

Today's Professional Private Wildland Fire Service



Presented by
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Washington Contract Firefighters Association and the
National Wildfire Suppression Association



Workshop Foundation

- During the fall of 2015 the NWSA Board of Directors agreed that in the spirit of partnership there was a need for a tool to help bridge the gap of misconception and misunderstandings between the **Professional Private Wildland Fire Service** and agency personnel.

Vision

- Present in person to agency individuals, fire department personnel and fire management teams in conjunction with NWCG classes at various levels.
- Provide an overview and basic understanding of the private wildland fire service.
- Foster the understanding that the private industry is here to complement the needs of the agencies.

Vision

- Provide a standardized message to insure information about the private wildland fire service would be consist throughout the country.
- Become a module in NWCG courses for agency field supervisors.
- Build relationships between all organizations involved in wildfire response.

Vision

- Provide knowledge about the professional private wildland fire services to hiring agencies to help foster a quality working relationship.
- Provide insight into the professional private wildland fire service roles, duties, responsibilities and costs.
- Provide insight into agency vs. private roles, duties and responsibilities.

History of the private fire service

Prior to the first government fire department, private fire brigades competed with one another to be the first to respond to a fire because insurance companies paid brigades to save buildings.

Utilization of private resources to help suppress wildfires began with the timber industry in the 1970's.

The USFS and other agencies began utilization in the mid 1980's.

Who Are We?



Who are We?

- Firefighters (volunteer, career, retired, aspiring)
- School teachers, bus drivers
- Retired Forest Service and other agency personnel
- Full-time wildfire business owners
- Farmers and ranchers
- Loggers, construction companies

How I Got Started

- Volunteer with Grant County #10
- Volunteer with Thurston County #1
- Career FF at Chehalis
- Volunteer with Lewis County District #6
- Mobilizations with Chehalis Fire Department

How We Got Started



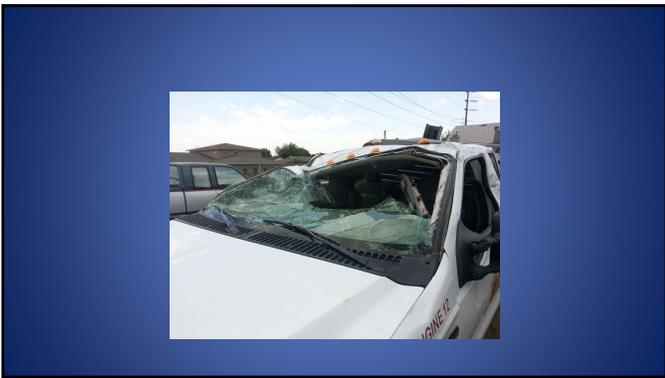


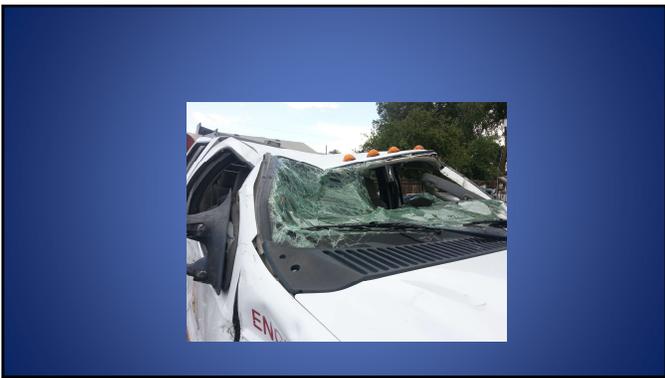












How the professional private wildland fire service supplements agencies.

Total Tactical Resources = 5,052

Total Firefighters = 11,319

Numbers as of 2015

How the professional private wildland fire service supplements agencies.

Total Logistical Resources = 4009
(Region 6= 2008)

Clerical and communication trailers
Caterers, laundry, sleepers, refrigerated trailers, portable toilets
Crew buses, gray and potable tank trucks
Mechanic w/ truck, private vehicles, weed wash units, etc.

Numbers as of 2015

2015 All Private Resources - Operations												
Host Region	Heavy Equip-ment	Engines	Misc. Heavy	Faller Module	Faller Single	Heavy w/water	Water Tender Support	Water Tender Tactical	Nat. Contract Crews	Regional Hand Crews	Total Resources	Firefighters
Region 1	219	201	67	69	69	66	132	0	2	0	825	1334
Region 2	25	20	20	1	0	0	15	4	0	0	85	126
Region 3	113	41	66	0	0	0	62	6	0	0	288	370
Region 4	152	88	74	14	7	7	54	14	2	0	412	602
Region 5	423	27	263	94	195		349		4	0	1355	2265
Region 6	369	352	301	125	226	22	232	0	24	165	1816	6236
Region 8	96	26	102	0	0	0	9	0	1	0	234	305
Region 9	0	22	11	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	37	81
Region 10											0	
Total	1397	777	904	303	497	95	855	26	33	165	5052	11319

















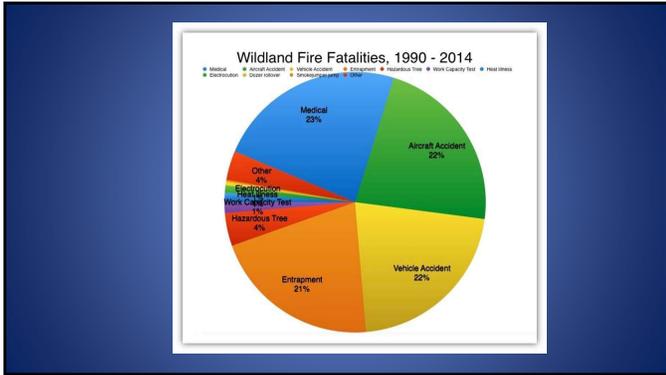






What Keeps Us Awake at Night?

- Crew safety



What Keeps Us Awake at Night?

- Crew safety
- Regulations
- Human resource issues
- Vehicle maintenance
- Cost of inputs
- Unknown and/or changing regulations
- Misunderstood or non-existing rules
- Enough work to sustain company and employees

What Keeps Us Awake at Night?

- Inspection
- Nevada agency
- Threatened by overhead members
- IAP

Would you allow this to happen in your organization?



Process for Getting Engine Assigned
(Company)

- Register company
- Incorporate/LLC
- Farm labor license (State)
- Farm labor license (Federal)
- Register in operating states
- General liability insurance
- Workers compensation insurance
- Extraterritorial certificates

Process for Getting Engine Assigned
(Company)

- DOT registration
- DOT entry audit with WSP
- Obtain regional agreement
- USDA eAuthentication (level 2 clearance)
- Register for EIN, DUNS, VIPR, NAP, ROSS, FMCSA, UCR and many more
- Business and employer tax registrations for each state
- Register for E-Verify and submit employees for approval

Process for Getting Engine Assigned (Engine)

- Purchase or build and equip
- Insurance and license
- DOT inspection
- Preseason inspection
- Determine location and price
- Scored for best value analysis
- Posted on DPL
- Wait for dispatch

Process for Getting Engine Assigned (Personnel)

- Recruit and hire qualified employees
- Training (initial, refresher, advancement & company)
- Work capacity fitness test
- Submit training records for review
- Create company identification card
- Driver's DOT medical
- Driver's CDL if over 26,000 GVW
- Driver's MSPA certification including fingerprinting
- S212 Saw Certification
- Language Assessment Exam (Hand crews)
- First aid training
- Drug testing
- Background checks

Contractor Associations

Washington Contract Firefighters Association (WCFA)



Contractor Associations

National Wildfire Suppression Association (NWSA)



CONTRACTOR ASSOCIATIONS

- Three Sisters Wildland Contractor’s Association (TSWCA)
- NW Contract Firefighters Association (NWCFA)
- Oregon Contractor Firefighting Association (OCFA)
- Several Others in Region 6

What is the Association’s Role?

- Provide quality wildland fire training
- To foster open communication between agency personnel and the private industry to ensure that each party is successful in completing their mission.
- Help elevate the professionalism in the private wildland fire service through education and communication.

Associations' Role

- Provide a unified voice to the appropriate agencies so the private industry can successfully meet the needs of the agency as well as informing the agency on how the agency can help their private resources.
- Associations are NOT policing agencies for the private fire service. (exceptions)

Association Agreements

- Training MOUs with the Pacific Northwest Coordinating Group that allow certified instructors to teach NWCG wildland fire courses.
- May have records inspection MOU for personnel training records
- May have MOU for equipment inspections



Training Qualifications

• Training

Instructors:

All instructors have gone through an approval process
Classes monitored by agency personnel

Class Standards:

Meet or exceed NWCG requirements for each class

Training Qualifications

• Records review

3rd party monitoring

• Work capacity fitness tests

Scheduled by employers and monitored by agencies

Resource Requirements

• Resource Complement

We meet and exceed the agency requirements for staffing, training and equipment for all resources.

(Crews, Engines, Dozers, Fallers, Tenders)



Agreement Types:

The primary contract types you will encounter:

- 1. National IBPA's (Buses, clerical Support)
(Incident Blanket Procurement Agreements)

National Type II-IA Crew Contract (Hand crews)

One national solicitation is issued for ALL regions.
Administered by USFS

Contracts Considered National By NICC

- National Contract Air Tanker
- National Contract Lead Plane
- National Contract Type 1 and Type 2 Helicopter
- National Contract Mobile Shower Facilities
- National Contract Type 1 and Type 2 Helicopter
- National Contract Infrared Aircraft
- National Contract Mobile Food Services Unit
- National Type 2 Hand Crews
- Others

Agreement Types:

2. Regional IBPA's

Water Handling Equipment Agreement Administered by USFS
(Engines, Water Tender, etc..)

Interagency Fire Crew Agreement – IFCA Administered by ODF
(Hand crews)

Agreement Types:

3. Local IBPA's (Vehicles with Drivers, Chippers)

The solicitation level and acquisition cycle is determined by the region (forest, zone, and region). Solicitation levels will vary and can be different from region to region.

Agreement Types:

4. EERA's – Incident only procurement

Used to sign up contracted resources not available through the IBPA competitive process due to availability or exhaustion of the dispatch priority list (DPL) and resources hired through other established dispatch ordering procedures.

Incident-only EERAs are valid only for the duration of the incident on which they were signed up. Once the incident releases the contracted resource the agreement is no longer valid.

How can Agreements be Utilized?

Fire Suppression

- Initial and Extended Attack
- Mop-up
- Standby / Back Fill

Fuels Management

- Task ordering:
The National Crew Contract has the ability for other agencies to utilize this contract for project work.

How can Agreements be Utilized?

- Other All Risk Incidents
 - Storms
 - Earthquakes
 - Post disaster recovery operations
 - ????

Contract Award Process

Incident Blanket Procurement Agreement –
 IBPAs are awarded pre-season using a best value award process and by using Choosing by Advantages (CBA) methodology to determine the dispatch priority. Award is based on reasonable price, acceptable past performance, qualified personnel and minimum equipment standards.

Contract	IBPA - National	IFCA - OR	EERA	Local Agreements	National Crew Contract
Award Process	Competitive	Competitive	Non Competitive	Non Competitive	Competitive
Agreement Type	Pre Season	Pre Season	Incident Only	Incident Only	Pre Season
Dispatch Process	National Dispatch	National Dispatch	Local	Local	National
Inspection Process	Pre Season Inspections	Pre Season Inspection	Incident Only	Incident Only	Pre Season Inspections

Dispatch Protocol

- Dispatching of private resources can vary depending on contract type.
 - However, most contracts create a system which is usually based on resources with best value being dispatched first. The exception can be for closest forces for initial attack needs.
- National Type 2 IA Crew Contract (NCC)
 - Each NCC is assigned a "Host Unit Coordination Center" (HUCC)

Dispatch Protocol

WCFA's stand:

Dispatch resources based on what is the most efficient fire suppression to minimize size of and damage from wildfires.

Legal – Contractors Responsibility

- Employee Medical Care
- Workers Compensation
- Wage Compensation
- Benefits
 - Retirements
 - Paid Leave
 - Health Care
- Liability Insurance
- Agreement requirements

Agency responsibilities

Do you ever ask yourself ?

“ WHY DO WE KEEP GETTING THE SAME POOR PERFORMING CREWS BACK “

Agency Responsibilities

- Complete performance evaluations honestly
- Turn evaluations into the contracting officer or proper personnel
- The contracting agency is the enforcer.

Agency Responsibilities

BE PROACTIVE:

CALL the owners / managers if there are issues. Good contractors want the phone call to solve problems.
Ask your private resources to work hard.
Incorporate hired resources in your training while on standby / backfill.

Agency Responsibilities

- Don't take on our responsibilities as an employer.
Example. Forcing / requiring medical treatment in non-emergency situations without contacting employee's supervisor.

Private Industries Operating Hurdles

- We are not compensated for ANY pre and post season activities:
 - Training of personnel
 - Hiring
 - Crew preparedness
 - Equipment and vehicle maintenance
 - Facilities upkeep
 - Physical fitness training
 - Equipment and facility upgrades
- We operate in the unknown
 - Example (National suppression contracts with contract awards not being made until June / July)

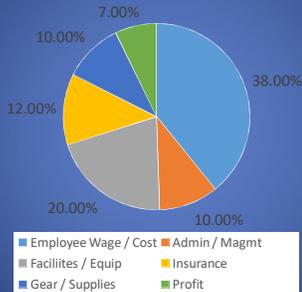
Costs Industry has to Consider

HOURLY AND DAILY RATES HAVE TO INCLUDE:

- Employee Wage + Benefits (Employer portion of taxes : Medicare, Social Security, FICA, Sick pay)
- Vehicle Fuel
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Admin Staff
- Workers compensation
- Supplies, PPE

The bottom line of an invoice doesn't just go into the pockets of the owners

Industry Costs Breakdown



Law's and Regulations

We are regulated by numerous government agencies and hundreds, if not thousands, of state and federal laws

Department of Labor (DOL)- State and Federal

Wage and Hour Division

MSPA (Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act)

Department of Transportation (DOT) – State and Federal

State

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – Federal and State OSHA's

Internal Revenue Service

- We must follow the MOST stringent of any regulations if the state and federal have similar regulations

Liability

- Employee Injury

- Impact on Contractor:

- Cost stay with employer, not the agency.

- Workers compensation rates increase, insurance costs increases.

- We want to keep employees safe, fit and when injuries do occur we want to get the individual back to work.

- Auto

- Workers Compensation

- Medical

- Emergency Air Evacuations: Contractor Pays

- National Crew = Agency Pays

Employee Turn Over



Performance Evaluations

Industry View:

- The current evaluations system does not accurately evaluate the resource.
- It is very likely that majority of poor performance evaluations are not making it to contracting officers.
- Evaluators are concerned about "liability" of giving poor evaluations, so they don't.

Performance Evaluations

Private industry concerns to be passed onto the IC and other overhead:

- Performance is not being used in dispatching because evaluations are not accurate.

Real World issues

Compliance issues

- Day 70 - the crew has been on the road and in an inspection we are missing a chin strap for a helmet. We are now shown as non compliant.
- We are inspected and re-inspected at many incidents.

Many, many of our employees become your employees

- Utilize us in capacities that improve firefighter abilities. Very likely some day the individual who learned on your division will be one of your agency's employees

*

Relationships

How do we help each other ?

The private industry is here to complement and support the agencies.
Accountability and support from the agency is needed.

Operations – how do we keep up a positive relationship?

Mutual Respect

Utilize resources to their fullest capabilities.

What do you think needs to change for the private wildland fire service to be utilized to its fullest?

Any questions ?

Contact information

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