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This guide is intended to assist Forest Service and State sponsored ADs (a.k.a. Casual Hires), with clarification of responsibilities as both FS employees and as incident resources. This guide is specific to ADs sponsored by the States, National Forests and Job Corps Centers located in the US Forest Service Eastern Region.

The intent of the AD Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (FSH 5109.34) is to hire persons on an as-needed basis to supplement regular federal employees in responding to an emergency threatening life and property.

Introduction

The US Forest Service Eastern Region (R9) recognizes the value of AD employees and intends to sponsor and use these employees when appropriate. The Region's guidance is in accordance with the Eastern Area Coordinating Group (EACG). The Region will ensure available and qualified agency employees are dispatched prior to ADs.

The Eastern Region operates under a four Hub Program to balance workloads across the geographical area. The Hiring Officials from each Hub have all discretion in hiring ADs based on Eastern Regional needs and administrative workload, and the casuals' past performance and availability. They do not guarantee sponsorship, employment, or assignments.

All personnel and all positions will be determined yearly on a case-by-case basis. The Forest Fire, Fuels and Aviation Staff Officers (FMO), Incident Business Specialist (IBS) and Dispatch Center Managers will determine and certify the need.

- ADs are sponsored based on where they reside within the respective dispatch area. ADs who reside outside these dispatch areas will not be sponsored.
- ADs should be available for a minimum of two months per year, including the month of August. *Two consecutive seasons without meeting availability expectations may be grounds for discontinuing sponsorship.*

To maintain sponsorship, all ADs will:

- Maintain their conduct and performance standards in alignment with agency employees hired under other authorities including:
 - Refraining from inappropriate behavior, including harassment of any kind.
 - Refraining from drug and alcohol use.
 - Presenting complete pay and per diem documents to the sponsoring unit immediately upon return, including immediate return of rental vehicles or agency-owned property items.
- Be held accountable according to ethical standards of duty including:
 - Performing duties to the best of their abilities.
 - Following all agency and inter-agency guidelines for their positions.
 - Following all standard safety guidelines.
 - Following all administrative guidelines and procedures including care for assigned equipment and obtaining a Performance Evaluation on every incident.
 - Return the Performance Evaluation to the Hiring Official following each incident.

AD Program Intent

The Northeast Hub AD Program, hosted by the Northeastern Interagency Coordination Center (NECC), covers all Forest, State and Job Corps ADs in the geographical area of the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. NECC recognizes the importance and need for Administratively Determined (AD) resources as an integral part of our emergency incident workforce. This document has been developed to provide fair and consistent practices and to standardize procedures for hiring, training and certification.

Hiring Official:

- Specific individuals have been delegated as Hiring Officials for the Northeast Hub.
- Hiring Officials will authorize ADs who have been sponsored by a local State or Forest unit.
- The Hub will be responsible for the hiring (Casual Hire Forms), payment, travel reimbursement and administration of any injury's compensation.
- **No AD shall mobilize to an incident or attend training without a completed and signed Casual Hire Form - PMS934.**
- The Hub will work with local units concerning conduct and/or performance issues.

Sponsoring Official:

- A designated State or Forest Service individual who makes the determination to sponsor an AD for local, geographic area, or national response needs.
- Responsible for activities such as training, WCT, IQS or IQCS, availability, mobilization, resource orders, travel arrangements, refreshers, etc.
- Approves Sponsorship Application Form.

ADs shall keep the Hub apprised of issues in a timely manner; this may include:

- Illness or injury on incident.
- Conduct or performance issues.
- Reassignments.
- Tax changes (new W-4).
- Address or bank account changes.
- Non-payment from ASC.

AD Sponsorship

An AD employee will be sponsored by only one Federal or State agency and will be utilized as needed to supplement agency shortages at the Forest, Regional and National level. ADs hired by NECC will be expected to support both local and national incident needs. The local Sponsoring Official has the discretion to sponsor an AD or certify any qualification. National policy is to ensure that available and qualified agency employees and/or cooperators (i.e., state or local government) are dispatched for all incident positions prior to dispatching AD hires.

If all regular agency resources are depleted for mobilization, NECC will follow the Eastern Region priority when determining the need to hire ADs.

The Eastern Region priorities for sponsoring all ADs are:

1. Local National Forest incident response needs, Job Corps Centers, and ESF4 response.
2. Eastern Area IMT Members.
3. Regional, or National shortage position needs such as Unit Leaders, aviation, finance, logistics, planning, or safety positions.
4. Crews, up to agency capacity.

5. Out of Geographic Area IMT members, only after Eastern Area Incident Management Team (EA IMT) rosters have been filled.

Qualified ADs will be required to apply and participate on the Eastern Areas IMTs to ensure each IMT is properly staffed throughout the IMT's availability period. This includes all mandatory NWCG IMT positions, and most discretionary IMT support qualifications (finance, logistics, aviation, planning, safety, information, and liaison functions). NWCG IMT POSITIONS can be found at https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/teams/imt_configuration.pdf.

Operational qualifications below the Division Supervisor level are not included in this requirement.

Administration

Correspondence with the Northeast Hub AD Administrators can be made using the following email: nhnecc@firenet.gov

Returning ADs will provide the following forms annually and no later than February 1st to NECC:

- **Incident Behavior Form - PMS 935**
- **OF-306 Declaration for Federal Employment**
- **Sponsorship Application Form** – Signed by appropriate Sponsoring Official

Forms to bring with on assignment:

- **Casual Hire Form** – Signed by both Hiring Official and AD
- **Proof of Driver's License** - Either a government driver's license issued by a federal agency or a Letter in Lieu of the driver's license is required on an incident if the AD will drive a government owned or leased vehicle.
- **AD Trip Itinerary or Expense Report** - To be used on each assignment to document travel expenses you wish to be reimbursed for.

As needed forms:

- Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification **IF** it has been more than three years since your last one.
- Form W-4, Employees Withholding Allowance Certificate **IF** your address or withholding status has changed.
- Form State W-4 withholding form **IF** you are required to file one.
- Federal Direct Deposit Form **IF** you have changed financial institutions or address.
- Vendor Code Information Worksheet **IF** you have changed financial institutions or address.

Please email NECC and indicate any forms you need. Forms can also be found at: [Eastern Area Coordination Center \(EACC\) \(nifc.gov\)](#).

Upon return from a fire assignment, all paperwork (OF-288, Resource Order, Casual Hire Form, Trip Itinerary/Expense Report with all receipts, and Performance Evaluation) must be submitted within five working days to NECC. This must occur before becoming available in IROC for a new assignment. This will assure timely submission of payment documents for prompt reimbursement.

Training and Certification

Prior to an individual being sponsored as an AD, all qualifications will be reviewed by the local Sponsoring Official to ensure the individual's qualifications meet agency standards. Individuals may not be certified in all positions for which they submit documentation.

If you receive any training, please email copies of appropriate training and certification documents to your local training official. These documents will be entered into the qualifications database, retained in your individual folders, and reflected on your Red Card.

Training may be provided to maintain qualifications for those positions for which the individuals are currently certified. The local Sponsoring Official has the authority to determine additional training needs and who is sponsored under these authorities based on fire activity, budget, and local agency and national staffing needs.

Position qualifications that require participation in fire line activities will be required to attend annual fire line safety refresher training (RT-130), the appropriate Work Capacity Test (WCT) and attend other additional training or medical examination as required by the sponsoring unit's policies. Remember to list these items on your Training Request Plan that you fill out annually and submit to your local agency Training Officer.

It is your responsibility to follow up with training course dates and make your request to attend training to NECC. Request must be received by NECC no less than five working days prior to the course. This will allow adequate time to complete your Casual Hire Form and get other necessary documents ready.

Incident Business Guidelines

As incident resources, ADs must be familiar with and follow all incident business rules. These rules can be found in the NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management (PMS 902-SIIBM) at [NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management, PMS 902](#)

Compensable Time - SIIBM Ch. 10, p. 10-9 Compensable time begins when the individual starts travel or when they report to the point of departure. Time spent at individual's residence preparing for an incident assignment is not compensable.

Crew Time Reports (CTRs) - SIIBM Chapter 10 (CTR example on page 10-34 and 10-35)
Each AD must document all hours worked. There is no guarantee of hours over eight per calendar day for ADs working on an incident; two hours when working at their home unit.

Follow Work/Rest ratio guidelines. If exceeded, MITIGATE 2:1 and JUSTIFY. (Chapter 10, page 10-13)

Meal Periods - SIIBM Chapter 10, page 10-12

Three criteria must be met for FIRELINE personnel to get a compensable meal break:

The fire is not controlled, and the Operations Section Chief says it is critical and orders it, and it is approved by the next level supervisor, and documented on the CTR.

For personnel in support positions and fireline personnel after control of the fire, a meal period of at least 30 minutes must be taken for each work shift. Meal breaks must be taken during travel per Federal Travel Regulations unless traveling by a method out of the traveler's control (plane, train, bus, etc.) and breaks cannot be taken. A work shift is defined as eight consecutive hours.

Travel - SIIBM Chapter 10, page 10-9 and 10-80 through 10-84

Travel to and from an incident will be arranged in a safe manner. Travel status is not a justification for excess hours and/or compensable meal breaks. Taking breaks outside of the vehicle or during a flight layover must be documented on the CTR as a break. All employees must abide by work/rest, excess hours mitigation, and Federal Travel Regulations, which state that breaks during driving must be taken.

Driving - SIIBM page 10-13 & 14, and National Incident Ops Driving Standards

No driver will drive more than ten hours (behind the wheel) within any duty day. Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty day limitation, provided no driver exceeds the 10-hour limit. A driver shall drive only if given at least eight consecutive hours off duty before beginning a shift.

AD Timesheets (OF-288):

For each assignment, ADs will be issued a Casual Hire Form. Give a copy to finance immediately upon check-in. Finance will collect CTRs and create an OF-288.

A signed OF-288 is the legal pay document for ADs.

- Assure that it is accurate prior to demobilization.
- The FS processes AD timesheets through the Albuquerque Service Center (ASC).
- The finance section at the incident is required to process both TIME AND TRAVEL EXPENSES on the OF-288 directly at the incident. The only exception is if travel expenses exist that are disallowed for reimbursement on the OF-288, for example rental vehicle expenditures on a personal credit card. In those cases, ADs will send travel documents to NECC for processing.
- Keep a copy of the signed OF-288 and give a copy to the Hub for documentation. This is for payment follow-up should an issue arise.
- If possible, obtain from the finance section staff the "Batch Number" to ASC prior to demobilization, and keep for further inquiry.
- ASC has approximately 14 days from receipt of signed OF-288s to process and pay. Timing may be dependent on the season and their backlog.
- It is the responsibility of the AD to insure a complete OF-288 is signed by the incident finance section before demobilizing.

Travel and Transportation:

All temporary duty travel for casual hires will be processed in accordance with the Forest Service Casual Hire Travel Expense Reimbursement guidance which follows all GSA, Department of Agriculture, and Forest Service Travel Regulations.

Transportation to and from incident assignments and/or authorized pre-season training will be coordinated through Dispatch.

- An AD's method of transportation will be indicated on the Casual Hire Information Form.
- Air transportation to incidents will be arranged and paid for by the Coordination Center.
- Dispatch will determine the method of travel per established guidelines.
- There will be no compensation for private vehicle mileage if an AD declines Government transportation.
- If a rental vehicle is authorized, it must be returned immediately upon return.
- If you had a NERV, all required close out paperwork must be emailed and completed with the NERV desk before making yourself available.

Mileage:

ADs will be reimbursed a POV mileage rate if no government transportation is available.

- The rate will be per GSA regulations.
- Mileage reimbursement covers ALL expenses related to that vehicle (oil changes, tires, mechanical issues, damage, etc.) and no further compensation will be provided.
- The GSA mileage rate applies to any type of vehicle used, including campers for personal lodging.
- Privately owned vehicles (POV) may be used for mobilization and demobilization only. They are not to be used to conduct the duties of any position on the incident.

Incident Use:

ADs who require a rental vehicle for operational use on the incident may be assigned a vehicle through the NERV program.

- Details for use of this program, and the AD's responsibility can be found here: [NERV|National Emergency Rental Vehicle](#). Follow the link to the NERV webpage and specific Standard Operating Procedures and directions for submitting paperwork.

FSH 7109.19 / Chapter 61.2

To minimize duplication of State driver licensing requirements, AD hires may be authorized by Hosting Agency Line, Supervisor, or Staff Officers to operate non-specialized vehicles without an operational test if they meet all the following:

- 1. Have a valid State driver's license.*
- 3. Have completed a Defensive and Distracted Driving course within the last four (4) years.*
- 4. Are not operating or towing any specialized equipment.*
- 5. Are not operating non-specialized vehicles on roads that are hazardous or closed to the public.*

Self Sufficiency:

ADs cannot be issued government charge/travel cards or travel advances.

- ADs will need to be self-sufficient with personal funds for some expenses prior to other support, such as Buying Teams arriving on incident.
- All expenses for reimbursement will be documented on an AD Trip Itinerary or Expense Report and submitted at the end of the assignment.
- Non-travel purchases (i.e., supplies or other non-travel related items) are NOT authorized and will not be reimbursed on the travel voucher.

Travel Reimbursement:

Reference FS AD Payment Procedures as posted by ASC each year.

- Most travel situations will have expenses that are reimbursable as an addition on the OF-288 per FS ASC procedures.
- The finance section makes the travel addition on the OF-288 and submits it to ASC directly from the incident.
- ADs should know this process to adequately review and approve the reimbursement correctly.
- Use the Travel Spreadsheet posted on EACC Business website and attach it to the OF-288.
 - Visit GSA.gov for the M&IE rate for the incident area.
 - At maximum, only 3/4 M&IE will be reimbursed the first and last day.
 - Meals will likely be provided on incident. In this case only incidental expenses, currently \$5 per day, will be added. This is not reduced on the first and last day.
 - Refusing to eat government-provided meals (by choice) does not entitle ADs to meal compensation.

Travel Documentation and Receipts:

When travel reimbursement cannot be documented and requested by Incident Finance using the OF-288 process mentioned above, all casuals will return their Travel Worksheet and travel receipts to NECC immediately upon return from the incidents within five business days.

Receipts will be gathered and submitted as one package. The package will include:

1. Lodging/motel receipts
 2. Rental car receipt paid by traveler
 3. Rental car fuel receipts
 4. Airline baggage fee receipts
 5. Shuttle, taxi, or other ground transportation expense receipts
 6. Statement of Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) mileage
 7. Airport parking fee receipts
 8. Any other reimbursable expense receipts
- For accurate travel reimbursement ADs shall document POV mileage and government-provided meals and lodging. Receipts must be provided for any procured expenses such as lodging, rented vehicles, meals, parking, etc.

- The receipt package will include the current travel worksheet indicating any meals provided by the government.
- All receipts will be put in chronological order.
- Image of route with mileage depicted (ie, google maps screenshot) must be included if requesting POV mileage reimbursement.

Travel Deviations:

ADs must abide by the same standard as regular government employees.

- Travel deviations must have the advanced approval of the hiring official and will not be compensated beyond the normal travel plan.
- Refer to SIIBM for further clarification.

Length of Assignment:

ADs are expected to be prepared for a standard 14-day assignment.

- Extension requests must be documented, and the sponsoring unit must concur.
- Only one extension will be granted for a total of 30 days per the Red Book.
 - After one extension, the AD must be released and return home.
 - If the AD does not return home, the point of hire will be adjusted.

Reassignments:

ADs may be reassigned on incident. The AD must complete timesheets for each incident and show a copy to the next incident to limit pay errors.

- Reassignments to new incidents: casuals should bring a copy of their new resource order and Single Resource Casual Hire Information form to the new incident.
- Position changes on a current incident do not require a new Casual Hire Form to be submitted to incident finance, but ADs must be sponsored by the hiring unit in the new position.
- ADs must be qualified or a trainee in the new position and it must be reflected on their Incident Qualification Card.
- Incident supervisors must document the position change in the Remarks section of the CTRs and/or on a General Message form.
- Position changes on an incident do not require a new Resource Order (unless changing from a subordinate position—like engine crewmember on an engine that is being released—to an overhead position).
- The IMT or receiving unit cannot issue a Position Task Book.

Health Benefits and work-related Injury:

ADs are eligible for Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) when they have worked 130 hours per month within a 90-consecutive-day timeframe. ASC will notify the AD when they are one month from meeting the criteria. The AD will work with ASC to process.

As federal casuals, ADs are covered by the federal Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) in the event of injury while performing the duties of their position, or while in official travel status.

- All injuries and illnesses which occur on incident must be reported to the incident and to Hiring Officials.

- The IMT must work with Hiring Officials to assure that data is entered into eSafety in a timely manner.
- A copy of the IMT's CA-1 or CA-2 must be sent to Hiring Officials.
- Paperwork for these situations must be processed via FS regulations, regardless of the incident agency.
- Contact the Hiring Official for assistance.

Point of Hire:

The point of hire for travel reimbursement is either the dispatch office, AD's home residence, or the closest FS office, whichever provides the most efficient travel route to the incident. Mileage will be calculated from the most efficient point.

If an AD is driving to the worksite from their residence and returning to their residence after shift, they will not be reimbursed for that mileage.

Training and Meetings:

When approved, ADs will be compensated for required training to maintain current qualifications and in certain instances to advance their qualifications if that meets agency needs.

- ADs who participate in any training or travel without prior Forest FMO approval and without a signed Casual Hire Form, will not be reimbursed.
- The Forests will not hire ADs to instruct classes and/or workshops unless there are no qualified agency employees available.
- ADs will be hired and paid for training to increase their position qualifications, on a case-by-case basis with approval by Forest FMO or Asst. Director of Cooperative Fire for state-affiliated ADs.
- When approved, sponsored fireline-qualified ADs will be compensated for Work Capacity Tests. Travel to and from the testing site will not be reimbursed.
 - ADs must follow the current agency process for medical exams or documentation. If an exam is required, this must be pre-approved.
 - Time spent at the clinic is not compensable.
- ADs will only be sponsored to attend IMT meetings if the AD is a PRIMARY (rostered) IMT member and attendance by their position meets the meetings intent.
 - If the meeting is intended for only C&G members, then ADs in team positions other than C&G will not be sponsored to attend.
 - ADs will be reimbursed for the AD pay grade for the position which meets the intent of the meeting or training.
 - If ADs are rostered members on a Type II IMT, they will be paid the Type II rate even if they hold a Type I qualification in the same position.

Qualifications, Task Books, and Evaluations

ADs must meet FS requirements per the current FS Fire and Aviation Qualifications Guide. The sponsoring unit maintains qualification documentation and issues an Incident Qualification Card.

- In the case of trainees, only the home unit may issue and certify Position Task Books.
- ADs are required to obtain a Performance Evaluation from their incident supervisor for each assignment and provide a copy to their hiring official.

State-affiliated ADs must meet NWCG 310-1 requirements to be hired by the Forest Service as an AD.

Acknowledgement

All ADs will sign the Incident Behavior Form that also acknowledges receipt and review of this guide.

Contacts

For further information or for any questions during an incident assignment, contact an authorized Hiring Official.

Enrollment as a FS AD hire is a privilege and intended for use to support local needs or to provide critical support to local or national suppression efforts.

When a question arises with regards to these guidelines and policies, the AD is expected to consult with the Northeast Hub for an appropriate course of action.

If you have any questions regarding this document, you may contact NECC at nhnecc@firenet.gov.