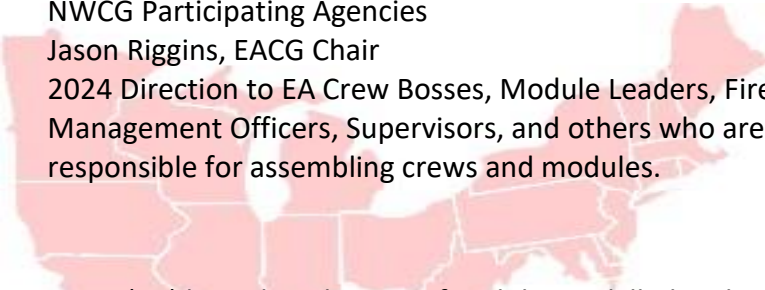




Eastern Area Coordinating Group

Date: February 12, 2024
 To: NWCG Participating Agencies
 From: Jason Riggins, EACG Chair
 Subject: 2024 Direction to EA Crew Bosses, Module Leaders, Fire Management Officers, Supervisors, and others who are responsible for assembling crews and modules.



The Eastern Area (EA) has a long history of mobilizing skilled and qualified fire crews to assist other geographic areas. Each agency within this Geographic Area (GA) is commended for not only developing the skills and qualifications needed for the job; but for also creating an expectation that EA crews, modules and overhead exhibit a high level of professionalism during their assignments.

To address common and reoccurring issues that come up during mobilization of crews and modules this document was produced to provide briefing topics, tools, and a central point for information relevant to EA Crew Bosses and Module Leaders to review prior to mobilization and throughout the assignment as well as informing local agency leadership and management. See the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#) for firefighter safety topics:

- Risk Management
- Fatigue – Work and Rest
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Safety Responsibilities of Wildland Fire Supervisors
- Driving Limitations

Additional issues to be cognizant of:

Expectations of Personal Conduct:

- Personnel are expected to maintain appropriate standards of personal conduct while at the workplace, incident camp, or accommodation sites.
- Personnel are expected to ensure that their personal conduct outside the workplace and while in transit, on Rest & Recreation does not affect their fitness for duty or reflect discredit on their own agency.

Conduct which is considered unacceptable includes:

- Use of illegal drugs while on this deployment.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverage that renders the employee not fit for duty or beyond the legal limit for that location. (NOTE: many fire camps are “DRY” Camps, follow established rules)
- Discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, retaliation (participation and/or opposition), sexual orientation, political beliefs and marital and/or family status.
- Falsifying records and/or giving false information.
- Driving while under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or legal or illegal drugs that impairs their ability to perform duties.
- Making statements or gestures to any colleagues that are derogatory, insulting or otherwise abusive. Making inappropriate comments to the media, governing bodies, co-workers or public.
- Refusal or failure to follow reasonable instructions from overhead personnel.
- Unauthorized use or misuse of vehicles.
- Failure to follow the “chain of command” and abide by “reasonable” instructions.
- Raucous, aggressive, or destructive behavior.

Time Issues:

As noted in the Eastern Area Incident Management Team Standard Operation Guide Routine/repetitive work shifts of 16 hours are not acceptable on most incidents. Division Supervisors and Operations have primary responsibility to ensure proper shift length. In addition, remember to provide a justification for any unique situation or pay provision such as compensable meal break, hazard pay, etc. Refer to [How to Fill Out a CTR](#) for more in-depth information.

Crew and Module Transportation:

There has been a significant effort made through the EACG, the Eastern Area Coordination Center (EACC) and the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) to improve modes of crew transportation for Eastern Area T2-IA Crews. Crew Bosses must recognize the fact that not all Geographic Areas Coordination Centers (GACC’s) have the means to provide pickups, SUVs or other 4x4 multi passenger vehicles in lieu of school busses. However, when crews are transported on school busses, there is no reason that EA crews should be subjected to riding vehicles and/or drivers that do not meet the safe transportation standards. When crews encounter school busses for their means of transportation, the Crew Boss should be aware of the following:

Busses should be inspected by ground support on arrival at an incident; however, crew bosses need to continually update their situational awareness on the operational condition of their assigned bus. If you notice any of these things, ask ground support to inspect the bus again. If there is no ground support, elevate the issue until you are satisfied with the response you get. Do not ignore potential safety problems. It is your duty to address potential safety problems and elevate to the appropriate level.

Be sure and ask Ground Support or Finance for a [Contractor Performance Rating form](#) and fill it out truthfully. If the bus worked without any problems and the driver was great, document that. If the equipment was causing you concern for your safety and the driver was questionable, let that be known as well. The Finance Section will want the evaluation to ensure it gets forwarded to the CO. It is your duty as a crew boss to fill out an evaluation for your bus driver and the bus they are driving your crew around in. This contractor evaluation form is the mechanism to get old, worn-out busses and inadequate drivers off the road or reward quality operators who have safe equipment and drivers.”

Crew Bosses should file a [SAFENET](#) to document and correct transportation safety deficiencies.

NERV (National Emergency Rental Vehicles) – For information contact your local dispatch center on transportation rental needs prior to mobilization.

Mobilization Centers:

Crew Bosses should read and understand EA Mobilization protocol as documented in the [Eastern Area Mobilization Guide 2023 Chapter 10](#). Crew Bosses need to understand that the key to conflict resolution begins with advance communication. If it is necessary for your crew to travel after 2200 hours, or to hotel midway to your final destination, your home unit line officer (FMO, State Fire Supervisor, Forest Service Sponsor, etc.) must make arrangements with the EACC Center Manager prior to arriving at the Mob Center.

Accident Reporting:

Crew Bosses need to inform their crew members that accident and injury reports are time-sensitive and must be properly documented. **It is critical that Crew Bosses know what agency crew members work for.** An improperly documented injury or illness can result in unpaid medical bills and debt collection services coming months after an employee returns home from an assignment. Use the following protocols for reporting an illness or an injury while on your assignment:

- **Forest Service & Forest Service AD’s Injury & Illness Reporting Process:**
NOTIFY USFS SUPERVISOR WITHIN 24 HOURS OF INJURY OR ACCIDENT (Note: This is usually the Hiring Manager from the local unit of the Forest Service.)

The Federal Employees’ Compensation Act changed in 2011 and requires the reporting of work-related injuries and illnesses electronically. The Forest Service, ASC-HRM, Workers’ Compensation Branch (WC) is utilizing eSafety to comply with this requirement and will no longer process handwritten CA-1 or CA-2 forms. WC requires an eSafety generated and populated CA-1 or CA-2 to be printed, signed, and faxed to WC via a secure eFax at 1-866-339-8583 (currently eSafety generated forms do not include the signature, therefore a hard copy is required). This process is required for injuries and illnesses occurring during incident assignments.

The eSafety system requires access to eAuthentication or a FS computer with access to the non-eAuthenticated user site (for access, contact ASC). If accessing through eAuthentication, a FS employee’s information will be prepopulated. If going to the

system outside of eAuthentication, all information must be entered. AD employees will need to enter all information regardless of how they access the system. If medical treatment is authorized on a CA-16, any bill from the medical provider is the employee's responsibility until a signed eSafety generated CA-1 or CA-2 is received at WC and processed to the Department of Labor.

eAuthentication link – <https://usdafs.connecthr.com>

FS Workers Compensation – <https://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/hrm/workers-compensation/index.php>

Federal Employees and AD's (This includes State Personnel hired as an AD)	
Scenario	Process
Injured FS employee has access to any electronic device that has internet access to eAuthentication or a FS computer.	Employee will enter CA-1 or CA-2 data directly into eSafety.
Injured FS employee or FS hired AD does not have a computer and internet access to eAuthentication or a FS computer; COMP/INJR has a FS computer.	COMP/INJR will allow FS employee or FS AD to use computer system to log into a non-eAuthenticated user site to enter claim for FS hired ADs. Contact ASC to access site. COMP/INJR will assist employee or AD in completing the fields.
Injured FS Employee or FS hired AD is not at camp or is otherwise unable to complete eSafety and COMP/INJR does have computer and internet access to eAuthentication.	Employee will complete hard copy of the CA-1 or CA-2 and Supplemental Form and submit to COMP/INJR. COMP/INJR or incident supervisor may enter the employee's portion of the CA-1 in eSafety on behalf of the injured employee.
Injured FS employee or FS hired AD and COMP/INJR is unable to access a computer, internet, or eAuthentication.	Hard copy CA-1 or CA-2 and Supplemental Form will be completed, signed and faxed to the injured employee's home unit for entry into eSafety.
FORMS	<p><u>CA-1</u> (Injury occurring in 1 operational shift)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed by employee or supervisor, with signed witness statement if there was a witness. • NOTE: The COMP/CLAIMS will complete the CA-1 if the person is taken to the hospital.

	<p>NOTE: The supervisor for ADs is the Forest Service Sponsor.</p> <p>CA-16 (Authorization for Medical Treatment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This form is only available to authorized employing agency personnel and may be obtained in electronic format via the Agency Query System (AQS) or ECOMP, or by contacting the employing agency workers' compensation personnel. Will be issued by the COMP/CLAIMS, FSC or ASC <p>CA-2 (Occupational disease; occurs over 2 or more shifts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed by employee or supervisor, with signed witness statement if there was a witness. NOTE: The COMP/CLAIMS will complete the CA-2 if the person is taken to the hospital. The employee is responsible for medical bills and requests reimbursement from OWCP. <p>NOTE: The supervisor for ADs is the Forest Service Sponsor.</p>
NOTIFICATIONS	<p>Immediate supervisors</p> <p>Medical Unit and COMP/CLAIMS or FSC</p> <p>Notify IARR, or EACC if IARR is unavailable</p> <p>Home Unit if not done already while completing State-specific reports</p>

▪ **State Personnel Injury & Illness Reporting Process:**

State Personnel while on state payroll <u>NOT</u> AD's	
FORMS	USE STATE-SPECIFIC FORMS. <u>Follow home agency reporting timeline</u> and home unit notification protocols
NOTIFICATIONS	<p>Immediate supervisors</p> <p>Medical Unit and COMP/CLAIMS or FSC</p> <p>Notify IARR, or EACC if IARR is unavailable</p>

	Home Unit if not done already while completing State-specific reports
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Payment Documents for Casuals:

- **Forest Service:** The OF-288 and travel will be processed through the Incident Finance Section any time a Complex Incident Management Team (CIMT) is assigned to an incident; a copy is provided to the employee or Crew Boss. If there are travel expenses which cannot be processed on the OF-288 (rental vehicle not rented through NERV, expenses the Casual will incur after leaving ICP which require receipts to be reimbursed – parking, baggage fees, etc.) all travel will be processed through ETS2; the casual must contact their hiring unit.
- **DOI:** The OF-288 and travel is processed by the hiring unit. The original OF-288 is provided to employee or Crew Boss.
- **Changing Positions and Pay Grades:** Casuals will receive the pay rate associated with the position listed on their original Resource Order or Crew Manifest unless the incident authorizes a change in classification level (field promotion). If a casual is assigned to a different position, the pay rate and position change is recorded on the Crew Time Report by the Incident Supervisor (this is not a Crew Boss). A new Single Resource Casual Hire Form **is not** required; the TIME Unit Leader or FSC notes the new position title, pay class and rate, and date of field promotion on the existing Single Resource Casual Hire form.
- Crew Bosses should take time to review and understand the current AD Pay Plans for DOI and FS. The pay plans can be downloaded from the:
 - [EACC Incident Business Management web page:](#)
 - [DOI AD Pay Plan](#)
 - [FS AD Pay Plan](#)
- Region 9 Forest Service requires all ADs to return home with an [Incident Personnel Performance Rating, ICS 225](#)

Purchasing:

- **Lodging and Meals:** Crew Bosses or other personnel with a purchase card may purchase lodging and meals for federal employees who do not hold a travel card. Ensure the TIME unit leader, FSC, or home unit are made aware government meals and lodging were provided. Do not provide a lodging receipt to the employee.
- **Baggage Fees:** This is an acceptable purchase for a purchase card holder. If excess baggage fees occur, it is the employee’s responsibility to remove excess weight unless the excess weight is a requirement of the position.
- As with all incident purchases, a resource order is required. Whenever possible, it is advised to discuss with the FSC prior to making purchases.

Law Enforcement Searches:

Fire personnel should understand that some Regions have implemented rigorous enforcement of drug and alcohol regulations and agency policies. Crews may encounter Law Enforcement Officers with K9 units patrolling incidents for illegal substances.

Role and Responsibility of the Interagency Resource Representative (IARR):

Eastern Area IARRs are there to help you. They provide support to all Eastern Area resources regarding timekeeping, travel, injuries, accidents, personnel problems, emergencies and other administrative needs. Crew Bosses should understand the IARR role and responsibilities. Prior to mobilization, Crew Bosses should review the [Eastern Area IARR Guide](#)

For additional information, visit the following websites:

How to fill out a CTR - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf8HIGgouAs>

SAFENET - <https://safenet.nifc.gov/>

NERV Information - www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/committee-correspondence/ibc-m-21-01-nerv-sop.pdf

Eastern Area Mobilization Guide -

https://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/logistics/dispatch/mob_guide/eacc_mobguide.htm

EACC Incident Business MGMT -

https://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/management_admin/incident_business/incident_business.htm

CA-1 Form – [Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation \(dol.gov\)](#)

CA-2 Form – [ca-2.pdf \(dol.gov\)](#)

EACC Incident Business Management –

https://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/management_admin/incident_business/incident_business.htm

ICS-225 – [ICS 225 Incident Personnel Performance Rating Form \(nwcg.gov\)](#)

EACG Expectations of Conduct – [Microsoft Word - Expectations of Conduct\[1\].doc \(nifc.gov\)](#)

EACC Crew Management – <https://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/logistics/crews/crews.htm>

National Wildland Fire and Aviation Critical Incident Stress Management –

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/cism/>

Emergency Medical Committee (burn injury protocol, infectious disease guidance, etc.) –

<https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/emergency-medical-committee>