



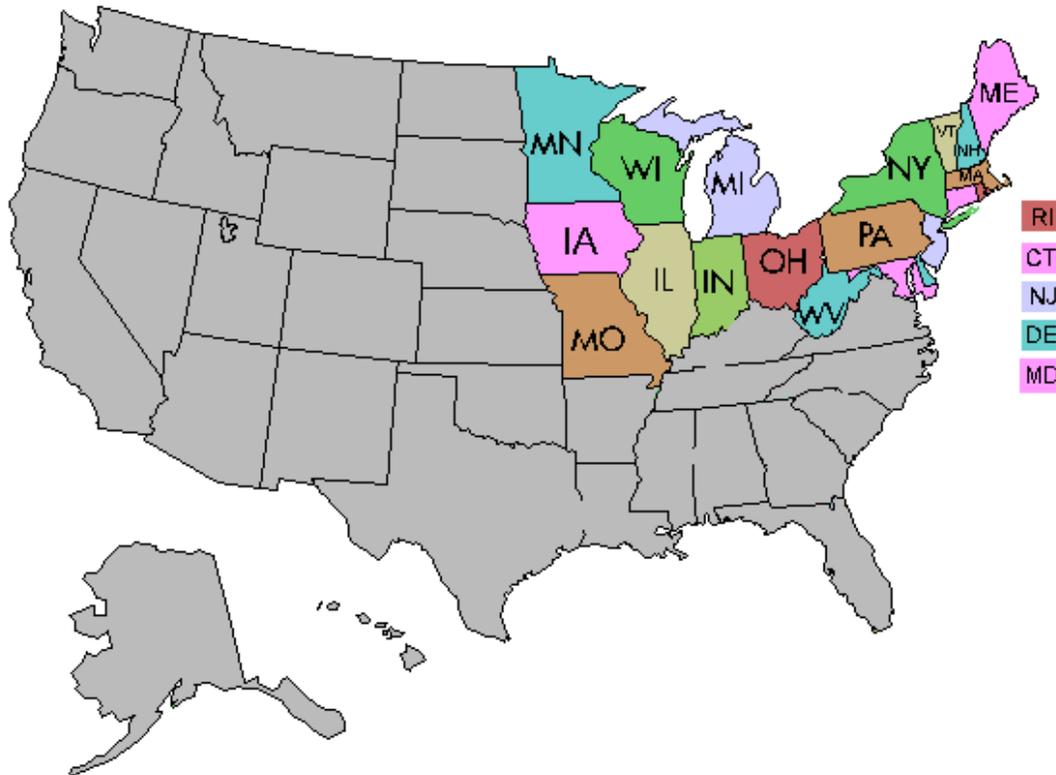
Eastern Area Coordination Center (GACC)

AD

(Casuals)

Frequently Asked Questions

March 14, 2016





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The purpose of this Guide is to provide a condensed reference document to answer questions about Casual Employment. The Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals) is the official pay plan and is complete within itself; for any hiring under this plan the provisions take precedence over any other policies or regulations that may be prescribed elsewhere. Such hiring is of uncertain or purely temporary duration, and must be terminated when other employment methods can be initiated. This plan does not provide the authority to hire individuals for out of country assignments.

This Guide is not to be used as final authority. Official regulations take precedence and must be relied upon when conflicts and interpretive questions arise.

References cited include the Forest Service and Department of Interior AD Pay Plans, Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH), Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide (PMS 310-1), and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

Frequently Asked Questions

When is a casual considered under hire?

The hiring period begins at the point of hire and the time an individual is available for hire at the request of an agency representative. It ends at the time the casual is returned to the point of hire or is no longer available. Point of hire is defined as the location of the unit where hiring documentation is completed or other locations as determined by the hiring unit. The hiring unit may determine an alternate location as the point of hire to allow for remote hiring of an individual and begin pay status from that location.

What are the requirements to be hired as a casual employee?

- Must be at least 18 years of age except for:
 - Job Corps and Youth Conservation Corps enrollees may be hired as casuals under the AD Pay Plan. Enrollees age 16 and 17 may be assigned to nonhazardous or non-arduous duties only, e.g., camp support.
- Meet minimum physical fitness standards as established by agency policy
- Meet minimum training requirements for the position before assignment
- Have PPE appropriate for position hired; PPE is provided by hiring agency



- Attend RT-130, Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training (Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1)
 - RT-130 is required for designated positions in order to maintain currency, and for all personnel assigned to positions with fireline duties and for any position assigned to the fireline for non-suppression tasks.
 - Refer to the Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1) at <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/docs/docs.htm> for positions that require Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training.
- A social security number is required. This applies to United States citizens as well as nonresident aliens.
- A DHS Employment Eligibility Verification – Form I-9, must be completed by the hiring official and casual employee at the time of hire.
- A Single Resource Casual Hire Information Form, PMS 934 is required for single resources at the time of hire for each incident; **this form is not required when hiring crews if there is a Passenger / Crew and Cargo Manifest form with name, pay classification, position, and unit location.** (IIBMH, Ch. 10, p. 10-3)
- Direct Deposit Form (SF-1199a) should be completed by the employee. A casual may request a check in lieu of a direct deposit if an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) would impose a hardship because of the inability to manage an account at a bank or due to a mental impairment or living in a remote location.
- Federal W-4 and State Tax withholding forms must be provided to the casual. Federal and state income taxes will be withheld from the casual's earnings. Casuals must be provided the opportunity to complete appropriate federal and state income tax withholding forms at the time of hire to ensure the correct amount of tax is withheld. Casuals requesting exempt status must complete the State Tax form every year to remain eligible. For states that do not have W-4s, use a Federal W-4 Tax Form and write the name of the state on top of the form.
- An Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card) as required by sponsoring agency.



What are the Training Requirements for Casuals?

- Refer to the Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1) <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/docs/docs.htm> for training requirements by position.
- Attend RT-130, Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training (Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1)
 - RT-130 is required for designated positions in order to maintain currency, and for all personnel assigned to positions with fireline duties and for any position assigned to the fireline for non-suppression tasks.
 - RT-130 training will focus on mandatory core content subjects and not on a minimum timeframe standard (number of training hours). The required number of hours is determined by the agency.
 - Refer to the Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1) at <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/docs/docs.htm> for positions that require Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training.

What are the requirements for Licensing or Certificates required for specialized work?

Casuals must possess current certifications and licenses for specialized work as identified in their sponsoring agencies Health and Safety Code. These requirements may include, but aren't limited to:

- State license/certification for electricians and contractors
- Qualifications such as CPR, Vehicle/Heavy Equipment licenses, firearm certification, blaster certification, pesticide use and application
- National certification for sawyers
- Meeting the requirements of the hiring agency and of the State where the incident is located for positions that require special certification or license (such as emergency medical technicians, drivers, or instructors) (AD Pay Plan, E.6)

What are the Physical Standards?

Casuals hired under this plan have minimum physical fitness standards and training requirements as established by agency policy.

Casuals are required to complete agency specific health and medical screening requirements for certain positions prior to being hired.



What are the Requirements for Driving Government Vehicles?

Casual employees must have completed a defensive driving course within the last three years.

The casual must be issued a letter of authorization OR a U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Identification Card (OF-346). The Identification Card or letter must be carried whenever driving a Government vehicle. The letter must clearly state what type of vehicles may be driven, the requirement to have a valid State license in possession, an expiration of the authorization (such as, the duration of a fire event), and any conditions (such as, daylight only, paved roads only, automatic transmissions only, no vehicles over 8600 GVW, and so on).

No driver will drive more than 10 hours (behind the wheel) within any duty-day. Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty-day limitation (no longer than 16 hours) provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of 10 hours.

A driver shall drive only if they have had at least eight consecutive hours off-duty before beginning a shift.

Exception to the minimum off-duty hour requirement is allowed when essential to:

- Accomplish immediate and critical suppression objectives, or
- Address immediate and critical firefighter or public safety issues.

As stated in the current work/rest policy, documentation of mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue is required for drivers who exceed 16 hour work shifts. This is required regardless of whether the driver was still compliant with the 10 hour individual (behind the wheel) driving time limitations.

Can a casual wear Uniforms?

- Casual hires are not expected to wear uniforms
- Retirees who were authorized to wear a uniform on active duty may wear their dress or field uniforms during functions associated with the Forest Service.
- Retirees may not wear the law enforcement uniform.

What are the Standard Pay Rates?

See the EACC Incident Business Management page for the current pay plan rates:

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



Does a casual get paid to attend Training?

The sponsoring agency has the discretion regarding paying casuals to attend training. Check with the sponsoring agency for their specific policy.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Per the September 23, 2014 memo, the BIA:

- Will pay casuals up to 2 hours for pack test;
- Will not pay casuals to attend refresher training;
- Will not pay for NWCG course training in 100 and 200 series; and
- Will not pay for travel time related to training, except when being transported in Government vehicles.

If a casual is paid to attend training and they attend as a Trainee, what is the pay rate?

The rate of pay is one AD rate lower than the full performance rate. When casuals attend Annual Fireline Safety Refresher training, they shall be paid at the current rate for the position requiring the training. **A resource order is not required for a casual to attend training.**

Casuals can be paid up to 80 hours of training per calendar year; associated travel time is not included in the hourly limitation.

Occasionally, a casual must take over 80 hours of training within a calendar year to maintain or gain qualifications or certification for a specific position. Agency Casual Payment Centers do not have the authority to pay casuals for over 80 hours of training without approval; therefore, the following process should be used:

- Request to approve payment for training in excess of 80 hours shall be done in writing by the Hiring Official to the applicable agency Incident Business Coordinator. The request should include a reason for additional training hours.
- Approval from the agency Incident Business Coordinator will accompany the OF-288 submitted to the Casual Pay Center.



Are the Work Capacity Test and Physicals paid for?

Time spent taking the Work Capacity Test is compensable and charged to the government using appropriate WFSU funds. The cost of the physical is paid for by the Government; however, the time spent taking the physical is not compensable (Work Capacity Tests for Wildland Fire Qualifications-Implementation Guide).

http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/wct/wct_index.html

Can casuals be hired as Instructors?

Casuals may be hired and compensated as training instructors when all other methods of hiring and contracting instructors have been exhausted; not to exceed a total of 120 hours excluding travel per calendar year, regardless of hiring agency, to prepare, instruct, and issue certificates for required courses for emergency incident situations.

There are 2 classification levels for position code THSP lead instructors:

- S300 and below courses = Classification Level AD-H
- S400 and above course = Classification Level AD-J

What are the Job Codes for Casuals?

Forest Service

Use WFSUAD (0901) for charges associated with preparing for the Work Capacity Test, medical screening requirements, and training (refresher, guard school, ICS courses).

Use WFPR for Casual Hire Instructors' time and related costs. These WFPR funds would be the funds for the forest who has hired the casual to instruct, not the casual's sponsoring forest.

Use the assigned financial codes as designated on the resource order for incidents.

BIA, FWS, NPS

Use AZA1 for charges associated with preparing for the Work Capacity Test, attending training (refresher, guard school, ICS courses) and instructors' time and related costs.

Medical screening requirements are charged to preparedness funds.

Use the assigned financial codes as designated on the resource order for incidents.



Does the Location of Work affect the pay rate?

No, the AD Pay Plan rates apply to all 50 states and do not change based on point-of-hire or location of assignment.

What happens if there is an Assignment Change that Affects the Pay Rate (Field Promotion)?

If the casual is assigned to a different position qualification the pay rate/position change(s) is recorded on the CTR, SF-261, by the incident supervisor (a CRWB is **not** considered the incident supervisor). The incident time recorder begins a new column on the OF-288 with the new rate of pay and indicates the reason for change in the remarks block of the OF-288 (AD Pay Plan, B.2)

Does a Casual earn Premium Pay and Differentials?

Casual employees are not entitled to hazard pay, overtime pay, or other supplemental pay.

Are Taxes taken out of Casual earnings?

Yes. Complete Federal and state income tax withholding forms to avoid being taxed at the highest rate.

Does a Casual earn Unemployment Benefits?

Under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 8501, Federal agencies do not report wages earned to state offices for unemployment compensation purposes. The services performed by an individual on a temporary basis in case of fire, storm, earthquake, flood or similar emergency are not considered as performing Federal service for the purpose of reporting wages for unemployment compensation benefits. Casuals may furnish statements of earnings to State Unemployment Offices on their own behalf. Therefore, Casuals do not receive unemployment compensation from the state.

How do Casual earnings affect Social Security earnings?

Casual earnings may be subject to Social Security earnings limitations. Casuals should contact the Social Security Office to determine applicability. Social Security tax is not withheld from the Casual's pay.



Is there Credit toward Retirement for Casual employees (FERS/CSRS/SS/Medicare)?

Casuals are not considered 'employees' for the purposes of creditable federal service eligible toward retirement or Social Security.

Are there other benefits that Casuals earn?

Casuals under this pay plan are not entitled to earn or to be granted annual or sick leave, or to be covered under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Act (5 U.S.C. 87), Civil Service Retirement Act (5 U.S.C. 83), Federal Employees' Retirement System (5 U.S.C. 84), Federal Insurance Contributions Act (26 U.S.C. 3121(b)(6)(C)), or the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Act (5 U.S.C. 89). However, the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (5 U.S.C. 81) does cover casuals. (AD Pay Plan, Conditions of Hire)

How does a Casual get paid?

Incident Time Reports (OF-288) are submitted to agency-specific Casual Payment Centers for payment. The Employee Common Identifier (ECI) is used instead of the Social Security Number, in Block #2 of the OF-288.

All payments are made electronically via EFT (Direct Deposit) or by Department of Treasury checks. EFT is strongly encouraged. A casual may request a check in lieu of a direct deposit, if an EFT would impose a hardship because of the inability to manage an account at a bank or due to a mental impairment or living in a remote location.

Inquiries from State Employment Offices and requests for verification of employment should be forwarded to the appropriate Casual Pay Center for response.

What is the Employee Common Identifier?

The Employee Common Identifier (ECI) is a unique 10-digit number generated for each casual employee in the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS system). To address Personally Identifiable Information (PII) concerns, the use of the ECI will replace the collection of Social Security Numbers (SSNs), where applicable.

Employee Common Identifier (ECI) replaces the use of Social Security Numbers (SSN) on all documents **except for the I-9 and W4**, which will continue to require the use of SSNs. Procedures on obtaining ECIs can be found on the NWCG web site at:

<http://www.nwcg.gov/general/memos/nwcg-014a-2013.pdf>



- The applicable Payment Center will be responsible for generating ECIs for new casuals, and providing ECIs to the Hiring Units for new and existing casuals.
- Hiring Units will be responsible for obtaining ECIs from the Payment Center and relaying ECI information to the appropriate entities, inputting on the appropriate documents, etc.
- Casual employees will be responsible for maintaining and providing their ECIs for e-ISuite input and for use on OF-288's.

What if a Casual doesn't have an ECI number when they are mobilized to an incident?

DOI ONLY:

- If an ECI is needed for a new casual and the hiring information has not yet been submitted to the DOI Casual Payment Center (CPC), an Approving Official (AO) may call the CPC to have an ECI generated and provided over the phone. The AO must provide the casual's name, SSN, and hired-at location.
- If an ECI is needed for a new or existing casual and the hiring information has been submitted to the CPC, an AO may call the CPC for ECI information. The AO must provide casual's name and SSN.
- If ECI information is needed for multiple casuals, an AO may submit the list of casuals with name, SSN, and hired-at by secured fax to the CPC. The list of casuals with corresponding ECIs will be faxed back to the appropriate AO with sensitive PII removed.

FS ONLY:

- Go to the Forest Service Albuquerque Service Center website to view the report which will identify the casual's name, ECI, and hired-at location (<http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/bfm/programs/financial-operations/incident-business/CasualPay.php>). For common names, contact Incident Finance (IF) for clarification.
- If an ECI is needed for existing casuals not listed on the report or you are unable to access the report, contact (IF) for ECI information.
- Provide ECI information to casuals when being mobilized to incidents.
- If needed, give ECI information to casuals when the Hiring Unit is contacted from the incident.
- If OF-288s are brought back to the Hiring Unit after an incident, ensure the ECI is included on all OF-288s before sending to the Payment Center for processing.



What Hours will a Casual be paid for?

Casuals assigned to an incident away from their point-of-hire must be given enough on-shift time (travel, ordered standby, actual work) to total 8 compensable hours per calendar day. This 8-hour guarantee does not apply to the first and last day of work. Casuals assigned to an incident away from their point-of-hire are entitled to the 8-hour guarantee if given a day off while on the incident and they are unable to return to their point of hire.

Casuals assigned to an incident at their point-of-hire are not guaranteed 8 hours for each calendar day, and are not entitled to guaranteed hours on days off. This is considered off-shift time and is non-compensable.

The minimum compensable time allowance for each work period is 2 hours. The minimum compensable time allowance of 2 hours does not apply to the first and last day of multiple day assignments.

When is a Casual in Travel Status?

Travel begins when the individual starts travel or when they report to a point of departure. The individual is not compensated from the time of dispatch notification; time spent packing at home, for any meal breaks, or for travel interruptions of more than three hours when free to pursue personal activities (IIBM Ch. 10, p. 10-14).

Is Deviating from the Official Travel Route allowed?

Casuals who are not reassigned and deviate from the normal travel route home will only be reimbursed for the number of miles back to the point of hire. The casual employee is no longer in pay status at the time of deviation. Casuals are not entitled to transportation provided by the government from the point the travel deviation occurs. The travel deviation must be documented and attached to the casual's original time record (OF-288). This documentation shall also be made a part of the incident record (IIBM Ch. 10, p. 10-120).

Is Lodging provided?

All Federal Travel Regulations must be followed.

Whenever deemed practical and necessary by the agency representative, furnish subsistence and lodging at government expense for casuals. When feasible utilize Buying Teams or other procurement officials to obtain these services via purchase card or other procurement instrument. If the government cannot provide subsistence and lodging for a casual, reimbursement should be made through the agency travel process (AD Pay Plan).



What are the Work/Rest Guidelines?

Work shifts that exceed 16 hours and/or consecutive days that do not meet the 2:1 work/rest ratio should be the exception, and no work shift should exceed 24 hours. However, in situations where this does occur, (for example; initial attack), incident management personnel will resume 2:1 work/rest ratio as quickly as possible.

Incident Commanders must justify work shifts that exceed 16 hours and those that do not meet 2:1 work to rest ratio (IIBMH Ch. 10, p. 10-20).

Are there Performance and Conduct requirements?

Incident Behavior form, PMS 935-1, is required at the time of hire for each incident. The home unit retains the signed original and the casual is provided a copy (IIBMH Ch 10, p. 10-42).

What happens if a Casual has an Injury or Illness?

Casuals are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act for work related injuries and illnesses.

If injured on an incident, casuals may be entitled to Continuation of Pay (COP) for 8 hours per day, 7 days per week, for periods of disability until the casual leaves the incident; the original length of commitment ends; or whenever the casual is released back to duty, whichever occurs first.

The supervisor will determine if medical care is necessary; get authorization for treatment; and complete the CA-1 or CA-2 supervisor section within 48 hours of the reported injury or illness. The employee needs to obtain a statement from any witnesses (when completing the CA-1 or CA-2 form). The injured/ill individual may be placed on COP, (continuation of pay), if unable to work, however, the casual may be sent home if he/she is unable to perform work. Travel may be paid for the return trip home.

The supervisor should coordinate with the Finance or Administrative Representative to ensure agency procedures are followed.



What hours are compensable if a Casual has an injury or illness?

When a casual is provided medical treatment by the incident, pay entitlement will not exceed actual hours worked or guarantee (8 hours per day for casuals) whichever is greater for that calendar day (5 CFR 551.425). Time spent traveling to or from a medical facility and/or time spent receiving medical attention is considered compensable time only if it falls within the employee's regular guaranteed work hours. Reference continuation of pay (COP) guidelines. (IIBMh, Ch. 10, p. 10-26)

Office of Worker's Compensation Program (OWCP) coverage

Casuals are covered under the Federal Employees Compensation Act. If a casual is injured, follow the sponsoring agency's process for reporting and completing OWCP forms.

For injuries that occurred during one operational shift, a CA-1 will need to be completed. If the casual needs medical attention, a CA-16 is submitted to the medical provider by the IMT or the sponsoring agency.

If there is no IMT assigned, coordinate with the sponsoring agency to issue the CA-16:

- Forest Service: ASC issues CA-16
- DOI: Hiring Unit issues CA-16

What does a Casual do if a personal item is Lost, Damaged, or Destroyed?

Casuals may file a claim for loss of, or damage to personal property, provided possession of the property was reasonable, useful and proper under the circumstances and the loss or damage occurred incident to the individual's service. Coverage is under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act, 31 USC 3721.

Agencies process claims for their personnel according to agency specific procedures. Agencies may require specific documentation, processing procedures and/or reimbursement limitations.

The incident may not approve reimbursement or replacement of personal property. If it is necessary to provide personal property to a regular government employee or casual in order for the individual to perform their duties, e.g., personal gear lost in a burn-over, the personal property must be provided through the commissary process and a payroll deduction (IIBMh, Chapter 10, Commissary). The individual must file a claim in accordance with home unit procedures to document the loss and request reimbursement (IIBMh, Ch. 70, p. 70-9).



Can a Casual be hired for an Out of Country Assignment?

Casuals may not be hired for out of country assignments (AD Pay Plan, Preamble).

Can a person have a contract or EERA while hired as a Casual?

Individuals who have a financial interest/contract with a Federal/state/local entity may be hired as a Casual for incident support if the nature of their financial interest/contract is not related or similar to the position/duties they are being hired to perform as a casual (IIBMH, Ch. 10, p. 10-2).

In addition, Casuals cannot supervise, hire, order, or recommend payments that in any way affect a company or contractor that the casual has ownership or employment with, or perform any other financial responsibilities to, or for, the company or contractor on an incident. (AD Pay Plan)

Can a Casual use their personal equipment if specialized equipment is authorized on a Resource Order?

No. If a resource order states that specialized equipment such as GPS, computer, cell phone, camera, etc. is authorized, the sponsoring agency or host unit will provide the equipment. The Casual needs to work with the dispatch office to ensure equipment is available and provided.

Who can hire Casuals?

An agency line officer will designate an appropriate hiring official who is knowledgeable of the AD Pay Plan and will execute the appropriate paperwork.

Is a Casual guaranteed of being sponsored?

Government agencies are not required to sponsor casuals. However, if an agency chooses to sponsor casuals, they will be hired by the closest unit to the casual's home address. All required hiring documentation to be completed will be the responsibility of the hosting agency.



What Positions are Casuals Ineligible to Occupy?

The Area Commander, Type 1 or Type 2 Incident Commander, Security Specialist Level 1 or Level 2, and Wildland Fire Investigator are key positions and can only be filled by current agency employees. Some exceptions exist for state, local or tribal government employees who cannot work on Federal incidents under their employment status or cooperative agreement due to policy or statute. Refer to the AD Pay Plan, Section B.3, for specific information.

What positions can a Casual be hired for?

See the position matrix listed in the AD Pay Plan. Classifications of AD-A through M are based on primary duties of the position.

How are Exception Positions hired?

- **Forest Service:** Any OF-288 with an Exception Position must be accompanied with a Description of Duties that is signed by a Regional Incident Business Coordinator. Exception Positions that have been classified by another Geographic Area may be used. See the Incident Business Practices website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/index.html> for a listing. If an exception position is not listed on the Incident Business Practices website contact the Regional Incident Business Coordinator.
- **DOI:** Any OF-288 with an Exception Position must be accompanied with a Description of Duties that is signed by the appropriate authority:
 - BIA: Fire Director or National Lead
 - BLM: State POC for Hired At location or National Lead
 - NPS: National Lead
 - FWS: Fire Director or National Lead

What is an alternative to Casual hiring?

To obtain temporary help prior to an incident, temporary hiring authorities, including a 30-day emergency need authority may be used. In some cases, contracts may be used to fill positions. Contact your servicing Human Resources and/or Acquisition Management staffs for assistance.



Can Non-U.S. Citizens be hired as Casuals?

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (8 U.S.C. 1324A) requires employers to hire only individuals who are eligible to work in the United States. This law also requires that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Form I-9 be completed on the day of hire and verified within three business days of the appointment. Those units who establish and train organized crews should complete DHS Form I-9 as soon as crews are organized to eliminate the need for verification at incidents. The designated hiring official is responsible for verifying the eligibility of any casuals hired.

Can Casuals be hired for Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Work?

Casuals can be hired to carry out emergency stabilization work where there is an immediate danger of loss of life or property or when prompt remedial action is essential before potentially damaging climatic events occur.

Casuals can be hired during a transition period, not to exceed 90 calendar days, following a natural emergency to develop plans and manage an emergency stabilization effort until regular employees can handle the situation or until other employment methods can be initiated.

Can Retirees be hired as Casuals?

Federal retirees may be hired as casuals under the AD Pay Plan. They must meet the same hiring requirements as any other casual.

- Salary offset does not apply
- Federal retirees who received separation incentive payments, e.g., buyout, may be subject to repayment of incentive payment if hired as a casual. Retirees should check with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for specific restrictions.

Where are Casuals hired?

Casuals may be contacted by the Eastern Area Coordination Center (EACC), expanded dispatch, or an agency hiring official.

The hiring period begins at the point-of-hire and the time an individual is available for hire at the request of an agency representative. It ends at the time the casual is returned to the point-of-hire or is no longer available. Point-of-hire is defined as the location of the unit where hiring documentation is completed or other locations as determined by the hiring unit.



The hiring unit may determine an alternate location as the point of hire to allow for remote hiring of an individual and begin pay status from that location. (AD Pay Plan)

Hiring officials need to assure hiring documentation is complete before directing the casual employee to an incident location.

What is the Hiring Unit Designator for USFS casuals who are hired by Northeastern Area (NA) State & Private Forestry?

For personnel who are sponsored as casuals through NA State & Private Forestry, the hiring unit/location designator will be PA-NAF.

The statement “Hired out of (casual’s state of residence)” will be added to the top of the OF-288 and the Single Resource Casual Hire Information form or next to the casual’s name on the Passenger / Crew & Cargo Manifest.

What is the Length of Assignment?

Casual hiring is of uncertain or purely temporary duration, and shall be terminated when other employment methods can be initiated.

Lengths of assignments are not guaranteed. A standard assignment length is 14 days, exclusive of travel from and to home unit, with possible extensions identified below. Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the 14 day limit, regardless of pay status, for all personnel, including IMTs.

Assignments can last up to 30 days excluding travel. Paid days off are only available to casuals if held at the incident; casuals are not entitled to paid days off at their home unit. Upon release from an incident, casuals are not entitled to paid days off (IIBMh Ch. 10).

What are the Preseason Documentation requirements?

- A DHS Employment Eligibility Verification, Form I-9, must be completed by the hiring official and casual employee at the employing location;
- Direct Deposit Form, FS-1199a; and
- Federal W-4 and a State Tax withholding forms must be provided to the casual. Federal and state income taxes will be withheld from the casual’s earnings. Casuals must be provided the opportunity to complete appropriate federal and state income tax withholding forms at the time of hire to ensure the correct amount of tax is withheld.



Follow agency direction for submittal of documents.

Forest Service

Fax or mail documents to ASC – IF:
USDA Forest Service
Albuquerque Service Center, B&F
Incident Finance Branch – Casual Pay
101 B Sun Avenue NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Fax: 1-866-816-9532

DOI

National Interagency Fire Center
Casual Payment Center MS 270
3833 S Development Ave
Boise ID 83705
Phone: 877-471-2262 Fax: (208) 433-6405

Hiring Units are responsible to provide the Incident Behavior form, PMS 935-1 to single resource casualls, ensure the casual signs the form, retain the original form, and provide the casual with a copy.

What Documentation is required at the Time of Dispatch?

Complete the Single Resource Casual Hire Information Form, PMS 934 http://www.nwccg.gov/pms/forms_otr/pms934.pdf. This form is required for single resources and is required at the time of hire for each new assignment. Provide the original to the casual to take to the incident finance section. **This form is not required for crews if there is a Passenger / Crew and Cargo Manifest form with name, pay classification, position and unit location** (IIBMh, Ch.10, p.10-3).

If the I-9, Direct Deposit and tax forms were not completed preseason, complete at time of dispatch. Follow agency direction for submitting forms.

Forest Service: I-9, Federal W-4, State Tax form (if applicable), and Direct Deposit are faxed or mailed to ASC-IF at time of dispatch. Hiring unit keeps copies or originals, depending on method used to submit paperwork to ASC-IF.



DOI: Federal W-4, State Tax form (if applicable), Tribal Exemption form (if applicable), Direct Deposit Form or EFT Waiver are sent to the DOI Casual Payment Center. I-9s, Crew Time Reports, Incident Behavior Forms, and Single Resource Casual Hire Information forms are retained at the hiring unit.

Who determines the method of transportation for a casual?

Dispatch Centers are responsible for determining the method of transportation and to inform casuals, upon dispatch, if their transportation to the incident will be provided through:

- Travel management center (via commercial transportation)
- Ground support
- Personal vehicle

If a vehicle is rented, the government has no authority to reimburse employees for the cost of personal or optional insurance, GPS units, pre-paid fuel or fuel upon return, options.

What are the Responsibilities of Agencies for Organized Crews?

The sponsoring agency is responsible to identify incident behavior expectations; document consequences for inappropriate behavior in crew agreements; ensure incident behavior expectations are provided to organize crew personnel; and establish documentation procedures (IIBMH, Ch.10, p.10-2).

Are Casual earnings subject to Garnishment of Wages?

Garnishment of wages is addressed in Title 42, USC, Section 659. The Casual Pay Centers process all garnishments to casual payments. Forward any court-ordered garnishments to the appropriate Casual Pay Center.

How is Casual Employment terminated at the End of an Assignment?

Termination requires closing out the Incident Time Report (OF-288).

Travel time and expenses are compensable back to the point of hire (unless terminated for cause and Agency Administrator or Incident Commander has documented prompt discharge without return travel).

The 8-hour guarantee does not apply to the last day of casual employment.



What are the steps for Processing Incident Time Reports (OF-288)?

An Incident Time Report (OF-288) is completed from the signed Crew Time Report (CTR, SF-261), and processed through the Incident Finance Section or local office.

Forest Service Sponsored Casual: Original OF-288 and a copy of the PMS 934 (Single Resource Casual Hire Information form) or Passenger / Crew and Cargo Manifest is sent to ASC-IF. A copy of the OF-288 is retained with the finance package and a copy is provided to the casual or Crew Boss.

USDA Forest Service
Albuquerque Service Center, B&F
Incident Finance Branch – Casual Pay
101 B Sun Avenue NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
877-372-7248, Option 1

DOI sponsored Casual: Original OF-288 is provided to casual or Crew Boss, a copy is retained with the finance package.

DOI National Interagency Fire Center:

Casual Payment Center, MS270
3833 S. Development Avenue
Boise, ID 83705-5354
877-471-2262

The Wage and Earning Statement will be sent to the address on record from the Casual Pay Center.

Are Casuals allowed Subsistence?

Whenever deemed practical and necessary by the agency representative, furnish subsistence and lodging at government expense for casuals under this plan. When feasible, utilize Buying Teams or other procurement officials to obtain these services via purchase card or other procurement instrument. If the government cannot provide subsistence for a casual, reimbursement should be made through the agency travel process.



How are Travel and Expense Reimbursements managed?

All Federal Travel Regulations must be followed. The sponsoring agency or unit is responsible for issuing authorization to travel. The sponsoring agency of the casual and type of expenses incurred will determine how the casual will be reimbursed for travel costs and who will process the travel voucher.

See the GSA website for current reimbursement rates: <http://www.gsa.gov>

Forest Service sponsored Casuals

When a casual incurs only M&IE and/or POV mileage, travel reimbursement will be processed by the IMT. Reimbursement will be included with the payment of the Incident Time Report (OF-288) for salary. This process also applies when other travel costs were incurred during the assignment (such as a rental vehicle or lodging) but paid by a purchasing official.

Casuals with non-transportation expenses (M&IE, POV, lodging, baggage fees, etc.) can be reimbursed through the OF-288 and processed by the IMT. Receipts for lodging, baggage fees, parking, etc. must be attached to the OF-288. If the casual has any transportation expenses (rental vehicles, public transit, etc.) the entire travel voucher will be reimbursed by the hiring unit through the agency travel system.

POV mileage will be documented on the Crew Time Report (SF-261).

See the ASC website for examples on how to calculate and post travel reimbursable expenses.

<http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/bfm/programs/financial-operations/incident-business/>

Department of Interior Agencies (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service)

Casual Employees under the Department of Interior agencies are reimbursed at their home unit and may claim the following expenses on the OF-288 form:

- Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) mileage;
- Incidental expenses; and
- Maximum of 15 meals per emergency incident.

When a casual employee's travel includes expense that cannot be claimed on the OF-288 (e.g., lodging or other travel expenses), the claim must be made in the DOI ETS (Electronic Travel System).



The DOI ETS must be used for the following travel expense claims (except for the BIA, where the voucher will be processed manually until further notice):

- Lodging paid by casual employee;
- Rental vehicle leased by casual employee;
- All training and non-emergency related travel that can be planned and authorized in advance (e.g., prescribed fire projects and training);
- Other expenses not allowed for reimbursement via the OF-288 (e.g., baggage fees, laundry costs, cab fare, etc.); and
- Any expenses not listed previously as an expense that is allowed for claim on an OF-288 form.

How are Travel Vouchers Processed?

Forest Service Sponsored Casuals

Casual Hires who need to have travel vouchers completed must be established in the FMMI vendor code table and ETS2 (Concur) system. The following documents must be completed by the hiring unit and submitted to ASC:

- FS-6500-214 Financial Information Security Request Form
- FS-6500-231 Vendor Code Information Worksheet
- Casuals who need to have travel vouchers completed, should have an Open Travel Authorization created in Concur once the FS-6500-214 and 231 have been completed and processed.
- All incident travel must be coded Mission Critical.
- Open Authorizations are established specifically for Incident Travel and should not be co-mingled with other authorizations for instructing, attending training, etc.

Once a casual returns from travel, they must provide a copy of the OF-288, Resource Order and supporting receipts in order for a FS Travel Arranger to complete the travel voucher utilizing the FS electronic travel system (ETS2), Concur. The OF-288 is used as proof that travel expenses were not claimed on the OF-288.



DOI Sponsored Casuals

Open Authorizations are established specifically for Incident Travel and should not be co-mingled with other authorizations for instructing, attending training, etc.

Once a casual returns from travel, they must provide a copy of the OF-288 and supporting receipts in order to complete the travel voucher. Either ETS vouchers or hard copy vouchers are processed by the hiring unit. The OF-288 is used as proof that travel expenses were not claimed on the OF-288. Under no circumstances will the casual be reimbursed under both the OF-288 and the ETS for the same travel incident.

What if a Casual is Terminated or Quits?

If a casual is terminated for cause or quits, note the reason in the Remarks block of the CTR and the OF-288. Compensation for return travel is generally not made in these instances. Exceptions must be in accordance with agreements or authorized by the IC for individuals' not covered under an agreement. Blocks 7, 8, and 9 on the OF-288 must be completed (IIBMH, Ch. 10, p. 10-45)

Are Casual employees represented by the Union?

Casuals are not covered by union representation.

What is the Chain of Command for a Casual to resolve issues?

USDA does not permit violation of EEO laws. If a casual firefighter experiences discrimination or is unable to resolve a workplace conflict or hazard, the notification process is: crew leader/representative, human resource specialist, and/or hiring unit official.

How are Performance and Conduct Issues handled?

For organized crews, the crew representative will work with incident management team officials to document and remedy performance and/or conduct issues. For single resources, the IMT will document and work to remedy performance and/or conduct issues.



Helpful information from the Casual Pay Center

- Crew manifests are sent with crew OF-288s
- Single resources/overhead personnel require a Single Resource Casual Hire Information form for each new assignment.
 - **A new Single Resource Casual Hire Information form is not required for reassignments during the assignment duration or for field promotions.**
 - The Finance Section or Unit Administrative contact can make pen and ink changes to the original Single Resource Casual Hire Information form that was used for the initial assignment. Submit with the OF-288 to the Casual Payment Center.
- Be sure appropriate reviews and signatures are obtained
- Submit address changes using the address change form found either on the ASC website for Forest Service sponsored casuals or the CPC website for Department of Interior sponsored casuals.
- Name on OF-288 must be legal name and legible
- Ensure travel is posted to the OF-288 according to agency policy
- For Forest Service sponsored casuals send original OF-288s to the Casual Payment Center. Photocopies aren't accepted as a pay document
- For DOI sponsored casuals send original OF-288 home with the employee or Crew Boss
- Ensure the ECI number is written on each OF-288; do not use Social Security numbers
- Attach an approving officer memo with OF-288 submissions

What items should Finance/Admin Representatives review before submitting OF-288s to the Casual Pay Center?

Incident finance contacts need to review timekeeping procedures and controls in place to assure requirements outlined in the IIBMH are adhered to. Red flags that indicate a need for additional attention include:

- Incidents coinciding with formal training being offered
- Exception Positions (including the appropriate documentation)
- Training hours payable as a trainee (meeting criteria of NTE 80 hours in most cases)
- Assigning different pay rates during the same operational period
- Commissary deductions (FS Casuals only)
- Training qualification (IQCS or IQS) matching pay level
- Reduced pay level if attending training as a trainee (full pay level is appropriate for refresher training)



Is it ever appropriate to use the AD Pay Plan authority rather than request extensions/waivers of 1039 hours?

A qualified "yes." However, you must be very careful that the AD authority is not being used to extend the 1039 appointment. ***The determination must be made on a case-by-case basis.*** Here are some examples:

- Fire Cache temporary employees hit their 1039 hours the end of September, but fire season is still active so they are still needed-can they be on a temporary appointment on Wednesday and come back to work doing the same job Thursday as an AD? An AD appointment would not be appropriate in this case as it has the appearance of extending the temporary appointment. Fire season is often still active at the end of September. Therefore, the unit should have been planning for coverage.
- Temporary employees hit their 1039 hours while fighting an active fire-due to the need to keep a crew intact and continue to fight the fire, can they be on a temporary appointment on Wednesday and come back to work doing the same job Thursday as an AD? If so, when do we end their AD employment? Can we keep them on as AD's back at their unit if the fire danger is elevated? It would be appropriate to have the employee come back to the fire as an AD and remain as an AD until the incident is over. The AD employment is initiated on the fire, so it should be ended on the fire. The employee should not be kept on as an AD back at their unit simply because the fire danger is elevated, because that has the appearance of extending the temporary appointment.
- A temporary recreation technician's 1039 hour appointment runs out the middle of August and the employee is separated. The first of September the unit breaks a large fire-can the recreation technician be hired as an AD to help fight this fire? The recreation technician can be hired as an AD to fight the large fire.

Can the AD Pay Plan be used to provide training when it is known that the individual will be hired for a temporary position?

No. The AD Pay Plan should be used to provide training only for casuals. A temporary employee should receive training under their temporary appointment. We need to be careful not to mix pay plans.



Eastern Area Incident Business Working Team

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ACRONYMS

AD – Administratively Determined
ASC – Albuquerque Service Center
AO – Approving Official
BAER – Burned Area Emergency Response
BIA – Bureau of Indian Affairs (DOI Agency)
BLM – Bureau of Land Management (DOI Agency)
COP – Continuation of Pay
CPC – Casual Payment Center (DOI)
CPR – Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CRWB – Crew boss
CSRS – Civil Service Retirement System
CTR – Crew Time Report, SF-261
DHS – Department of Homeland Security
DOI – Department of Interior
EACC – Eastern Area Coordination Center
ECI – Employee Common Identifier
EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity
EERA – Emergency Equipment Rental Agreement
EFT – Electronic Funds Transfer
FAR – Federal Acquisition Regulation
FERS – Federal Employee Retirement System
FMMI – Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FS accounting system)
FPPS – Federal Personnel Payroll System
FS – Forest Service
FWS – Fish and Wildlife Service (DOI Agency)
GSA – General Service Administration
IC – Incident Commander
IF – Incident Finance at ASC (FS Casual Payment Center)
IIBMH – Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook
IMT – Incident Management Team
M&IE – Meals and Incident Expenses
OWCP – Office of Workers' Compensation Program
PII – Personally Identifiable Information
PMS 310-1 - Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide
POC – Point of Contact
POV – Personally owned vehicle
PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
SS – Social Security
USC – United States Code
USFS – United States Forest Service