

**National Wildfire Coordinating Group
(NWCG) Preparedness Branch
Incident Business Committee Meeting
May 1-3, 2018 -- Boise, ID**

PRESENT:

Jamie Parker, FS
Sarah Fisher, FS
Dave Burley, BLM
Christine Peters, NPS
Robin White, BIA
Robby Gross, NASF
Wendy Walter, NASF
Ben McGrane, AQM

TUESDAY, MAY 1

NWCG SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT (training & qualifications)

Mark Cantrell discussed the NWCG systems improvement informational page regarding the beefed-up NWCG web presence, communications, publications, and position management.

Regarding incident positions, the focus is changing from training and is becoming more aligned with knowledge, skills, abilities, position objectives, etc., and removes unnecessary redundancy (310-1 positions had a variety of authoritative position descriptions). In the past, incident positions went from beginner to qualified. With the focus being more objective-based, we're moving to beginner to qualified, then qualified to SME. Target is to have revised position descriptions completed and online in fall, 2019.

IBC members then discussed the evolution of AD position descriptions and leveling, and that the IBC may need to maintain current leveling documents as a sideboard to the NWCG position management page.

-- Lori Glaeser discussed the KSA analysis and the training design plan. The IBC is tasked with the KSA (knowledge, skills, and attitude) analysis for finance/administration positions, with primary focus on reducing redundancy in training requirements. Discussed process and assumptions of KSAs.

IBC members made determinations on finance knowledge and skills for ICS positions.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

National Emergency Rental Vehicles (NERV):

Discussion led by Ben McGrane and Matthews Smith (FS CFO Office). Solicitation closes Friday, May 4. Plan to implement the pilot NERV contract in the Southwest and the Pacific Northwest this year, with a goal of making NERV available nationally next year.

The Forest Service has collaborated with GSA for NERV, which is a procurement tool rather than a travel instrument. The solicitation was issued a few weeks ago and FS received some vendor comments regarding RFQ. Changes were made and an amendment was

issued, with a solicitation closing date of Friday, May 4. If mobilized resources don't need off-road vehicle during their assignment, then they would be encouraged to rent a vehicle through Concur. Currently, there are 14 vendors on the GSA schedule, and FS has received some interest from a few of those vendors. FS is hoping to have primary, secondary, and, possibly, tertiary vendors. Although the BPA will be solicited and awarded through USFS, it will include all of USDA, DOI fire agencies, and National Association of State Foresters. Once the tool is in place, major program emphasis will then shift to administrative oversight.

Ben discussed the solicitation and discussed salient points:

- The solicitation includes a cleaning/detailing fee that will be applied to off-road vehicles.
- Tax-exempt statement: Exempt from state taxes, which is technically different from TDY rental vehicles. Exemption is due to supremacy clause, which precludes States from levying taxes on the federal government.
- Ceiling rates clause: Mimics TDY agreement -- vendors can't exceed the ceiling rate, but can lower the rates.
- Section C: Open to all NWCG agencies. Off-road definition was debated and will state that there are specific vehicles that are considered to be off-road. SUVs will not be considered off-road capable.
- BPA will be for 4 years.
- Interim phase: National access will be provided by April 1, 2019. Once the NERV BPA is in place, existing geographic area BPAs could be cancelled. However, field units could still pursue a local area BPA with local vendors.
- Rates: The BPA is not exempt from random charges, e.g., airport fees, etc. The solicitation also requested the vendors provide daily/weekly/monthly rates.
- Age requirements for vehicle rental were put in place on the amendment.

If there are no major unexpected twists with solicitation responses and because there will not be a formal evaluation, Ben anticipates that the NERV BPA could be in place within 2-3 weeks.

As for administration and tracking of charges, Ben said that FS will detail in one PNW employee to oversee and administer the NERV BPA and to also oversee fleet management with the vendor, but additional funding is needed to cover the detail of the PNW employee and to detail in one more employee.

IBC members then had a discussion about employee authentication (person renting the vehicle has authorization to do so). If an employee uses the govt. travel card, there are built-in checks and balances. However, with the centrally-billed (CBA) approach, we will be dependent on personal accountability and IMT responsibility. Where does the responsibility lie -- with the vendor or with the employees renting vehicles? This would not be an issue with ground support vehicles, since those vehicles are being tracked. But it's not reasonable to expect vendors to control the internal validation. Should the rental vehicle approval be validated at time of rental and at time of return? When employees are picking up rental vehicles, should they provide their resource order number and fire number? Or should we include an e-authentication request with the CBA?

Other issues discussed included the possibility of employees renting a vehicle for personal use against the NERV BPA or that they might extend the rental after demob to drive the

vehicle for personal use before returning the vehicle.

IBC members then discussed electronic invoicing, and determined that more thought needs to go into managing payments, cross-billing, etc.

Ben also discussed claims: With TDY rental vehicles, any damage claims would go through the tort process; however, with the NERV BPA, claims would be managed through the contract-claims process. Any damage claims will come back to the NERV contract center -- the NERV BPA is a procurement tool with an identified CO.

Another issue is vehicle use, since vehicles are used beyond driving from camp to the fireline. Technically, vehicles are assigned to an incident, not to a person. Ben will draft language regarding incident vehicles and send to Matthews.

At the end of the NERV discussion, IBC members determined that more work needs to be done on internal controls for who's renting what, why they're renting the vehicle through NERV, and what they're renting the vehicle for, and we also need to think about internal audits.

All that said, Jamie then provided a categorical break-down of the IBC work that still needs to be completed:

- Evaluation of responses to NERV solicitation: Some IBC members (Ben, Sarah, Robin, Dave) volunteered to review responses, which won't take more than 1 day, and will meet at 9:30ish on May 14. Once the review is completed, Ben anticipates that the award(s) will be in place the week of May 21, and pre-work will need to be done that week with the selected vendors to work through all the details.

- SOPs: IBC members will volunteer to draft SOPs. Will be a heavy load, since we may need to draft SOPs for:

- ordering (electronic, phone, counter), ways to order, who is authorized to order, need for a resource order, and ordering requirements (off-road restrictions, provide parameters for personnel in Operations, Logistics, etc.).

- vehicle tracking

- claims

- payment (resource order for payment package, etc.)

- billing

- staffing & timelines

Service Animals:

Discussed service/therapy animals at incidents and that we might consider including language in the IIBMh before employees start bringing peacocks, snakes, dogs, etc. to incidents and claiming them as emotional support animals. Jamie will ask if the FAQ sheet was vetted through HR. Dave Burley will send a copy of the FAQ to Cindy Pogue, BLM HR, for DOI input.

Advanced COST Review:

A few years ago, the IBC tasked a group to create the course and agreed that it would be managed by the IBC. Since then, 2-3 training sessions have been held with the new course materials. The Northern Rockies proposed some changes, with the primary being that we

remove the word “advanced” from the title, because some people who have taken the course are beginners, while others thought “advanced” meant that they would learn new tricks. The only qualification for a cost-unit leader is a suggestion to take S-360. The only benefit to S-360 is learning about the interactions among incident units. It was suggested that we remove the cost module from S-360, which could then focus on comp, procurement, and time. Additionally, S-360 is not an NWCG sanctioned course and is not included on the NWCG training page. Jamie will discuss with Tim Blake and will also arrange a conf. call with IBC members and Tim sometime next week.

FS to pay DOI bills:

If States are billing DOI and there’s no co-op agreement in place, FS will pay (the State invoice and a request for FS to pay should be sent via email to Sarah and Jamie). For state invoices that do have a DOI agreement, NPS RAP teams will process and pay for FWS, BIA, and NPS. BLM will process state invoices through the NOC. It would be helpful if States did not include multiple fed fire agencies on one invoice (e.g., if Wisconsin resources responded to NPS and BLM fires, separate each agency to a separate invoice). **Christine will draft a briefing paper to include points about sending individual billings to each federal fire agency, include DOI POCs for state invoices, requiring one invoice per email, and including the requirement for states to attach the signed State agreement with the DOI agency(ies).** IBC members also discussed having the State agreements posted to the GACC IB websites. Dave talked about how we should work toward having State agreements include DOI fire agencies as signatories on the agreements, or include a clause in the State agreements that would allow any DOI fire agency to pay under the agreement.

2019 national meeting:

Robby discussed the benefits of hosting a national meeting, but also mentioned the amount of work and time that goes into planning and logistics, and that planning a national meeting for some time in 2019 may not be realistic. Robby proposed that we think about hosting a national meeting in 2020, then maybe plan on hosting a national meeting every 4 years.

Members then discussed options, with one being to appoint an IBC member to function as a point of contact to each GACC who would then report back to the IBC with any issues/questions/concerns within the GACC. With these assigned IBC members, the thought is that the GACC would then invite the IBC rep to the annual GACC IB meetings. IBC Points of Contact for GACCs:

- Northern Rockies: Western States Rep
- Rocky Mountain: NPS
- SW: FS
- Great Basin: FWS
- California: BLM
- PNW/Alaska: BIA
- Southern & Eastern: Eastern States Rep

Jamie will draft up a letter and send to IBC reps, who can then send to agency personnel as a heads-up.

National meeting discussion was then tabled.

Handbook revision:

The glossary was removed from the SIIBM, and Jamie explained that the NWCG glossary is all encompassing among all NWCG committees and resides on the NWCG website. IBC members then reviewed the glossary from the SIIBM.

Commissary manager position:

There were no concerns from agencies, so position will be removed from 2019 AD Pay Plan and 310-1, etc. **Sarah to submit change request to OTC for consideration.**

AD position review and re-write:

Jamie discussed the old AD position descriptions that we still have on file and the need to re-write the PDs, since many contain very little information about knowledge, skills, training, etc. The plan now is to identify the position descriptions that need to be rewritten; define the incident function (finance, logistics, etc.); identify SMEs who could re-write the position descriptions (and possibly use the NWCG training SMEs to transfer information to the new position description template, as well as add complexity, supervision, contacts, etc.). The IBC will also need to re-write the position descriptions for the THSP positions. **Robin and Robby volunteered to coordinate the PD update project.**

USFS Fleet Handbook:

The handbook states that because CDL requirements require CDL holders be drug-tested, AD employees cannot hold CDLs. However, many caches hire AD employees with CDLs (in 2017, FS hired 47 and DOI hired 31). It was recognized that including this statement in the handbook is hampering cache operations, and FS is now trying to remove the statement from the Fleet Handbook.

We then discussed that owners/operators with a CDL license can join a consortium, though there would be dues/fees. However, DOT regulations state that employers are required to pay for drug testing and for consortium fees. Drug testing is random within the consortium. Should federal fire agencies reimburse the AD employee for the consortium fees? We all agreed that it would be appropriate, since we pay for drug tests and CDL licenses for regular government employees whose position requires them to maintain that certification. **Marcus Medina (Rocky Mountain Cache) is leading an interagency cache managers group to determine consortium options.**

Internet needs at ICP: Usually, an IBPA or ViPR agreement is written for internet services at the ICP, but we can never get a consistent answer about incident needs. FS is asking if there is still a need, at least for tools, regarding internet needs, and it would be beneficial to have standard, consistent criteria. Can we come up with specs for an agreement, or with an order of operations or considerations when an IMT shows up (e.g., tickler list with questions, e.g., is there already an Internet service in place, etc.)? IT falls under the Planning Committee, but can IBC come up with standard specs that FS can solicit for? The strategic view would also include the bigger perspective that recognizes that some teams mobilize with their own equipment. IBC supports the proposal. **Jamie and Dave Haston will work with the Incident Planning Sub-Committee.**

THURSDAY, MAY 3

APP development, Shannon Tippett -- Were looking at the Appian product, and did prototype of Modoc for NIFC. However, they could never get the Appian platform installed at NIFC, even working with Appian engineers. Because the code was so specialized, the developers also couldn't work with the prototype either

We now have Oracle databases in the NWCG environment, and are starting to work on Apex, which is a middle-ware, low-code product, and are starting to develop Modoc and FUSE (fire engine use app) within the Apex environment. Both programs are built, and are now working on databases.

There is currently a GS-13 developer position that has been advertised, and they hope to have a developer team built here at NIFC to manage products and databases. Apex can use Drupal and Oracle software for application development.

APEX environment makes it mobile capable -- can put in visual for screen image (table, smartphone, etc.), so Apex might be the correct solution for IBC apps, since it's a database that can support a lot of information.

Developers are currently updating IQCS and installing Apex, so there may be a need to put IBC on the list for app development. IBC will need to pull together requirements (how many docs, etc. will be hosted on the app).

Sean Cross and Jessie Bender want to talk in early June about future of electronic SIIBM - will include Shannon in the meeting.

eLog requirements, Ron George:

CDL operators must log their hours, though in the past it was through paper copies and there wasn't much oversight. DOI is now transitioning to eLog, which links to the odometer when the vehicle is started and begins tracking mileage.

We may have issues with eLog regarding emergency incident vehicles. Will there be an impact to the financial side? In the past, when vendors hit their mileage/time, incidents had never really dealt with how to manage -- do we pay the operators for the down day, or does the vendor replace the driver? Should the responsibility be on the vendor, e.g., if incident is hiring equipment for 14 days, should the company provide operator(s) for full 14? It's the same discussion as over-sized loads and driving on a holiday. We're hiring for a service, but the vendor should figure out all legal requirements/restrictions and make it work for the incident. Requirements/restrictions may need better interpretation or added language in agreements/contracts.

Ron George called in and joined the discussion. How would eLog requirements impact finance? Are there finance section responsibilities/processes that need to be identified? New requirement for electronic logging device has no change on driving regulations for operators of commercial motor vehicles. eLog device means that drivers can no longer lie or cheat -- device will now make drivers accountable, and enforcement is through DOT. The electronic device won't be required for all commercial vehicles. The issue that comes up is that drivers tell incident personnel that they can no longer drive because they've worked so many days in a row and so many hours, so do we need to do anything different from a finance perspective? If drivers can't drive the vehicle, then they would be in a non-

pay status. If we need them to provide service through the duration of the incident, language could be in the agreement that states that expectation. Contractors must adhere to all state and federal regs, so it may mean that vendors will be required to provide a second driver. Although the regulations haven't changed, the device will hold drivers more accountable to the federal regs.

Does this apply to federal drivers? There are exemptions for federal drivers (as well as for fire and emergency vehicles), and Ron believes that agency people are also exempt.

In any event, contract language will be added and we may need to include guidance for teams -- do we want to establish side-boards and tell OPS that they can only use the resource for 8-10 hours/day? There is value in working with the IMTs to potentially manage certain types of resources that need to comply with federal and state regulations and it would benefit both the incident and the vendor if we limit the number of hours worked per operational period.

A DOT Inspector may come to the incident and, if drivers are operating outside of the restrictions, then DOT will fine the operators, but this not our problem. The vendors need to figure it out and we should continue to use resources as we always have.

Jamie will talk with Dave Haston next week to come up talking points for the management and for the finance sides. Ron George and Dave Haston will vet through CETT; Sarah and Ben will discuss with CO forum. Might also help to provide information to contractors regarding rules and regs with applicable links would also be beneficial.

Cost recovery: Increased interaction has taken place between OWF and the bureaus. If there is a true cross-billing scenario between the Federal agencies, then the master agreement would need to be amended. An effort is underway to standardize cost-share agreements amongst all agencies and our state partners. This may include considerations based on jurisdictional scenarios, regional or higher level review of cost-share agreements, and potentially increased engagement by management in the settlement process. Currently, there are some FS employees working on the cost-share framework. Once available, these will be shared with stakeholders (DOI, state partners, incident business personnel, line officers, Grants & Agreements staff, FEMA representatives, etc.) for review and feedback. FS hopes to pilot the framework approach this fire season.

Business review, Sarah Fisher: e-ISuite will be going through a contracted Business Requirements Review along with ICBS and CAD. With so many processes/procedures going electronic, this is a good time for the IBC to review the functional areas of incident finance and look for efficiencies. The Business Requirements contractor could help the IBC with possibilities, options, alternatives, and the needs analysis should be done by late summer/early fall. If we can define how we want incident finance to look in the future, the contractor may be able to provide some options.

IBC will create a task group to look at opportunities and to work with contractor. Sarah is willing to be the liaison on the task group, and each agency should provide a representative. Donna Tate will also be heavily involved, as well as a rep from OPS. **Each**

agency needs to provide names to Jamie and Sarah by Friday, May 25. Sarah will draft up tasking and send to IBC by close of day next Wednesday, May 15.

IBC fall meeting discussion: Currently, the IBC's fall meeting is scheduled for the week of October 15 in Coeur d'Alene, but we're now considering going to a FEMA HQ to talk about cost recovery, so proposal is that we travel to Washington, D.C., Seattle, or Oakland. **IBC members will need to have a commitment and approval from their supervisors for travel by the June 6 IBC call (which was moved from June 13).**

Round Robin:

Ben: As an outcome of TIPP, contracts for mobile showers and kitchens will go through Forest Service IAS procurement program. Looking at opportunities to integrate AQM and FAM program duties.

Christine: Nothing to report.

Robin: Nothing to report.

Dave: BLM's Orange Book should be published this week. Night diff guidance was tweaked -- examples/scenarios were reduced and overall direction of night diff application was clarified.

FireCode User Guide: Dave is re-writing, but is waiting for edits from FWS and BIA for agency-specific guidance.

Casual Payment Center manager position should be offered in the near future.

State of Alaska BLM crews may be transitioned from casual employees to contract crews sometime in the near future.

Wendy: Negotiating the annual operating plan for Idaho agreement.

Resigning from committee at the end of the October IBC meeting. Has requested names and a commitment letter from those interested in being a State rep on the IBC.

Robby: Wendy and Robby will finalize state contact list.

Sarah: Jamie retiring October 1, and FS is not sure what will happen with that position.

Jamie: Sirena updated standard costs' component spreadsheet; will be posted on IBC site (some rates have changed).

LUA form with PMS # - had a request from FS national forms person to make the LUA an official form and assign a form number. Jamie Wade has explained the LUA is an interagency template and IBC doesn't feel it should have an official form number other than the PMS number.

Next conference call is June 6.