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**National Wildfire
Coordinating Group**

Course Coordinator's Guide

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Sponsored for the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) publication by the NWCG Training Committee. Questions regarding the content of this product should be directed to the NWCG Training Branch at BLM_FA_NWCG_Training@blm.gov. Questions and comments may also be emailed to BLM_FA_NWCG_Products@blm.gov.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Course Coordinator's Guide is to provide administrative information to training specialists, course coordinators, lead instructors, and other managers who present training courses. The content in this guide covers both National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) certified courses and other courses requiring development.

The content provides general instructions for course planning, management, presentations, and followup. Most courses are prepackaged to meet a national standard, whereas others must be developed by a cadre for an identified agency need. If an NWCG course requires specific considerations for presentation, the considerations will be listed in that course's Instructor Guide.

NWCG POSITION ON COURSE PRESENTATION AND MATERIALS

The recommended number of hours needed to teach each course are listed in the Field Manager's Course Guide (FMCG). These hours are developed by subject matter experts based on their estimation of the time required to present all material needed to adequately teach the units and course objectives. The hours listed may vary slightly due to factors such as number of students, types and complexity of course activities, and the addition of local materials.

NWCG does not approve of course delivery varying greatly from the recommended course hours. Instructors and students are cautioned that in order to be recognized as an NWCG-certified course, certain guidelines must be followed.

Course updates should be obtained from the NWCG Training and Qualifications website at training.nwcg.gov/sect_course_updates.html before the course presentation to ensure the most current material is used.

Additional information on course presentation and materials can be found in the FMCG at www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm.

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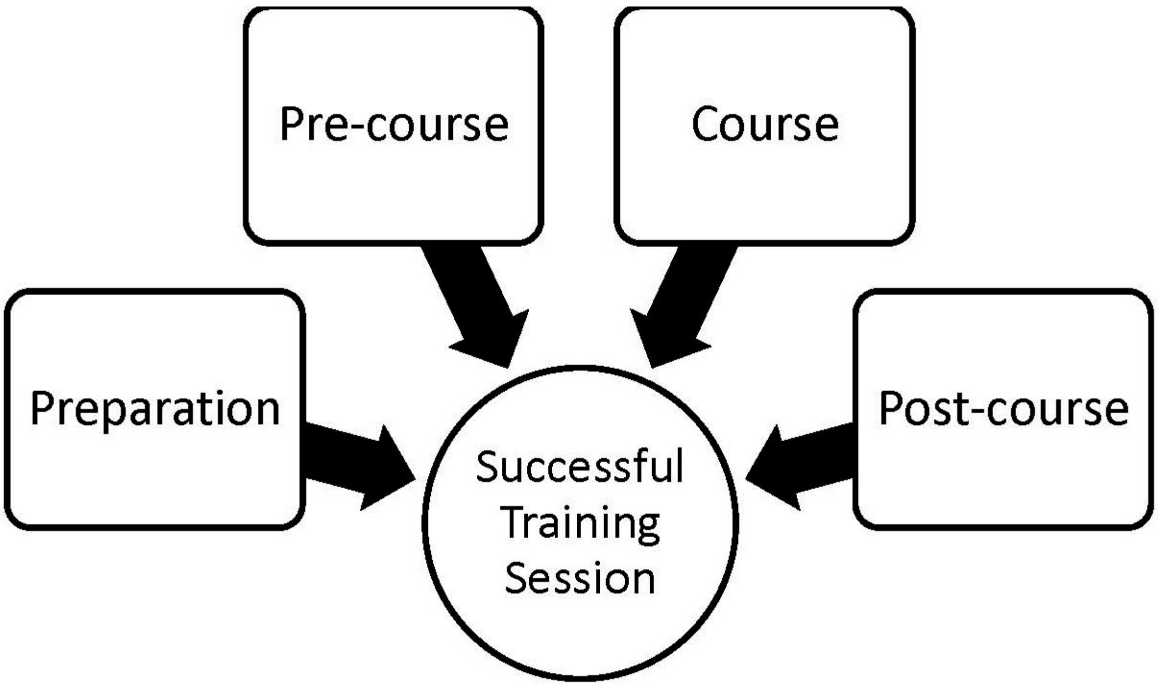
DEVELOPING A COURSE TIMELINE CHECKLIST



Course Coordinators should develop a course timeline checklist before the course begins to help ensure all tasks related to the course are completed. Developing a course timeline checklist involves organizing tasks and identifying a time sequence.

Some things to consider when developing a course timeline checklist include:

- **Time for course preparation** – When will the course be held? Will you have unlimited time to plan and/or coordinate the course, or will these activities be in conjunction with your regular job? The tendency is to not allow enough time for everything that must be done. This is especially true for a course that has to be developed or adapted for a specific geographical setting.

- Contracts, training facility reservations, travel arrangements, and purchases – Many of these arrangements take months to accomplish.

- **Steering committee, instructor cadre, and support staff** – Check the FMCG for lead and unit instructor qualifications.

- **Funding, instructor selection, student selection, and pre-course work** – There are a number of tasks that must be completed along the course timeline. Allow sufficient time for each.

- **Production or procurement of course materials** – Visual aids, workbooks, and lesson plans need to be coordinated with instructor deadlines and production schedules.

- **Use of computers** – Obtain computers and printers, if needed; arrange for internet access (agency-specific access needs); and install appropriate programs (some locations require computer checkout procedures and administrative privileges to install programs).

- **Availability of target audience** – When is the target audience available to come to the course? Consider seasonal employees, pay status, fire season, prescribed fire season, and cadre availability.

- **Use of radios** – All radio equipment and radio frequency use for the course (e.g., classroom simulations, field exercises, and course logistics) requires specific authorization and must be coordinated and assigned through the local agency frequency coordinator or the Communications Duty Officer at the NIFC National Interagency Incident Communications Division, as appropriate. Radio equipment and frequencies for training should be requested well in advance of course start date (at least 2 months) and shall be released and/or returned to the issuing entity upon course conclusion.

SAMPLE COURSE TIMELINE CHECKLIST

This Sample Course Timeline Checklist is a guide to preparing for a course presentation. Not all the items listed will fit the administration of each course. The checklist can be adapted to fit each specific course (see Appendix A for a blank Course Timeline Checklist).

COURSE: S-330 Task Force/Strike Team Leader DATES: Nov. 17-19, 2015

Preparation Activities

Suggested Time Sequence		***Items to Complete***	***Date Completed***
12 months	☑	Identify Course • Purpose • Target audience • Course objectives • Course prerequisites	Nov. 2014
	☑	Identify Necessary Organizational Structure (see p. 13) • Lead instructor • Unit instructors • Adjunct instructors • Logistics coordinator • Fiscal coordinator	Nov. 2014
7 months	☑	Select and Confirm Instructors and Coordinators	April 2015
	☑	Issue Course Announcement • Purpose of the course • Objectives • Target audience and course prerequisites • Nomination process • Course coordinator, contact phone number, and email address • Nomination deadline • Course dates • Costs • Location	

Preparation Activities (continued)

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
6 months	☑	Review Course Package • Develop rough agenda	May 2015
5 months	☑	Secure Location and Equipment • Number of students, instructors, observers, and role players • Classroom space and arrangement • Instructional media equipment • Computer support • Comfortable training environment • Wall space • Acoustics • Room availability • Security requirements • Restrooms and smoking area • Restaurants and hotels • Staff-ride locations • Sand table availability and portability	June 2015
	☑	Arrange for Lodging and Transportation, if needed	June 2015
	☑	Select Date for Initial Cadre Meeting	June 2015
4 months	☑	Order Materials • Instructor Guides • Student Workbooks • Course Materials CD • Supplies • Additional publications	July 2015

Pre-Course Activities

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
3 months	☑	Receive Nominations and Select Students (Follow the standard nomination process located on the National Fire Training website.) • Ensure students meet prerequisites • Verify prioritization • Create and distribute pre-selection letter	Aug. 2015
2 months	☑	Notify Students of Selection • Create and distribute selection letter	Sept. 2015
	☑	Assess Pre-Course Work or Grade Exam	Sept. 2015
	☑	Request Guest Speaker(s)	Sept. 2015
	☑	Conduct Initial Cadre Meeting • Coordinate course materials and presentations • Finalize logistical support requirements • Finalize time schedules and course agenda • Review student profiles, if used • Obtain instructor biographies and contact information • Review experiential learning sessions: – Sand table exercise – Staff ride – Simulation materials – Role players – Site for field training – Radio frequencies • Review course materials for policy changes, software updates, etc. and update as needed	Sept. 2015

Pre-Course Activities (continued)

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
1 month	☑	Review Logistical Details	Oct. 2015
1 month	☑	Submit Miscellaneous Requests • Kits • Supplies • Comp time and/or overtime	Oct. 2015
3 weeks	☑	Prepare Course Materials • Workbooks (or ebooks) • Electronic presentations • Agenda • Handouts • Roster • Name tags and/or desk tents • Course completion certificates	Oct. 20, 2015
1 day	☑	Set Up the Classroom • Audio • Projection screen • Projection station • Lectern • Platform risers • Room lights • Ventilation • Seating • Equipment and supplies	Nov. 16, 2015
1 day	☑	Conduct Pre-Course Cadre Meeting and Rehearsal	Nov. 16, 2015

Course Activities

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
00	☑	Start Course • Start on time • Cover logistics and ground rules • Introduce opening speaker • Conduct icebreaker	Nov. 17, 2015
	☑	Conduct Course • Maintain Availability – Monitor course to fill needs and facilitate course continuity • Evaluate – Respond to needs, gather feedback, conduct daily cadre meetings, assess student comprehension and monitor progress, follow evaluation criteria, and ensure students complete a Student Training Course Evaluation form	Nov. 17-19, 2015
	☑	End Course • Distribute course completion certificates • Distribute payment receipts, if applicable • Thank students • Conduct course closeout cadre meeting	Nov. 19, 2015

Post-Course Activities

Suggested Time Sequence		***Items to Complete***	***Date Completed***
2+ days	☑	Gather Instructor Materials	Nov. 21, 2015
2+ weeks	☑	Prepare Record of Course Completion and Non-completion • Notification of completion • Notification of non-completion	Dec. 5, 2015
	☑	Prepare and Send Thank You Letters • Send letters to all individuals who participated in presenting the course	Dec. 5, 2015
	☑	Complete and Submit Course Evaluations • Document problems or recommendations regarding the course content on the Training Course Evaluation form (see Appendix B)	Dec. 5, 2015
	☑	Complete and File Course Package	Dec. 5, 2015

The activities listed in the previous Sample Course Timeline Checklist are described in greater detail in the following sections.

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

This section provides information for identifying what course is needed and what positions in the organizational structure are required to provide support for the course. Course complexity will determine the number of people necessary to coordinate and instruct the course.

A. Identify the Course

Once management has identified a need for skills development that can be provided by a course, the next step is to describe what the course will be and identify who will be attending. What are the objectives of the course? Will the course be presented using alternative delivery methods (i.e., webinar, video conferencing)? What criteria or prerequisites will be used to select students? The students' level in their organization will affect the level of the training, the location, and the "formality" of the training. The education and experience level of potential students is very important to developers and instructors. A pretest or pre-training survey may be necessary to identify entry level. This establishes the base knowledge level and experience from which to begin the training.

NWCG has recognized that due to the inherent complexity and/or technical content of some courses, these courses should have a formal course handoff (train-the-trainer) for the various geographic area instructor cadres to assist them in successfully presenting the course. If you have been instructed to conduct a handoff course, refer to the course handoff process in Appendix C.

B. Identify Necessary Organizational Structure: Needs and Roles

After you have identified what course is needed, decide what positions are necessary to provide support for the course. A number of factors influence the positions needed to produce a successful course. The chart on page 13 outlines an organizational structure that might be used for a course, showing appropriate positions and the roles and activities of each position. Use only those positions needed to support the training.

Notice that a steering committee may be involved in defining goals, direction, target audience, and objectives. This is especially valuable with a course that is multiagency or national in scope. Dividing the work up among several people makes it easier on everyone involved and helps to ensure all activities are accomplished on time. The groups and positions in the organizational structure include:

Steering committee – Members should include subject matter experts with technical competency in the subject matter and who have considerable interest in the success of a training effort. The steering committee provides technical and policy guidance. Steering committee members coordinate with their respective organizations to find instructors, students, and funding.

Instructors – General information about instructor levels is presented below. The FMCG at www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm provides additional information about NWCG instructor requirements.

- *Lead instructor* – The lead instructor must have sufficient experience in presenting all units of the course to be capable of substituting for unit instructors at the last minute, if needed. However, some courses are of such a technical nature that no one person may be technically competent to present all of the units.

- *Unit instructors* – Unit instructors must be experienced in the lesson content they are presenting and have sufficient presentation skills to deliver the subject matter for student comprehension.

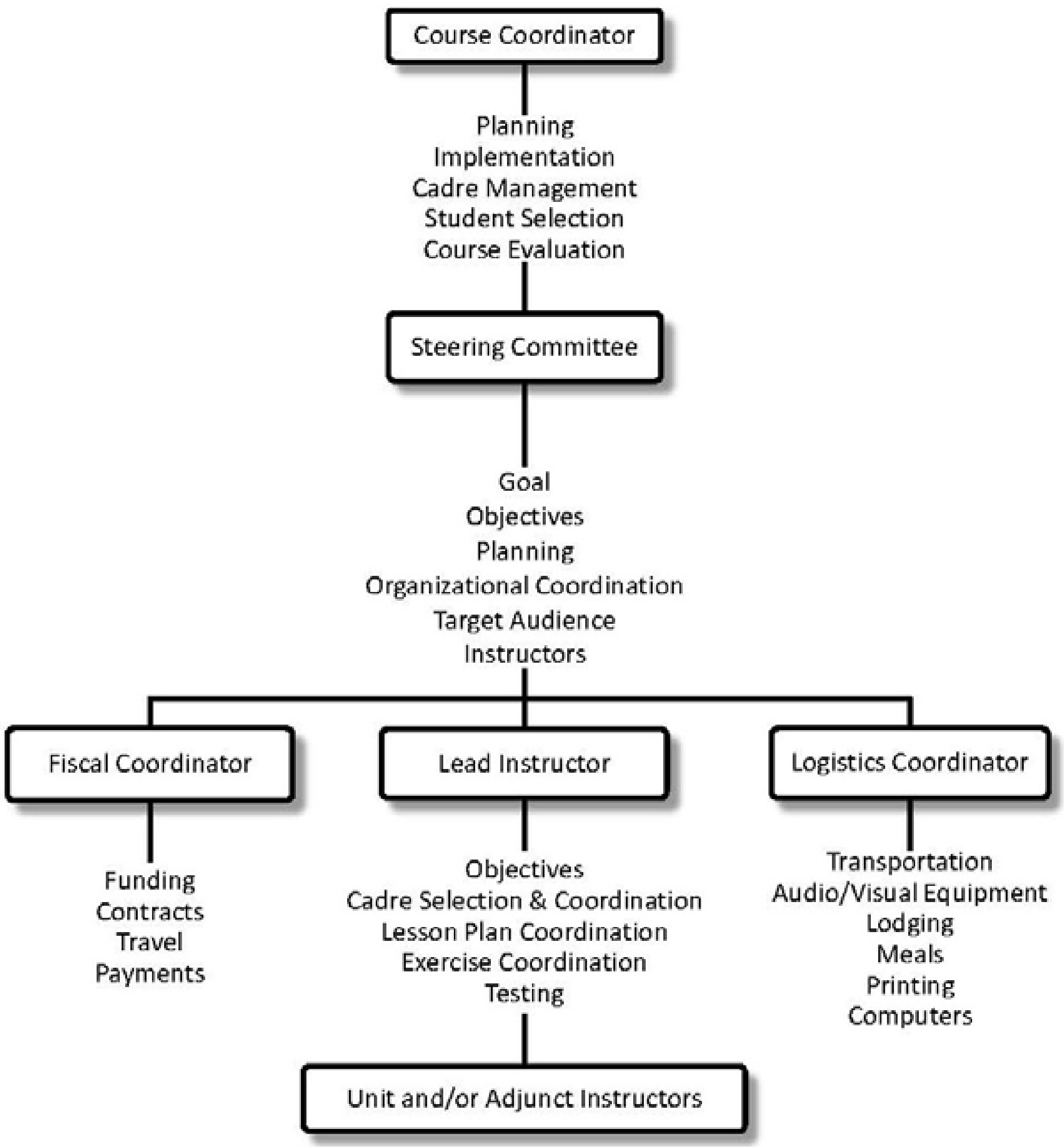
- *Adjunct instructors* – Adjunct instructors may be used to provide limited instruction in specialized knowledge and skills at the discretion of the lead instructor. They must be experienced, proficient, and knowledgeable about current issues in their field of expertise.

Logistics coordinators and fiscal coordinators – Logistics Coordinators and Fiscal Coordinators should be skilled in managing courses and conferences.

Miscellaneous support staff (clerical and technical) – Higher complexity courses may require more support staff. Consider the need for onsite information technology (IT) support, clerical support, coaches, role players, and drivers.

The following chart is an example of the positions within the organizational structure that might be used for a course. The number of people required to fill the positions that will provide support for a course will vary, depending on the complexity of the course.

COURSE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



C. Select and Confirm Instructors and Coordinators

Identify and request instructors and additional people necessary to meet the needs of the course. The number of instructors will depend on the course content, number of students, and length of the course; most prepackaged courses will indicate the desired number of instructors. Determine if contracts, funding, travel authority, and necessary approvals need to be completed.

All instructors must meet the minimum instructor qualifications set forth in the FMCG.

D. Issue Course Announcement

Now that the course has been organized and the necessary approvals have been obtained, the course must be announced or advertised. Course announcements come out in various forms (e.g., pamphlets, brochures, training catalogs, training schedules, and websites). Whatever the format, the course announcement should contain certain information, such as:

- Purpose of the course
- Objectives
- Target audience and student prerequisites
- Nomination process
- Course coordinator, contact phone number, and email address
- Nomination deadline
- Course dates
- Costs
- Location

A student nomination form may be included with the course announcement for the nominee to fill out and return. This serves as a screening device to ensure that nominees meet course prerequisites and assists in prioritizing nominees for selection. If additional information is needed to aid in selection, request that nominees enter it in the Remarks block of the nomination form.

The zone webmaster should list 100- through 200-level courses on the host unit's specific geographic area training web pages or the National Wildland Fire Training page (not all geographic areas post 100- through 200-level courses). The host unit's geographic area webmaster will list 300- through 600-level courses on the National Wildland Fire Training Schedule (http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/). Contact information is listed on each geographic area's and zone's web page.

E. Review Course Package

The course coordinator and lead instructor will need to become familiar with existing materials well in advance of the course presentation. A rough agenda should be developed based on timeframes suggested in the course package.

F. Secure Location and Equipment

Select a location for the course that will help support the training goal. The location must be compatible with the methods used during the course; the characteristics of the classroom and additional rooms (e.g., cadre, simulation, and breakout) influence the quality of the course. Consideration should be given to class size, group interaction, and instructional equipment needs.

Logistics should be a principal factor when considering where to conduct a course. Consider the availability of support (e.g., copiers, phones, computers, internet connectivity, cost-effectiveness, source of emergency purchases, transportation, lodging, food, and quality of facilities) when selecting a location. Check regularly with the hotel or facility for any issues that may arise. A logistics coordinator may be necessary to help with this process.

Items that need to be considered when determining a location include, but are not limited to:

- Number of students, instructors, observers and role players.
- Number of classrooms and additional rooms, if necessary. Consult with instructors to determine the need for additional rooms.
- Arrangement of the classroom(s) and the size and number of tables and chairs (desks or tables should be arranged to allow students to work in small groups or as individuals, depending on the course needs).
- Instructional media equipment in room, electrical cords, and outlets
- Computer support: Local area network (LAN), internet access, VTC, help desk, etc.
- Comfortable training environment: Heating, cooling, lighting, ventilation, and ability to darken room(s).
- Use of walls for hanging posters or number of available whiteboards.
- Acoustics and need for a sound system (room should be quiet and not susceptible to outside interruptions).
- Room availability (you will want to have exclusive use of the room[s] for the duration of the course). Check on other meetings and conventions being held in the facility at the same time.
- Security requirements.
- Proximity to restrooms and smoking area.
- Proximity of restaurants and hotels.
- Staff-ride location.
- Sand table availability and portability.

Instructional equipment to be obtained or reserved may include:

• Easel and flip charts	Projection screen
• Projector	Lectern
• Whiteboard	Computers
• Connectivity accessories	DVD player

If video teleconferencing (VTC) is used, refer to Appendix D for items to consider.

Field exercises are incorporated into some courses. These require an outdoor site and potentially will require extra planning regarding transportation, permission to use the site, tools, subject matter experts, job hazard analysis, medical evacuation plan, and medical personnel.

G. Arrange for Lodging and Transportation

The course coordinator may need to arrange for lodging and/or transportation for students, cadre, or both.

H. Select Date for Initial Cadre Meeting

Cadre meetings are essential for successful training sessions and may include several meetings (before, during, and at the end of the course). All instructors, coordinators, and support personnel should be invited to the initial meeting. Meetings can be done by web conferencing, conference call, or in person.

I. Order Materials

Most course materials can be ordered through the Products Management System (see Appendix E for information on ordering course materials). When course materials are not available, they must be developed or reproduced. For those courses incorporating simulations, special items will be required on a course-by-course basis.

Course materials may include:

Instructor Guides – Contains directions and information essential to the coordination and presentation of the course.

Student Workbooks – Is used as a note-taking guide during the course and includes course and unit objectives and information relevant to each unit. Consider if it is possible to use an electronic workbook. If an electronic workbook is used, students can be provided with a flash drive or CD containing course materials and be asked to bring a laptop to class.

Course Materials CD – Contains electronic versions of Instructor Guide, Student Workbook, PowerPoint presentations, etc.

Supplies – Some supplies needed for the course are not included in the course package and must be obtained by the course coordinator or lead instructor.

Additional Publications – A list of all materials necessary to present NWCG courses (excluding 500- and 600-level courses) is available in Appendix A of each Instructor Guide. Additional information is located in the course instructions at the beginning of each course.

PRE-COURSE ACTIVITIES

This section describes the key items to consider and complete before the start of the course.

A. Receive Nominations and Select Students

The process for selecting students to attend courses can vary considerably. For some courses, students will be selected by the local agency. For other courses, the geographic area training committee, course coordinator, cadre, or steering committee may determine the selections. A well-written course announcement will assist in getting the right target audience for the course. Expect some nominees to drop out before the course or not complete required pre-course or online components. Be prepared to backfill with students on the wait list, if possible. A minimum number of students should be established to ensure the cost effectiveness of the course. Once the students have been identified, letters should be sent to all selected nominees.

The NWCG Interagency Training Nomination form is typically used to nominate students for NWCG courses (see http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/nwcg_nomination_form for current form). The standard nomination process should be used for completion and submission of nominations. This process can be found on the National Fire Training website at www.nationalfiretraining.net/. Be aware that the nomination form may not have the most current contact information for seasonal employees, and additional effort may be required to obtain updated information. Nominations for geographic and national (300- through 600-level) courses are due by November 1 each year unless otherwise stated on the National Wildland Fire Training Schedule.

If the course is sponsored by a Federal agency, the course coordinator should ensure the course is created in IQCS, and consider using the nomination workflow within the system.

After nominations are received:

Ensure students meet course prerequisites – Minimum course prerequisites for NWCG courses are identified in the FMCG.

Verify prioritization – Ensure sending units prioritize nominees; not every nominee may be selected.

Create and distribute pre-selection letter – A pre-selection letter to nominees is necessary only if the course requires students to complete a pre-selection assessment and pass with a score of at least 70 percent before being considered for selection into the course. Mail or email the pre-selection letter, which should include:

- Pre-selection assessment and instructions for completion and submission. Some assessments will require submission of a proctor statement.
- Assessment completion deadline.

B. Notify Students of Selection

Once students have been selected, the course coordinator will notify students and provide the necessary course information.

Create and distribute selection letter – A selection letter will need to be sent to students who have been selected to attend the training. The contents of the selection letter will vary depending on the course design. Notify students early enough to allow sufficient time to complete the items listed below and schedule travel if necessary.

Note: Consider time necessary for home unit to bring students into pay status if they are seasonally employed.

Information to include in all selection letters:

- Course dates
- Course start time and approximate end time
- If flexibility in the schedule exists, consider a start time that allows for travel time for students and instructors as well as an opportunity for a cadre rehearsal. Also consider an end time that allows for travel time for students and instructors and a closeout cadre meeting.
- Location of training facility
- Instructions to connect for distance learning, if used (e.g., VTC, conference call, webinar)
- Student roster (may be posted on the internet)

- Course tuition, if applicable
- Cancellation instructions and deadline
- List of any materials students must bring with them
- Appropriate attire and personal protective equipment (PPE) if field trips or exercises are scheduled
- Student profiles, if applicable
- Lodging options, if applicable
- Facility logistics (e.g., parking, security)
- Survey special needs

Have students contact the course coordinator if they have special needs that need to be considered (e.g., proximity to front of the room, requests for oral delivery of exam).

- Course coordinator contact information

Additional information to include in the selection letter if pre-course work with reading and/or exercises is required:

- Provide materials to students by:
  - Mailing or emailing
  - Uploading and providing the link
  - Providing instructions on how to obtain the material
- Provide instructions and deadline for completing and/or submitting assigned material.

Additional information to include in the selection letter if the course has an online component:

- Link for students to access online component
- Deadline and instructions for completing online component

Attendance in the instructor-led component is contingent upon completion of the online component. Allow adequate time for student completion.

C. Assess Pre-Course Work or Grade Exam

If the course contains pre-course work or an exam that is required to be returned before the course begins, the instructors or course coordinator will need to assess the pre-course work or grade the exam before the course start date.

D. Request Guest Speaker(s)

If guest speaker(s) will be used, contact must be made to coordinate timing, expectations, topic, and payment.

E. Conduct Initial Cadre Meeting

The initial cadre meeting provides an opportunity for instructors to meet, review material, discuss concerns, and plan strategy with the course coordinator or lead instructor. The course coordinator and lead instructor will discuss unit assignments with each instructor. Each instructor should receive a copy of the entire course before the meeting. This is critical for instructors with little or no previous experience with the course. Due to cost restraints, the initial cadre meeting should be held in the most affordable manner possible; options include web conferencing, conference call, or in person (see Appendix F for Cadre Meetings Checklist).

Objectives of the initial cadre meeting include:

Coordinate course materials and presentations – Each instructor is assigned a unit or units to instruct; all information needed for instruction within the unit is given in a lesson plan outline. The handouts, electronic presentations, and other instructional materials referenced in the outline are located in the appendixes of the Instructor Guide. Any special items must be identified and obtained or developed by the instructor or coordinator. Cadre may need to review the course materials for policy changes, software updates, etc. and update as needed. Use of adjunct instructors may be appropriate for part of a unit; this should be discussed and agreed upon by the lead instructor and cadre. General ground rules should be addressed including instructor participation and duty hours, attire, and other relevant information. Timeframes and responsibilities need to be established for lesson material production including such items as handouts, visuals, and reference materials.

Finalize logistical support requirements – If the initial cadre meeting is held onsite, give the cadre a tour of the facilities and a demonstration of the equipment to be used to give the cadre an idea of what is needed and how best to prepare for presentations. If web conferencing or a conference call is used, make time to review this information before the beginning of the course.

Finalize time schedules and course agenda – Things to consider:

- *Course length* – Times are listed in the Instructor Guides. See the FMCG for "Course Length for NWCG Courses."
- *Breaks* – Pre-planned or spontaneous? Breaks at the end of presentations work best. Allow approximately 10 minutes each hour, if possible.
- *Special events or social activities* – Field trips, tours, and social activities need to be planned and coordinated, as appropriate.

Review student profiles – If student profiles were collected, the course coordinator should summarize them and share the summary with the instructors.

Obtain instructor biographies and contact information – A brief biography of each instructor may be needed for distribution to students during the course presentation. This should include an instructor's academic background and work experience in chronological order, written in third person narrative form, and should highlight courses taught, projects developed, and items of relevance to the course being taught (see Appendix G for a sample instructor biography).

Review experiential learning sessions – Any sessions that will need extra time and effort to coordinate or additional materials or people to conduct them should be reviewed before the start of the course. These may include a dry run through a sand table exercise, preparing for a staff ride, gathering or preparing simulation materials, identifying role players, scheduling the site for field training, and/or identifying radio frequencies.

F. Review Logistical Details

All logistics will need to be coordinated well in advance of the course. Do vehicles need to be reserved? Will coffee, food, and/or water need to be provided? Who is paying for these items? If the course will be conducted at an offsite location or requires a field exercise, additional coordination to accomplish required logistics will be necessary.

G. Submit Miscellaneous Requests

Requests for kits, supplies, and comp time and/or overtime, if needed, will need to be submitted before the beginning of the course.

H. Prepare Course Material

It is the responsibility of the course coordinator or lead instructor to review lesson plans for subject content and adherence to standards. All visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint slides, DVDs, flipcharts, handouts, and display items) and student materials such as workbooks and name tags need to be assembled and reviewed for accuracy and professional quality.

Workbooks – Student Workbooks for NWCG courses may be ordered pre-assembled. If a workbook is being used that needs to be assembled or reproduced, extra time will be necessary.

Electronic presentations – PowerPoint presentations are available on the Course Materials CD and must be ordered separately from the Instructor Guide. All slides are numbered by unit, sequence, and course number. The identifying slide number is referenced at the appropriate time in the aids and cues column of the Instructor Guide's unit lesson outline.

Agenda – A final agenda should be prepared and copied for each instructor and student. Most Instructor Guides contain a draft agenda. Times may need to be adjusted and instructor names will need to be added.

Handouts – Handouts are not included in the Student Workbook and must be reproduced. The number designation for handouts will be similar to that for electronic presentations. All handouts should be three-hole punched. Handouts are located in an appendix in either the Instructor Guide or on the Course Materials CD.

Roster – Student roster should be prepared for use before, during, and after the course presentation. They may include student names, agency, e-mail address, physical address, and phone number. Rosters are used for statistical records, student status (i.e., enrolled, substituted, or cancelled), generating sign-in sheets, preparing certificates of completion, financial obligations, and post-course mailing.

Name tags and/or desk tents – These can be pre-printed after the course roster has been finalized.

Course completion certificates – Lead instructors must sign the certificates. It is preferred that the certificates be signed using blue ink to indicate an original document. To save time during the course, certificates can be preprinted before the course and then adjusted accordingly based on final exam scores and final student enrollment.

I. Set Up the Classroom

It is the responsibility of the course coordinator to ensure the classroom will meet the needs of the course. The room arrangement has a direct bearing on the classroom atmosphere and thus the potential for learning. Keep in mind that there is more than one way to arrange the room.

Key points to check when setting up the classroom:

Audio – Plug in everything and test it. Is the sound working? Locate controls and volume. Are there enough microphones and extra batteries? Are cords long enough? Is feedback a problem? Is there noise from outside the room needing to be addressed?

Projection screen – Is the screen large enough? Is the image squarely projected? Electrical control tested? Are there stage curtains?

Projection station – Is it high enough? Wide enough? Correct distance from the screen? Are extension cords or remote control needed?

Lectern – Check height and light. Is a pointer needed?

Platform risers – Is there a panel presentation? Will presenters need to be elevated so all students can see them?

Room lights – Where are the light switches? Is the room dark enough for projecting? Does light from the doorway hit the screen?

Ventilation – Will temperature remain comfortable? How are air conditioning and heat controlled?

Seating – Front row no closer than two screen widths? Last row no further than six screen widths?

Equipment and supplies – Guard against breakdown. Obtain extra bulbs, sufficient extension cords, backup computer(s), and extra batteries, flip chart paper, markers, assorted office supplies, clock, trash can, etc.

J. Conduct Pre-Course Cadre Meeting and Rehearsal

The pre-course cadre meeting and rehearsal should occur the day before or the morning of the start of the course. This meeting provides an opportunity for instructors to determine the course presentation tempo; test drive the electronic presentations, videos, and links; and discuss concerns (see Appendix F for Cadre Meetings Checklist).

Ensure all instructors know the username and password to revive the computer from stand-by mode. Inform instructors if there are any agency requirements for access to the computer and provide instructions.

If there was pre-course work, discuss how the work will be addressed in class.

COURSE ACTIVITIES

This section covers the sequence of events and processes used throughout the course. The course coordinator is responsible for all activities during the course. The authority for managing the course can be delegated to the lead instructor, but the responsibility still belongs to the course coordinator.

A. Start Course

The course should start on time. This sets a positive tone for the course. Start by covering the logistics and ground rules (e.g., cell phone policy, restrooms, emergency exits, coffee, food, and smoking) and any details unique to the facility. Introduce the opening speaker, and then conduct the icebreaker (may be done by course coordinator or instructors).

B. Conduct Course

The course coordinator's duties during the course presentation in support of the lead instructor, instructors, and students include:

Maintain availability – Situations may occur that will halt instruction (e.g., the computer will hibernate unexpectedly or internet connectivity may be lost). Monitor the course to reduce these situations and facilitate course continuity.

Evaluate – Continuous evaluation is critical to the success of the course. Items to consider include:

- Responding to any needs or changes as soon as possible and tell students how you plan to resolve them.
- Gathering feedback using a unit or daily evaluation form (see Appendix B for example evaluation forms).
- Conducting daily cadre meetings to identify any issues related to course material or delivery and to develop solutions. These meetings can be conducted as informal sessions. Selected students may be asked to attend the daily cadre meetings. They can provide a summary of the unit or daily evaluations or their personal feedback to assist the cadre in making adjustments for the next day. See Appendix F for a Cadre Meetings Checklist.

- Assessing student comprehension and monitoring student progress throughout the course. If a student is falling behind, the cadre should explore avenues or policies for tutoring and counseling as soon as possible. A daily review of student activities at the cadre meeting and/or test results will provide a chance to give assistance or remedial training as needed. Students must be informed that they are not passing the course. A plan to assist the student in meeting course objectives must be made that is agreeable to both the student and instructor. Do not allow a problem to go uncommunicated and then after the course, inform the student they have failed.

- Following evaluation criteria in the Instructor Guide for each course. Some courses may use various course components such as pre-course tests, unit quizzes, class participation or exercises, and final exams to calculate the final score. The score will be based on the final exam unless otherwise stated in the Instructor Guide. Ensure the standard of obtaining a passing score of at least 70% for NWCG courses is followed.

- Ensuring all students complete a Student Training Course Evaluation form before leaving the course (see Appendix B for example form). This form is included on the Course Materials CD for each NWCG course (100- through 400-level). Collect the forms before students depart.

C. End Course

At the end of the course, answer any questions the students may have. Return final exams to students for review, and collect the exams before students leave the course. Distribute course completion certificates, and distribute payment receipts, if applicable. If the certificates will be mailed, let the students know when to anticipate receiving them. Thank the students for their time and participation.

Conduct course closeout cadre meeting to review final evaluations and document recommendations for future course modifications (see Appendix F for Cadre Meetings Checklist).

POST-COURSE ACTIVITIES

This section covers the activities to be performed after the course has ended. It is the responsibility of the course coordinator to complete all letters, course completion certificates (signed by the lead instructor), and the course package as described below. These tasks should be completed within 2 weeks after the course has ended.

A. Gather Instructor Materials

Any material to be returned or retained for future courses should be gathered, organized, returned, and stored.

B. Prepare Record of Course Completion and Non-completion

Notification of completion – The record of course completion must be distributed or posted. The course completion certificates may be given to students at the end of the course or may be mailed with a completion letter. The course coordinator should ensure the certificates are typed and signed by the lead instructor. For NWCG courses, the certificates can be ordered from the Product Management System. Direction on using NWCG certificates can be found in the FMCG.

If Federal students attended the course, the course coordinator should create the course in IQCS, award student completions, and award instructor competency (based on unit standards). Non-Federal course coordinators should coordinate with Federal partners to accomplish this.

Notification of non-completion – Notifications of non-completion should be sent through proper organizational channels, which vary by agency and geographic area. Reasons for non-completion of a course include not participating, not completing assignments, failing quizzes, not attending the entire session, or failure to meet the minimum passing score required for the course.

C. Prepare and Send Thank You Letters

Thank you letters should be sent through appropriate organizational channels to all the individuals (and/or their supervisors) who participated in presenting the course.

D. Complete and Submit Course Evaluations

Lead instructors should review the following items after course completion: course content, pre-course work, visual aids, delivery methods, course prerequisites, and testing procedures. The lead instructor and/or course coordinator should document problems or recommendations regarding the content of the NWCG course on the Training Course Evaluation form (see Appendix B). A file for course recommendations is maintained by the NWCG Evaluation Unit for future revisions to each course. Submit recommendations to:

NWCG Evaluation Unit: blm_fa_nwcg_training@blm.gov

E. Complete and File Course Package

The course coordinator should complete and file a course package. It must contain the instructor list, student completion roster, and course agenda. These items will be necessary documents if legal proceedings arise. Additional information may be included such as testing results, record of non-completion, summarized student evaluations, sign-in sheet, course coordinator notes and recommendations for next session, and instructor biographies. This package can assist with planning future courses.

APPENDIXES

Appendixes are included at the end of this document.

APPENDIX A – COURSE TIMELINE CHECKLIST

COURSE: ____________________________DATES: ___________________

Preparation Activities

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
12 months ↓	☐	Identify Course • Purpose • Target audience • Course objectives • Course prerequisites	_____________
	☐	Identify Necessary Organizational Structure (see p. 13) • Lead instructor • Unit instructors • Adjunct instructors • Logistics coordinator • Fiscal coordinator	_____________
7 months ↓	☐	Select and Confirm Instructors and Coordinators	_____________
	☐	Issue Course Announcement • Purpose of the course • Objectives • Target audience and course prerequisites • Nomination process • Course coordinator, contact phone number, and email address • Nomination deadline • Course dates • Costs • Location	_____________

Preparation Activities (continued)

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
6 months	☐	Review Course Package • Develop rough agenda	____________
5 months	☐	Secure Location and Equipment • Number of students, instructors, observers, and role players • Classroom space and arrangement • Instructional media equipment • Computer support • Comfortable training environment • Wall space • Acoustics • Room availability • Security requirements • Restrooms and smoking area • Restaurants and hotels • Staff-ride locations • Sand table availability and portability	____________
	☐	Arrange for Lodging and Transportation, if needed	____________
	☐	Select Date for Initial Cadre Meeting	____________
4 months	☐	Order Materials • Instructor Guides • Student Workbooks • Course Materials CD • Supplies • Additional publications	____________

Pre-Course Activities

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
3 months	☐	Receive Nominations and Select Students (Follow the standard nomination process located on the National Fire Training website.) • Ensure students meet prerequisites • Verify prioritization • Create and distribute pre-selection letter	________
2 months	☐	Notify Students of Selection • Create and distribute selection letter	________
	☐	Assess Pre-Course Work or Grade Exam	________
	☐	Request Guest Speaker(s)	________
	☐	Conduct Initial Cadre Meeting • Coordinate course materials and presentations • Finalize logistical support requirements • Finalize time schedules and course agenda • Review student profiles, if used • Obtain instructor biographies and contact information • Review experiential learning sessions: – Sand table exercise – Staff ride – Simulation materials – Role players – Site for field training – Radio frequencies • Review course materials for policy changes, software updates, etc. and update as needed	________

Pre-Course Activities (continued)

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
1 month	☐	Review Logistical Details	____________
1 month	☐	Submit Miscellaneous Requests • Kits • Supplies • Comp time and/or overtime	____________
3 weeks	☐	Prepare Course Materials • Workbooks (or ebooks) • Electronic presentations • Agenda • Handouts • Roster • Name tags and/or desk tents • Course completion certificates	____________
1 day	☐	Set Up the Classroom • Audio • Projection screen • Projection station • Lectern • Platform risers • Room lights • Ventilation • Seating • Equipment and supplies	____________
1 day	☐	Conduct Pre-Course Cadre Meeting and Rehearsal	____________

Course Activities

Suggested Time Sequence	*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
00	☐ Start Course • Start on time • Cover logistics and ground rules • Introduce opening speaker • Conduct icebreaker	________
	☐ Conduct Course • Maintain Availability – Monitor course to fill needs and facilitate course continuity • Evaluate – Respond to needs, gather feedback, conduct daily cadre meetings, assess student comprehension and monitor progress, follow evaluation criteria, and ensure students complete a Student Training Course Evaluation form	________
↓	☐ End Course • Distribute course completion certificates • Distribute payment receipts, if applicable • Thank students • Conduct course closeout cadre meeting	________

Post-Course Activities

Suggested Time Sequence		*Items to Complete*	*Date Completed*
2+ days	☐	Gather Instructor Materials	________
2+ weeks ↓	☐	Prepare Record of Course Completion and Non-completion • Notification of completion • Notification of non-completion	________
	☐	Prepare and Send Thank You Letters • Send letters to all individuals who participated in presenting the course	________
	☐	Complete and Submit Course Evaluations • Document problems or recommendations regarding the course content on the Training Course Evaluation form (see Appendix B)	________
	☐	Complete and File Course Package	________

APPENDIX B – EVALUATIONS

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STUDENT TRAINING COURSE EVALUATION

Course Name and Number:____

Date:________________ Location:____

Check the response that best reflects your opinion. If you have specific input on the course's strengths or improvement opportunities, provide comments in the Remarks section.

This Course	**Remarks:**
☐ Exceeded my expectations	
☐ Fulfilled my expectations	
☐ Failed to meet my needs	

Course Time Allocated	**Remarks:**
☐ Appropriate	
☐ Took too much time (should be shorter)	
☐ Insufficient (needed to be longer)	

Level of Instruction	**Remarks:**
☐ Appropriate	
☐ Too basic	
☐ Too advanced	

Instructor Presentations	**Remarks:**
(Consider objectives met, clarity of instruction, enthusiasm, training aids, exercises, methods used.)	
☐ Excellent	
☐ Good	
☐ Satisfactory	
☐ Unsatisfactory	

Course Materials **Remarks:**
(Consider usefulness of texts, exercises, handouts, reference materials.)

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory

Classroom and Breakout Room **Remarks:**
(Consider lighting, temperature, cleanliness, furnishings, equipment, distractions.)

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory

Correspondence and Guidance **Remarks:**
(Consider timing of pre-course materials and information provided concerning, travel, lodging, logistics.)

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory

What did you like MOST about this course?

What did you like LEAST about this course?

Recommendations for improving this course (be specific):

Name (optional):

TRAINING COURSE EVALUATION

(To be completed by the course coordinator, lead instructor or both)

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Training Branch is interested in obtaining your candid evaluation of the various factors of this NWCG course. Your evaluation of the factors listed below and any other constructive suggestions will be valuable guides for improving the course. Comments associated with specific cadres, locations, and facilities should be forwarded to the course coordinator, not to NWCG Training Branch.

Course:______________________ **Location presented**:__________________

Dates presented:______________ **Your name**:_________________________

Course related material (understandability, completeness, technical errors); consider any or all of the following items:

1. Pre-course work and pre-test
2. Objectives
3. Instructor materials
4. Student workbook
5. Handouts
6. Audio and video aids
7. Quizzes and tests
8. Exercises and scenarios
9. Simulations and field work
10. Group interaction
11. Time allotted

Comments:

Please give us your feedback on any or all of the following:

1. Did the lecture follow the student workbook?
2. What percent of the materials was new to you?
3. Were the course materials relevant to the associated position?
4. What aspects of the course did you find most valuable?
5. What aspects of the course did you feel needed to be strengthened?
6. Did the course meet or exceed your expectations?
7. Were unit and course objectives met?
8. When the course is rewritten, would you be interested in participating?

Comments:

Please send this form to:

E-mail:
blm_fa_nwcg_training@blm.gov

Or

Provide feedback at the NWCG website at http://training.nwcg.gov by selecting the NWCG EVAL button in the upper right corner.

UNIT EVALUATION

Unit Name and Number:____

Date:________________Location:_____________________________________

Check the response that best reflects your opinion. If you have specific input on the course's strengths or improvement opportunities, provide comments in the Remarks section.

This Unit **Remarks:**

☐ Exceeded my expectations

☐ Fulfilled my expectations

☐ Failed to meet my needs

Unit Time Allocated **Remarks**:

☐ Appropriate

☐ Took too much time (should be shorter)

☐ Insufficient (needed to be longer)

Level of Instruction **Remarks:**

☐ Appropriate

☐ Too basic

☐ Too advanced

Instructor Presentations **Remarks:**
(Consider objectives met, clarity of instruction, enthusiasm, training aids, exercises, methods used)

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Satisfactory

☐ Unsatisfactory

Unit Materials **Remarks:**
(Consider usefulness of texts, exercises, handouts, reference materials)

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Satisfactory

☐ Unsatisfactory

Classroom and Breakout Room **Remarks:**
(Consider lighting, temperature, cleanliness, furnishings, equipment, distractions)

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Satisfactory

☐ Unsatisfactory

Correspondence and Guidance **Remarks:**
(Consider timing of pre-course materials and information provided concerning travel, lodging, and logistics.)

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Satisfactory

☐ Unsatisfactory

What did you like MOST about this unit?

What did you like LEAST about this unit?

Recommendations for improving this unit (be specific):

Name (optional):

APPENDIX C – COURSE HANDOFF PROCESS

The NWCG has recognized that due to the inherent complexity and/or technical content of some courses, these courses should have a formal course handoff (train-the-trainer) for the various geographic area instructor cadres to assist them in successfully presenting the course. The course handoff includes an explanation of the instructional design and describes supplemental content material required for presenting the course. This is particularly important for courses requiring adaptation for various geographic areas.

The course handoff process is described below.

I. Goal

The goal of the course handoff is to guide the attendees step by step through the course content and instructional design, and give them necessary information to successfully coordinate and/or instruct the course.

II. Objectives

At the completion of the course handoff, attendees will:

A. Have acquired knowledge of all content areas and idiosyncrasies of the course through presentations and discussions.

B. Be able to describe the process used to customize lessons for course presentation.

C. Be able to explain the process used to evaluate (measure) student performance.

III. Determining the Need for a Formal Course Handoff

A. It is the responsibility of the NWCG Training Branch to identify whether a course is complex enough in detail or technical content to require a formal handoff.

B. The criteria used may include any of the following:

1. More than 50% of the course content is conceptually complex (theoretical rather than practical).
2. The instructional design is complex due to variations in selected presentation methods (e.g., exercises and simulations).
3. Complex emerging technology needs to be transferred to the field.
4. More than 50% of the course content will need to be adapted by the geographic areas.

IV. Training Announcement for Course Handoff

The course handoff will be announced and nominations solicited for attendance. The desired target audience for a course handoff is potential lead instructors and course coordinators.

Sample training announcement:

Course:	FI-210, Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Determination, Instructor Handoff
Date(s):	February 2-5, 2015
Location:	National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, Idaho
Nominations:	Due December 13, 2014; submit nominations to the handoff coordinator on an NWCG Interagency Training Nomination Form.
Notification of Selection Date:	January 5, 2015
Target Group:	Potential lead instructors and course coordinators who will be expected to deliver the FI-210, Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Determination, course.
Description:	This workshop will be limited to 20 to 25 targeted lead instructors and course coordinators. Attendees will be guided through the course content and instructional design, and given necessary information to successfully coordinate and/or instruct the course.
Course Coordinator:	Don Jones 3833 S. Development Avenue Boise, Idaho 83705 djones@.blm.gov (208) 387-1234

V. Agenda for the Attendee

The timeframe for the handoff may vary, but 2 days is typically adequate. To make the instructional process effective, allow sufficient time to cover content and process. If appropriate, course materials should be sent to attendees to preview before the course handoff.

APPENDIX D – CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING VIDEO TELECONFERENCING (VTC)

- Classroom material should be designed to support the goals of the training session. Traditional classroom materials may not be appropriate for a video teleconference (VTC) session. Determine the goals, and then create the content.
- Ensure lighting, microphones, sound, camera placement, room set up, etc. are adequate and available before hosting a VTC session.
- Ensure instructors have practiced with the equipment before their presentation. Instructors must be prepared to give their presentation using VTC techniques and strategies. There will be time-lapse delays; make sure everyone knows this upfront (what may happen is that the instructor will ask for questions and by the time the remote students hear what the instructor asked, the instructor will have moved on, thinking there were no questions). Make sure instructors and students are aware of the delay and take it into account when interacting with the remote location(s).
- Have a plan for how questions from VTC remote audience will be addressed. Create bin items from email or instant messaging, and make time at the end of each unit or at established times in the agenda to address questions.
- Consider time zones when setting starting and ending times for the VTC session.
- Consider using more than one computer so instructors can have one computer dedicated to the VTC communication, while the other computer can be used for instructor notes and needs. This may help remove distractions from trying to switch from VTC to other applications and back to VTC.
- Consider having a facilitator in each VTC training room to help with breaks, transitions, identifying potential problems, and other issues that may occur.

- Set up the VTC session well in advance of the course to ensure all computer connections will be able to accommodate content, instructors, and students (i.e., some bridges will not allow voice and two-way VTC visual without the addition of another type of media such as a television). Make sure all programs and equipment can interface properly, and test all equipment at the actual locations where use is planned. If the VTC session will include multiple agencies, make sure everyone can communicate with one another or set up bridges, if needed. Consider having an IT person that is familiar with the VTC on-call to assist with VTC glitches.
- Have a backup plan for what to do if the VTC technology fails.
- Are there other video teleconferences taking place in your area at the same time? Trying to conduct more than one video teleconference simultaneously in your area can dramatically reduce connection speeds for all the events.

APPENDIX E – ORDERING COURSE MATERIALS

The course materials needed for NWCG courses are typically listed in Appendix A on the Course Materials CD. Course materials may be ordered from:

Mail or fax orders to:

Great Basin Cache Supply Office
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise ID 83705
Phone: (208) 387-5104
FAX: (208) 387-5573 or 387-5548

An NWCG National Fire Equipment System (NFES) Catalog, Part 2: Publications explains current procedures for ordering course materials. The catalog also lists the materials needed for each course along with their cost. The catalog can be accessed electronically at http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/catalog.htm. If the order is faxed, confirm by phone that the fax was received.

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APPENDIX F – CADRE MEETINGS CHECKLIST

Consider the following activities when conducting various cadre meetings.

Initial cadre meeting:

- ☐ Coordinate course materials and presentations.
- ☐ Finalize logistical support requirements.
- ☐ Review target group and student profiles, if applicable.
- ☐ Obtain instructor biographies and contact information.
- ☐ Review experiential learning sessions.
- ☐ Review summary of student evaluations and cadre recommendations from previous courses.
- ☐ Finalize time schedules and course agenda.
- ☐ Develop list of instructor expectations for the course.
- ☐ Review pre-course scores, if applicable.
- ☐ Discuss equal employment opportunity (EEO) provisions and language.
- ☐ Discuss requirements for appropriate cadre attire.
- ☐ Make changes or adjustments to the course as needed.

Pre-course cadre meeting:

- ☐ Determine course presentation tempo.
- ☐ Test drive electronic presentations, videos, and links.
- ☐ Discuss concerns.
- ☐ Provide computer username and password or other access requirements.
- ☐ Determine how pre-course work will be addressed, if applicable.

Daily cadre meeting:

- ☐ Review unit or daily evaluations (several students may be asked to provide a summary).
- ☐ Assess student comprehension.
- ☐ Assess group dynamics.
- ☐ Adjust course timeframes.
- ☐ Determine how to incorporate topics, objectives, or content instructors may have overlooked or that need reinforcement.
- ☐ Identify issues (e.g., instructors, facilities, students, course content).

Closeout cadre meeting:

- ☐ Review final evaluations.
- ☐ Document recommendations for future course modifications.

APPENDIX G – SAMPLE INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

David Jones, Ecologist (Research Forester), USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Logan, Utah

Dave's work experience consists of 1 year of wildlife management and research experience in Wisconsin and 5 years of course work, teaching, and research for advanced degrees before starting his Forest Service career. From 1991 to 1994, he was stationed at Reno, Nevada, while leading a wet mantle flood research project. From 1995 through 2000, he led the water yield improvement project at Logan, Utah. From 2000 to the present, Dave has been assigned to aspen ecosystems research and has been involved in several special assignments. Effects of forest management, especially clearcutting and/or fire, on soil and water have occupied most of his personal research time.

Dave has B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Wisconsin and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

In his free time, Dave enjoys hiking in the foothills with his dog Bruno and listening to bluegrass music.

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