

# **Arizona State Wildfire Qualifications Review Committee Bylaws**

This Committee is formed to provide oversight for the certification of NWCG Prescribed and Wildland Firefighting positions that have (1) potential to supervise personnel from agencies other than their own or (2) a wide range of safety factors or influence even though they are not generally supervisory positions.

## **Article 1: Name**

1.1 The name of this committee shall be Arizona State Wildfire Qualifications Review Committee (Committee).

## **Article 2: Purpose and Powers**

2.1 The authority provided to the Committee through the State Forester is found within ARS 37-622 which states that the State Forester shall provide necessary oversight to ensure standardized training and certification for all classifications of wildfire firefighters to be deployed, through cooperator agreement with the state forester, to any federal or state wildfire incident.

2.2 The NWCG Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1) is the recognized authority for defining minimum standards for certification of Prescribed and Wildland fire positions. The Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement includes federal agency-sponsored positions that are not included in the 310-1 which are frequently used on wildland fire incidents. The Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) "Standard Operational Guideline, SOG 804 Minimum Experience Requirements for Red Card Certification (SOG 804)" shall be used to supplement the PMS 310-1; outlining minimum training and experience that is required by the DFFM for certification. The DFFM SOG 804 may require criteria that is in excess of the PMS 310-1 but will not require criteria less than the PMS 310-1.

2.3 The Committee shall review the training and experience records for the DFFM personnel and for individuals who operate under a current intergovernmental agreement with the DFFM.

2.4 The Committee will make a recommendation to the DFFM Fire Management Officer (FMO) regarding qualifications that are reviewed. The Arizona State FMO is the final authority regarding which positions are included on the State issued Incident Qualification Card (Red Card).

2.5 The State District Manager or the Cooperators Fire Chief has authority to suspend/revoke/decertify their employee's qualifications. Qualifications may be suspended/revoked/ or decertified if the employee receives an unsatisfactory performance evaluation, if employees conduct on an incident is unprofessional and shows a disregard for safety protocols. Any employees found not meeting standards set forth in NWCG Wildland Fire Qualification Systems Guide PMS 310-1, the DFFM Standard Operations Guide SOG 804 will be automatically suspended until they can be reviewed by the committee.

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2.6 Certification of physical fitness and the annual fireline safety refresher is the responsibility of the firefighters' home unit. The Intergovernmental Agreement signed by the Fire Department/District ensures compliance with these required standards. This information will be documented on the Red Cards by the Fire Chief or training officer.

2.7 To conduct the business of this committee a quorum consisting of no less than seven (7) committee members must be present or available through teleconferencing.

2.8 Committee recommendations shall be passed by a majority of the voting members present.

2.8 These bylaws do not prohibit the State Forester from using his/her authority to qualify individuals outside regular committee meetings under emergency circumstances as specified by the State Forester.

### **Article 3: Membership**

3.1 Membership of this committee shall consist of:

The DFFM training officer (1)

The DFFM training specialist (1)

The DFFM district manager from each district (5) (at the discretion of the district manager, an assistant FMO may attend a committee meeting as a voting member in the absence of the district manager)

Two local fire department/district representatives from each district (10)

One representative from the chain saw program (1)

3.2 The fire department/district representatives shall serve for a 3 year term. Once the three year term has been satisfied their Committee membership will expire. If a fire department/district representative finds it necessary to terminate their membership prior to the completion of their term, they are expected to give ample notice to the Committee Chair so a replacement can be selected without disruption to the operations of the committee.

Parties who are interested in serving on the Qualification Review Committee should submit a letter of interest to the Committee Chair. The Chair will present the letters of interest to the DFFM District Managers, State Forester and State FMO for consideration and selection. Vacancies will be announced in the Committee Meeting Minutes as well as posted to the DFFM website.

3.3 All committee members will be knowledgeable about wildland fire and wildland fire training, ICS, the Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide as supported by the NWCG (PMS 310-1), and the DFFM Policy SOG 804 titled "Minimum Experience Requirements for Red Card Certification."

3.4 There will be no dues or other charges for membership on the committee.

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## **Article 4: Officers**

4.1 The officers of this committee shall be a Chair and a Vice Chair. The State Training Officer will be the permanent Chair and the State Training Specialist shall serve as vice.

4.2 The Chair shall act as a facilitator in conducting the business of the committee. The Vice Chair shall act as Chair in the absence of the State Training Officer.

4.3 The vice Chair shall take notes at the meetings to document the activities of the committee. In the event that the Vice Chair acts as Chair during a meeting, the Vice Chair will select a member of the committee to document the activities of the committee during the meeting. After the meeting, the Vice Chair will use the notes to compile the meeting minutes. The minutes will be posted within 2 weeks to the DFFM website and will be distributed to the Committee Members and to the Wildland Coordinators who submitted a request for review on behalf of someone in their agency.

4.4 The Chair and Vice Chair will ensure the SOG 804 and Committee bylaws are updated with any amendments recommended by the committee annually and will post the current by-laws to the DFFM website.

4.5 The DFFM will be the depository for meeting minutes and other documents produced by the Committee.

## **Article 5: Meetings and Tasks**

5.1 Committee Review Meetings are open meetings and anyone is invited to attend, however, they are not subject to the requirements of ARS 38-431. There are absolutely no restrictions regarding this. Meetings are open to Fire Department personnel, DFFM personnel, Federal personnel; anyone wishing to sit in is encouraged to attend.

5.2 This committee will conduct quarterly review meetings. The meetings that are scheduled for the spring and fall will be conducted onsite, the summer and winter meetings may be conducted onsite or via conference line. Additional meetings can be requested/scheduled with a majority vote of the committee and as the need dictates.

5.3 Firefighter requests for certification will be considered during the quarterly review meetings. The candidates Incident Qualification System records (IQS) and training files will be evaluated to assess whether or not their documented training and experience meets the criteria that is required.

5.4 If there is an "Immediate Need" for certification review, the associated District Manager will conduct an individual review of a firefighter's training file. The District Manager must ensure all required documentation (per 310-1 & SOG 804) has been submitted. There must be no question that the person is qualified to advance and they have submitted all the documentation that is required for the position they are seeking. If the District Manager determines the records meet the criteria they can grant an "Interim" (i.e. temporary) approval of the qualification. They will send an email notice to the

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DFFM State FMO and the training specialist. The training specialist will process the qualification in IQS and ROSS and issue an updated Qualification Card (Red Card). The person's request will be added to the agenda for the next committee meeting and their training file will be reviewed by the Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

5.5 Deadlines for submitting requests for committee review will be posted on the State Forestry website. Any requests that do not meet the deadline will be added to a wait list. Requests on the wait list will be considered on a "first come, first served" basis and as time allows at the end of the qualification review meeting. There is no guarantee that requests received past the deadline will be reviewed during the meeting. The requests that are not reviewed during the meeting will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled review meeting.

5.6 An Individual Firefighter Experience Log must be entered and uploaded into IQS by a qualified IQS Data Entry Support user (or submitted to the State Training Specialist for entering) no later than December 1<sup>st</sup> each year. This provides documentation of wildland fire assignments and ensures the firefighter's pertinent qualifications stay current. It is the responsibility of the Individual Firefighter to submit annual fire experience logs to their Fire Chief or Training Officer. If fire experience logs have not been submitted or have been submitted late there is no guarantee that their qualifications will be current in ROSS or on their State Issued Red Card.

5.7 If a firefighter wishes to regain qualification for a position where currency has lapsed, they shall request to revert to the trainee level in the position where currency has expired and shall be issued a position taskbook for the position. If the position had previously been reviewed and approved by the Committee this request does not need additional approval from the Committee. The firefighter will complete on-the-job-training if needed, complete any additional required training courses which have been added to the positions for which they are attempting to recertify (NWCG 310-1 or SOG 804), and requalify by completing a performance assignment as a trainee (with a trainer) in the position. When all currently required training courses and trainee experience assignments have been completed, the documentation must be submitted to the committee for review with a request to regain their expired position.

5.8 When a person regains qualification in a position that had lapsed, they will also regain currency in all of the positions for which the position maintains currency. For example, a person with an expired ENGB qualification who completed the requirements to regain the ENGB qualification will also regain currency in positions they previously held for which ENGB maintains currency (currently FOBS, FFT1, FFT2, ICT4, CRWB, FELB, FIRB, HEQB, and STEN).

5.9 The Committee will review performance issues that happen during an incident (i.e. inability to follow direction, inability to perform job duties, receiving a poor performance evaluation). They will give their recommendation only regarding the status of the person's qualifications (i.e. revoke qualifications, hold as a trainee, etc....) to the State District Manager and Cooperators Fire Chief. The Committee will not make recommendations regarding disciplinary actions.

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5.10 Red Cards will be issued no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. When the Committee holds a qualification review meeting after red cards have been issued for the year (spring and summer meetings), the Red Cards that need revision will be issued within a reasonable time (not to exceed 30 days) following the meeting.

5.11 Red Cards issued by the DFFM will have a space for the Cooperators Fire Chief or Training Officer to enter the actual dates of Refresher Training and Pack Test results. The State Issued Red Cards will not be valid until the Cooperator Fire Chief or Training Officer enters that information on the card.

### **Article 6: Evaluation Guidelines**

6.1 The prescribed and wildland firefighting positions that do and do not require review by the Committee are clearly identified in the DFFM Standard Operational Guideline 804 (SOG 804).

6.2 The Committee will either recommend approval for the request or they will identify what is lacking in the person's training or experience that must be addressed before the request will be approved. The Committee may also offer a recommendation for the candidate's professional training and development.

6.3 For positions that require review by the committee, the request must be approved (via Committee Review or a District Manager Interim Approval) before a firefighter can initiate the new task book.

6.4 Candidates will submit a packet for review that includes copies of their training certificates, firefighter experience logs and copies of the title, certification, and evaluation pages of their task books. Documentation that is incomplete will be returned. When the missing information has been included, the packet will be accepted and processed.

6.5 If approved documentation is not available (lost or destroyed) the committee shall determine what substitute information will be acceptable. Examples include signed letters (or email) from the chief of the department with specific information including candidates name, date and location of training/experience, name of trainer/evaluator. Only an individual who can validate the person's experience or successful completion of the training can provide third party evidence to substantiate missing documentation.

Printouts from the federal IQCS (Incident Qualifications and Certification System) will be accepted in lieu of formal training and experience records for former federal employees whose original records are no longer available. Similarly, a State Managed IQS (Incident Qualification System) printout will be accepted from all States and their Cooperators who adhere to the NWCG 310-1 standards in lieu of formal training and experience records for former state employees (outside Arizona) whose original records are no longer available.

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6.6 When considering a candidate's training records, time will be afforded to candidates to provide additional documentation and information in case of committee queries. The amount of time will be determined by the committee at the time the questions are noted.

6.7 When Committee approval to issue a new taskbook has been obtained, it is the Cooperators (fire chief, training officer, wildland coordinator) responsibility to issue the new book and to submit a copy of the taskbook cover sheet to the state training specialist. Once the cover sheet has been submitted, the specialist will add the trainee qualification in IQS and ROSS and will issue a new red card.

6.8 When the Committee has approved a firefighter to initiate a Specific Task Book from the Combined Single Resource Boss Task Book, or the Combined Unit Leader taskbook in the Finance or Logistics Section, the training specialist may authorize that a second Specific Task Book be issued as long as all current pre-requisite experience has been met.

6.9 If a Position Task Book (PTB) is not completed in 3 years from the date of its initiation (or first task being evaluated), the PTB will expire. If the initiation of the task book was previously reviewed and approved by the Committee, the training specialist may authorize a new task book to be initiated without additional Committee review. Any completed PTB evaluations must be submitted to the training specialist before initiating the new task book. In alignment with the 310-1, prior experience and evaluations may be taken into account in completion of the new PTB at the discretion of the Certifying Official. All qualification standards identified in the current 310-1 and SOG-804 must be applied at the time of the new PTB initiation.

6.10 An employee who transfers to the DFFM, or one of the Cooperator Agencies, from a different agency must have their records reviewed by the Committee if the person has qualifications that are reviewed by the Committee.

6.11 No position qualifications will be grandfathered after 1995.

6.12 Persons disagreeing with the findings of the committee may appeal to the committee through the Chair or Vice Chair for re-evaluation. The Chair or Vice Chair has authority to resolve the appeal within the guidelines of the Committee By-Laws and the SOG-804. When appropriate and prudent the committee may re-convene to address the appeal. In this situation the person who is making the appeal is welcome to appear in person or via teleconference, and they may submit additional documentation for the committee to consider. Those persons disagreeing with the committee and using Incident Qualifications Cards not approved by the committee will be suspended for 30 to 90 days at the discretion of the committee. Such persons will show unavailable in dispatch records for the stated time period.

### **Article 7: Amendment**

7.1 The Committee may recommend revisions to these by-laws with a majority vote at any regularly scheduled meeting.