fellow firefighters as well as the public. Be sincere, courteous, and helpful in all your dealings with the public. Go beyond the expected: fully answer questions, including unasked questions. Be informed: Know what's happening and know where to get timely and accurate information.

**Look sharp/be sharp.** Take pride in how you look. Wear the appropriate uniform appropriately. Make good first impressions. Remember last impressions are just as important as first impressions. Be courteous and respectful to everyone.

**Lead by example.** Demonstrate your professionalism every moment of every day. Remember a good Leader must first be a good follower.

We are not so much limited by our ignorance as we are by our assumptions. Ask questions, demand answers and think FIRST before acting.

## **DISPATCH**

A list of crew boss, crew boss trainees, and squad bosses is being developed. It will primarily be the responsibility of a crew boss to pull a crew together when he/she is available to take a crew out. Generally, once a crew has been put together and placed on the availability list, it will remain on the availability list for 1 week. All crew members are expected to be available for a full 14 day assignment, not including travel. The crew will be available for dispatch 24 hours per day, seven days a week. The crew will be dispatched by either the Great Plains Interagency Dispatch Center (GPC) or the North Dakota Interagency Dispatch Center (NDC), depending on the composition of the crew. While on an assignment, the incident will determine the schedule for the crew. The crew will be capable of performing initial attack duties, day shifts, or night shifts. Being late for work will not be tolerated.

## **TDY (TEMPORARY DUTY YONDER)**

When on assignment or a dispatch, the crew's conduct, on and off the clock, fall directly under the supervision and the responsibility of the crew boss. Therefore, the privileges of the crew are at the crew boss's discretion. Our primary role is to perform in a safe, professional manner wherever the assignment. If an incident occurs which jeopardizes the safety or the reputation of the involved agencies or the crew, individual or the entire crew's privileges may be revoked and will result in disciplinary actions for the parties involved.

## **PHYSICAL FITNESS TRAINING**

Fitness is absolutely vital to your job. Each crewmember is required to have a current red card, which includes passing the arduous rating field test. Crewmembers that are in good shape are more productive, healthier, safer, and tend to receive more enjoyment from fire assignments. Considerable trust is extended to each and every crewmember in regards to physical fitness. Each firefighter must be in good shape BEFORE performing as a crewmember. It cannot be emphasized enough how important physical fitness is to performing the duties of a handcrew. You owe it to yourself and to your crew to be in the best shape possible, our lives may depend on it.

## **UNIFORM**

From the first moment of mobilization you will be required to wear a fire department, agency, or crew shirt. Once all crew members meet at the mobilization point the required uniform will be fire resistant, nomex, pants and a belt. In addition all crewmembers will wear quality constructed leather lace-up work boots (eight inch tops or taller). Undergarments and socks should be made of natural materials. In fire camp, during travel, and when visible to the public, the crew must wear a clean official crew or agency shirt or sweatshirt. (Hint: keep a clean crew

shirt and pair of nomex pants reserved for travel home). Official crew hats or agency uniform hats are the only hats allowed.

## **EQUIPMENT**

You are expected to and are accountable for maintaining all of your gear. Report damaged items to your supervisor. If you need to replace lost or damaged equipment (e.g. gloves, headlamp), please notify your supervisor. Some lost or damaged items may be obtained through local incident supply cache. Crewmembers will not check out supplies from fire camp unless directed to do so by their immediate supervisor. In general the crew will make a daily list of needed items and send one designee to the supply area to obtain and/or order needed items. This will prevent confusion when the crew demobilizes and must account for all accountable property assigned to the crew.

### **LINE GEAR**

It is vitally important that you keep your line gear ready for fire at all times. Your line gear should supply all your needs over the course of the long shifts you will work. On occasion, the crew finds itself in a temporary coyote camp situation. In a coyote camp you will receive no supplies other than what you pack in your line gear. That being said your line gear cannot exceed 25 pounds, without water and fusees, because of flight weight restrictions. Because you will work with your pack on, weight should be minimized. Make sure you carry all the required equipment. The line gear items that are required are listed and described as follows:

**Pack.** Your pack should be fairly durable, but care should be taken to avoid losing buckles, etc. Do not tie any gear to the outside of your pack. Remember to leave space for your lunch when arranging the items in your pack. The standard blue GSA fireline pack will be the official pack of the crew, although it is understood that some people will prefer to use their own linegear for assignments.

**Hard-hat with chinstrap.** Each hard-hat and harness system should be periodically inspected and replace if flaws appear or if they have been subjected to a sudden, heavy blow. A red hard-hat will be provided for each member of the crew.

**Leather boots.** Boots will be 8-inch high, lace-type leather boots with non-slip, Vibram melt-resistant soles. It is strongly advised to have boots well broken in before wearing them on a fire assignment. Foot problems resulting from new boots seem to be the most common medical problem on hand crew assignments.

**Leather gloves.** Gloves will be required at all times on an incident.

**Fire shelter and rigid plastic sheath.** You should inspect your fire shelter frequently. It should be immediately replaced if the pull strip becomes damaged, cracks appear (check folds closely), or if excessive abrasion occurs (look for gray dust). Fire shelters should be worn on the belt or in an easily accessible place on the outside of your pack. Avoid sitting or lying on your shelter.

**One-quart canteens (four minimum).** You may wish to carry one or two additional canteens, depending on your water needs. To keep your drinking water potable, you should change it every three to four days.

**Headlamp and batteries.** Check your headlamp to see that it operates properly. While in your pack you should keep a slip of paper between the battery contacts. This will ensure that your lamp does not get turned on accidentally. You should carry a spare set of fresh batteries in your pack.

**MRE or comparable ration.** You will want this meal for long first shift situations or when we cannot get fed on the fireline. If one MRE is not sufficient for your needs you are responsible for carrying what you need above the one MRE requirement.

**Safety glasses or goggles.** Prescription glasses with safety lenses are also suitable. Safety glasses will be required when digging line, working with water, or operating a chain saw.

**Additional Equipment:**

- Four fusees
- Ear plugs
- Personal first aid kit
- Space Blanket
- Rain gear
- Long sleeve shirt or sweatshirt
- Wool cap
- High energy snacks
- Extra boot laces
- Spare socks
- Insect repellent
- Watch
- Pocketknife or multi-tool

**TRAVEL BAG**

Each crew member must have a travel bag or what is commonly called a “red bag.” The red bag should carry enough personal supplies to outfit a crewmember for a minimum of two weeks without doing laundry. Gear should be packed in plastic bags for additional protection. Your name, the agency you work for, and address should be on every red bag. Your red bag will be your home away from home, but keep in mind that items not found on this list might not be reimbursed if lost or stolen. With the exception of your sleeping pad and/or tent nothing may be strapped to the outside of your travel bag.

**Required items:**

- 1 Spare nomex fire shirt
- 1 Spare nomex fire pants
- All cotton t-shirts
- 100% cotton underwear
- Wool and cotton socks
- Toilet kit and towel
- Running shoes and PT attire
- \$50 cash / traveler’s checks / ATM card
- Sleeping Bag

**Optional:**

- Shorts
- Jeans or sweats
- Swim suit
- Boot grease
- Stuff sack/laundry bag
- Playing cards, books, etc.

- Prescription medicine
- Spare prescription glasses
- Travel alarm
- Cell phone or calling card
- Camera
- Warm coat

## CREW EQUIPMENT

To be fully successful in providing a quality Type 2 IA crew, proper vehicles, tools and equipment will be necessary. Vehicles available for use of the crew may vary throughout the season depending upon which units are providing personnel for the crew on any particular assignment. Tools and other equipment needs listed below are generally available from many of the local fire caches throughout North Dakota. It is suggested that in the future a dedicated cache of tools and equipment be permanently designated for crew use.

**Vehicles.** In order to meet interagency standards as a Type 2 IA crew, the crew must be capable of being broken into smaller units for initial attack. Capability of splitting into a minimum of 3 initial attack units is recommended in order to provide a quality service to the unit where the crew is assigned. This requirement of initial attack capability dictates that the crew has a minimum of 3 vehicles. Vehicles should be four wheel drive with sufficient ground clearance to negotiate rough terrain typically encountered in the fire environment. Ideal configuration would consist of four crew-cab or 4 door pick-up trucks. Other acceptable vehicles would include suburban or other large SUV type vehicles. At least one vehicle used by the crew must be capable of transporting fuel and other hazardous materials outside the passenger area of the vehicle.

**Equipment, Tools and Supplies.** Although various geographic areas may require different equipment the following inventory should provide the crew with the necessary tools, equipment and supplies to operate effectively for at least a 24 hour period un-supported. The following is not necessarily an all inclusive list for crew needs but rather a minimum requirement for effective crew operations.

- Chainsaws – (4) Stihl 044 with 24” or larger cutting bar (or equivalent chainsaw)
- Saw kits (4)
- Dolmar gas/oil containers (4)
- 1-liter sigg bottles – (12) 8 for fuel, 4 for bar oil
- 2 cycle fuel mix sufficient to mix 10 gallons of fuel
- Bar oil (4 gallons)
- Five gallon fuel containers – (4) 1 for chainsaw fuel, 3 for drip torch fuel
- Drip torches (6)
- Fuseses (2 cases)
- GPS units (4)
- Pulaski (12)
- Combi-tool or rhinos (10)
- Shovel (8)
- McCloud tool or fire rakes (4)
- Flat files (20)
- Fibre Tape (8 rolls)
- MRE (6 cases)
- Drinking water (40 gallons)
- Programmable radios (6)
- Bladder bags/backpack pumps (8)
- Cooler (4)
- Belt weather kit (4)
- Duct tape (4 rolls)
- Flagging (several rolls of various colors)

## **APPENDIX 1: SQUAD GEAR LIST**

Here is a basic list of gear and equipment that each squad (or each vehicle) should plan to bring on a wildland fire assignment. This is a subset of the complete crew list, which can be found in the text above.

- 4 X 4 vehicle that comfortably seats 5
- 1 gps
- 1 saw and kit
- 1 dolmar plus 2-3 sigg bottles with fluids in them
- 2 shovels
- 3 Pulaskis
- 3 combi's or rhinos
- 1-2 fire rakes or McLeods
- 1 case MRE's
- 1-2 cases of H<sub>2</sub>O or sports drink
- 2-3 flat bastard files
- flagging (your choice on color and type)
- 4 QB's full of water
- 2 bladder bags/back pack pumps
- 1 cooler
- 1 belt weather kit
- 3 rolls of strapping tape
- 1 roll of duct tape
- Crew Time Report (CTR) book

## **APPENDIX 2: MOBILIZATION CHECKLIST**

Here are just a few suggestions to help with the mobilization and check-in process. Incident management teams are routinely checking red cards for all fire fighters at check-in and the process will go much more smoothly if you carry extra copies of the following documents.

- Photocopies of each firefighter's red card
- Photocopies of resource order
- Photocopies of crew manifest (include qualifications and home unit addresses)
- Map to incident

## **APPENDIX 3: MORNING CREW DUTIES**

On a fire assignment in 2006, we ran into a situation where the incident management team insisted that the crew start time was ½ hour later than the crew boss and squad bosses. The argument was that the supervisors could start their time earlier because they had to go to briefing. This seems like a flawed policy since there are many duties that need to be completed before the crew is ready to leave camp and most of this can be complete while supervisors are at briefing. This section is mainly to provide justification to use the same start time for the entire crew.

- Pick up lunches and water/Gatorade
- Prepare line gear
- Prepare vehicles (includes fueling as necessary)
- Tool rehab/repair
- Cleanup camp
- Miscellaneous supply needs
- Medical needs