

# Competency Descriptors for Suppression Specialists

## **Suppression Specialist Position Descriptor**

A Fire Suppression Specialist is one who applies technical fire management principles and practices for the protection and enhancement of the wildland environment through the implementation of operational plans.

### **I. Program Management**

#### Description

This competency identifies the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities required to develop and manage a suppression program.

#### Outline

1. Develop, implement and evaluate program goals and objectives in support of mission accomplishment.
2. Develop, implement and evaluate fiscal activities.
3. Supervision and development of employees.
4. Agency and interagency relations development and maintenance.
5. Program monitoring, evaluation, implementation of corrective actions.
6. Identifying research needs and applying new technologies.

#### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Professional knowledge of natural resource management concepts, principles, and practices applicable to the full range of duties associated with fire management.

Knowledge of the ecological response to the presence or absence of fire.

Expert knowledge of wildfire protection and fire use techniques, methods and procedures.

Knowledge of fire suppression/prescribed fire tools and equipment.

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

Knowledge of agency financial regulations, policy and guidelines.

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

Ability to develop, implement and monitor fire suppression budget.

Knowledge of the policies and process of personnel management.

Knowledge of the systems, methods and techniques of personnel motivation, development, organization, supervision, and evaluation of staff, to emphasize accountability.

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

Ability to apply sound personnel management skills, to include supervision, coaching, training, motivation and evaluation.

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

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

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 program monitoring and evaluation process and procedures.

Knowledge of reporting requirements and procedures.

Ability to monitor and evaluate Fire Suppression Program elements and determine their effectiveness in meeting management goals and objectives.

Ability to apply corrective actions to increase efficiencies and effectiveness.

Knowledge of fire suppression/prescribed fire computer program, such as Geographic Information Systems, Global Positioning Systems, WIMS, BEHAVE, etc.

Ability to identify and define fire related management issues.

Determine if the knowledge is available to resolve the issue. If not, develop research recommendations.

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

## **II. Planning**

### Description

This competency element requires an understanding of the planning processes involved in suppression programs. These skill levels must be sufficient to allow for participation on interdisciplinary teams in the development of:

Unit Level Fire Management Plan-- these plans could include pre-attack plans and other suppression-related plans.

Annual Operating Plan-- these plans could include memoranda of understanding and cooperative agreements, mobilization plans, step-up staffing plans, etc.

#### Outline

1. Environmental laws, regulations and policies
2. Agency enabling laws, regulations and policies
3. Agency mission
4. Agency Interdisciplinary Planning Process
5. Individual plan components

#### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge of environmental laws, regulations, and policies including the National Environmental Policy Act.

Knowledge of agency specific policies sufficient to participate in the development of operational plans.

Knowledge and ability to participate in the interdisciplinary planning process.

Knowledge of components of required plans under area of responsibility.

Ability to write operational plans, which may include the following:

1. Annual Operating Plans
2. Training Plans
3. Fire Suppression Plans
4. Safety Plans
5. Individual Project Plans

### **III. Operations**

#### Description

This competency element requires a thorough comprehension of

operational program components sufficient to achieve land management objectives established for the unit. Operational components include presuppression, suppression, prevention, fuels and prescribed fire, and aviation.

## Outline

### A. Presuppression

1. Detection
2. Preparedness
3. Agreements
4. Fire Danger/Behavior Predictions
5. Severity Requests
6. Dispatching

### B. Suppression

1. Strategy and Tactics
2. Incident Management
3. Emergency Rehabilitation
4. Logistics/Support
5. Priority setting and coordination
6. Reporting

### C. Prevention

1. Implement mitigation activities identified in the prevention plan

### D. Fuels and Prescribed Fire

1. Implementation of fuels management projects
2. Implementation of prescribed fire activities
3. Priority setting/coordination
4. Logistics/Support
5. Reporting

### E. Aviation

1. Aircraft Capabilities and Limitations
2. Tactical Application of Aircraft
3. Aviation Safety Management
4. Administration

## Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

### **A. Presuppression**

Knowledge of aerial and land-based detection systems and

technologies sufficient to develop and implement an efficient and effective detection program.

Ability to analyze fire occurrence and develop a detection system.

Knowledge of fire business management principles and practices.

Knowledge of fire behavior, fire organization, equipment, hazards and protection standards, sufficient to develop preparedness plans.

Ability to develop preparedness plans, implement, evaluate, and take corrective actions.

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

Ability to develop and implement training plans.

Working knowledge of the cache management system sufficient to manage a unit fire cache.

Ability to conduct readiness and safety inspections to assess unit's ability to provide efficient and effective fire suppression.

Working knowledge of cooperating agencies' missions, organizations, and operating procedures sufficient to develop and implement cooperative agreements.

Working knowledge of WIMS, NFDRS, etc. sufficient to develop, implement and adjust preparedness, staffing and dispatch plans.

Working knowledge of the severity request requirements process.

Ability to analyze critical factors and initiate timely severity requests.

Working knowledge of agency and interagency mobilization policies and procedures, and guidelines.

Ability to develop, implement and evaluate dispatch plans (i.e. pre-attack, pre-planned dispatch, mobilization guides, etc.).

Knowledge of fire suppression /prescribed fire computer programs, such as Geographic Information Systems and global positioning systems, etc.

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.

## **B. Suppression**

Working knowledge of land management objectives, protection standards and wildland fire management strategies and tactics sufficient to develop and select appropriate suppression response alternatives.

Ability to recognize changing environmental or situational conditions, to develop alternative courses of action.

Working knowledge of the Incident Command System component of National Interagency Incident Management System.

Ability to evaluate and select the appropriate level of command required for the safe, efficient and effective management of an incident.

Comprehensive knowledge of fire behavior, suppression, resources, equipment, tools, methods and techniques, sufficient to safely, efficiently, and effectively direct the suppression of wildfires.

Working knowledge of agency emergency rehabilitation policy, procedures, and techniques, sufficient to plan and implement appropriate rehabilitation of damages resulting from suppression actions.

Knowledge of logistical support organization, principles and practices, sufficient to support the management of incidents and other activities.

Comprehensive knowledge of fire behavior, values at risk, resource capability and availability, sufficient to establish priorities for allocation of resources.

Ability to effectively coordinate with cooperators in providing efficient fire suppression.

Working knowledge of required reports and the ability to provide timely documentation of activities.

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

## **C. Prevention**

Implement mitigation activities as identified in the Prevention Plan.

Working knowledge of fire prevention process, practices and techniques.

#### **D. Fuels and Prescribed Fire**

Working knowledge of prescribed fire organization, principles, practices, and techniques, sufficient to safety and efficiently implement the operational aspects of prescribed fire plans.

Working knowledge of fuels management principles, practices, and techniques, sufficient to effectively implement fuels management activities.

Ability to provide required logistical support to one or more concurrent projects.

#### **E. Aviation**

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

Knowledge of and ability to safely and efficiently utilize aviation resources in a unit's fire operations.

Ability to ensure management of aircraft utilized in unit's fire operations are conducted in a safe and efficient manner, following established standards.

Knowledge of and ability to obtain compliance with 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.

### **IV. Safety**

#### Description

This competency requires a thorough knowledge of the environmental and workplace hazards of the wildland fire environment. It focuses on the Suppression Specialist's ability to provide leadership and direction to subordinates in the recognition and mitigation of these hazards using all applicable laws, policies and guidelines. 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

In-depth 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.

Advanced skill and ability in imparting a professional passion for safety through the effective use of educational and certification processes.

Skill in conducting hazard and risk analysis for complex fire situations utilizing advanced fire behavior prediction skills, resulting in strategy and tactics that mitigate hazards but allow for the achievement of management goals and objectives without compromising safety.

Advanced knowledge and skills 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.

Knowledge of fire safety practices and procedures.

Ability to recognize and correct unsafe practices and conditions.

Knowledge of standard first aid procedures.