

# Position Classification Standard for Wildland Fire Management, 0456

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION ..... 2**

    COVERAGE ..... 2

**MODIFICATIONS TO AND CANCELLATIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL SERIES, STANDARDS, AND GUIDES ..... 3**

    DEFINITION OF TERMS ..... 4

    HAZARDOUS NATURE OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT ..... 6

**PART I – OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION..... 7**

    GENERAL SERIES DETERMINATION GUIDELINES ..... 7

    EVALUATION OF POSITIONS ..... 8

    OFFICIAL TITLING PROVISIONS ..... 9

    OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION..... 10

*Wildland Fire Management, 0456* ..... 10

    IMPACT OF AUTOMATION ..... 15

    ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS ..... 16

    CROSSWALK TO THE STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION ..... 19

**PART II – GRADING INFORMATION ..... 20**

    HOW TO USE THIS GRADING INFORMATION ..... 20

**PART III - EXPLANATORY MATERIAL ..... 48**

## INTRODUCTION

This Position Classification Standard (PCS) provides a series definition, titling instructions, and grading criteria for positions in the Wildland Fire Management 0456, series, for General Schedule (GS) and other “white collar” pay plans. In the GS position classification system established under chapter 51 of title 5, United States Code, the positions addressed here are one-grade interval positions.

This PCS is divided into three parts. Part I contains occupational information applicable to Federal work covered by the PCS without regard to pay plan or classification system. Part II provides the grading criteria for positions classified in accordance with GS grade definitions. Part III includes explanatory material about the development of this PCS.

The term “General Schedule” or “GS” traditionally denotes the major position classification system and pay structure for white collar work in the Federal Government. Agencies no longer subject to chapter 51 have replaced the GS pay plan indicator with agency-unique pay plan indicators. For this reason, reference to GS has been omitted from much of this PCS.

### Coverage

This series includes classes of positions which involve technical and specialized work in the protection of forest or range lands and resources from fire. This series includes general fire management work which is preparatory to the assumption of technical or specialized assignments, and which is accomplished as a part of specialized functional fire management programs including forest and range fire prevention, presuppression, suppression, post-suppression, fire research, and other specialized work relating to fire management programs.

Wildland fire management work may involve duties, responsibilities, assignments, and work objectives comparable in difficulty to those of professional forestry positions. However, positions in this series do not require the broad professional knowledges and abilities required for full performance in the Forestry Series (0460) and therefore do not require education equivalent in type, scope, and thoroughness to that represented by completion of a full four-year accredited college curriculum leading to a bachelor's degree.

Because of fluctuation in fire management work, and in order to obtain optimum utilization of employee work time, fire management positions often include work characteristic of other series. The percent of time devoted to fire management duties varies widely from area to area depending on the length of the fire season, fire conditions, and other factors. Employees may perform a variety of other duties in addition to fire management work both during the fire season and at other times of the year. The performance of other duties in conjunction with fire management work does not remove positions from this series when the principal objective of the position is fire management work.

The work covered by this series may involve the performance of two or more different kinds or specializations of fire management work. The PCS provides a description of the major work

covered by the series. The PCS may be used to describe various combinations of work not outlined in this PCS, however, found to be performed in this series. This allows agencies the opportunity to expand the work performed without being too restrictive. This does not alter the authority of agency managers and supervisors to organize programs and work processes; to establish, modify, and abolish positions; to assign duties and responsibilities to employees; and to direct and supervise the accomplishment of their assigned missions. The classification system should be a guide to judgment and supportive of each agency's efforts to manage its workforce. Standards are to be considered and interpreted as guides to judgments made under the classification authority delegated to agencies by title 5 U.S.C., Chapter 51.

Jobs within an occupation frequently vary so extensively throughout the government that it is not possible to reflect in a standard all the possible combinations and permutations of duties and responsibilities. Proper application of standards, therefore, requires the use of judgment rather than just a mechanical matching of specific words or phrases in standards. Standards should be viewed in terms of its overall intent, and considerable judgment is needed in determining where work being classified fits into the continuum of duties and responsibilities described by the standard. In some instances, typical related duties have been listed briefly under various specializations for illustrative purposes. The Office of Personnel Management's instructions for evaluating mixed-series/mixed-grade positions found in the [Introduction to Position Classification Standards](#) should be applied in classifying positions involving work performance in two or more fire management specializations or when the positions involve the performance of work classifiable in other series in addition to fire management work (e.g., Forestry Series, 0460).

### **Modifications to and Cancellations of Occupational Series, Standards, and Guides**

<b>Previous Series</b>	<b>Action Taken / How to Classify Work Previously Covered</b>
<b>Forest and Range Control Series 0456</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reestablishes and renames this occupational series, Wildland Firefighting, 0456.</li> </ul>

## Definition of Terms

This PCS include wildland fire management terminology. The following terms used in the standards have the meanings given below.

- Accessible areas - Areas of forest or range land which are readily accessible from roads, landing fields, or waterways and are within one hour of travel time by foot or horseback.
- Air Moves – Includes aircraft take-off, landing, and touch-and-go.
- Backfire/Back burn - A fire intentionally set on the fire side of a control line as a part of the process of managing a fire.
- Fire history - Reports and records which contain data showing the history of: (1) fire occurrence; (2) areas burned; (3) number of simultaneous fires; (4) causes of fires; and (5) types of people, activities, or operations responsible for man-caused fires.
- Fire Management - Planned and organized activities designed to prevent and suppress fires on forest and range lands for the purpose of preserving and protecting natural resources.
- Fire post-suppression - Analysis of fire records and reports, measurement of burned areas, estimation of damages, investigation of cause of fires, and the preparation of recommendations to prevent fire recurrence or fix responsibility for fires.
- Fire presuppression - Advance planning, staffing, detection, and detailed preparation for suppression, before fires occur, in order to assure effective suppression action.
- Fire prevention - Planned effort toward reducing the occurrence of preventable forest and range fires.
- Fire research - Work related to studies or tests conducted for the purpose of improving the methods, techniques, or procedures used in fire management programs and activities.
- Fire suppression - Combined use of staff, facilities, equipment, and physical forces to extinguish fires or confine fires from the time of their discovery.
- Fire weather station - A forest meteorological station specially equipped to measure weather elements that have an important effect on fire management.
- Fuel – Any compound used for propulsion or heating, or that will support combustion.
- Fuel types - Vegetative types classified according to burning characteristics.
- Hazard reduction - Any treatment of a hazard that reduces the threat of ignition and spread of fire.
- Inaccessible areas - Areas of forest or range land which cannot be reached by motor transportation or boats and where ground travel time is in excess of one hour from roads to take-off points.

- Prescribed burning - Skilled application of fire to natural fuels to accomplish, at minimum damage and acceptable cost, certain planned objectives of silviculture, wildlife management, grazing, hazard reduction, slash removal, etc. Prescribed burning is accomplished under conditions of weather, fuel moisture, soil moisture, etc., that will allow confinement of the fire to a predetermined area and at the same time produce the intensity of heat and rate of spread required.
- Special fire management projects - Work related to planning, supervising, inspecting, or participating in prescribed burning activities; building fire breaks; hazard reduction projects; etc.

The terminology included in this PCS is not inclusive of the plethora of terminology commonly associated with conducting wildland fire management work. Additional terminology used in wildland fire management work may be found in the [Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology](#) published by the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group](#).

## Hazardous Nature of Wildland Fire Management

All fire and hazardous material incidents have the potential to cause physical harm to persons and/or property. Firefighters are regularly exposed to a variety of dangerous situations such as fires that are out of control, toxic spills, possible explosions, or other hazardous conditions. Hazards encountered by firefighters include the potential for, but are not limited to:

- Entrapment - while on the job Wildland Firefighter may find themselves pushed up against an obstacle surrounded by flames. May have no choice but to deploy their fire shelter as a last resort.
- Burns, dehydration, lacerations, and other effects of heat, smoke inhalation, heavy protective clothing, falling materials, or explosions.
- Respiratory, exposure to toxic materials and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive agents.
- Heat-Related Illnesses - common heat-related illnesses that firefighters fall victim to include heat stroke, heat rash, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion.
- Hypothermia due to work in cold/rain/snow and/or work at high elevations. Risk of frostbite, immersion cold injury.
- Physical injury and sensory damage from firefighting activities, equipment operation, terrain, and noise levels.
- Dealing with persons in varying stages of fright, panic, and injury.
- Traversing, operating, or riding in vehicles under adverse conditions and/or flying in aircraft to reach sites or fires in outlying areas.
- Jumping by parachute or propelling into remote wilderness to establish fire lines.
- Working alone with a crew in remote areas where it is possible to lose contact due to fire or communication system outages and requires ability to use survival skills until help arrives or communication is reestablished.
- Hazards in dealing with unpredictable wild animal behavior, such as but not limited to snake bite, insect swarm, bear, or rabid animal attack.

These hazards make demands on the knowledge and judgment used by Wildland Firefighters and on their physical ability to cope with the conditions. Firefighters must be prepared to avoid unnecessary dangers and to identify and deal effectively with hazardous situations when they are encountered including the use of appropriate personal protective equipment for the situation.

The knowledge, skills, and abilities required to deal with hazards of the kind typically encountered in this occupation have been considered in the evaluation criteria for this standard.

## PART I – OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Part I is intended for use by all agencies in evaluating Wildland Firefighting positions in the Wildland Fire Management, 0456, series. It provides series definitions, titling instructions, and detailed occupational information for this PCS.

### General Series Determination Guidelines

Selection of the correct series for a position is an essential part of the entire human resources management process for a variety of reasons. For example, qualification requirements used in recruiting are based on the series of the position; career ladders are influenced by the series; and organizational structure is often designed with consideration of the series of assigned positions.

Determining the correct series for a position is usually apparent by reviewing the assigned duties and responsibilities and comparing them to the series definitions and general occupational information the job family standard (JFS) provides. Generally, the series determination for a position is based on the primary work of the position, the highest level of work performed, and the paramount knowledge required to do the work of the position. Normally, it is fairly easy to make this decision. However, in some instances, determining the correct series may not be as obvious.

Use the following guidelines to determine the predominant series when the work of a position matches more than one job family or occupational group. Also, when the work of a position falls into more than one series within this job family, it may be difficult to determine which particular series predominates. In such situations, apply the guidelines below in the order listed to determine the correct series.

- **Paramount knowledge required.** Although there may be several different kinds of work in the position, most positions will have a paramount knowledge requirement. The paramount knowledge is the most important type of subject-matter knowledge or experience required to do the work.
- **Reason for the position's existence.** The primary purpose of the position or management's intent in establishing the position is a positive indicator for determining the appropriate series.
- **Organizational mission and/or function.** Positions generally align with the mission and function of the organization to which they are assigned. The organization's function is often mirrored in the organizational title and may influence the appropriate series.
- **Recruitment source.** Supervisors and managers can help by identifying the occupational series providing the best qualified applicants to do the work. This is closely related to the paramount knowledge required.

Although the work of some positions may require applying Wildland Firefighting or related knowledge and skills, classification of positions in the Wildland Fire Management, 0456, series may not be appropriate. The [Additional Occupational Considerations](#) section of this standard provides examples where the work may involve applying related knowledge and skills, but not to the extent it warrants classification to this job family.

Additional information may be found in OPM's publication, [The Classifier's Handbook](#).

## Evaluation of Positions

Wildland Fire programs and organizations vary greatly in their size, structure, and functions as they are designed to meet the needs of the work required to protect land, forest, and property. The evaluation of wildland fire work requires the consideration of the range of fire hazards and other emergencies that may occur in determining the components and required level of service to be provided. In turn, these factors will dictate the positions and possible specializations needed in the fire organization. Some organizations will not have certain types of specializations because these functions are performed by other components.

The types of specializations correlate to the grade of a position based on the duties and responsibilities of the position and the appropriate qualifications or certifications needed for the position. Firefighting personnel are expected to attain and maintain their assigned proficiencies, but the personal possession of additional certifications or qualifications beyond what is needed or required for a position does not justify a higher grade.

The necessity for readiness requires firefighters to often be trained for duties and responsibilities that they do not regularly perform. Duties demanding less than a substantial, i.e., 25 percent amount of time are not usually considered in classifying or grading a position. However, when evaluating emergency related duties in an occupation like wildland fire management, credit is given for maintaining proficiency in higher graded tasks even though they may not occur frequently. The criticality of the employee's prompt response to an emergency seldom permits the reassignment of such tasks to a higher graded staff member. (For further guidance on the principle in a related occupation see the [OPM Digest of Significant Classification Decisions & Opinions, Page 1, No 18, dated August 1993.](#))

When computing the percentage of time of duties performed, it must include preparation time preceding emergency responses and post emergency actions that a wildland firefighter must complete. Preparatory time will vary depending on the specializations and the level of the specialization required. For example, preparatory work may include stocking and keeping necessary supplies current and maintaining specialized equipment and keeping it in working order. Activities following an emergency may include but are not limited to completing medical or hazard material paperwork, discussing patient-related issues with medical providers, replacing expended materials, performing maintenance on equipment, cleaning-up of biohazards or other hazardous material, and/or discussing the incident with incident responders from other agencies or fire departments.

As wildland fire management positions may require multiple specializations, the evaluation of positions of this nature shall be treated the same as other potentially mixed grade positions. (For further guidance see the [Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, Section I.](#))

## Official Titling Provisions

Title 5, United States Code, requires the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish authorized official position titles to include a basic title (e.g., Wildland Firefighter) that may be appended with one or more prefixes and/or suffixes. Agencies must use the official position titles for human resources management, budget, and fiscal purposes. Instructions for assigning official position titles are provided for specific series in this section.

### Supervisors and Leaders

- Add the prefix “Supervisory” to the basic title when the agency classifies the position as supervisory. If the position is covered by the General Schedule, refer to the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) for additional titling and grading information.

For supervisory and nonsupervisory positions that include managing the total internal Fire management function for an agency, bureau, service, installation, or other organization, there can be only one Wildland Firefighter Officer for the organizational component and level served. Do not use the prefix, “Supervisory” in conjunction with this title, although the position may satisfy the definition of "supervisor" in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.

Titles such as *Officer (e.g., Wildland Firefighting Officer), Administrator, or Manager (e.g., Wildland Firefighting Manager)* may be substituted to denote a level of responsibility which inherently includes supervisor ([Introduction to Position Classification Standards](#), page 15). Do not use the prefix, “Supervisory” in conjunction with this title, although the position may satisfy the definition of "supervisor" in the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#).

- Add the prefix “Lead” to the basic title when the agency classifies the position as leader. If the position is covered by the General Schedule, refer to the [General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide](#) for additional titling and grading information.

### Specialty or Parenthetical Titles

Parenthetical titles have been established for official use in this series. Specialty titles are typically displayed in parentheses and referred to as parenthetical titles. Parenthetical titles may be used with the basic title of the position to further identify the duties and responsibilities performed and the special knowledge and skills needed. Agencies may use a combination of two parenthetical specialty titles in official position titles where the two are of significant importance to the position.

Use the basic title without a parenthetical specialty title for positions with no established specialty or for positions involving work in more than two of the established specialties.

### Organizational Titles

Organizational and functional titles do not replace but complement official position titles. Agencies may establish organizational and functional titles for internal administration, public convenience, program management, or similar purposes. Examples of organizational titles are Branch Chief and Division Chief. Examples of functional titles are Chief of Fire Management and Chief of Fire Operations.

## Occupational Information

	<b>WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT, 0456</b>	<u><a href="#">Qualification Standard</a></u>
<b>Series Definition</b>	<p>This series includes positions that supervise or perform work to manage and extinguish fires and involves technical and specialized work in the planning and the execution of Wildfire management programs in fire adapted ecosystems while dealing with problems of smoke dispersion, and hazard reduction near urban areas. This includes, but is not limited to, fire prevention, pre-attack planning, wildfire suppression, post suppression, fire research, and other specialized work relating to fire management programs.</p> <p>Knowledge required by positions in this series vary by specialty area, however positions may require knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildland Firefighting and fire prevention theory and techniques.</li> <li>• Wildland Firefighting fire suppression and management techniques.</li> <li>• Wide range of methods for assessment and improvement of complex fire program management.</li> <li>• Fire behavior, fuels management, fire hazard and risk analysis, fuel volume and flammability assessment.</li> <li>• Fixed and mobile Wildland Firefighting equipment operation, maintenance, and repair such as but not limited to handtools, chainsaws, firing devices, pumps, hoses, valves, communication equipment, Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, navigation, and land management tracking systems/programs such as Avenza, GAIA, Collector, ArcGIS.</li> <li>• Skills in planning, direction, or carrying out fire protection and prevention programs and operations.</li> <li>• Wildland Firefighting oriented manual weather observation and recording, fire weather forecasts, and long-term weather trends.</li> <li>• Firing Operations techniques and methods of igniting a wildland area to consume the fuel in a prescribed pattern. e.g., heading or backing fire, spot fire, strip-head fire, and ring fire.</li> <li>• The types and capabilities of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters used in suppressing and managing wildland fires.</li> <li>• Incident Command System (ICS), command and control, and the coordination of emergency response resources, provided for within the common hierarchy of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).</li> <li>• Resource values pertaining to the forest and/or range and the relationship to wildland firefighting and resource protection and fire use.</li> <li>• Hazards and risks resulting from the junction of the natural landscape and the built environment at the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).</li> </ul>	

(continued)

**WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT, 0456 (continued)**

Titling

The basic title for positions that involve wildland firefighting operations is:

Wildland Firefighter - For positions that involves performing, managing, and supervising wildland fire work to include pre-response preparation, engagement, mitigation activities, and post-response actions, engagement with pre-response mitigation or preparation, incident response and post-incident response for wildland fire incidents and all-hazard responses. Work may involve all manners of fire suppression, fire management, and fuels management duties to include fire preparedness, suppression, and/or fuels. Work may involve response to emergency medical incidents. Coverage additionally includes suppression work performed on organized Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC) and work performed on organized Handcrews.

OPM has prescribed the following parenthetical titles for the Wildland Fire Management, 0456, series covered by this PCS:

- Aviation – Work involves performing wildfire related work involving operating and maintaining unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), mixing, and loading of aerial fire retardant to fixed wing aircraft, coordinating and monitoring parking of aircraft and base operations, coordinating incident airspace, managing incident air traffic while coordinating with ground resources engaged in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire activities.
- Fire Engine Operation - Work that involves operating and driving engines to fire locations, frequently via unimproved roads, and positioning engines in the appropriate locations, considering the safety of the crew and equipment and how the equipment can best be used in initial attack of wildfire to manage and mop-up fire and during urban interface wildfire operations.
- Fire Management Officer - Work involves planning, developing, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating an integrated fire management program for a segment of the organization. Provides leadership, coordination, and direction for the administration of the fire program to include but not limited to training, preparedness, detection, budget, suppression, post-fire response, fuels/vegetation management, prevention, mitigation/education, aviation, dispatching and other fire support functions, and to ensure the integration between fire and other natural resources.
- Fire Management Planning - Work involves serving as analysts and advisors providing program leadership and consultation for short and long-term strategic fire management planning, assessments, and interagency and/or unit fire management plans, projects, and programs to include but not limited to staff training planning and execution.

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**WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING, 0456 (continued)**

Titling

- Fuels Management - Work involves gathering data about fuel quantity and conditions, using firefighting skills to implement prescribed fire and mechanical thinning treatments that improve current vegetation conditions while reducing flammable materials that fuel wildfires.
- Helitack – Work involves performing wildfire related work involving helicopters such as but not limited to, being transported by, rappelling from, hanging from longline to perform work and providing incident support for all helicopter-centered activities, i.e., water delivery via bucket, transport of gear and supplies via internal loading and/or sling and/or longline, and providing the full range of Helibase operation and support duties.
- Prevention – Work involves the planning and implementation of strategies, plans and activities that may include fire prevention, public education, fire information, fire risk mitigation assistance and coordination, fire investigation and trespass (cost recovery).
- Smokejumper - Work involves performing wildfire related work involving fixed wing aircraft such as but not limited to parachuting from airplanes to provide attack on wildland fires in remote areas and/or as flight crew member on aircraft with flight duties assigned involving navigation, agency communications and flight checklist responsibilities, selecting a safe jump spot and evaluating jump criteria for minimizing possible injuries.

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**WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING, 0456 (continued)****Occupational Information**

Wildland firefighters are primarily tasked with combating wildfires and preventing future fires from starting. Positions vary and include general fire management work, forest, and range fire prevention, presuppression, suppression, post-suppression, fire research, and other specialized work relating to fire management programs. Wildland firefighters may work year-round and some work only during the fire season. The demand for firefighters and incident management personnel is now constant as fire season length has historically increased.

Preparation and readiness are the cornerstone of the Wildland Fire Management occupation. Successful response to emergencies requires preparing for the unexpected. Wildland Firefighters are trained to react to a variety of conditions and locations, such as forest, rangeland, and/or the wildland urban interface (WUI) with a response appropriate to the conditions encountered. Although many firefighters follow established protocols or procedures and refer situations to their chain of command as appropriate, they must also quickly and independently gauge the situation, make several assessments, and choose from a variety of actions to take based on ever changing conditions.

The wildland fire system is complex and comprised of responders from Federal agencies as well as, State, local government, Tribal and contract resources. Wildland fire forecasts consistently predict fire seasons starting sooner, ending later, and with a higher severity throughout the nation. Science has changed the way we think about wildland fire and the way agencies manage it. Agencies still suppress fires, especially if they threaten people and communities, but understand that fire has a role in nature – one that can lead to healthy ecosystems. Agencies now look for ways to manage wildland fire and allow it to play its role through ongoing research.

Agencies have established interagency fire operating plans, cooperative agreements, state compacts, and other mechanisms to ensure they can effectively share resources and provide the necessary support. Increased development in the wildland-urban interface, long duration fire seasons, climate change, and navigating differing expectations among partners have rapidly and significantly increased the complexities involved in managing Agency responses to wildland fire and all hazard incidents.

Wildland Firefighters are additionally called upon to perform work in support of all-hazard situations, including but not limited to, search and rescue, medical response, response to hurricanes, floods or other natural or human disasters.

continued

**WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT, 0456 (continued)**

Occupational Information

Listed below, are some descriptions of the nature of the work and the intended coverage of this series. This list should not be considered as a definitive catalog of all the specific kinds or combinations of work performed by positions in this series and is not in order of importance.

- Locates fireline, directs and participates in fireline construction, backfiring and burnout operations, engine and pump operations, tree falling and holding/patrol/mop-up operations.
- Anticipates fire behavior, determines strategy and tactics, directs on-line activities, and takes action to accomplish incident objectives.
- Searches out and extinguishes burning materials by moving dirt, applying water by hose or moves dirt, chops brush, or fallen small trees to build fireline using various hand tools such as axes, shovels, Pulaski, McLeod and power saws to control spreading wildland fire and to prepare lines prior to prescribed burning. Chops, carries and piles logging slash, backpack pump, etc.
- Makes parachute jumps from various aircraft under many conditions while executing landings on rough terrain, open areas, mountain slopes, or timber to provide initial fire attack.
- Serves as flight crew member on aircraft with flight duties assigned involving navigation, agency communications and flight checklist responsibilities. Selects a safe jump spot and evaluates jump criteria for minimizing possible injuries. Checks jump equipment and instructs jumpers on problems and techniques peculiar to the mission.
- Responds to incident(s) via helicopter, may be inserted to incident via rappel from a hovering helicopter.
- Monitors and directs the loading of mixed retardant into airtankers. Coordinates movement of aircraft, vehicles, and personnel on the ramp. Maintains the safety of ramp operations. Monitors and directs personnel (parking tenders, retardant loaders, fuel vendors and mechanics) in ramp operations. Uses portable radios, and nationally approved Airtanker Operations Hand Signals, to communicate with the pilots, parking tenders and loaders.
- Serves as an analyst and/or advisor providing program leadership and consultation for short and long-term strategic fire management planning, assessments, and interagency and/or unit fire management plans, projects, and programs.
- Evaluates the technical aspects and effectiveness of existing wildland fire and aviation management programs and provides recommended changes or initiatives to improve the overall efficiency and success of the programs.
- Gathers data about fuel quantity and conditions, using firefighting skills to implement prescribed fire and mechanical thinning treatments that improve current vegetation conditions while reducing flammable materials that fuel wildfires.
- Technically administers aspects of the prescribed fire/fuels plan, ensuring that preparation, ignition, holding, mop-up, and rehabilitation are completed to the standards specified.
- Prepares, presents, and disseminates information to the public on the current fire danger rating and whether campfires are allowed. Prepares and presents the role of fire in ecosystem management educational programs on unit, both internally and externally.
- Provide expertise in strategic and local fire planning analysis systems, models, and decision support systems.
- Analyzes fire suppression and occurrence data in conjunction with fire plans to identify human caused fire threat areas, trends, patterns, and future problem areas and establishes methodology in conjunction with cooperators to eliminate fire potential and risk factors.

[←BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

### **Impact of Automation**

Automation, computers, information technology (IT), and their widely varied applications are valuable tools for Wildland Firefighting work. Automation increases the ability of staff to perform a wide variety of tasks. Employees may access files, initiate, and track projects, analyze data, and generate reports. They input, store, and retrieve data in multiple formats. They also use the Internet to search for information pertaining to assignments. They use Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, navigation, and land management tracking systems/programs such as Avenza, GAIA, Collector, ArcGIS to navigate terrain and plan activities. Some wildland fire work may also be significantly enhanced through the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and artificial intelligence in planning and suppression processes.

Although the incumbents use computers and automation to perform basic work processes, knowledge of the rules and processes to perform the work remains the paramount subject-matter knowledge required. The kind of automation tools involved, and the skill required to use them, generally replace, or supplement work methods and techniques previously performed through manual or machine-enhanced processes.

Although computers are used to facilitate work within this series, the use of automation does not change the primary purpose of the work. Proper classification of positions is based on the relevant knowledge and skills required to perform the primary duties of the position.

<b>Additional Occupational Considerations</b>	
<p>Although some positions may require applying knowledge of firefighting and fire prevention theory and techniques, knowledge of fixed and mobile firefighting equipment operation, and/or the ability to plan, direct, or carry out fire protection and prevention programs and operations, classification to the Wildland Fire Management, 0456, series may not be appropriate. To select the appropriate series, you must determine the most important or paramount subject matter knowledge required to perform the primary duties of the position. In determining the paramount knowledge, you must also consider the primary purpose for the position’s existence, the position’s scope, the most important qualification(s) required, the mission setting, recruitment sources, career progression, and the background knowledge required. The following table provides examples of situations where the work may involve applying related knowledge and skills, but not to the extent that it warrants classification to this series.</p> <p>The <a href="#">General Series Determination Guidelines</a> section of this guide on selecting the most appropriate series.</p>	
<b>If Work involves....</b>	<b>See This Standard or Series Definition:</b>
Positions which primarily involve the elimination or control of physical (such as mechanical) conditions, operating practices or other factors which may result in traumatic injury to persons or damage to property and which require knowledge of the principles, standards, and techniques of safety, e.g., safety program management, and fire protection and prevention are only one of several major areas of responsibility in regard to the workplace.	<a href="#"><u>Safety and Occupational Health Management Series, GS-0018</u></a>
Positions concerned with specialized safety work for which specific occupations have been established. Performing work to manage and extinguish mostly structural fires, rescue persons endangered by fire, and reduce or eliminate potential fire hazards predominately outside wildland settings.	<a href="#"><u>Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-0081</u></a>
Positions responsible for guarding Government buildings and property and incidentally identifying obvious fire hazards, locating, and reporting fires, and activating emergency firefighting procedures. The purpose of police work is to assure compliance with Federal, State, county, and municipal laws and ordinances, and agency rules and regulations pertaining to law enforcement work.	<a href="#"><u>Grade Evaluation Guide for Police and Security Guard Positions, GS-0083/0085</u></a>
Positions primarily engaged in conducting, supervising, or managing the line program activities or functions of the employing agency. Performing business functions that support the needs of wildland fire at various levels in the organization. Support includes basic and specialized support functions such as travel, time, budget support, and incident support functions at the incident and program level.	<a href="#"><u>0300 – General Administrative, Clerical, and Office Services Group</u></a>

(continued)

<b>Additional Occupational Considerations</b> (continued)	
<b>If Work involves....</b>	<b>See This Standard or Series Definition:</b>
Performing work involving operating or supervising the operation of communication equipment. The work involves operating communications equipment but does not require specialized knowledge of firefighting techniques, equipment, and procedures to prevent and manage fires.	<a href="#"><u>Telephone Operating Series, GS-0382</u></a>
Performing or supervising the operation of telecommunications equipment in transmitting, receiving, and relaying messages, but does not require specialized knowledge of firefighting techniques, equipment, and procedures to prevent and manage fires.	<a href="#"><u>General Telecommunications Series, GS-0392</u></a>
Performing biological sciences and natural resources management work that requires professional knowledge of the biological sciences.  Providing scientific expertise, consultation, prediction, and interpretation of the role of fire in ecosystems and vegetative communities; the consequences of fire presence or exclusion; and the relationship of fire characteristics to fire effects on upland and riparian vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, watershed, soils, water, air, cultural values; and threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. These personnel may provide input to the planning, fire management decision making and wildfire response and recovery processes through data collection, analysis, and synthesis.	<a href="#"><u>Job Family Position Classification Standard for Professional Work in the Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group, 0400</u></a>
Providing practical technical support in range research efforts; in the marketing of the range resource; and in the scientific management, protection, and development of grasslands and other range resources.	<a href="#"><u>Range Technician Series, GS-0455</u></a>
Providing practical technical support in forestry research efforts; in the marketing of forest resources; or in the scientific management, protection, and development of forest resources.	<a href="#"><u>Forestry Technician Series, GS-0462</u></a>
Performing professional healthcare or medical care work with no requirements to perform fire protection and prevention duties.	<a href="#"><u>Job Family Standard for Professional Work in the Medical and Healthcare Group, 0600</u></a>

(continued)

<b>Additional Occupational Considerations</b> (continued)	
<b>If Work involves....</b>	<b>See This Standard or Series Definition:</b>
Applying professional engineering knowledge and principles in an appropriate professional engineering series, such as Fire Protection Engineering. Fire protection engineering work involves the protection of life and property from destructive fire.	<a href="#"><u>Job Family Position Classification Standard for Professional Work in the Engineering and Architecture Group, 0800</u></a>
Performing work concerned with furnishing all types of supplies, equipment, material, property (except real estate), and certain services to components of the Federal Government, industrial, or other concerns under contract to the Government, or receiving supplies from the Federal Government.	<a href="#"><u>Supply Group, 2000</u></a>
Deploying personnel, aircraft, equipment, and supplies for incidents, but does not require specialized knowledge of firefighting techniques, equipment, and procedures to prevent and manage fires.	<a href="#"><u>Dispatching Series, GS-2151</u></a>
Performing work coordinating incident airspace and/or manages incident air traffic from either an airplane or helicopter. May coordinate, assign, and evaluate the use of aerial resources in support of incident objectives.	<a href="#"><u>Air Traffic Control Series, GS-2152</u></a>
Performing work primarily involved in: (1) piloting or copiloting of aircraft to carry out various programs and functions of Federal agencies; (2) providing ground and flight instruction and in-flight evaluation in the piloting of aircraft; (3) flight testing of developmental and modified aircraft and components; (4) in-flight inspection and evaluation of air navigation facilities and the environmental conditions affecting instrument flight procedures; and (5) performing staff work concerned with planning, analyzing, or administering agency aviation programs, where the work requires primarily the application of pilot knowledge and skills.	<a href="#"><u>Aircraft Operation Series, GS-2181</u></a>
Federal Wage System knowledge of operation and maintenance of heavy equipment (e.g., bulldozers, water tenders, and other mechanized equipment) to perform tactical and logistical tasks to accomplish fire management objectives.	<a href="#"><u>Job Grading Standards for Trades, Craft, and Labor Positions</u></a>

<b>Crosswalk to the Standard Occupational Classification</b>					
<p>The Office of Management and Budget requires all Federal agencies to use the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system for statistical data reporting purposes. The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses SOC codes for National Compensation Survey and other statistical reporting. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and other Federal agencies maintain a “crosswalk” between OPM authorized occupational series and the SOC codes to serve this need. These SOC codes and this requirement have no effect on the administration of any Federal human resources management systems. The information in this table is for information purposes only and has no direct impact on the classification of positions covered by this job family standard. The SOC codes shown here generally apply only to nonsupervisory positions in these occupations. As changes occur to the SOC codes, OPM will update this table. More information about the SOC is available at <a href="http://stats.bls.gov/soc">http://stats.bls.gov/soc</a>.</p>					
<b>Federal Occupational Series and Position Titles and Their Related Standard Occupational Classification System Codes</b>					
<b>Federal Occupational Series</b>	<b>Standard Occupational Classification Code Based on Occupational Series</b>		<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Standard Occupational Classification Code Based on Position Title</b>	
Wildland Fire Management, 0456	33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	Supervisory Wildland Firefighter	33-1021	First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers
			Wildland Firefighter	33-2011	Firefighters
			Wildland Firefighter	33-2022	Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists

## PART II – GRADING INFORMATION

### How to Use This Grading Information

#### INTRODUCTION

There are a number of possible ways of presenting, for purposes of analysis and classification, the essential characteristics of work. For this reason, classification standards and guides have different formats and include a variety of evaluation elements. This PCS is written in a narrative format describing the nature of work and level of responsibility for each grade covered by the standard. This requires the user to look at work as a whole and select the most appropriate overall grade. Although each grade level is not described individually, the pertinent factors are described in terms of duties and responsibilities at each level where they are of particular significance. The classification factors include the Guidelines; Complexity; Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts; Supervision Received; Supervision Exercised; and Elements Influencing Complexity of Fire Management Program. These classification factors are of significance in classifying positions in this series, however some of the criteria described may not apply to all positions.

#### CLASSIFICATION FACTORS

**First use the classification factors below as a guide to describe the position characteristics.**

*Guidelines* - A large body of specialized technical firefighting, safety, fire prevention, and fire organization guides exist and must be thoroughly understood and applied by incumbents occupying positions in this series as they advance in knowledge of the work and experience in their agency's organization. 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. All employees are expected to be aware of the constantly changing nature of guidelines as new or modified techniques emerge.

*Complexity* - This factor concerns the degree to which incumbents of these positions are required to innovate in situations of stress and pressure, and the degree to which they must apply originality in following the various practices and making the decisions required. The relative unpredictability of fire behavior under certain conditions emphasizes the need for seasoned judgment gained through specialized training and intensive fire management experience.

*Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts* - This is an important factor and involves the significance and difficulty of work performed in giving and securing information related to fire management programs or problems, in explaining agency regulations and practices, and in attempting to influence others to a course of action. Its value is related to the complexity of the basic fire management function performed and the intensity of problems inherent in the fire management environment in which the incumbent performs work. This factor is used in determining the degree to which the work assignment requires the employee to give and obtain information: the difficulty of explaining or securing cooperation, information, or compliance; the degree to which the position requires the employee to maintain contacts and cooperative relationships with groups of diverse interests and backgrounds; the frequency and importance of personal work contacts; and the degree to which the contacts are of significance to the public.

*Supervision received* - The kinds of decisions made, and the finality of such decisions are important in differentiating between levels of fire management work. This factor involves the degree of responsibility for action or decision, which is inherent in the scope of the position, and the potential effect of the decisions or actions of the individual upon the program of the agency or the safety of life and property.

This factor takes into consideration the following: the degree to which decisions made are based on directly applicable precedent, on information developed by the employee, or on authorities delegated to the individual; the degree of far-reaching consequence of the employees' decisions concerning the appropriateness of operations and the causes of certain fires; or the soundness and acceptability of reports submitted or reviewed by incumbents. Other considerations may include: the degree of responsibility for applying correct guides in making decisions and the consequence of failing to apply such guides; the degree of responsibility inherent in endeavoring to secure compliance or agreement, in adjusting fire management operations to demands of environmental factors, and in coordinating fire management programs with other agency programs; or the degree of responsibility for actions or decisions which will encourage others, build morale, and reorganize groups of individuals under trying fire combat-type conditions.

*Supervision exercised* - This is an important factor in classifying Fire Management Officer positions, and a factor of secondary importance in classifying other positions included in these standards. It includes the degree of completeness and finality of supervisory responsibilities and the manner in which the work of others is supervised. This factor takes into consideration: the scope, complexity, and diversity of the fire management programs supervised or directed; the degree of accountability for the co-ordination and effectiveness of all operations supervised in terms of responsibility for staffing and programing, and the performance of related management functions; the degree of responsibility for applying fire strategy and tactics in deploying staff and equipment for maximum results; and the extent of personal supervisory skills required for achieving an effective fire management force.

*Elements influencing complexity of fire management program* - While consideration of the above factors is basic to reflecting the level of difficulty of occupations generally, there are a number of elements common to most positions in this series which are of special significance in evaluating the complexity of individual fire management programs, and hence in establishing the levels of the positions involved. These elements relate to situational and environmental influences affecting positions. These Fire Management Program Elements are especially important in reflecting more specifically the nature and variety of work and other pertinent factors. While it is true that most fire management positions will involve considerations of these elements, the degree to which they are present often varies significantly. In view of this, degrees of each of these elements are described as an aid in determining the relative program complexity and level of position. The elements when considered collectively illustrate "Fire Management Programs of Limited Complexity," "Moderately Complex Fire Management Programs," and "Complex Fire Management Programs." It should be recognized that, although the elements described are significant and important in estimating the complexity of the fire management program, they are only indicators of the difficulty of individual positions and not precise measures to be applied mechanically without the use of overall judgments about the level of the work performed. The user of these standards is expected to go beyond the specific numbers and take into account the total duties and responsibilities of positions. Average figures should be used in evaluating elements which are expressed in numerical values. The statistical data used in evaluating these elements should be based on long range cycles that accurately reflect the overall scope and complexity of the fire management programs. Judgment is required in determining the specific degree applicable in each of the elements, for example, in determining the number of risks or causing agents present in a particular area. Consideration should be given to the effect that the different types of risks actually have on the scope and complexity of the fire management program. Credit should not be given to risks when these do not contribute materially to the overall difficulty of the fire management program or to individual positions. For example, a major highway cutting through or traversing the length of a forest should be considered a risk. However, a seldom-used jogging road or a major highway touching the tip of a forest would not contribute materially to the complexity of the fire management program and thus should not be considered as a risk.

Usually, the individual elements of fire management programs evaluate to several different degrees of difficulty and complexity. Seldom will all of the program elements for a particular area evaluate to the same degree of difficulty. Careful consideration should be given to the composite effect that the majority of program elements have on the overall difficulty, responsibility, and complexity of a particular position. These elements and degrees employ the use of numerical criteria expressed in broad ranges and narrative statements which are judgmental in nature. Three degrees of program difficulty and complexity are described are representative of typical fire management positions. In the overall evaluation, consideration should be given to the organizational level (e.g., state, district, region, national forest, or higher-level organization) of the positions, since this has a significant impact upon the scope of decisions, supervision received and exercised, person-to-person work relationships, and other factors. Part II includes criteria for Fire Management Officer positions.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE STANDARD**

The grade level criteria for the Wildland Firefighting Series are divided in two parts. This is to facilitate the presentation and application of grade level criteria that are different for program management and non-program management positions. This standard includes illustrations of positions GS-3 through GS-13 for benchmarking purposes. The absence of an illustration for positions at any grade from GS-1 to GS-15 does not preclude evaluation of positions at that grade.

*Part I* of the standard provides grade level criteria for Wildland Firefighting positions.

- *Descriptions of Typical Positions* – This section describes the duties and responsibilities common to various positions and specialty areas of Wildland Fire Management.

*Part II* of the standard provides grade level criteria *Fire Management Officer positions* – This section defines and describes in degrees of difficulty the criteria for fire management positions and provides illustrations for typical positions.

### **Additional considerations for classifying lead, supervisory, and managerial positions**

Some work covered by this series may include leader, supervisory, and managerial positions. In addition to the evaluation criteria covered in this PCS, additional evaluation criteria may be applicable for classifying positions with lead, supervisory, and/or managerial duties and responsibilities.

OPM's [General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide](#) is used most often to classify lead positions. It includes criteria for titling and grading work leaders who, as a regular and recurring part of their assignment, lead three or more employees in one-grade interval occupations in the General Schedule in accomplishing work. Work leaders also perform work that is usually of the same kind and level as that done by the team lead.

OPM's [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) is used most often to classify supervisory positions. It includes definitions of both managerial and supervisory work and criteria for titling and grading supervisory and managerial positions. In addition, some other standards for specific occupational series provide criteria for classifying supervisory and program management work. Not all standards, however, which cover program management work also measure the difficulties and responsibilities of supervising people.

Therefore, to classify a supervisory or program management position in any occupational series, classifiers should:

- Apply criteria for measuring program management work as provided in the standard for the series to which the position is classified or in related standards or guides which measure program management duties and responsibilities.

and

- Apply the supervisory classification guide to positions whose supervisory and/or managerial duties and responsibilities meet minimum requirements for coverage by the guide.

For positions covered by standards which measure program management authorities, the grade level is typically governed by program management duties and responsibilities. For positions which are primarily supervisory, the grade level will usually be determined by the supervisory classification guide. The overall grade of the position should reflect the highest level of program management or supervisory work performed.

Additionally evaluate supervisory and managerial positions using the criteria in the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#).

## **PART I - Fire Management Position Illustrations**

The final step in the evaluation of wildland firefighting positions not covered by the fire management program elements in this PCS include using the occupation and specialty-specific factor illustrations below as a frame of reference for applying factor level concepts. Do not rely solely on illustrations in evaluating positions because they reflect a limited range of actual work examples. Use the illustrations to gain insights into the meaning of the grading criteria. Consider each illustration in its entirety and in conjunction with the description of the evaluation criteria covered above based on your application of the Classification Factors and the Fire Management Elements in your analysis, and do not merely use a selected portion of an illustration taken out of context as evidence of a match. The level of work described in some illustrations may be higher than the threshold for a particular factor level. If the factor information in the position description fails to fully match a relevant illustration, but does fully match the criteria, you may still assign the level. The absence of an occupation citation and specialty-specific factor illustration does not automatically preclude assignment at that level.

### **Wildland Firefighter GS-3**

1. Typically, GS-3 Wildland Firefighters receive training in the procedures and techniques of fire management work including fire prevention, presuppression, and suppression activities. Typically, this includes the performance of a number of the following duties:
  - a. Receive intensive planned training preparatory to undertaking more difficult and responsible assignments in fire management work. Training courses cover a variety of subjects such as standard and specialized forest fire fighting practices, fire prevention and safety, tire risks and hazards, specialized suppression procedures required by local conditions, weather behavior, special techniques required to control/manage fires, construction of various types of fire lines, fuel types, first aid methods, use of specialized and complex firefighting equipment (e.g., portable pumps, trenchers, and power saws}, tank-truck work including operation of pumps, use of hose and accessories and the tactical use of tankers, driver training courses, and the geography of the area to which assigned.
  - b. Work with higher-grade employees and receive on-the-job training and instruction in the maintenance of fire tools, equipment, and fire caches, keeping records of firefighting equipment, working with cooperators, inspecting campgrounds and public use areas, preparing reports of lost or damaged articles, explaining the fire prevention program to visitors, dispatching work, and other aspects of the fire prevention program.
  - c. As a part of their training, Wildland Firefighters at this level serve as members of suppression crew by participating in the suppression of fires and work at various positions on the crew (e.g., shovel, pulaski, nozzle, hose layer, etc.). They perform suppression operations such as attacking, corralling, controlling, or mopping up fires, building or patrolling fire lines, cleaning up burned areas within fire lines, suppressing spot fires, felling snags or trees, and cutting brush.
2. Wildland Firefighters at this level receive specific instructions and detailed work assignments from supervisors or higher-grade employees who outline procedures to follow and the results desired. Supervisors are available to answer questions regarding methods, practices, and procedures and frequently review their work for compliance with instructions.

### **Wildland Firefighter GS-3**

1. GS-3 Wildland Firefighters may be assigned to lookout stations on districts for the primary purpose of detecting and reporting the occurrence of fires, status of fires, suspicious smokes, smoke-like dusts, or unusual volumes of legitimate smokes. Typically, this includes the performance of a number of the following duties:

- a. Use standard fire finders to locate smokes observed from lookout stations, estimate probable distances to smokes, ascertain the probable size and characteristics of fires, and locate fires on maps with reference to land subdivisions and known landmarks. Make telephone calls or radio dispatchers and report the azimuth, distance, location, volume, color, behavior of smoke, and other pertinent facts. After reporting initial fires or smokes, continue to observe the area and report significant changes such as increased smoke, wind conditions, change in color or volume of smoke, type of cover fire is burning in, the rate of spread, or fire spotting over larger areas. Observe ground lightning strikes, thunderstorms, and build-up of cloud formations, and report significant observations to dispatcher and keep the area under continued observation.
  - b. Record and report daily weather observations (temperature, fuel moisture, humidity, and wind velocity). Maintain records and Jog hooks. Make minor adjustments, service and maintain radios, fire finders, telephones, and other equipment, and maintain lookout towers, quarters, and grounds in a neat and orderly condition. May also be required to: suppress small fires located in the vicinity of their lookout stations; order groceries and supplies; issue fire permits; and report violation of game law or trespass violations.
2. Wildland Firefighters at this level work in accordance with standard orders and established operating procedures furnished by supervisory personnel at the beginning of their seasonal assignments and receive supplemental assignments; instructions, and assistance from dispatchers by telephone and radio. Supervisory personnel make periodic inspections of lookout stations during the fire season to ensure compliance with Instructions, acceptable performance of housekeeping and maintenance work, and general adequacy of lookout operations.
  3. Person-to-person work relationships consist of contacts with fishers, hunters, campers, and other visitors to lookout stations. Incumbents answer questions regarding lookout operations and furnish a variety of general information relating to fire prevention regulations, the fire management program, routes of travel, areas closed to visitors, and hunting and fishing laws and regulations.
  4. Decisions are made in estimating distances to observe smokes by comparisons with known landmarks and determining from those observations when to report significant changes in the status of going fires.

#### **Wildland Firefighter GS-4**

1. GS-4 Wildland Firefighters are assigned to specific locations on districts and participate in a variety of fire prevention, presuppression, and suppression activities. Typically, they perform a number of the following duties:
  - a. Serve as a skilled and fully trained member of a fire or tanker crew with responsibility for utilizing a variety of different types of specialized tools, equipment, and techniques in suppressing fires.
  - b. Scout fires and develop data on hazardous areas, camp locations, water supply, cargo drop spots, fuel concentrations, helicopter landing spots, fire direction, and the intensity of fire spread.
  - c. Maintain firefighting tools and equipment assigned to their station or district which includes: placing caches at strategic points; servicing and maintaining tools and equipment; oiling, greasing, and servicing automotive equipment, portable pumps, and power equipment; conducting periodic inventories; keeping records of firefighting equipment and supplies; checking equipment at the end of the fire season; making reports of lost or damaged articles; and arranging for the replacement, reconditioning, and storage of firefighting supplies, tools, and equipment at the close of the fire season.
  - d. Receive and record reports of isolated small fires received from dispatchers and develop plans for suppressing fires, including methods of attack on fire, types of equipment required, and travel route to use (trail, road, or cross-country). Locate, suppress, and control/manage isolated small

- tires usually in timbered and mountainous terrain by applying an understanding of fire behavior, topography of the area, and extensive training in fire management work, involving the use of a variety of hand and power tools in felling trees or snags, operating pumpers, building fire lines, burning out, backfiring, mopping up, and patrolling lines. May supervise one or two fire fighters who accompany them on fires. At fire, anticipate direction of greatest spread, determine method of suppression, extinguish hot spots, build trenches around fire, and take action to bring fire under control. On larger fires or fires out of control, radio for additional fire fighters and equipment and, in some cases, designate safe cargo dropping areas where tools and supplies can be delivered by plane. Determine the probable cause of fires and prepare reports showing size of fire, fuel types, wind velocity, and cause of fire. If man caused, gather, and preserve evidence for possible needs in prosecuting offenders.
- e. Serve as situational leader on large fires and direct the work of a small crew of fire fighters in building fire lines, burning out, backfiring, felling snags, mopping up, and patrolling fire lines.
  - f. Serve as alternate or fill-in dispatcher on light fire load districts, and dispatch crews and equipment to fires. Advise crews on tools and equipment required according to fuel types, and inform them of weather conditions, topography of the area, best route for reaching the fire, and other factors affecting the management of the fire.
  - g. Participating in the fire prevention program by working with supervisors in recruiting and organizing volunteer emergency firefighting crews of local residents, issuing equipment, and instructing and training cooperators in basic firefighting techniques and the use of equipment. Make inspections of public use areas and campgrounds and advise and instruct visitors regarding fire prevention regulations, camping, fishing, scenic areas, recreational use, and other activities. Observe and enforce regulations or restrictions such as smoking rules, sanitation rules, closures, game laws and regulations, and fire prevention regulations, and issue warnings of fire danger and fire hazards.
2. Wildland Firefighters at this level work under the general supervision of more seasoned staff, or other supervisory personnel, and receive general assignments and perform the majority of their work independently according to established procedures. They suppress small fires and perform other assigned duties with limited instruction or guidance. Their work is subject to periodic observation and inspection for acceptability and compliance with operating procedures and instructions.
  3. Personal work contacts include providing information to visitors regarding fire prevention, fire danger, fire laws, restricted areas, and routes of travel and frequently involve contacts with travelers, campers, and residents of the area to point out fire hazards, to explain State and Federal laws, and to secure cooperation and participation in the fire prevention program.
  4. Decisions made relate to such matters as (1) selecting routes and methods to reach fires; (2) deciding if fires can be suppressed without additional help or equipment; (3) determining initial action to be taken to control/manage small fires; and (4) ascertaining the cause of fires.

#### **Wildland Firefighter GS-4**

1. In addition to performing the duties described for GS-3, GS-4 Wildland Firefighters are required to exercise a greater degree of independent judgment in performing more difficult and complex work at lookout stations. They may normally serve as lookouts at observation areas where high-hazard fuel types are present which are capable of producing mass fires or many small fires which require large fire mobilization control tactics. Observation areas usually have fire-starting lightning storms and varied or numerous smoke-producing and fire-starting agencies or potential risks such as mining operations, industrial plants, towns and villages, logging operations, sawmills, railroads, construction

activities, residences, resorts, and defense installations. Typically, they also perform a number of the following duties:

1. Operate key communications centers which connect a number of other lookout stations and other organizations by telephone and/or radio. Receive and relay messages and information received from their organization, mobile units, law enforcement organizations, and other Government agencies relating to weather forecasts, fire hazard conditions, fires, emergencies, accidents, and the location of work crews and personnel.
  2. Serve as key contact at lookout stations visited by large numbers of people during the fire season. Promote the fire prevention program by explaining State and Federal laws, policies, and regulations as well as fire prevention methods and procedures and fire hazard conditions. Utilize a thorough and detailed knowledge of fire and trespass regulations, game laws, and other agency rules, and report violations when observed.
  3. May relieve dispatchers of routine checking of communications and contacts with personnel in field. Initiate dispatching action for brief periods in the absence of dispatcher or at night during periods of high risk. On light fire load districts where full-time dispatchers are not employed may dispatch staff, supplies, and equipment required to manage and suppress fires.
2. At this level, Wildland Firefighters are expected to carry out their functions completely and independently according to established procedures and to refer only emergency or unusual problems to their supervisors via the most appropriate communication method/device.

#### **Wildland Firefighter (Fire Engine Operation) GS-5**

1. GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Fire Engine Operation) have substantiality full-time assignments as operators of fire tankers used to suppress and manage forest and range fires and are responsible for driving, operating, and servicing large tankers equipped with extensive and complicated plumbing systems and pumps capable of drafting large volumes of water. Typically, operators select routes or follow designated routes and drive tank-trucks in heavy traffic rind on narrow, steep, and hazardous mountainous roads, which requires a high degree of driving judgment and skill and a thorough understanding of safety techniques to deliver staff and equipment safely to destinations. Maneuver trucks into position near fire, taking into consideration parking limitations, terrain, wind conditions, and escape routes. Determine pressures required, regulate valves, and operate pumps and auxiliary equipment during suppression operations. Utilize a detailed knowledge of operation of pumps, use of hose and accessories, and the tactical use of tank-trucks; techniques used in reading contour maps and techniques used in computing pressures; water application techniques used in fighting forest and range fires, structural fires, small household butane and oil fires, and fires under or adjacent to power lines; use of radios and other communication devices; operation, maintenance, and minor repair procedures used on rotary, single, and multiple stage centrifugal and piston pumps; methods required in solving complex water delivery problems involving extended fire hose networks often a mile or more in length; and techniques required to calculate pressures, friction losses, and amounts of vertical lift required to pump water across rough terrain.
2. GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Fire Engine Operation) may be assigned responsibility for supervising firefighting personnel and for directing their activities when suppressing fires.
3. GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Fire Engine Operation) work under the general supervision of Fire Management Officers who periodically check the readiness of equipment, review their work performance on fires, and ensure that fire plans, safety rules, and equipment maintenance procedures are being followed.

**Wildland Firefighter (Aviation) GS-5**

1. GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Aviation) accompany pilots on flights to detect and report on the location and status of fires by radio and act as aerial scouts on going fires. Typical duties include:
  - a. Accompany pilots on flights over prescribed routes which traverse relatively inaccessible forest-covered terrain. Detect fires, locate fires on maps, and report observations to ground stations by radio. Their radio reports cover a variety of information relating to the fire such as: the precise location of the fire by quarter section, township and range, and name of drainage; and detailed information on the status of the fire, i.e., size of fire, fuel types burning, type of smoke column, presence of other fires, character and comparative sizes if there are several going fires, degree of slope face where fire is burning, surrounding fuel types, probable rate of spread, and general information about topography. Frequently aerial observers advise dispatchers as to the probable number of staff and types of equipment required to suppress fires, which fire to suppress first, presence of roads, trails, or jump spots, helicopter landing spots, wind and weather conditions, and a variety of other information and observations which may be of assistance in suppressing fires.
  - b. Wildland Firefighter (Aviation) (1) scout small fires to receive ground-to-air signals as to crew needs for supplies, food, and equipment and relay information by radio to dispatchers; and (2) scout large fires to prepare aerial base maps showing perimeter of fires, report hot spots or areas requiring immediate attention by ground crews, monitor ground-to-air signals, report fuel types in the path of fires, and relay observations, information, and data.
  - c. Usually are responsible for insuring that safety regulations are followed and that contract pilots fly prescribed routes at designated altitudes. Are in charge of the flight (except for the actual operation of the plane) and change routes or altitudes within safety limits to provide complete aerial coverage. Ensure that contract planes have been properly inspected and approved by the agency, that safety and other prescribed equipment is on board, and that unauthorized personnel are not transported by planes.
  - d. Related duties include: keeping maps and records; making reports; participating in prevention, presuppression, or other fire management work; recommending changes in aerial routes to provide better and more effective coverage; obtaining daily weather and fire information from districts; compiling weather and fire reports.
2. GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Aviation) work under the general supervision. Supervisor outlines prescribed procedures and give instructions which designate aerial routes and general altitudes to fly and outline radio reporting procedures. Work is periodically reviewed for adherence to approved plans, schedules, and practices, and spot-check the correctness of decisions made and actions taken. During emergency or fire situations, incumbents have limited opportunity to contact their supervisors for help, assistance, or guidance.
3. Review of most work occurs only after action has been taken and is limited to determining the effectiveness of results. For example, incumbents make decisions concerning the location of fires and the probable force needed to suppress a given fire. The soundness of such decisions cannot be determined until after the suppression forces have been dispatched and the fire located and controlled. Improper recommendations can result in loss of life, damage to property, and the misutilization of staff and equipment.
4. Decisions made relate to determining location of fires, the size of fires and fuel types present, the probable number of staff required to suppress fires, the estimated number and different types of equipment required, and the possibility of using aerial tankers or additional Wildland Firefighter (Aviation) staff to perform smokejumping, etc.

**Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) GS-5**

1. GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) make fire prevention inspections and investigations and participate in fire management promotional work for the purpose of reducing the occurrence of preventable forest and range fires on districts with fire management program of limited complexity. They perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below:
  - a. Establish contacts with visitors, explain fire prevention rules and regulations applying to the use of the area, and give talks on fire prevention to youth groups, public schools, and campfire groups. Distribute and explain fire prevention literature to cooperators, visitors, and the general public. Show fire prevention films to groups and post fire prevention and other signs at locations designated in fire plans. Issue campfire, burning, welding, and blasting permits in accordance with regulations. Contact local residents (ranchers, industrial operators, resort owners, loggers, and householders) to appraise them of fire dangers and advise them of steps they can take to prevent fire.
  - b. Inspect locations such as garbage dumps, logging operations, railroads, mines, power transmission lines, cabins, resorts, campgrounds, defense installation sites, road construction projects, equipment operations, power operated machinery, oil and gas storage tanks, incinerators, welding operations, operations which use explosives, and other hazard-producing activities, to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and county fire laws, regulations, and ordinances. Prepare written reports of hazardous conditions detected on inspections for the review of their supervisors who determine appropriate action to take and make follow-up inspections to ensure that conditions have been corrected or eliminated.
  - c. Participate in the investigation of human-caused fires by collecting and preserving evidence, preparing reports, and obtaining information for use in the apprehension and conviction of trespassers, arsonists, or other violators. As required, appear as witnesses in court actions and testify concerning investigative findings.
  - d. Assist in enforcing closures of areas during critical fire periods and in enforcing State and county fire laws. Participate in fire prevention campaigns. Apply fire danger rating systems to operations. Assist in the development of fire management and prevention plans for their district and in the training of other fire personnel. Operate and maintain small weather stations. Keep office records and compile fire, weather, and other reports. Detect, suppress, or report on small fires discovered while on prevention patrols or contact assignments. May serve as leader on large fires.
2. Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) work under a supervisor who provides general work assignments, instructions, and work schedules designating the kind of contacts to make, frequency of contacts, time of year contacts will be made, and hazardous areas to inspect. Supervisors furnish advice, assistance, and help in determining action to take on hazardous conditions encountered, or unusual work problems that occur, assign human-caused fires to investigate, make special work assignments, and periodically review the incumbents' work for adequacy and compliance with instructions and work schedules.
3. Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) at this level have extensive and varied person-to-person work contacts with personnel and officials of State and local governments, local residents, visitors, community groups, logging and industrial operators, and the general public to maintain close liaison and promote the fire prevention program. Their contacts require that incumbents explain the nature and extent of existing fire hazards and elicit cooperation and support in eliminating hazards or keeping them to a minimum.
4. They make recommendations, decisions, and commitments with the provisions of operating policies, procedures, and instructions. Many of their on-the-ground decisions are evaluated in terms of their long-range effectiveness and the degree to which the community accepts the fire management program. Decisions relating to action required to correct hazards present in logging operations, highway construction projects, and other risk-producing agencies or operations are subject to close

review before final action is taken.

### **Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) GS-5**

1. GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) staff who perform smokejumping are trained in making parachute jumps to forested and mountainous terrain to suppress fires that require attention before ground crews can reach them.

#### GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper)

- a. Staff receive intensive and standardized training in the principles and techniques of suppressing forest and range fires and in parachute jumping. Fire suppression training covers a wide variety of subjects which include fire line construction under all types of conditions, felling snags and trees, lightning behavior, weather, topography, escape routes, recognizing blowup conditions, fire behavior in different types of fuels, burning periods, woodsmanship, first aid training, and training in the use of compasses and hand and power tools. Training includes the intensive use of a variety of different types of training and conditioning devices such as: obstacle courses, jump towers, climb ropes, parallel bars, ankle strengtheners, let downs, allen rolls, collapses, mock-up plane jumping, running, tree climbing, woods hiking, care and use of chutes and jumping equipment, crosscountry hiking carrying heavy packs, and parachute manipulation for steering to landing spots. Upon completion of jumper ground training, incumbents make practice jumps to demonstrate successful course completion.
- b. Serve as a member of a parachute jumping suppression crew with responsibility for suppressing fires in mountainous country. As dispatched, they go to fires and jump from airplanes over mountainous terrain which may require landing in open areas, in timber, on mountainous slopes, or in rough terrain. After landing, they assemble firefighting equipment and supplies dropped by parachute and signal the plane that the landing has been successful. Smokejumpers then perform a variety of suppression duties as described at the GS-4 Wildland Firefighter level in suppressing and managing fires. After fires are suppressed, they retrieve parachute and other firefighting equipment and carry them to predetermined locations for return to base.

Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) are frequently required to read maps and find their way back from fires through rugged inaccessible country with heavy packs of supplies and equipment to reach roads, trails, or helicopter landing spots. In many instances the country has not been previously traversed. This requires the use of a high order of woodsmanship.

2. Incumbents receive close supervision from senior staff and leaders because of the hazardous nature of their assignments. They receive detailed instructions regarding terrain, routes to follow, and pick-up points while enroute to fires and specific instructions regarding spots, jumping conditions, wind velocity, and other conditions prior to making actual jumps. They receive help and assistance from leaders in parachute jumping techniques, in methods of suppressing and managing fires, and in maintaining their equipment. Instructions are usually complete and are rarely deviated from. Their work performance is frequently observed and reviewed for overall adequacy.

### **Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) GS-6**

1. GS-6 Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) serve as fully trained and skilled members of the Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) force. In addition to performing the duties described for GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper).

They:

- a. Parachute to fires which require a high degree of skill due to unfavorable conditions such as high

- elevations, variable wind conditions, or difficult ground conditions (e.g., cliffs, rock outcroppings, snags, etc.). After landing, they perform the same duties in suppressing fire as described for GS-4 Wildland Firefighters and GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Aviation).
- b. As a Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) in charge of suppressing small fires, they direct suppression operations, make work assignments, solve work problems, review work, and make fire reports. Assume responsibility for directing the operation and use of special tools and equipment such as, but not limited to power saws, portable pumpers, flame throwers, and communication equipment, and make decisions as to when, where, and how equipment can be utilized to the greatest advantage. Determine the strategy to be used in suppressing fires, assume responsibility for the proper care and maintenance of tools, equipment, and jumping gear, and ensure that all articles are safely delivered to pick-up points for return to the base.
  - c. Related duties include: (1) making parachute jumps which require a high degree of skill in jumping techniques and parachute manipulation to land successfully in designated areas; (2) executing repeated jumping maneuvers to test modified or experimental equipment; (3) checking parachutes, dropping assemblies, and packaging prior to dropping cargo from aircraft; and (4) packing or repairing parachutes and pumping equipment.
  - d. Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) at this level are frequently assigned responsibility for supervising a crew of subordinate Wildland Firefighters in: performing building and ground maintenance work; keeping mess halls and barracks in a neat and orderly condition; servicing and maintaining tools, equipment, and automotive vehicles; mixing borate; performing special work assignments; and participating in special forestry projects.
2. GS-6 Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) work under the general supervision of leaders who jump with the squad on large fires. Incumbents of positions at this level follow standard procedures and practices and perform their work assignments with limited supervision or guidance.

#### **Wildland Firefighter (Helitack) GS-6**

1. Serves as a skilled member of a helitack crew. Responds to incident(s) via helicopter, may be inserted to incident via rappel from a hovering helicopter. Ensures load manifests, aircraft weight and balance calculations are accurate and within helicopter limitations and safety guidelines.
2. May serve as a spotter of a helicopter on a regular and recurring basis and has aviation responsibilities including helitack and/or helitack/rappel operations, reconnaissance, aerial ignition, and search and rescue. Helicopter rappel crew duties include participation and instruction of rappel training, oversight and inspection of life bearing rappel equipment (rappel ropes, descent device, rappel harness, helicopter rappel anchors).
3. After landing, they perform the same duties in suppressing fire as described for GS-4 Wildland Firefighters and GS-5 Wildland Firefighter (Aviation). As a Wildland Firefighter (Helitack) in charge of suppressing small fires, they direct suppression operations, make work assignments, solve work problems, review work, and make fire reports. Assume responsibility for directing the operation and use of special tools and equipment such as, but not limited to power saws, portable pumpers, flame throwers, and communication equipment, and make decisions as to when, where, and how equipment can be utilized to the greatest advantage. Determine the strategy to be used in suppressing fires, assume responsibility for the proper care and maintenance of tools, equipment, and jumping gear, and ensure that all articles are safely delivered to pick-up points for return to the base.
4. GS-6 Wildland Firefighter (Helitack) work under general supervision. Incumbents of positions at this level follow standard procedures and practices and perform their work assignments with limited supervision or guidance. Plans and carries out recurring work without detailed instructions and plans, schedules, and completes inspections and reports. Incumbent often functions independently in the field, relying on his/her own experience, expertise, and judgment. The supervisor reviews reports, and

checks work on the basis of meeting program objectives and on the effectiveness of overall helicopter operations. Completed work is reviewed for adherence to guidelines and established policy and safety objectives.

### **Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) GS-7**

1. GS-7 Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) are assigned responsibility for directing fire prevention programs and functions in moderately complex fire management programs. They perform duties described at GS-5 and, in addition, perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below:
  - a. Plan and execute fire prevention programs. Plan and supervise the installation of exhibits and conduct "show-me" trips on fire prevention activities. May appear on television and radio programs dealing with fire prevention and fire management work. Issue news releases. Serve as instructors and participate in or conduct fire prevention training for fire personnel. Develop course outlines and fire prevention plans. Participate with timber specialists in preparing project plans for removal of timber to provide for the adequate disposal of slash and the establishment of special precautionary measures to ensure area protection from fires.
  - b. Develop maps showing all hazards existing in the area and recommend action programs for the abatement of hazards within specified time limits and develop work and inspection schedules for subordinate staff. Make periodic progress reports, prepare master sign posting and exhibit plans, develop plans for the reduction of man-caused fires and other fire hazards, and make special studies to develop better methods for decreasing the number of human-caused fires.
  - c. Prepare and develop plans with cooperating fire agencies for "cover-up" action to assure adequate prevention efforts during fire disaster periods when the agency's prevention forces are reduced or removed because of assignments to going fires in other areas. Negotiate with and secure signed cooperative agreements and contracts with logging operators, sawmills, industrial concerns, ranches, railroads, and construction companies, etc. Performs frequent inspections of industrial operations to ensure compliance with regulations and agreements. Issue notices of violations designate corrective action required to correct emergency conditions, and close down operations that violate fire prevention regulations.
  - d. Make thorough and detailed interior and exterior inspections of major resorts, cabins, year-round residences, and summer homes to ensure that Federal, State, and local fire, building, and health laws, regulations, and ordinances are being followed. Check buildings and areas under Federal permit for conditions of buildings, presence of fire hazards, and sanitary and other conditions, prepare reports of findings, and initiate action to correct deficiencies. Make follow-up inspections to ensure that corrective action has been taken. In cases of noncompliance, prepare reports for local law enforcement agencies and their supervisors who determine appropriate action to take based on their findings and recommendations. Usually, Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) have been delegated authority to apprehend violators, make arrests, and participate in the prosecution of violators of fire laws or other laws.
  - e. When stationed at field headquarters (for example, a national forest) Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) inspect, evaluate, and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of fire prevention programs. Furnish staff direction to subordinate Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) and offer advice and assistance on improvement of fire prevention programs and activities.
  - f. Frequently, GS-7 Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) may supervise and train one or more Wildland Firefighters and inspect and report on the work performance and effectiveness of fire prevention programs. In many cases, they may supervise fire suppression crews stationed at strategic locations and perform other related duties.
2. At this level Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) work under the general supervision. Supervisors outline program objectives, assign special studies to be undertaken, and approve work plans for the year which establish duties and functions, work assignments, and operating policies and procedures. Supervisors furnish help and assistance on difficult or unusual problems such as special-use problems, law enforcement action, cancellation of permits, or extremely hazardous conditions present

in industrial operations. Their work is reviewed periodically for overall adequacy, compliance with operating policies and procedures, and effective accomplishment of broad program objectives.

3. Personal work contact at this level are frequent and continuing with influential groups such as public organizations, civic groups, and community officials. Contacts frequently cover wide geographical and functional areas and involve relationships with groups having varying interests. Person-to-person work contacts with private landowners, special-use permittees, employees and officials of other agencies (Federal, State, and local), youth groups, civic leaders, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, industrial operators, utility companies, and others are for the purpose of promoting the fire prevention program and securing cooperation in and support of programs and their agency's policies. Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) at this level frequently utilize mass information media such as social media, television, radio, the press, and special exhibits to advance public understanding of their programs and the agency's work.
4. GS-7 Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) make recommendations and decisions relating to the issuance of notices of violations to correct emergency conditions; action to take on hazardous conditions which are not corrected voluntarily; immediate corrective action required to eliminate hazardous conditions; closing down industrial operations which are in violation of fire regulations; the type of warnings to issue; methods, plans, and procedures to improve the overall fire prevention program; and appropriate actions to take in apprehending violators and making arrests.

#### **Wildland Firefighter (Fuels Management) GS-7**

1. GS-7 Wildland Firefighter (Fuels Management) are assigned responsibility for directing fuels management activities, programs and functions in moderately complex fire management programs. They gather data about fuel quantity and conditions, prepare and implement prescribed fire and thinning treatments that improve current vegetation conditions while reducing flammable materials, inventory fuel beds, prepare associated reports, perform hazard fuel reduction projects, pile vegetation debris and act in assigned positions such as ignition or holding specialist or other designated positions during fuel reduction efforts by prescribed fire, monitor burning conditions and are responsible for prescribed fire, fuels management, smoke management, and wildland fire planning. They perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below:
  - a. Serves on prescribed fire and fuels projects. Provides technical guidance on fire protection and prevention issues. Conducts routine project assessments which determine the presence or absence of hazardous wildland fuels. Reviews project plans and make recommendations on appropriate levels of monitoring. Participates in drafting prescribed fire/fuels management plans following the interagency template. This involves reviewing fuel treatment alternatives and may include preparing segments of a plan to support the objectives of the fire management program.
  - b. Administers routine aspects of the prescribed fire/fuels plan, ensuring that preparation, ignition, holding, mop-up, and rehabilitation are completed to the standards specified.
  - c. Conducts field reconnaissance of prescribed fire/fuels treatment units, summarizes field findings, and makes recommendations on appropriate prescriptive criteria for meeting program objectives.
  - d. Provides training needs to support prescribed fire and fuels management programs.
  - e. Participates in the development and refinement of plot characteristics, frequency of visits, subjects to be measured, and data storage and analysis techniques.
2. At this level Wildland Firefighter (Fuels Management) work under the general supervision. Supervisors outline program objectives, assign special studies to be undertaken, and approve work

plans for the year which establish duties and functions, work assignments, and operating policies and procedures. Supervisors furnish help and assistance on difficult or unusual problems. Their work is reviewed periodically for overall adequacy, compliance with operating policies and procedures, and effective accomplishment of broad program objectives.

### **Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) GS-9**

1. GS-9 Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) are assigned responsibility for directing entire fire prevention programs on forests with complex fire management programs. In addition to performing various combinations of duties described at the GS-7 level, they perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below:
  - a. Direct cooperative programs between the agency and cooperators such as local businesses, officials of other Federal, State, and local agencies, and officials of law enforcement agencies. Direct law enforcement and investigative programs and solicit cooperation and support in detecting, reporting, and suppressing fires and in apprehending incendiaries, arsonists, and other violators of fire prevention laws and regulations. Participate in the development of county ordinances pertaining to fire prevention in cooperation with county officials.
  - b. Serve as technical advisers to district officials and assist them in the preparation and development of effective hazard reduction and fire prevention plans and programs. Inspect programs and the work of lower grade level Wildland Firefighters stationed on districts to determine overall compliance with plans and operating policies and procedures and effectiveness of their programs and prepare reports recommending changes or modifications in operating procedures, plans, or programs to provide for more effective overall fire management programs for the districts. Their inspections and recommendation cover a number of different program phases such as: determining the qualifications and effectiveness of fire prevention programs, adequacy of prevention plans, effectiveness of fire management publicity program, thoroughness of risk and hazard inspections, compliance with inspection schedules, proper location of suppression forces, qualifications of fire suppression forces, and overall adequacy of law enforcement safety and training programs. Develop and recommend the adoption of new methods, techniques, or procedures to reduce hazards and risks. Assist subordinate Wildland Firefighters, Fire Management Officers, or other officials in processing difficult or unusual fire trespasser law enforcement cases by working on cases from investigative stages through final settlement. Recommend the need for fire prevention training courses for fire personnel and develop, conduct, or participate in training programs.
2. GS-9 Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) work under the supervision of officials who establish broad program objectives and review, approve, and correlate work plans and recommendations with other agency programs and activities. Supervisors periodically observe incumbent's work for effective program accomplishment and review and approve recommendations for special studies, major changes in operating policies, or special projects to be undertaken. Supervisors furnish help and assistance in matters pertaining to overall policy, expenditures of funds, or methods to follow in handling difficult or unusual public relations problems.
3. Recommendations, decisions, and commitments relate to: (a) prevention program needs and staffing requirements covering individual district or wide geographical or functional areas; (b) information to include in press releases on large project fires or serious fire situations; (c) methods to use in dealing with news media representatives, large and influential service clubs and citizens committees, and officials of other Government agencies; and (d) procedures to follow in handling difficult law enforcement problems.

### **Wildland Firefighter (Aviation) GS-9**

1. GS-9 Wildland Firefighters (Aviation) directs air tactical operations by providing aerial command and establishing priorities for initial attack, extended attack and other aviation duties as required. At this level, Wildland Firefighters (Aviation) receive mobilization information; evaluate aircraft needs to perform air tactical mission; brief pilots on mission requirements and crew resource management; determine navigation requirements; requests location of known hazards; gathers air space information; identifies available aircraft and estimated time of arrivals; identifies tanker base information; establishes air traffic control ensuring control of aircraft in incident airspace; identifies retardant and foam use restrictions; establishes target identification and appropriate tactics and coordinates with appropriate personnel; orders additional air resources as needed; notifies ground crews of incoming aircraft and tactics; coordinates with other incidents; provides intelligence to appropriate personnel; and monitors incident aircraft and pilot flight hour limitations.
2. GS-9 Wildland Firefighters (Aviation) apply technical methods and procedures related to aviation operations and program management. Incumbents perform a wide variety of aviation operations projects incorporating diverse technical fire management knowledge. GS-9 Wildland Firefighters (Aviation) ensure that risk management processes are applied to aerial leadership and tactics and are reevaluated continually during the operational period.
3. GS-9 Wildland Firefighters (Aviation) exercise initiative in developing solutions to common technical and procedural problems such as changes in priorities, need for extended field time, need for additional equipment or personnel, and other issues. However, the employee may seek direction or decision on the course to follow when encountering significant technical or procedural problems with the work. In such instances, the employee may be expected to develop solutions for resolving the problem. Review of work is usually in the form of an assessment as to how the employee resolved technical and operational problems encountered after the fact in many cases. These reviews emphasize the quality of judgment used by the employee in resolving technical and operational problems noted in reports or identified by those with whom the employee interacted.

### **Fire Management Planning Specialist GS-9**

1. GS-9 Fire Management Planning Specialists provides input for short and long- term strategic fire management planning, assessments, and interagency and/or unit fire management plans. They provide technical advice for coordinating and integrating fire management topics, issues, and solutions into non-fire program plans.
2. Assists in the development of local plans that reflect national, regional, and local management goals, requirements, and strategic objectives related to fire and aviation management. Fire Management Planning Specialist provides input for the development of plans and fire management alternatives in coordination with Regional Office, Forest and Grassland Office staff and other resource specialists.
3. Fire Management Planning Specialists at this level evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of fire and aviation management programs through periodic on-the-ground inspections or visits to field units. Participate in functional reviews and annual readiness inspections. Fire Management Planning Specialist coordinate with partner agencies and/or organizations on process, decisions, documentation, and analysis. Performs data collection and evaluation of fire hazard risk, fuels, historic fire occurrence, fire effects, climatology, and weather.
4. Fire Management Planning Specialist provides wildland fire planning technical support and coordination with fire management officers, land or resource management staff, and planners

throughout the local area under the guidance of their supervisor.

5. Fire Management Planning Specialist supervisor assigns specific projects in terms of issues, organizations, functions, or work processes to be studied and sets deadlines for completing the work. The supervisor provides assistance on controversial issues. The employee plans, coordinates, and carries out the successive steps in fact-finding and analysis of issues necessary to complete each phase of assigned projects. Work problems are normally resolved by the employee without reference to the supervisor. Work is reviewed for conformance with overall requirements as well as contribution to the objectives of the study. Complete work products are reviewed for consistency of facts and figures, choice of appropriate analytical methods, and practicality of recommendations. Findings and recommendations developed by the employee are reviewed prior to release, publication, or discussion with management officials.

### **Fire Management Planning Specialist GS-9**

1. GS-9 Fire Management Planning Specialists are responsible for development and delivery of interagency national, fire suppression, fire use, prescribed fire, and aviation management courses to an interagency fire community. GS-9 Fire Management Planning Specialist may also serve as a coordinator of an apprenticeship program.
2. GS-9 Fire Management Planning Specialists perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below. Duties include but are not limited to
  - a. Developing the process and procedures to obtain national and interagency identification of training needs and conducts an annual complex needs analysis to determine needs.
  - b. developing an inter/interagency training schedule for classes offered at the facility. Coordinates the selection of training cadres and staff for offered courses, and for space needed to deliver courses.
4. GS-9 Fire Management Planning Specialist participates actively on Fire management and suppression assignments, as an incident leader or individually, for the purpose of maintaining or increasing expertise in subject areas, or for acquiring information to be used in training courses, or to evaluate on the job performance of personnel following training.
5. GS-9 Fire Management Planning Specialist supervisor sets the overall objectives and resources available. The employee and supervisor, in consultation, develop the deadlines, projects, and work to be done. The employee, having developed expertise in the line of work, is responsible for planning and carrying out the assignment, resolving most of the conflicts that arise, coordinating the work with others as necessary, and interpreting policy on own initiative in terms of established objectives. In some assignments, the employee also determines the approach to be taken and the methodology to be used. The employee keeps the supervisor informed of progress and potentially controversial matters. Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, or effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results.

### **Fire Management Planning Specialist GS-11**

1. GS-11 Fire Management Planning Specialist provides local expertise for short and long-term strategic fire management planning, assessments, and interagency and/or unit fire management plans.
2. GS-11 Fire Management Planning Specialists perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below. Duties performed include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Developing local plans that reflect national, regional, and local management goals,

- requirements, and strategic objectives related to fire and aviation management.
  - b. Providing local planning analysis results for inclusion in regional and/or national forest and grasslands plans and analytical studies in fire and aviation management.
  - c. Using expertise to analyze and resolve unique problems relating to the development, execution, and monitoring of local fire management issues.
  - d. Supporting fire management plan development and analysis, utilizing expertise in Wildland Fire Decision Support System and National Fire Danger Rating System as well as through similar and/or emerging technologies.
  - e. Providing advice and guidance in adaptation of policies, standards, methods, and guidelines received from national and regional levels to local conditions.
  - f. Coordinating and integrating fire management topics, issues, and solutions into non-fire program plans.
  - g. Providing input to the development of plans and agreements, and working closely with counterparts from other federal, state, or local partner agencies.
2. GS-11 Fire Management Planning Specialists supervisor assigns work in terms of broad areas of responsibility, program emphasis, and key management concerns for special projects. The supervisor and employee confer on priorities and deadlines. The incumbent is independently responsible for conducting fire management analysis and planning, coordinating with others, and determining the approach to take to complete specific assignments. Recommendations are usually accepted as authoritative. Policy questions dealing with controversial issues are reviewed with the supervisor to achieve agreement or solution. Completed work is reviewed for the attainment of objectives.

### **Fire Management Planning Specialist GS-11**

1. GS-11 Fire Management Planning Specialist evaluate interagency fire management training and development programs and assists in the notification and development of new national and regional initiatives to meet workforce objectives. Fire Management Planning Specialists at this level serve as a technical advisor to the Fire Management Officer and unit level leadership in the area of training.
2. In addition to performing the duties described at the GS-9 level, GS-11 Fire Management Planning Specialists perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below. Duties include but are not limited to:
  - a. Implementing progressive strategies for outreach, recruitment, hiring, employee training and development, leadership development, retention, and organizational learning at the unit/zone level.
  - b. PARTICIPATES in fire operations to assess effectiveness and identify further needs for workforce training, changes to policy or protocol, formulation of standards, methods or guides for fire and aviation management program elements.
3. GS-11 Fire Management Planning Specialist supervisor and incumbent develop a mutually acceptable project plan which typically includes identification of the work to be done, the scope of the project, and deadlines for its completion. Within the parameters of the approved project plan, the incumbent is responsible for planning and organizing the program direction and work, estimating costs for the program, coordinating with staff and subject matter expert personnel, and conducting all phases of the project. The incumbent informs the supervisor of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems with widespread impact. Completed projects, evaluations, reports, or recommendations are reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives.

## PART II - FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ELEMENTS

While consideration of the above factors is basic to reflecting the level of difficulty of occupations generally, there are a number of elements common to most positions in this series which are of special significance in evaluating the complexity of individual fire management programs, and hence in establishing the levels of the positions involved. These elements relate to situational and environmental influences affecting positions. These Fire Management Program Elements are especially important in reflecting more specifically the nature and variety of work and other pertinent factors. While it is true that most fire management positions will involve considerations of these elements, the degree to which they are present often varies significantly. In view of this, degrees of each of these elements are described as an aid in determining the relative program complexity and level of position. The elements when considered collectively illustrate "Fire Management Programs of Limited Complexity," "Moderately Complex Fire Management Programs," and "Complex Fire Management Programs." It should be recognized that, although the elements described are significant and important in estimating the complexity of the fire management program, they are only indicators of the difficulty of individual positions and not precise measures to be applied mechanically without the use of overall judgments about the level of the work performed. The user of these standards is expected to go beyond the specific numbers and take into account the total duties and responsibilities of positions. Average figures should be used in evaluating elements which are expressed in numerical values. The statistical data used in evaluating these elements should be based on long range cycles that accurately reflect the overall scope and complexity of the fire management programs. Judgment is required in determining the specific degree applicable in each of the elements, for example, in determining the number of risks or causing agents present in a particular area. Consideration should be given to the effect that the different types of risks actually have on the scope and complexity of the fire management program. Credit should not be given to risks when these do not contribute materially to the overall difficulty of the fire management program or to individual positions. For example, a major highway cutting through or traversing the length of a forest should be considered a risk. However, a seldom-used jogging road or a major highway touching the tip of a forest would not contribute materially to the complexity of the fire management program and thus should not be considered as a risk.

Usually, the individual elements of fire management programs evaluate to several different degrees of difficulty and complexity. Seldom will all of the program elements for a particular area evaluate to the same degree of difficulty. Careful consideration should be given to the composite effect that the majority of program elements have on the overall difficulty, responsibility, and complexity of a particular position. These elements and degrees employ the use of numerical criteria expressed in broad ranges and narrative statements which are judgmental in nature. Three degrees of program difficulty and complexity are described are representative of typical fire management positions. In the overall evaluation, consideration should be given to the organizational level (e.g., state, district, region, national forest, or higher-level organization) of the positions, since this has a significant impact upon the scope of decisions, supervision received and exercised, personal contacts/purpose of contacts, and other factors.

The fire management program elements below include three ratings – Degree C: Low, Degree B: Middle, and Degree A: High. Select one of the three ratings for each of the elements that include the rating scale below.

### RATING SCALE

<b>DEGREE C: LOW</b>	<b>DEGREE B: MIDDLE</b>	<b>DEGREE A: HIGH</b>
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**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

1) **Size of Area Protected.** Number of acres of forest and range land requiring protection.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
Less than 260,000	250,000 to 1 million	Over 1 million

2) **Weather and Climate** - This includes typical conditions of wind, humidity, and temperature in the area, as they are related to the difficulty of fire management planning, suppression, state of trained readiness required, and staff and equipment needs. These aspects are considered as they affect fire behavior, rate of spread, and seriousness of fire potential.

C. Extended periods of low humidity are rare. Rainfall occurs intermittently during the fire season with rarely more than 30 days without significant rainfall.

B. There are often periods of more than 30 days without measurable precipitation except for scattered thunderstorms. Critical wind conditions occur at least once each fire season; e.g., chinooks, east winds, cold front passages.

A. Forest areas are characterized by Mediterranean climate, with fire seasons of eight months or more; e.g., the Southern California forests.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
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3) **Topography and Accessibility** - Nature of the topography and the degree of accessibility to the area. Considered is the severity of these ground conditions as they affect fire behavior, rate of spread, and special control problems, and the complexity and intensity of fire prevention and fire management methods.

C. Most of the area is flat to rolling with differences in elevation usually not over 600 feet and few obstacles (such as rock cliffs, bluffs, washes, or other conditions) which prevent free movement of manpower and equipment in the construction of control lines or create special safety hazards. Usually less than 50% of the area is inaccessible to motor transportation.

B. The area is moderately steep with slopes ranging from 20% to 50%; elevations from valley bottoms and ridge tops usually vary between 500 ft to 3000 ft; on 10% to 40% of the area obstacles such as rock cliffs, deep gullies, water barriers, and rock outcrops prevent free movement of staff and equipment in constructing fire lines and create special safety hazards in fire suppression work. From 50% to 75% of the area is usually inaccessible to motor transportation.

A. Over 50% of the area is steep mountainous terrain with slopes ranging generally from 50% to 100%, cut up by deep canyons and high mountain ridges; differences in elevation between canyon bottoms and mountain tops often exceed 3000 ft. It is not possible to construct control lines effectively and safely without extreme cost and danger to staff and equipment; rocks, cliffs, deep canyons, and steep side slopes limit free movement of staff and equipment; fires burn erratically because of the varying steepness of slope and can frequently sweep rapidly from canyon bottoms to mountain tops, and direction of spread is materially influenced by the rough topographic features. Usually over 75% of the area is inaccessible to motor transportation.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
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4) **Fuels and Hazard** - Fuel classification provides a method for judging the complexity of fire

management in terms of rate of spread and resistance to control. For example, fuels with low rate of spread and low resistance to control represent significantly less complexity and fire potential than fuels with high rate of spread and high resistance to control.

C. Areas where the fuel type is classed as low rate of spread and low resistance to control or low-medium or medium-low.

B. At least 50% of the area classed as medium-medium, high-low, or low-high.

A. At least 50% of the area classed as high rate of spread and high resistance to control; or at least 10% in this category and 50% or more classed as high-medium or medium high.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
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### RISK CHARACTERISTICS

1) **Human-caused Fires.** Number of human-caused fires, annually.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
Below 10	10-50	More than 50

**Visitation** - Average annual number of visitors to area during fire season.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
Less than 30,000	30,000 1 million	Over 1 million

### A. CAUSING AGENTS

Causing Agents - This element includes a variety of different types of uses or operations which create fire danger situations and fire hazards, and present problems of fire prevention and control. The following causing agents should be considered only when the fire history of the area indicates that the causing agents have resulted in frequent fires which have contributed to the difficulty of the fire management program. (Rate the element on the basis of a combination of the two categories listed below.)

(1) Logging; (2) sawmills; (3) mining; (4) railroads; (5) major resort areas; (6) construction activities and projects; (7) towns and villages; (8) dense urban populations; (9) heavy-use campgrounds; (10) industrial plants; and (11) areas where incendiarism or lightning strikes represent significant problems of fire prevention and management.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
Less than 3	3 to 6	7 or more

**B. MINOR CAUSING AGENTS**

(1) Power lines; (2) defense installations and sites; (3) private residences; (4) public highways; (5) high voltage power lines; (6) telephone lines; (7) public dumps and incinerators; (8) power generating plants; (9) public utilities, systems, and facilities; (10) television and radio installations; (11) apiaries; (12) TV and motion picture locations; (13) regular commercial aircraft routes; (14) regular military aircraft use; and (15) farms, ranches, livestock operations, and other privately owned land uses.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
Less than 5	5 to 10	11 or more

**PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS**

1) **Size of Fire Management Work Force**- This element concerns the number of fire management personnel. These are General Schedule and Federal Wage System employees whose positions are established for the primary purpose of performing fire management work. The size of the regular work force reflects many of the other elements (fire history, size of the area, presence of potential risks, extent of logging operations, etc.) which are taken into consideration by management in staffing the organization to provide an adequate fire management program for the specific area.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
Less than 25	25 to 150	Over 150

2) **Cost of Extinction** -This element reflects the scope and responsibility involved in the organizing, planning, directing, and controlling of fire management work, and to show how the level of difficulty of the duties involved in carrying out the responsibility is reflected in the history of the cost of extinguishing fires.

C. Fire management work as characterized in an area where the fire history shows that fire extinguishing costs are typically under \$50,000.

B. Difficulty of the planning and management work is characterized by areas where fire history shows a fire extinguishing cost pattern for the largest fires between \$50,000 to \$800,000, with no major fires over \$800,000 except a rare occurrence which has not resulted in a significant change in area operation.

A. Organizing, planning, and managing are major considerations in an area which has a history of major fires, e.g., one or more major fires in the past five years which cost \$800,000 or over to extinguish.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
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3) **Fire History** - Average Number of Fires per Year- The fire occurrence history of the area indicates probable future occurrence and the difficulty of planning, difficulty of prevention, and general scope of the fire management assignment.

DEGREE C: LOW	DEGREE B: MIDDLE	DEGREE A: HIGH
Less than 25	26 to 126	Over 126

The numerous possible combinations of degree evaluations which can exist in the variety of work situations present make it impractical to set any hard and fast rule as to what combinations of A, B, and C evaluations equate to a specific overall level of program complexity. However, as a general rule, programs which show an individual element evaluation pattern of 6 A's and most of the remainder at B are considered "Complex;" programs which show a pattern of 6 C's and most of the remainder at B are considered programs of "Limited Complexity;" and "Moderately Complex" programs will usually reflect a pattern of more even distribution of the number of A, B, and C evaluations, for example, 3 to 4A's, 3 to 4B's and 3 to 4C's. A breakdown of this criteria is also provided below.

#### **Element Evaluation Breakdown**

<b>Element Evaluation</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
Complex	6 A's and most of the remainder at B	Mostly A's
Moderately Complex	3 to 4A's, 3 to 4B's and 3 to 4C's	A pattern of more even distribution of A, B, and C evaluations
Limited Complexity	6 C's and most of the remainder at B	Mostly C's

As stated above, in addition to the pattern of degree evaluations, consideration should be given to the organizational level of these positions as this is reflected in the various factors of scope of decisions, supervision received and exercised, person-to-person relationships, and others. For example, a degree evaluation of a national forest level fire management program may indicate a complex program, and one or more districts within this forest may also evaluate as complex based on the elements alone. However, a reasonable interpretation of the other classification factors in such a situation indicates that the district fire prevention technician should be at a level below their counterpart positions at the forest level.

**FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POSITION ILLUSTRATIONS****Fire Management Officer GS-7**

1. GS-7 Fire Management Officer directs a fire management program of limited complexity. They perform substantially the full range of duties set forth below:
  - a. Serve as technical assistants to district officials who are responsible for directing resource management programs and perform a variety of staff, administrative, and supervisory duties in directing fire management programs. Typically they: make analytical and factfinding surveys and reports on fire management needs and problems; plan and carry out fire prevention campaigns, damage surveys, and trespass reviews; apply practical fire management techniques to fire behavior problems; plan, schedule, direct, inspect, and review fire management programs and make recommendations concerning fire management activities; select, train, assign, review, and evaluate work performance of fire management personnel; estimate labor and equipment needs based on fire expectancy and potential; negotiate firefighting agreements with officials of industrial concerns; determine staffing needs for fire positions; make cooperative arrangements with representatives of local, State, and other Federal agencies; direct suppression action on larger fires; inspect work of subordinates in suppressing smaller fires; and take charge of suppression forces when fires get out of control.
  - b. Perform various combinations of duties described for Wildland Firefighter (Prevention) at the GS-7 level. In addition, they: direct cooperative programs between the agency and representatives of business, civil, and educational organizations, public utilities, county and State road departments and law enforcement agencies, and other Government agencies and organizations; inspect hazardous areas owned by others and recommend on hazard reduction; survey cut-over forest areas, classify according to degree of hazard, and develop plans for slash disposal and risk reduction projects; direct crews in prescribed burning and slash disposal activities involving fuels with a high rate of spread and resistance to management in rugged topography; and ensure that fire forces are qualified and are in a state of readiness to meet the fire management needs of the district.
2. GS-7 Fire Management Officer work under the general supervision of higher-level officials who outline broad program objectives, review, and approve program plans, and coordinate fire management work with other activities. Supervisors furnish help and assistance in the development of annual work schedules, plans, and budgets, in conducting prescribed burns, and in other work problems. Supervisors periodically review overall work performance to ensure that the fire management program is being carried out adequately in accordance with established plans, policies, and annual work schedules.
3. Personal work contacts include those described under various specializations described at the GS-7 level and below. Frequently incumbents represent their supervisors and handle more difficult public relations problems relating to disposal of hazards, fire prevention or law enforcement problems, hazardous slash situations, and other industrial problems. They have contacts with press and radio representatives regarding their fire management program, fire conditions, and the progress or status of fires.
4. GS-7 Fire Management Officer make a variety of significant decisions relating to all phases of the fire management program in their assigned areas. Their decisions and recommendations are based upon a substantive knowledge of the overall program and an intimate and detailed knowledge of day-to-day operations. Their recommendations and decisions relate to matters such as: (1) adequacy of fire management plans; (2) changes to be made in fire management operations

or procedures; (3) administrative decisions relating to the fire management program; (4) personnel and equipment requirements; (5) interpretation of policies and procedures; (6) when fire conditions will safely permit the removal of personnel at the end of the fire season; and (7) when to commit the agency to specific courses of action.

5. GS-7 Fire Management Officers plan, supervise, direct, and coordinate all phases of fire management work performed by wildland firefighting forces and support staff. They direct the work of a number of regular fire management personnel and other personnel during fire suppression activities (for example, from 5 to 15 regular fire management personnel and from 15 to 76 others). Fire Management Officer exercise both administrative and technical supervision over subordinates and are expected to provide guidance, leadership, and overall direction to accomplish fire management program plans, programs, and objectives in their assigned areas.

### **Fire Management Officer GS-9**

1. GS-9 Fire Management Officers direct fire management programs of moderate complexity. They perform many of the same individual tasks as described for Fire Management Officer at the GS-7 level. Their more difficult duties and responsibilities result primarily from the greater size, scope, and complexity of the fire management program that they direct. At this level fire management officers make recommendations and decisions and take courses of action to protect forests and other resources from fire where damage or destruction would result in serious losses because of commercial or other values. Their work is complicated by environmental situations such as: frequent critical climatic conditions which contribute to the occurrence of fires and to the difficulty, variety, and intensity of fire suppression problems; extensive logging operations which create large quantities of slash and increase fire hazard reduction responsibilities; complex vegetative and fuel type combinations in the area which increase fire potential and result in continuous fire management problems; and intensive public use that results in frequent human-caused fires which require intense planning and leadership to carry out active and continuous fire prevention program.
2. Fire Management Officer at this level have greater and more significant supervisory responsibilities as reflected by the size, complexity, and diversity of the work force which they direct. They direct a number of regular fire management personnel and other agency personnel and cooperators during fire suppression activities (for example, from 25 to 75 regular fire management personnel and from 75 to 300 others). GS-9 Fire Management Officer are relied upon to assign and reassign crews, various Wildland Firefighters of various specializations and other fire personnel to various shifts and stations in the organization; maintain stability of the fire management force where frequently changing workloads, staffing requirements, and tempo of operations create problems; solve extremely difficult and unusual technical fire management problems; and formulate long-range plans to ensure that an effective fire management program is being carried out in their assigned area.
3. Other factors such as personal work contacts and recommendations and decisions differ principally from those at GS-7 in the greater degree of responsibility present with respect to the importance of personal work contacts; greater importance of long-range planning; and the effect of decisions made in terms of the size and complexity of the staff directed and the significance and consequence of decisions.

### **Fire Management Officer GS-11**

1. GS-11 Fire Management Officer are assigned responsibility for directing all phases of fire management programs on forests with moderately complex fire management programs. They provide staff leadership, guidance, and direction to all phases of fire management programs including fire prevention, dispatching, suppression, and post-suppression and perform substantially the full range of

duties set forth below:

- a. Develop and maintain overall fire management plans for the organization covering a variety of activities such as: placement of lookout towers; need for aerial patrols and aerial observation routes; hazard reduction projects; staffing requirements; procedures and specifications for construction of landing spots, fire camps, staging areas, fire lanes and barriers, and water facilities; organizational requirements for supplies, materials, equipment, and facilities. standardized mapping and record keeping systems; strategic locations of fire forces; prevention inspection schedules and workload requirements; initial attack methods; operating procedures; operational methods for managing and suppressing large fires; policies and procedures for operating and maintaining communications systems and facilities; and fire management training programs needs and requirements.
  - b. Advise and assist subordinate officials and employees of the organization in the preparation and consolidation of plans for fire prevention training of cooperators and agency personnel, staffing fire prevention, dispatching, prescribed burning, use of new equipment or techniques, use of aerial tankers or helicopters, fire suppression, and cooperator participation. Coordinate plans submitted by subordinate organizations, develop master plans, and provide staff technical direction in the execution of master plans throughout the organization.
  - c. Develop, formulate, and recommend standard operating methods and procedures for use throughout the organization in conformance with broad agency guides.
  - d. Make periodic inspections of the fire management organization and operations for compliance with approved plans, rules, regulations, and standards to ensure that an adequate and effective fire management force is being maintained. Inspect and evaluate the effectiveness and timeliness of fire prevention and fire dispatching operations and programs. Make aerial and ground observations of fire fighting forces, equipment, and facilities during fire suppression operations to ensure adequacy, efficiency, timeliness, speed of action, and effectiveness. Prepare reports of findings and make recommendations for correction of deficiencies or steps required to improve operations or programs.
  - e. Plan, coordinate, direct, and participate in training courses for agency personnel, cooperators, and others covering all phases of the fire management program including methods, techniques, and practices of fire prevention, emergency and special suppression techniques, fire suppression, civilian defense training, and leadership of staff and crews in fire situations. Develop course materials, plan demonstrations, and develop training schedules.
  - f. As required, contract for the use of airplanes and other special equipment, emergency hiring of personnel, and purchase of services, supplies, and equipment during fire emergencies. On short notice, take action to mobilize reserve, emergency, or "standby" fire fighting forces.
  - g. Direct the preparation and consolidation of annual budgets for fire management programs, taking into account funds to expend for salaries, supplies, new facilities, and equipment, etc., to ensure adequate staff, equipment, and facilities to protect natural resources from fire.
  - h. Review or prepare reports concerning fire trespass, fire damage, or fire damage appraisals. Recommend or determine action to take in law enforcement cases and on the adequacy of fire damage appraisals. Review damage and trespass cases involving large sums of money to determine soundness of the Government's case and to recommend appropriate action required. Participate in or conduct boards of review held for the purpose of reviewing fire action taken on large fires.
  - i. Direct suppression operations on large or complex fires as required by the severity of the fire or by the requirements of a particular fire.
2. Fire Management Officers at this level work under the general direction of agency officials who manage extensive areas of Federal forest and range land. They are delegated authority to organize the fire management program based on broad outlines and to commit their organization to courses of action. They are held responsible for conducting their work independently and for the adequacy and appropriateness of methods and procedures used to achieve a sound and effective fire management program. Their work is reviewed or accomplishment of broad program objectives and for the

suitability and consistency of standards, operating policies, and procedures that they develop.

3. They maintain extensive and varied personal work contacts with agency officials, officials of other Government agencies Federal, State, and local), officials of large industrial concerns, cooperators, law enforcement officials, and the general public. They maintain work relationships with law enforcement agencies, cooperators in fire prevention campaigns, and other groups. Fire Management Officers participate in negotiations with timber protective associations and with other agency officials in the development of agreements by which 1) isolated Federal lands under the jurisdiction of Federal agencies will be protected by the appropriate organization or State or (2) privately owned forest lands intermingled with Federal lands will be protected by Federal agencies. They participate with local leaders in the development of safety, health, and civil defense plans, and coordinate and integrate the use of fire management resources with those of safety, health, and civil defense organizations. Fire Management Officers deal with the most difficult or controversial public information or relations problems to explain the agency's operating policies, endeavor to secure cooperation, or resolves points of differences in connection with agreements or respass cases.
4. GS-11 Fire Management Officers are usually delegated authority to assume command of suppression action and may relieve subordinate officials when such action is indicated by inadequate progress in managing fires. They make a variety of decisions and recommendations relating to: strategy to be used in managing major fires; organizational training needs to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of fire management forces; adequacy of subordinate organizations in terms of staffing, qualifications, equipment, facilities, etc.; appropriateness and effectiveness of fire management standards ; establishment of work priorities; methods to use in slash disposal and prescribed burning programs; budget needs; use of aerial tankers and helicopters, and placement of ground forces and equipment to effectively manage large fires, save lives, and save natural resources; placement of lookout stations; qualifications of fire personnel and contract pilots; use of aerial procedures; establishment of aerial routes, etc.

### **Fire Management Officer GS-12**

1. GS-12 Fire Management Officers are assigned responsibility for directing all phases of complex fire management programs, typically at forest levels. They perform many of the same individual tasks described for Fire Management Officers at the GS-11 level. Their more difficult duties and responsibilities result primarily from the greater size, scope, and complexity of the fire management program they direct which includes various combinations of environmental situations such as: critical conditions and combinations of moisture, wind, and temperatures; high concentrations of lightning-caused fires; numerous incendiary problems; extreme fire hazards due to large areas of snags or slush; and heavy or highly inflammable fuel types creating difficult management problems. They devote a greater portion of their time to coordinate fast-moving and complex fire management activities and plan and develop specialized training courses designed to fit the particular needs of the fire management program. They negotiate complicated cooperative agreements and resolve difficult and controversial public relations problems with large and influential groups.
2. Supervisory controls are essentially the same as those described at the GS-11 level. Fire Management Officers at this level are delegated authority to carry out work operations and achieve program objectives. The supervisor is available for consultation on questions of long-range policy, changes in resources management plans, and clarification of program objectives or of controversial issues. The supervisor reviews the officer's work by periodically checking the overall fire management program for adequacy or for correlation with other major resource management programs.
3. The decisions and commitments made by Fire Management Officers at this level reflect the greater variety, scope, and complexity of fire management problems as indicated by program elements such

as the size and fire history of the area, size and complexity of fire management staff forces, potential risks present, or extensive logging operations. They have authority to deviate from established precedents and practices, submit recommendations to higher authority on the appropriateness of existing systems and potential use of experimental systems and methods, or propose changes in fire management systems, methods, or techniques based on fire management experience of the area.

4. Many of the personal work contacts are similar to those described for GS-11 Fire Management Officer. They differ principally because of the greater degree of responsibility present with respect, importance of personal work contacts in terms of long-range promotional campaigns or educational undertakings, development of extensive mutual aid protection plans with large and influential groups, and dealings with manufacturers' representatives in the development of new fire management items or equipment.

### **Fire Management Officer GS-13**

1. GS-13 Fire Management Officer are assigned responsibility for directing all phases of a very complex fire management program exceeding those described at the GS-12 level. They perform many of the same individual tasks described for Fire Management Officers at the GS-11 and 12 levels. Their more difficult duties and responsibilities result primarily from the greater size, scope, and complexity of the fire management program they direct which includes various combinations of environmental situations such as: critical conditions and combinations of moisture, wind, and temperatures; high concentrations of lightning-caused fires; numerous incendiary problems; extreme fire hazards due to large areas of snags or slush; and heavy or highly inflammable fuel types creating difficult management problems. They devote a greater portion of their time to coordinate fast-moving and complex fire management activities and plan and develop specialized training courses designed to fit the particular needs of the fire management program. They negotiate complicated cooperative agreements and resolve the most difficult and controversial public relations problems with large and influential groups which is made more complex due the large coverage area.
2. Supervisory controls are essentially the same as those described at the GS-11 and 12 level. Fire Management Officers at this level are delegated authority to carry out work operations and achieve program objectives. The supervisor is available for consultation on questions of long-range policy, changes in resources management plans, and clarification of program objectives or of controversial issues. The supervisor reviews the officer's work by periodically checking the overall fire management program for adequacy or for correlation with other major resource management programs.
3. The decisions and commitments made by Fire Management Officers at this level reflect the greater variety, scope, and complexity of fire management problems as indicated by program elements such as the size and fire history of the area, size and complexity of fire management forces, potential risks present, and extensive logging operations. They have authority to deviate from established precedents and practices, often submit recommendations to higher authority on the appropriateness of existing systems and potential use of experimental systems and methods, and propose changes in fire management systems, methods, or techniques based on fire management experience of the area.
4. Many of the personal work contacts are similar to those described for GS-11 and GS-12 Fire Management Officers. They differ principally because of the greater degree of responsibility present with respect, importance of personal work contacts in terms of long-range promotional campaigns or educational undertakings, development of extensive mutual aid protection plans with large and influential groups, and dealings with manufacturers' representatives in the development of new fire management items or equipment.

## PART III - EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

### KEY DATES AND MILESTONES

The “Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act”, Public Law 117-58, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was enacted on November 15, 2021. This Act called for the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to coordinate with the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to develop a distinct “wildland firefighter” occupational series.

The Forest and Range Fire Control Series, GS-0456, was originally established in October 1948 to cover what is now referred to as “wildland firefighting”. This occupational series was retired from use in 1972 by request of the primary using agencies, due to low use of the occupational series and position management needs; i.e., mixed series work performance over time impacting position classification. The work has been classified primarily in the Forestry Technician, GS-0462, and various other series since the retirement of the Forest and Range Fire Control Series, GS-0456.

Beginning in **November 2021**, OPM, initiated a study of wildland firefighting. Throughout this process, OPM worked closely with Federal agencies, and other key stakeholders governmentwide to update and reestablish this occupation. Using scientific methodologies and evidence-based approaches, OPM collected occupational information and data, conducted focus groups, and evaluated focus group data/information to inform the development of the Wildland Fire Management, GS-0456 series and PCS.

OPM worked with agencies through the end of **March 2022**, to finalize data collection and to analyze data for this study.

In **April 2022**, OPM held focus groups with technical wildland fire fighter Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), Human Resources SMEs, and union representatives. OPM shared language from the Draft Wildland Fire Management, 0456, series position classification standard with agency SMEs and union representatives. Agencies and focus group participants were asked to provide comments regarding proposed updates to the series definitions, occupational information, the series coverage information, position titles, and other key aspects of the work to reflect current terminology and work performed. OPM incorporated agency comments in preparation of the release of the Wildland Fire Management, 0456 series.

In **June 2022**, OPM released the Position Classification Standard for Wildland Fire Management, 0456.

## RESULTS OF AGENCY REVIEW AND COMMENTS

### 1. Distinguishing between Technical, Administrative and Professional Work

**Agency Comments:** Wildland Firefighter work was noted to be currently classified in multiple series to include single grade interval Technical work, two grade interval Administrative and two grade interval Professional work.

**Our Response:**

- a. Wildland fire management work may involve duties, responsibilities, assignments, and work objectives comparable in difficulty to those of professional forestry positions. However, positions properly assigned to this series were not found to require the broad professional knowledge and abilities required for full performance in the Forestry Series and therefore do not require education equivalent in type, scope, and thoroughness to that represented by completion of a full four-year accredited college curriculum leading to a bachelor's degree. The job analysis conducted for this study did not substantiate education as a mandatory requirement for performance of the Wildland fire management work included in this occupational study.
- b. Agencies are reminded that 5 U.S. Code § 3308 precludes the Office of Personnel Management or other examining agency from prescribing a minimum educational requirement for an examination for the competitive service except when the Office decides that the duties of a scientific, technical, or professional position cannot be performed by an individual who does not have a prescribed minimum education. Additionally, agencies can only establish requirements for specific credentials, registration, licenses, or certificates when they are necessary for satisfactory job performance. This must be validated by a job analysis which sustains the requirement. These are usually position related and fairly limited in coverage.
- c. Agencies are reminded of the following Professional, Administrative, and Technical definitions of work that describes the general characteristics of work as described in the [Introduction to the Position Classification Standards](#) and found on the following page:

<b>Professional</b>	<b>Administrative</b>	<b>Technical</b>
<p>Professional work requires knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor’s or higher degree with major study in or pertinent to the specialized field, as distinguished from general education. Work is professional when it requires the exercise of discretion, judgment, and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations, and to improve data, materials, and methods. There are situations in which an employee meets the formal education requirements for a particular professional field but does not perform professional work. This may be due to a lack of professional work to be done, or it may be because the organization and structure of the assignment does not require a professionally qualified employee. In such situations, the position is classified in an appropriate nonprofessional series, based on the duties and responsibilities assigned and the qualifications required to do the work. Professional occupational series follow a two-grade interval pattern and are identified as professional in the series definitions. If a series definition does not state that the work covered is professional, it should not be considered professional for classification purposes.</p>	<p>Administrative work involves the exercise of analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and personal responsibility, and the application of a substantial body of knowledge of principles, concepts, and practices applicable to one or more fields of administration or management. While these positions do not require specialized education, they do involve the type of skills (analytical, research, writing, judgment) typically gained through a college level education, or through progressively responsible experience. Administrative work may be performed as a part of the principal mission or program of an agency or subcomponent, or it can be performed as a service function which supports the agency’s mission or program. Employees engaged in administrative work are concerned with analyzing, evaluating, modifying, and developing the basic programs, policies, and procedures which facilitate the work of Federal agencies and their programs. They apply a knowledge of administrative analysis, theory, and principles in adapting practice to the unique requirements of a particular program. Administrative occupational series typically follow a two-grade interval pattern.</p>	<p>Technical work is typically associated with and supportive of a professional or administrative field. It involves extensive practical knowledge, gained through experience and/or specific training less than that represented by college graduation. Work in these occupations may involve substantial elements of the work of the professional or administrative field, but requires less than full knowledge of the field involved. Technical employees carry out tasks, methods, procedures, and/or computations that are laid out either in published or oral instructions and covered by established precedents or guidelines. Depending upon the level of difficulty of the work, these procedures often require a high degree of technical skill, care, and precision. Some technical work may appear similar to that performed by employees doing beginning professional or administrative work in the same general occupational field. Technical work, however, typically follows a one-grade interval pattern and does not require the application of knowledge and skills equivalent to those required for two-grade interval work. Classification decisions are based on duties and responsibilities, qualifications required, career patterns, management’s intent in designing the position, the purpose of the work, and recruiting sources.</p>

## 2. Position Classification and Pay System

**Agency Comments:** Agencies commented during stakeholder engagement activities (e.g., focus groups, meetings) that the classification updates would fix the pay issues.

**Our Response:**

- a. The position classification standard includes guidance for agencies to use to identify the key components of a position including the definition of work, titles, duties/responsibilities, knowledge required to perform the work, and the grading criteria for evaluating the work. Although the core elements align with grading criteria, the grading criteria is not representative of pay.
- b. Designing a compensation system or pay schedule is a separate entity that is based on core factors such as the value of work in terms of the design of the work. Key attributes of a compensation system include a person based versus a position-based system. Designing a compensation strategy is based on many factors including benchmarking studies and market-based pay research. The purpose of position classification is not to set pay or design a compensation system per se. The purpose of position classification is to identify the core duties and responsibilities for performing work, which may be leveraged to conduct studies on pay.

## 3. Position Classification and Retirement System

**Agency Comments:** Agencies commented during stakeholder engagement activities (e.g., focus groups, meetings) that the classification updates would fix the retirement coverage determination issues.

**Our Response:** The retirement system coverage has no relationship to position classification i.e., determination of title, series, and grade. Agencies are reminded the need to apply 5 CFR § 831.902 appropriately and make the retirement system determination for each position.

## 4. Dispatcher Work and Wildland Firefighting Work

**Agency Comments:** Agencies provided information collected during the literature review phase of the study and during focus groups about the various positions that are associated with wildland fire management work. This work included dispatcher positions responsible for deploying staff and equipment to incidents. Dispatcher positions are currently classified in both the Forestry Technician, GS-0462 and the Dispatching Series, GS-2151 series.

**Our Response:**

- a. Reviews of organizational charts and position descriptions indicated positions in both series working side by side and performing identical duties in many cases.
- b. During the focus groups with the lead agencies some Subject Matter Experts (SME) commented on the current use of both series not advocating for one over the other. SMEs

provided evidence that dispatcher work is appropriately classified in the GS-2151 Dispatcher Series. There was no absolute requirement for individuals performing dispatcher functions to have fire management knowledge. As a result, an individual without knowledge in wildland fire management work may qualify as a dispatcher and perform the duties of a dispatcher successfully. In addition, focus group discussions indicated the difference in the classification determination of these positions was being driven by retirement system eligibility and benefit differences versus the actual work performed and the qualifications required to perform the work; e.g., dispatch positions were often assigned to the Forestry Technician, GS-0462, series and used to accommodate firefighting employees with on-the-job injuries specifically. The purposeful misclassification of positions can conflict with Merit Systems Principles (5 USC § 2301(b)(1)) and result in the commission of a Prohibited Personnel Practice (5 USC § 2302(b)(6)).

- c. Due to these findings, work involving dispatching work was excluded from coverage of this series and is specifically identified in **Additional Occupational Considerations**. Agencies are reminded that the retirement system determinations are a separate issue to be determined independently from position classification determinations.

## 5. Grade Coverage and Career Progression.

**Agency Comments:** Agencies requested work in this series be established at the grade level 1 through 15 to allow for career and pay progression.

### **Our Response:**

- a. OPM occupational studies identify the core duties and responsibilities for performing work. The range of work is contingent on the duties and responsibilities of positions. Federal agencies are delegated authority to classify their positions and assign work. Agencies are not precluded from assigning grades based on their analysis of work. Agencies may extend grading criteria in OPM position classification standards based on their analysis of work and mission.
- b. All OPM GS Position Classification Standards are consistent with the grade-level definitions of work established by law (5 U.S.C. 5104). These definitions are based on the difficulty and responsibility of the work at each level and the qualifications required to do that work.
- c. Classification standards which have grade level criteria normally describe typical grades for the work covered identified through occupational study. Jobs within an occupation frequently vary so extensively throughout the government that it is not possible to reflect in a standard all the possible combinations and permutations of duties and responsibilities. Proper application of standards, therefore, requires the use of judgment rather than just a mechanical matching of specific words or phrases in standards. This does not preclude agencies from properly classifying positions at levels above or below the grade range specifically described in the standard. Such grades are

determined by extending the criteria as needed to meet specific job situations as described in the [Introduction to Position Classification Standards, Primary Standard](#).

- d. Although the Federal classification system is not a pay plan, it is vital to the structure and administration of employee compensation. The pay system is influenced not only by the grade level of positions but also by other factors, such as quality of performance, length of service, and recruitment and retention considerations. The pay system can be changed independently of the classification system as shown by the enactment of the Federal Employees' Pay Comparability Act of 1990.
- e. Agencies have considerable discretionary authority to provide additional compensation and leave benefits to support their recruitment and retention efforts. These flexibilities include special rates, recruitment, relocation, and retention incentives, as well as student loan repayments and leave flexibilities. Information on these flexibilities can be found on the [OPM Pay and Leave Policy Website](#).

**6. Work Classified in the General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences, 0401 and Miscellaneous Administration and Program, 0301 Series and Coverage by the Wildland Fire Management 0456 PCS**

**Agency Comments:** Agencies presented data and illustrative position descriptions of Wildland Fire Management work classified to both the General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences, 0401 and Miscellaneous Administration and Program, 0301, series.

**Our Response:** Position descriptions and information reviewed indicated proper coverage by the Wildland Fire Management Series, 0456. Agencies must review these positions for proper series coverage.

Wildland Firefighting fire management work may involve duties, responsibilities, assignments, and work objectives comparable in difficulty to those of professional forestry positions, i.e., positions properly classified to the Forestry Series, 0460. However, positions properly assigned to this series were not found to require the broad professional knowledges and abilities required for full performance in the Forestry Series and therefore do not require education equivalent in type, scope, and thoroughness to that represented by completion of a full four-year accredited college curriculum leading to a bachelor's degree. Job Analysis did not substantiate college education as a mandatory requirement for performance of the Wildland Firefighting fire management work included in this occupational study and covered by this standard.

Agencies are reminded that the Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series, 0301, covers positions which are to perform, supervise, or manage two-grade interval administrative or program work for which no other series is appropriate. The General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences, 0401 series cover positions that involve professional work in biology, agriculture, or related natural resource management when there is no other more appropriate series. Agencies must apply the Wildland Fire Management 456 PCS to determine the appropriate classification series for wildland firefighter positions.

## 7. Fire Engine Operation

**Agency Comments:** Agencies suggested the expanded usage of the parenthetical titles of Fire Engine Operation to include all staff assigned to work from an engine. Significant discussion was put forth at focus groups concerning the pros and cons of combining the work. It was relayed that this combination would positively correlate to agency organizational design, i.e., Engine Module.

### **Our Response:**

- a. It was determined the skill set required for operation of the vehicle and pumping mechanisms represented a unique skill set that was not required of all staff being transported to the fire by the vehicle.
- b. The duties performed and skills required by those being simply transported by engine was found to be in alignment with our basic titling of Wildland Firefighter. Adding the work covered by the basic title simply due to transport mechanism alone to the parenthetical title coverage would not add materially to the understanding and identification of the position.
- c. Parenthetical titles should be used only where it would be helpful or necessary to identify further the duties and responsibilities involved, and such duties and responsibilities reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work.

## 8. Helitack, Smokejumper and Aviation work

**Agency Comments:** Agencies suggested combining the parenthetical titles of Helitack, Smokejumper and Aviation to a single title.

- a. Significant discussion was put forth during focus groups with SMEs concerning the pros and cons of combining the specialized work described for the parenthetical titles.
- b. Agencies provided the following overarching major duties for portions of the Aviation work:
  - i. Parachutes into mountainous, remote, and/or rugged terrain and performs as a wildland firefighter to provide protection for life, property and assigned resources from wildland fire.
  - ii. Utilizes a variety of hand tools, saws, pumps, and firing equipment in the active suppression of wildfire.
  - iii. Serves as a parachute rigger to pack, repair, and maintain parachutes and related smokejumper parachute equipment.
  - iv. Maintains smokejumper and firefighting equipment, tools, and supplies.
- c. Agencies provided the following overarching major duties for portions of the Helitack work:
  - i. Transported by rotary wing aircraft to wildfires.

- ii. Provide initial attack, facilitate the arrival of additional personnel, and deploy the helicopter water bucket.
  - iii. Load helicopter personnel and cargo considering methods, weight distribution, the necessity for securing, total weight, etc. and complete manifests of personnel and equipment being transported to the fire or other work site.
  - iv. Inventories and inspects rotary winged aircraft accessories, fire tools, and equipment.
  - v. Exits rotary winged aircraft in remote areas to construct helispots, or to attack small fires, hot spots and spot fires.
  - vi. Rappels from hovering helicopter.
  - vii. Performs line work to include search and rescue operations.
  - viii. Participation and instruction of rappel training, oversight and inspection of life bearing rappel equipment (rappel ropes, descent device, rappel harness, helicopter rappel anchors).
  - ix. Responsible for the safe and efficient deployment of rappellers and cargo on incident and training missions from a variety of aircraft.
- d. Agencies provided the following overarching major duties for portions of the Aviation work:
- i. Operate and maintains unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), assist with detection, containment, extinguishing of fires; locating hot spots, firebreak breaches, and delivery water/fire retardant to the affected site.
  - ii. Mixes and loads aerial fire retardant to fixed wing aircraft,
  - iii. Establishes target identification and appropriate tactics and coordinates with appropriate personnel; orders additional air resources as needed,
  - iv. Coordinates and monitors parking of aircraft and base operations,
  - v. Coordinates incident airspace,
  - vi. Manages incident air traffic while coordinating with ground resources engaged in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire activities.
  - vii. Provides flight information such as incident location, heading, and radio frequencies to aircrew. Briefs on hazards and conditions that may affect air operations.
  - viii. Monitors incident aircraft and pilot flight hour limitations.

**Our Response:** While argument could be made that a single Aviation parenthetical title covering all aircraft related work may simplify the titling process, the skill sets related to the performance of work as described above in each area were found to be sufficiently unique to substantiate the separation of titling to appropriately cover each specialization.

## 9. Handcrew and Hotshot Work

**Agency Comments:** Agencies suggested combining work commonly referred to as Hotshot, Handcrew and Hotshot/Handcrew to a single title. Significant discussion was put forth at focus groups concerning the pros and cons of combining the work under a singular official title.

- a. Agencies provided the following overarching major duties for the work:
  - i. Perform work assigned to an organized fire crew that travel throughout the country to suppress wildfires.

- ii. Perform wildland fire suppression/ management/ control functions.
- iii. Utilize a variety of specialized tools, equipment, and techniques to actively suppress wildfires. Utilizes a variety of specialized tools, equipment, and techniques while actively suppressing wildfires, such as a Pulaski, shovel, McLeod, ax, and chainsaw to control the spread of wildfire.
- iv. During initial attack fire suppression activities, locates fireline, implements appropriate fireline construction methods (e.g., mineral soil scrape, cup trenching, removal of ladder fuels) necessary to stop fire spread and ensure completion to acceptable standard. Fireline construction, the use of pumps and engines, and hose lays using appropriate nozzles and adjustments resulting in the effective use of water and additives.
- v. Perform holding/patrol/mop-up operations.
- vi. Construct handlines in various vegetative types.
- vii. Participate in wildland fire and safety training in the techniques, practices, and methods of fire suppression and in the safe, efficient operation and use of tools, equipment, and vehicles used in fire suppression activities, with emphasis on those used for the particular function assigned.

**Our Response:** These duties were found to be consistent with the intent of the basic title of Wildland Firefighter and creating additional parenthetical titles would not add materially to the understanding and identification of the position. Parenthetical titles should be used only where it would be helpful or necessary to identify further the duties and responsibilities involved, and such duties and responsibilities reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work.

## 10. Parenthetical Titles

**Agency Comments:** Agencies suggested additional parenthetical titles to cover leadership, supervisory and managerial roles and other positions for organizational alignment. The following titling was proposed: Wildland Firefighter (Fire Engine Crew Leader); Wildland Firefighter (Helicopter Manager); Wildland Firefighter (Assistant Helicopter Manager); Wildland Firefighter (Hot Shot Squad Leader); Wildland Firefighter (Hot Shot Foreman); Wildland Firefighter (Hot Shot Superintendent); Wildland Firefighter (Lead Hotshot/Handcrew); Wildland Firefighter (Assistant Fire Management Officer); Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper Squad Leader); Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper Base Manager); Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper Loft Manager); Wildland Firefighter (Lead Suppression); Wildland Firefighter (Airbase Manager); Wildland Firefighter (Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS)); Wildland Firefighter (Fire Director) and other titling.

**Our Response:** The use of specific parenthetical titles for management, supervisory, and leader roles is inherent within titling flexibilities included in the PCS and aligned with classification titling policy. These types of positions would be identified through the use of appropriate prefix and suffix designations found in the PCS supplementing the base title and specialty parenthetical title if appropriate. This PCS includes instructions for evaluating and titling manager, supervisory, and leader positions. Additional guidance is provided in this PCS on using organizational titling.

Agencies are reminded that parenthetical titles should be used only where it would be helpful or necessary to identify further the duties and responsibilities involved, and such duties and responsibilities reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work. Additional titling guidance is provided below.

**Titling guidance for Supervisory and Leader positions is as follows:**

Add the prefix “Supervisory” to the basic title when the agency classifies the position as supervisory. If the position is covered by the General Schedule, refer to the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) for additional titling and grading information.

For supervisory and nonsupervisory positions that include managing the total internal Wildland Firefighting function for an agency, bureau, service, installation, or other organization, there can be only one Wildland Firefighting Officer for the organizational component and level served. Do not use the prefix, “Supervisory” in conjunction with this title, although the position may satisfy the definition of “supervisor” in the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#).

Titles such as Officer (e.g., Wildland Firefighting Officer), Administrator, or Manager (e.g., Wildland Firefighting Manager) may be substituted to denote a level of responsibility which inherently includes supervisor (Introduction to Position Classification Standards, page 15). Do not use the prefix, “Supervisory” in conjunction with this title, although the position may satisfy the definition of “supervisor” in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.

Add the prefix “Lead” to the basic title when the agency classifies the position as leader. If the position is covered by the General Schedule, refer to the [General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide](#) for additional titling and grading information.

## **11. Position Classification Evaluation Criteria.**

**Agency Comments:** During the focus groups meetings OPM requested information from agencies on the criteria for evaluating work.

**Our Response:** Agencies provided written responses in a narrative format describing core work and duties differentiated by grade level for each suggested specialty area. This information was used in the establishment of this position classification standard.

There are a number of possible ways of presenting, for purposes of analysis and classification, the essential characteristics of work. For this reason, classification standards and guides have different formats and include a variety of evaluation elements. The most common formats of classification standards are:

- Narrative – Standards describing the nature of work and level of responsibility for each grade covered by the standard. This requires the user to look at work as a whole and select the most appropriate overall grade.

- Narrative factor – Standards describing covered work in terms of individual factors essential to determining the difficulty of assigned work. This requires the user to select the proper level for each factor to determine the overall grade.
- Point factor – Standards describing work in terms of individual evaluation factors, which are assigned points for different levels. This requires the user to select the proper level for each factor, add up the total points assigned, and refer to a point-grade conversion table to determine the overall grade. Many point factor standards are in Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, which uses factors with established point values.

The formats and evaluation elements used in classification standards is contingent on work characteristics. Regardless of style or variations in the way criteria are presented, classification standards deal one way or another with essential characteristics that are common to all work.

These include such things as the kinds of knowledge and skills required, the degree of difficulty involved, the kind of supervision received, the nature of personal judgment required, the level and purpose of contacts with others, and the impact of the work environment or inherent risks and hazards involved in the work.

All format styles were considered in the process. OPM reviewed an agency draft FES formatted standard. The sample FES standard presented was lacking in a number of areas and did not fully address the complexity of the variations of work and conditions present in the occupation. The sample standard also lacked testing validation of the proposed factor level criteria, which is essential to the standard development process. In addition, OPM conducted a test application which revealed the criteria was not sufficient. However, we leveraged the information included in the draft FES standard to update the 456 Position Classification Standard.

Although FES is currently the predominate format, we found the Narrative/Narrative factor format used in this guide is most appropriate for the work. Not only was the format chosen for this standard in close alignment with established guides for similar work, the foundation was also tested and found to be consistent with the grade-level definitions of work established by law (5 U.S.C. 5104).

As classifiers are trained in the application of all formats and styles of position classification standards, therefore, we do not anticipate application issues when utilized by properly trained staff.

## 12. Illustrations and Grade Level Coverage.

**Agency Comments:** Agencies presented data and illustrative position descriptions of Wildland Fire Management work across grade levels and specialty areas

**Our Response:** OPM increased the amount and types of illustrations available after validation of information presented. We have included at least one grading illustration for each parenthetical. This standard includes illustrations of positions GS-3 through GS-13 for

benchmarking purposes. The absence of an illustration for positions at all grades from GS-1 to GS-15 does not preclude evaluation of positions at that grade. Such grades are determined by extending the criteria as needed to meet specific job situations.

Standards are to be considered and interpreted as guides to judgments made under the classification authority delegated to agencies by title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 51. Jobs within an occupation frequently vary so extensively throughout the government that it is not possible to reflect in a standard all the possible combinations and permutations of duties and responsibilities. Proper application of standards, therefore, requires the use of judgment rather than just a mechanical matching of specific words, phrases or illustrations in standards. Standards should be viewed in terms of its overall intent, and considerable judgment is needed in determining where work being classified fits into the continuum of duties and responsibilities described by the standard.

To aid in the classification of specific positions, agencies are encouraged to develop and use internal classification guides. These guides may be useful in assuring consistent treatment of an important occupational area in an agency. While such agency guides do not require OPM review or approval, they must result in classification findings that are consistent with published OPM standards for similar or related kinds of work.

### **13. Illustrations and Lower Graded Work.**

**Agency Comments:** Agencies presented data and illustrative position descriptions of Wildland Fire Management work across grade levels and specialty areas which included the GS-1 and 2 grade levels.

**Our Response:** This standard includes illustrations of positions beginning at the GS-3 level. Agency responses indicated that GS-1 level is not normally used and GS-2 level positions are only filled as temporary seasonal positions and the use such graded positions is limited to roughly 20-40 employees annually. These are considered very early entry level grade levels and are primarily used as a recruiting tool to hire high school students who have limited or no work experience. These positions perform basic firefighting duties as part of a handcrew or engine crew for learning how to use the tools and equipment, and other tasks fundamental to the position. Hiring at these grade levels has been beneficial to filling positions with local applicants in the harder to fill areas, such as remote locations or those where housing is limited and/or cost prohibitive.

Positions at the GS-3 level are used to fill temporary and permanent positions. When filled permanently, they are considered entry level with the full performance level being GS-4 or GS-5. All GS-3 level positions are filled with a career ladder, and none are considered as full performance level. GS-3 positions may be used on various crews; or as part of a formal training program for suppression crew firefighters.

Due to the limited usage of grades below GS-3, specific illustrations of the of work are not included in this standard.

#### **14. Implementation of the position classification standard.**

**Agency Comments:** Agencies raised issues concerning the implementation of the option for current wildland firefighters to retain their current classification due to language included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117–58 issued November 15, 2021.

The language is as follows: “CURRENT EMPLOYEES.— Any individual employed as a wildland firefighter on the date on which the occupational series established under paragraph (1) takes effect may elect— (A) to remain in the occupational series in which the individual is employed; or (B) to be included in the “wildland firefighter” occupational series established under that paragraph.

**Our Response:** We appreciate this concern and agree that it creates challenges in the classification process. We look forward to working with agencies on the implementation of this unique provision in the law.