

Competency Descriptors for Fire Dispatchers

Fire Dispatcher Position Descriptor

One whose primary purpose is to support fire management operations in a dispatch role, performing a variety of staff and administrative duties relating to fire suppression and prescribed fire activities. The employee must have prior fire suppression training and experience in order to anticipate needs, determine priorities, and select alternative resources.

I. Fire Management Support Communications

Description

This competency element identifies the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities required to provide fire management communications support to a field unit.

Outline

1. Communications Technology
2. Verbal and Written Communications
3. Routine Fire Management Support

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge of standard radio and telecommunications systems; ability to utilize in routine and emergency situations.

Knowledge of fire weather, fire danger, and fire behavior prediction systems.

Knowledge of fire suppression/prescribed fire/aviation computer programs.

Ability to apply new and existing technology in fire dispatch activities.

Knowledge of maps and land photos of various types, such as topographical, unit and aerial; ability to interpret same.

Ability to monitor and track resources following standard guidelines and procedures, to include aircraft, personnel and equipment.

Knowledge of aerial and land-based detection systems and technologies.

Knowledge of fire administrative functions, such as dispatch reports, time reports, computer entry and retrieval of data.

Working knowledge of reporting requirements and procedures.

Ability to apply new and existing technology in fire dispatch activities.

Ability to present dispatch training, and develop or modify existing training packages.

Knowledge of organization and function of cooperating interagency fire organizations, such as National Wildfire Coordinating Group, National Interagency Coordination Center, Geographic Area Coordinating Group, state and local groups.

Knowledge of agency and interagency fire business management practices and procedures.

Knowledge of agency/interagency training, qualifications, and certification standards and procedures.

Ability to effectively interact with the public and media.

Ability to apply corrective actions to increase efficiencies and effectiveness.

Knowledge of agency financial regulations, policy and guidelines.

Knowledge of agency financial management system, contracting, procurement and payroll.

Knowledge of cooperative agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement.

Ability to identify and define fire dispatch related issues.

II. Mobilization

Description

This competency element describes the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities required to dispatch personnel, aircraft, equipment and supplies for wildfire/prescribed fire activities.

Outline

1. Dispatch Procedures
2. Agency and Interagency Mobilization

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Detailed knowledge of standard fire dispatch procedures and guidelines used in ordering and dispatch of personnel, aircraft, equipment and supplies for wildfire/prescribed fire activities.

Knowledge of agency and interagency mobilization policies, procedures and guidelines.

Ability to develop, use and maintain mobilization and dispatch guides.

Ability to prioritize and allocate resources based on established guidelines.

Knowledge of cooperating agencies' mission, organization and operating procedures.

Knowledge of capabilities, limitations and approved safety standards and operating procedures or commonly used fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

Knowledge of cache management procedures.

III. Operations

Description

This competency identifies the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities necessary for providing dispatch support to field operations involving presuppression, suppression, fuels and prescribed fire, and aviation activities.

Outline

- A. Presuppression
 - 1. Detection
 - 2. Preparedness
 - 3. Agreements
 - 4. Fire Danger/Behavior Prediction
 - 5. Dispatching

- B. Suppression
 - 1. Incident Management
 - 2. Logistics/Support
 - 3. Priority Setting and Coordination
 - 4. Reporting

- C. Fuels and Prescribed Fire
 - 1. Logistics/Support

- D. Aviation
 - 1. Aircraft Capabilities and Limitations
 - 2. Aviation Safety Management
 - 3. Administration

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge of the Incident Command System component of the National Interagency Incident Management System.

Knowledge and skill in fire suppression/prescribed fire tactics, methods and procedures.

Knowledge of fire suppression/prescribed fire equipment and tools.

Knowledge of capabilities, limitations and approved safety standards and operating procedures of commonly used fixed and rotary-wing aircraft.

Knowledge of safe and efficient aviation management procedures.

Knowledge of established personnel safety requirements, such as training, personal protective equipment, determination of payloads, manifesting, flight following, crash/rescue response, etc.

Knowledge of aviation administration requirements and procedures, such as contract solicitation, awarding and administration, fiscal accounting, etc.

Knowledge of appropriate suppression responses to include minimum impact suppression tactics.

Ability to recognize changing conditions, develop alternative strategies and take appropriate action.

Understanding of various smoke management regulations including EPA, state and local and Agency specific.

Knowledge of current fire weather, fire danger and fire behavior prediction systems and their interpretation.

Knowledge of local, regional and national dispatch and coordination systems and procedures, including preparedness levels.

Ability to implement various dispatch plans within area of responsibility, which support local units' coordination program.

Ability to perform duties under stressful and adverse operating conditions, such as long hours, heavy workloads, emergency situations, adverse working and environmental conditions and accidents.

IV. Safety

Description

This competency requires a thorough knowledge of the environmental and workplace hazards of the wildland fire environment. Instilling a passion for safety, zero tolerance for unsafe acts, and personal accountability is paramount.

Outline

- A. Law, Policy, Guidelines
 - 1. Occupational Safety and Health Act
 - 2. Applicable State Safety Regulations
 - 3. Department and Agency Policy and Guidelines
 - 4. NWCG Guidelines

- B. Education
 - 1. Training
 - 2. Certification

- C. Hazard and Risk Analysis
 - 1. Wildland Fire Environment
 - a. Fuels
 - b. Weather
 - c. Topography
 - 2. Associated Hazards
 - a. Aviation
 - b. Mechanized Equipment
 - c. Hazardous Materials
 - d. Other

- D. Hazard and Risk Mitigation
 - 1. Wildland Fire Management
 - 2. Associated Hazards

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge and comprehension of the laws, policy and guidelines pertaining to safety such as the Code of Federal Regulations, National and Agency policy and guidelines, 10 Standard Fire Orders, 18 Watchout Situations, and other related fire safety guidelines.

Ability to impart a professional passion for safety through the effective use of educational and certification processes.

Skill in recognition and mitigation of a variety of miscellaneous hazards encountered within the wildland fire environment and other work environments, i.e., aviation, mechanized equipment, and hazardous materials.

Ability to recognize and correct unsafe practices and conditions.

Knowledge of standard first aid procedures.

Knowledge of fire safety policies and procedures.