

**NORTHERN ROCKIES COORDINATING GROUP
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
October 7-8, 2014
Idaho Dept. of Lands, Coeur d'Alene, ID**

In Attendance:

Lily Huskey, USFS Central MT Zone Rep, Training Cmte
Tracey Nimlos, USFS R1, Incident Business Coordinator
Deanna Crawford, USFS IBS, Southwest Zone Rep
Biddy Simet, NPS and NW MT Zone Rep
Mike Lucas, BUYT Rep
Joyce Anderson – USFS IBS, South Central MT rep
Joanne Marceau – DNRC Financial Specialist
Tony Lubke, Dispatch Liaison
Maebeth Seidlitz, Fire Wardens
Wendy Walter, Fire Business Program Mngr IDL, Committee Chair
Wanemah Heulett, DNRC IBS, Missoula, MT
Rick Seidlitz, DNRC / NRCG BOD Rep
Ann Vogt (phone) BLM Equipment Cmte Rep
Amanda Boatright (phone) BIA Incident Business Lead
Jeannie Nez Perce, Pend Oreille FPD, IDL
Heather Good- Clear-Nez National Forest IBS (acting)
Debby Wesselius, Contracting Specialist
Monica Hagen, Admin Asst, IDL
Brooke Heasty, Admin. Assist. Fire Bureau, IDL
Nikki Shockley, Admin. Assist., Ponderosa FPD, IDL
Sam Altman Admin Asst, Craig Mtn, IDL
Jennie Rollins, Cataldo FPD, IDL
Teresa McFadden, Mica FPD, IDL
Lynn Pearson, Office Specialist, Pend Oreille Lakes FPD,, IDL

Tuesday, October 7, 2014

Action Items from March:

Time Workshop
Rental Vehicles
Supplements – Tracey has the Word version
State issues: changing the interagency billing threshold (raise)

NR Equipment Safety Task Group:

A mix of equipment, business and safety folks to review accidents and injuries. Review methods and requirements for hiring to search for changes or improvements in the process that could mitigate potential fatalities. Ann Vogt and Debby Wesselius are on it. Meeting Dec 9 at DNRC.

Cache support for Type 3 Incidents:

For T3 incidents DNRC couldn't get items from the Missoula cache. What's the real problem: is it the lack of a "P" code or simply a T3 incident? Certain cache items that require certain positions that maybe they didn't have. For example: to order radios they need to have a radio tech. DNRC will follow up to determine the crux of the problem.

Rental Vehicle Task Group:

Notes from Wendy:

Reviewed notes from Tony Lubke that came out of the Center Manager's meeting. Dispatchers would like more direction.

Rental vehicles have become an entitlement and users are not taking the proper amount of responsibility toward the vehicles and toward the contractors. Leads to a large number of claims. Other GACCs have additional tools that may solve some of the problem, but that doesn't affect the accountability issue.

Everything in R6 goes on a credit card and is processed in one place. The contractors are safeguarded – they're paid as soon as the vehicles are returned. R6 has a BPA. They have more fire C.O.s to make these payments. Great Basin has a similar BPA but if users have government travel cards, they pay with their cards, if they don't the vendor sends a bill to the particular payment center related to a particular fire.

The NRCG BOD issued direction last year, but dispatch centers applied it inconsistently. Need more dispatch involvement – a diverse group across the region – to create the plan. Information needs to be relayed down to their Expanded Dispatch organizations.

Revised regional task group: Lily, Deanna (lead), Ann, Wendy suggested we ask folks from Grangeville Dispatch to join. Deanna will make the request. Would like some east-side dispatchers too. NRCG group will be independent of the national committee at least for the next fire season.

AD/EFF POV use:

This option is still in the rental vehicle direction but some dispatch centers did not make this available to their ADs. If the AD/EFF wants to take their POV and it's on their resource order, the dispatch centers should not refrain from making POV an option. ADs need to understand the liability and the appropriate use of their vehicle. Lily and Deanna will address this in the vehicle direction.

Other issues:

USFS Gas cards not being taken in small towns:

Buying team had to set up a BPA in Fossil, OR and Debby W. had to pay the vendor a couple of times when PINs didn't work. Card reader didn't work, and in OR, can't pump your own gas so it was a struggle with the PINs and working with the vendor.

There were no “pool” cards this year, either. We need to find a way to pay for miscellaneous fuel.

Finding rooms for firefighters:

Dispatchers were reluctant to pay for rooms. Issue: firefighters don't show up and the contracting officer gets stuck with the bill. Or the FF doesn't properly check out. This probably applies more to single-resources since many crew bosses have the purchasing authority to pay for other rooms.

Lack of currency in Finance Sections among ADs:

Do FSC2s need annual refresher training? Some ADs are not current. A 2-3 day refresher would be helpful – improve efficiency and cut back on errors. How do ICs make their FSC choice and know that they are qualified. Joyce's suggestion: If the IBS gets a finance package that includes packages that can't be paid, the unit should request that the IMT finance section members return to fix the errors. If the FSC2 needs training, it needs to be supported by the IC and the sponsoring unit. FSC2s should attend the trainings already offered regularly.

ADs from Eastern Coordination Center:

The USFS division of State and Private Forestry sponsors AD from most eastern states. This is not always clear on the Single Resource Casual Hire Info Form.

Recommend: Update to the Single Resource Casual Hire Info Form to clearly indicate the hiring/sponsoring unit – not a dispatch center.

Hiring a pickup-with driver:

Make sure the drivers know the detail of the insurance they need to carry. Hauling “stuff” and hauling people may require different insurance or commercial designations. Debby will review the VIPR solicitation regarding insurance.

Idaho EMS:

Private contracted ambulances, EMTs and Paramedics. Will be re-solicited this year with some changes. Some IMTs and dispatch centers didn't understand the process or the contract. The process needs to be explained to the teams at IMT meetings. Wendy will meet with Tracey and MaryJo Loman regarding this process. Questions from dispatch about how to manage them in ROSS.

BLM/DNRC Solicitations:

2015 solicitations:

BLM: They have scheduled the Tents (Type 3 and 4 only) and maybe gray water but not sure. Nationally, a heating solution was found which will be part of it this year. Specs will be forthcoming. VIPR awards were extended 6 months awaiting this language.

USFS solicitations: graders and feller-bunchers. Will not limit the dispatch centers but will let the commercial process play out and see where the equipment is. Full and open competition across the regions. Not adding the masticators.

New solicitation: Tim and Kevin along with Ops folks are looking at a “Heavy Equipment Task Force.” A group of equipment to essentially work a timber fireline. Could gain efficiencies by having a contractor pull this together. Could include all the equipment needed to cut and remove timber as a group. This idea will be presented at the Ops committee meeting.

Coach and short school busses: Have not used the short school busses and coach busses are typically hired as commercial items. Debby recommends to not solicit for either one of these.

Alternative: Since we have specs on short busses, roll them into Chapter 20 in the event that an Incident-Only EERA would be needed.

DNRC:

Toilets and handwash stations. A few specs from the solicitation were left off the contracts this year. This will be fixed for next year. Joanne had some packages reflecting a misunderstanding of the pick-up fees. The vendor was paid a pick-up fee on the same day that it was rented and serviced, which is not appropriate. Should have a pick-up fee only when the vendor is called back to pick up after the units have already been serviced for the day.

Debby suggests that we have a task group to review the language to see where the weaknesses are and what needs to be clarified and/or carried over to the agreement. Ask Mary Fields to look at it.

- Specify in special instructions what the serviced and unserviced rate is and when they should be applied relative to the pick-up and delivery dates.
- Specify in the solicitation the number of units, minimum, that should be delivered at a time. To determine the number of loads/mileage that the government will cover.
- Specify that the government can test potable water for hand-wash sinks.

Vehicles: will visit section 2.3: ordering and dispatch procedures.

Use of National Buying Team:

The team went to two fires this year. Had rotation issues.

Teams are being cobbled together when organized teams are sitting in station waiting for a dispatch. They are more flexible now about the number of folks they need to bring. They’ll go short when ordered short. If the order is filled from outside the GACC, will probably get a full team.

- Item for dispatch workshop: remind dispatchers what a national buying team should look like – configuration is 7 people.
- Buying Team workshop: go over LUAs and EERAs for folks in the 1105 series since they can now create these agreements (previously restricted to 1102).

Lend/Lease Issue:

Documentation on Invoice is hard because there’s not enough room. The direction needs to be clarified regarding the length of a “defined period of time.” Need to carry through the direction for payment of contractors. Lend/Lease can create invoices with E numbers that don’t actually exist in ROSS.

IMT Finance Section issues:

Does our information go to ICs? Some does, some goes only to FSCs. Doug is on the Business Committee mailing list and he's our conduit to ICs. Some zone mailing lists include ICs and some don't.

Contractor travel questions/issues:

Travel calculations **to** the incident are defined in section D.6.5 of the solicitation.

Use the city and state designated for the equipment. In some cases, dispatch was allowing travel in excess of the city/state listed in the schedule of items at the average speed of 45 mph. In some cases, Debby had recalculate the appropriate and allowable travel time per the solicitation. The first shift ticket should reflect the language in the solicitation and the city/state designated for the equipment. She'll bring this up at the dispatcher's workshop. If actual departure location is different than the city/state on the contract, ROSS should reflect in the comments section the actual departure location of the equipment. Finance sections also need to review the travel shift tickets against the city/state on the agreement and use the 45 mph calculation to determine travel time. If the finance section makes changes because shift tickets are incorrect, proper documentation needs to be included for the payment agency.

Northern Rockies heavy equipment outside the GACC:

- Argued about the 45 mph plus applicable rest (1/2 hr. meal break and work/rest or DOT compliance).
- Claimed inability to get permits.
- Didn't understand what they needed to cross state lines.
- Resource orders were rescinded from California.
- Vendors should understand what agency they'll be working for – need to be told.
- Need to understand the payment and claims process – for the agency they'll work for.
- We need to do a better job to let our vendors know what they'll get into before they accept a resource order.

Debby proposed a script for dispatchers who send vendors across state lines to assure that the above bullets are addressed.

IIBMH White Pages review:

Reviewed what Bidy sent through her agency lead. Deadline was 10/1, but the national IBC doesn't meet until October 27th so there's still time to get suggestions through agency leads.

Equipment Specs: Debby

Equipment safety task group may change some of our specs after they do their safety review.

Contract Equipment Task Group: Kevin Erickson is chair.

Kevin is presenting issues to Washington DC audience. Looking at the performance eval form. Not a good fit for incidents. Working on a revision. Evals will affect their placement on the DPL. Looking at other minor specs for equipment with solicitation that are two years out. Looking at the way they calculate government estimates and developing a cheat sheet for universal use. Kevin has one for NR, but needs to describe the thought process that can be shared with other regions.

Utilization of Buying Teams and/or Expanded Dispatch:

Prioritize purchase requests so that purchasers who are slammed know what's critical.

Assure that dispatchers understand who does what purchasing between Expanded/Buying Team and cache item fills.

Develop some "how-tos" with the logistics committee to help resolve this back-log. This is not really a business committee issue – it belongs with ordering and dispatchers.

Wednesday, October 08, 2014

VIPR Heavy Equipment & Transport Cheat Sheet:

The existing transport cheat sheet conflicts with the equipment webinar, general clauses and VIPR agreement. The language may need to be clarified to include the half-day language for 1st and last day on the transport guarantee. Cheat sheet should be on our website. User groups should always look back at the VIPR clauses – source material. We should teach from the source documents as well, not from cheat sheets. If we do any cheat sheets, we should refer folks to the source material – to the transport section of the contract, for example.

- Create a cheat sheet that references common questions.
- Discard all cheat sheets and create one that references a source.
- NRCG website contains all of our current cheat sheets. Gather and update. Most are in the ToolBox.

Interagency Billing:

States are working with the USFS for documentation of charges to be paid. Wendy is going to request that the USFS add certain things to their financial reporting system so that they can collect on more types of charges. Montana is also looking at items that have come off the USFS revised financial system. Want to go back to the older way to obtain more information. The new system shows some charges in a generic way, without a name or other way to specifically identify a charge. Tracey Nimlos said the detail was not built into the financial system and ID/MT are not asking for anything that the FS staff has not already asked for. No more detail is possible from the system; it's not written into the program.

FEMA is driving the need for this from the state side. This FEMA region requires 100% documentation, others do not. Timeliness of the bills is also an issue.

BIA / Tribal billing may not have enough detail when they get to the states for FEMA reimbursement. Some BIA regions request more detail from the tribes than others so it's hard to determine the cost per day for the FEMA declaration period. Amanda and Wendy are working with them to help improve this.

Items for the Operations Committee:

Tracey will be going to the meeting. Requested issues that should be brought forward to Ops:

- Cheat sheet update
- Rental vehicle update
- AD transport – POV use inconsistent among dispatch centers
- Hiring and management of AD / sponsorship (agency or hiring-unit rules apply)

- Ask ICs to support refresher training for their FSCs. Will also need hiring / sponsoring unit support as well. Need ICs to request that they attend training. If they can't attend or don't attend, the ICs need to expect that there should be a separate evaluation of the Finance Package – a closer look at basic stuff, etc.
- Stress the importance of the Finance Section evaluation, so that training deficits and problems can be corrected.
- Team in-briefings should include notes about the Finance Close-out – and the timeline. May begin up to 3 days prior to close-out with agency spot-checks of the Finance Package.
- Consider updates to the entire team evaluation process. Possibly update and revise up to 90 days after the team demobed so that all support functions that were still being worked on by the agency, can be considered.
- Consider including support functions in the Incident Objectives and Delegations of Authority, against which the team is evaluated.
- Consider offering position sharing among their FSCs or other finance section positions.
- Remind ICs that they are required to follow Legacy Filing standards – including the “red” label, long-term folders.

Winter Training Sessions:

Legacy File Clinic: Standards have been out since 2005 but it's not consistently used. The actual Legacy Files for long-term storage are not placed in the front of the boxes. This could be something that would be included in the 90-day follow-up team evaluation. This is a Plans issue. Maybe we should forward the link to a power-point presentation as a reminder.

S-481: Incident Business Advisor: Missoula, Jan 20-22. Tracey is lead instructor. Bertalee is on the Cadre. New course material will be used. Positions are now combined to INBA rather than IBA1 and IBA2. IBA2 trainees will convert to INBA trainees. IBA1 trainees will become fully qualified INBAs.

S460: Finance/Admin Sec Chief: Feb 23-26. Bertalee and Lily with someone from a state. This is a recommended course, not required. DIVS class is the same week. Debby may need to present in that class – and is offering to combine the two sessions for that presentation. (Mary Reevis is course coordinator for DIVS. Need lead instructor's name to run this idea by).

Buying Team Workshop: April 6-8: emphasis is national teams. This is critical with the new authorities given to the 1105 purchasing agents. Tracey is the course coordinator, Mike is the lead instructor. Same week as the ICPI class – maybe can do a joint session for some shared topics..

S262-ICPI: April 7-9: At the AFD Hangar. Federal CORs can count this class time toward their warrant maintenance. This class would also be good for FSCs and FSC-trainees. The ICPI position has no authority – it's an advisory position. The ICPI advises the team on contractors/contracting issues. They do not direct resources.

TIME Workshop: April 20-23. Terri Tangen is the lead. Cadre is developed, draft outline is pulled together, course material needs to be built.

eI-Suite: April 27-May 1 and May 4-8. Both are full-week classes. At least 300 people need the training, but we don't know what it looks like yet. May need two levels: a full week course for folks who have never used I-Suite, and less time for proficient I-Suite users. We have 8 people going to Train-the-Trainer. The cadre will need to get together to see how we can get the course delivered region-wide.

- Unknown: whether training will be on the stand-alone or enterprise version. Joyce's session has requested that all students have internet access so they can train on the enterprise version.

Other Training Info: Lily

Interface with the operational courses:

- Local Fire Management Leadership: Tracey and Amanda, maybe Nemah too.
- Fire Program Management: same as above – different audience – same dates
- Incident Medical Specialist: Tracey (maybe Nemah, too)
- Helo Refresher: CDA: Wendy
- Helo Refresher: Helena: Lily
- DIVS: Debby for contract administration with Lily for other topics
- OSC: Tracey, unless someone else wants to do it. Nemah, too.

S-261 Course Revision: materials are out.

We need to look at our “combined” course. Use it or not, depending on instructor preference and audience.

Webinar:

Committee: should be driven by the items on the webinar. The “Agency-Administrator” session was probably not very valuable. Tracey will take the lead and organize, find topics and presenters.

Supplements:

Chapter 0: Deanna

Chapter 10: Bidy

Chapter 20: Lily (with equip task group/Tim/Kevin/Debby

Chapter 30: Tracey

Chapter 40: Deanna

Chapter 50: Joyce: ND/SD, Becky and Nemah: MT, Wendy ID

Chapter 70: Joyce

Chapter 80: Joyce

Compilation: Vice-Chair does the final review: that will be Nemah this year. But Lily does an initial compilation, then forwards to the vice chair.

Tracey will send the Word versions to everyone.

Chapter leads: forward out for comments with a deadline that works for them.

Finalize at spring meeting.

Next NRCG BOD Chair: Ken Schmidt / BLM

Committee Updates:

Chair: Amanda Boatwright, effective immediately

Vice-Chair: Nemah Huelett

Spring meeting:

Location: Missoula, DNRC Conference Room

Weds-Thurs, March 18-19, 2015

Discuss trainee pool at the spring meeting.

Round Robin:

Rick:

The FSC position does make a difference to the NRCG BOD. We stood down a team this year due to lack of a qualified FSC. May need to do that again this coming year.

The BOD thinks highly of this committee.

Mike:

Promote the BUYT workshop for everyone interested.

Tony:

Dispatch Workshop in Helena, April 21-23 (Conflicts with the TIME workshop). Lily can present some business information, Wendy wanted to present Idaho EMS information. But if she can't make it to the workshop, she'll visit the dispatch centers for the information. Maybe some of the information can be combined – especially Debby's material – since a lot of the Dispatch Workshop is VTC.

Deanna:

Will have an S260/S261 at some point, not yet scheduled.

Keeping calendar open for eI-Suite

Debby:

Inserted into a lot of existing trainings. She needs to formalize what she's doing so that others can do it. Currently, she creates new material for every session that she instructs. She works a lot with Tim and Kevin to determine whether what's legal is actually appropriate. It takes both a contract/legal plus a contract/operations perspective to present her material.

Monica:

Nominated for Boise eISuite Train-the-Trainer and needs S260/S261.

Joyce:

Lily and Joyce are talking about another Type 3 workshop. Last one had over 100 people. May actually do 2 and make them interagency. They will send information to Wendy. No dates yet – but possibly May.

Will see if there's an interest in Fire 101. Material needs to be updated. Send to Wendy.

Will be instructing eI-Suite as needed.

Lily:

Central zone was slow this year – no issues came out except comments on transports.

Central zone committee didn't meet this year.

Fire staff for the combined Helena and Lewis & Clark was announced.

Central zone wants a combined S260/S261 course.

Will instruct in Type 3 Workshop, a Fire 101 and eI-Suite this year.

Sam Altman:

IDL Administrative folks thanked the committee for allowing them to participate.

From the IDL side: look more closely at job-sharing positions on teams.

Nemah:

DNRC Fire Business committee meeting was last week. No big issues came out of it.

Susan Dowler and Becky Shepard are going to Train-the-Trainer

Refresher workshops for fire finance this spring.

Tracey:

Last week of January: USFS National Incident Business Coordinator's meeting

IMT meetings the week of April 13 in Missoula

Incident Business Specialist position for Idaho is closed. Should get a referral list soon.

Met with Mary Jo Lommen this week regarding the Inc Med Specialist program. She had some concerns from this summer.

Amanda:

Nothing

Ann:

Nothing

Wendy:

May host S260/S261 in CDA but focus will be eI-Suite this year. Appreciates knowing when others are hosting training.

Working on other fire management issues for IDL including other agreements and offsets. Her job encompasses a lot more than incident business.