

**Washington Interagency Geographic
Board Operation Guide
2014**



(As amended for use in 2015 Season)

WIIMT Logo Design: Marilyn Coleman WIIMT # 4

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SECTION 2

GEOGRAPHIC BOARD DECISIONS

A. Geographic Board operating policy and procedures

Board By-Laws

March 30, 2015

*** SEE NORTHWEST GEOGRAPHIC AREA BOARD BYLAWS***

Oct. 7, 2008

Adopted Board meeting schedule:

April 21, 2004

“It was agreed to adopt the By-Laws as revised. The By-Laws will be added to the Team Handbook.., and will be provided to the Agency Administrators.”

Membership

March 14, 2012

It was agreed to add the team Incident Commander having delegation for the upcoming Team Review/Team Training to the Geographic Board as an ex officio member. The IC's alternate shall be his/her Deputy or Trainee IC. The Incident Commander shall be excused from Geographic Board executive session discussions.

Regular Board meetings:

- During the second full week of January (two-day);
- During the second or third full week of April (coincident with the annual team meeting);
- During the second full week of July (by conference call or other electronic means);
- During the second full week of October.

July 14, 2004

By consensus, elections will take place annually at the regular October Board meeting.

Annual Team Formation Process:

- Recruitment opens: During the first week of November
- Recruitment closes for ICs: At the end of the second full week of November
- IC selections for following year: during the last full week of November
- Recruitment closes for other positions: At the end of the second full week of December ICs/Board meeting to fill rosters: During the second full week of January (as part of Board's regular January meeting)
- Team rosters are published: At the end of January
- Teams take over from prior year teams: On March 1

Meetings with Individual ICs/DPICs: During the last full week of November

Annual WIIMT meeting: During the second or third full week of April in 2008, the Board will select the actual dates for the next twelve months during its July regular meeting. Thereafter, it will do so at its April regular meeting. The written schedule will be distributed to incident commanders, agency administrators and other interested people.

Board “Operating Manual ”

April 17, 2007

The review/update process was refined. The WIIMT responsible for planning the next year’s team meeting was charged with reviewing the guide and making suggestions for changes to improve clarity regarding team operating processes, and providing a draft to the Board by December 31st. The Board will devote time to reviewing the suggestions and discussing this as an action item at its regular January meeting.

August 1, 2003

There was agreement that it would be wise to review the team handbook with the idea of incorporating the Board’s mission and operating authority, existing policies, and the operational guidance that will apply to the 2004 fire season.”

Rules for Executive Session

August 25, 2005

“After discussion on Federal, State, and Local rules and regulations regarding executive session the following was agreed to: *To discuss sensitive issues, the Chair will announce when the Board will enter into executive session. Sensitive issues will then be discussed with no notes taken. Decisions made during executive session will be announced in the meeting minutes.*”

B. WIIMT Formation Process

Team Formation Process

October 18, 2007

“A team established in one year is replaced on March 1st of the following year by the team selected for that year.”

July 17, 2006

There was consideration of alternatives to continuing to use an annual team recruitment and formation process. Following discussion, “There was unanimous agreement to retain the current annual WIIMT recruitment process [annual recruitment and team formation]”.

September 9, 2003

“People wishing to be considered as an IMT member, Alternate, or Trainee will be

required to complete and submit a letter of interest each year. It is the Board's intention that selections for position openings on IMTs be limited to those people who submit applications during this process."

C. WIIMT Configuration

Incident Commanders – Assignment and Number per Team

March 27, 2009

Note: The change to Team Size and Configuration required this portion to be changed to match the intent.

The Geographic Board formally appoints a single Incident Commander for each team, as well as a Deputy Incident Commander where appropriate. *The Incident Commander and Geographic Board appoint other command and general staff positions and trainees/apprentices. The incident commander selects other team positions.*

The five Washington Interagency Incident Management Teams have a 50 O-number roster, but the default configuration for assignments is the standard long team specified in the national mobilization guide. The incident commander is to negotiate with the ordering agency administrator for additional team positions, considering the incident objectives and specific circumstances and needs.

The Deputy Incident Commander position is not mandatory. The Incident Commander on IMTs may only be filled by those approved by the Geographic Board.

December 8, 2005

"The Geographic Board will formally appoint a single incident commander for each team, as well as a deputy incident commander where appropriate." The Board reviewed and left unchanged its past decision that a WIIMT is considered available for assignment with a single qualified ICT2, so that there is no requirement that each WIIMT have a DPIC. The Board also reviewed and left unchanged its past direction that the Board be consulted and approve before any person, not previously approved through Board review, accepts an assignment on a WIIMT as incident commander.

April 21, 2004

"The Board will not be expanded to include an incident commander. Instead, a representative for the incident commanders will be invited to attend each regular meeting to present a report and exchange information with the Board."

August 1, 2003

"The Board is directly involved in decisions about who serves as an IC on an IMT; therefore, the Board will make decisions about short-term replacements. This will be accomplished in consultation with the affected Incident Commanders. Fully qualified replacements may be appointed from the Alternate Pool or other sources, or there may be opportunities to consider in-training assignments. When a need arises, the IC should call the Board member representing his agency or, in the representative's absence, the

Board Chair.”

WIIMT Configuration and Availability for Dispatch

March 14, 2012

The number of teams available for out of state assignment during PNW Preparedness Levels 1 and 2 was changed to 1.

July 17, 2006

“The normal *minimum configuration* for WIIMT dispatch is that defined in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide Chapter 60 Section 63.1.1 for a “long” team. *A WIIMT will normally be considered unavailable for assignment if it is necessary to have more than two (2) substitutes fill Command/General Staff positions.* However, the Incident Commander of the “up” team has responsibility to assess the team’s condition, including the number of vacancies in team positions, and make a determination of team availability for dispatch on a case-by-case basis.”

Team Size and Configuration

March 27, 2009

“WIIMTs have a 50 O-number roster, but the default configuration for assignments is the standard long team specified in the national mobilization guide. The incident commander is to negotiate with the ordering agency administrator for additional team positions, considering the incident objectives and specific circumstances and needs” (replaced policy that had been adopted on February 20, 2004).

January 10, 2006

“Walkup moved that the Board allow assignment of an unspecified number of trainees, provided that the total number of team positions was fifty or less, in order to enhance development and qualification of people in critical positions identified by the Board and incident commanders. This applies for team assignments in Washington, with team configuration for out-of-state assignments to be consistent with national mobilization guide standards for Type 1 teams. Gossard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.”

February 20, 2004

“Authority lies with the incident commander to determine that he or she can safely and effectively carry out an assignment utilizing the number of team members authorized for a specific incident by the requesting agency administrator. In general, the Board expects assignments within Washington to be accepted because the default size of the team is 50 positions, and so this situation is thought more likely to apply to assignments outside of Washington State (and even there to be infrequent if ever).”

November 26, 2003

“A WIIMT will consist of up to 42 positions occupied by fully qualified individuals and up to 8 designated trainees. Trainees will be assigned to meet IMT position needs as prioritized by the Board in consultation with the Incident Commanders. The Incident

Commander will select up to four trainees and the Board will assign up to four trainees. The minimum size of a WIIMT shall be 27 standard positions (plus trainees), configured according to those positions identified in the National Mobilization Guide. Numbers above the minimum for non-standard positions shall be negotiated by the Incident Commander and requesting Agency Administrator prior to dispatch.”

Trainees Qualifications

January 10, 2006

“Walkup moved that the Board allow assignment of an unspecified number of trainees, provided that the total number of team positions was fifty or less, in order to enhance development and qualification of people in critical positions identified by the Board and incident commanders. This applies for team assignments in Washington, with team configuration for out-of-state assignments to be consistent with national mobilization guide standards for Type 1 teams. Gossard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.”

January 8, 2004

“Candidates considered for a training assignment needs to meet the minimum requisites outlined in PMS310-1 to have a task book assigned for the ICS position of interest. Where capacity exists within a WIIMT to support it, the Board supports the concept of providing “shadow assignments” for others who do not meet “trainee” requirements. Such assignments are paid by the employee’s agency, and people in such assignments are not a member of a WIIMT.”

August 1, 2003

“The Board supports effective use of formal training assignments that are directly tied to advancement toward defined position qualifications. Once a person is fully qualified, that person becomes available to all IMTs through the Alternate Pool and for assignment to an IMT through the following year’s team selection process. Resource orders for training positions on the IMT will come from among 50 positions allocated to each IMT.”

April 5, 2000

“Trainees will be kept in a pool. It was agreed to have DNR be the keeper of the pool. Six trainees will initially be sent to each incident. The host agency will pay for trainees.”
Note: The number of trainees was subsequently increased to eight per team (November 26, 2003)

Apprentice Positions and Shadow Assignments

March 1, 2007

The Board has adopted a policy on the use of apprentices and individuals needing shadow assignments. Both types of assignments are intended to help sustain adequate numbers of qualified individuals over time; as such, they are intended to compliment formal trainee assignments. Apprentices differ from trainees in that they have an interest in IMTs but lack the experience or prerequisite training necessary to be issued a Position Task Book for a specific ICS position. The objective of apprentice assignments are to accelerate career development of the individual and eventual qualification for assignment to IMTs. They also can contribute to the task at hand by providing some

additional help to the incident, but are not relied upon to meet incident objectives.

Shadow assignments serve the purpose of providing individuals exposure to how IMTs work, with the objective of improving that individual's understanding as it may relate to their normal job. These assignments are often used by Agency Administrators with limited fire experience as a way to help them better deal with the fire aspect of their jobs. These assignments have no direct benefit to the incident that hosts them. Both the Board and IMTs will receive requests for shadow assignments and the Washington Line Officer Team has a mentoring program in place that encourages Agency Administrators to take shadow assignments.

Apprentices

- Come from traditional wildland firefighting agencies.
- Will have a development plan outlined after the first assignment that identifies a target position.
- Will gain sufficient experience and complete prerequisite training necessary for the issuance of a PTB one year after first assigned as an apprentice. The objective will be to complete the apprentice assignment in 1 year.
- Teams will report to the Board annually on the progress of assigned apprentices.
- Included as one of the 50 approved IMT positions. Teams may have up to 2 apprentices assigned at one time.
- Costs are paid by the participating agencies through charges against the incident (suppression funds as opposed to preparedness).
- Most are anticipated to be filled by management referral (Board, Agency Administrators, IMTs).

Shadow assignments

- Will generally come from agencies with response capabilities under NIMS, Line Officer Team requests as a venue to get inexperienced Agency Administrators experience in ICS or from foreign countries under international wildland fire suppression MOUs.
- Will be identified by management referral (Board, Line Officer Team, National or Geographic Area Coordination Centers).
- Costs are paid by requesting agency or as specified in international MOU.
- Are specific to a single incident.
- Are not included in the 50 approved IMT positions.
- Incident Commanders are encouraged to host shadow assignments but have the final decision on whether they can accommodate them given the nature of
- the incident.

Definition of "current agency" employees

July 24, 2007

Qualified former fire agency employees employed by the Washington Fire Service or the DNR are considered current agency employees for the purposes of National Mobilization Guide 63.1.1 *Interagency Incident Management Team Configuration*.

D. Dispatch

Team Rotation

August 6, 2010

“The Board has adopted an operating guideline which states that “every team would get at least one assignment per fire season before a team is given a third assignment that fire season”. The Board believes it is important to maintain team effectiveness, cohesion and proficiency. Actions which facilitate these desired outcomes while honoring equitable parity is desired and achievable. Efforts will be made to accomplish this with business practices that (preferably) involve no or only a minimal change in the rotation. For purposes of this guideline, the fire season will be reset on the Tuesday following October 31st.”

Dispatch Process

August 1, 2003

“The current dispatch process [DNR’s emergency communication center maintaining the team rosters, notifying incident commanders of resource orders, filling the order, and notifying team members’ home dispatch office for dispatch] will continue to be used. A period of 60-90 minutes to dispatch an IMT seems reasonable..... This topic will be revisited over time, as ROSS continues to be implemented and costs for currently expensive dispatch tools moderate.”

April 5, 2000

“The Board agreed that the [DNR] Coordination Center would receive the initial request for team mobilization.”

Unusual Dispatches

September 9, 2003

“A request by a member agency to stage an IMT is considered to be a dispatch and does not require that the Board confer to consider and reach a decision.”

September 9, 2003

“The Board will confer and decide on a case-by-case basis requests to reassign an IMT from one incident to another. The Board’s general stance is against such reassignments.”

September 9, 2003

“The Board will confer and decide on a case-by-case basis requests to extend an assigned IMT beyond a “normal” 14-day fire duty assignment. The Board’s general stance is against extensions. ICs will be asked to bear this in mind, and to make contact early in the thought process with the DNR Emergency Coordination Center who,

in turn, will contact Board members.”

Availability for Out-of-State Assignment

March 14, 2012

Amend the WIIMT Operations Guide to reflect that “At PNW Preparedness Levels 1 and 2, one Team must be available for in-State assignment.

August 1, 2003

“Availability for out-of-state assignment is based on PNW preparedness levels. Availability means available for assignment (IMTs committed to incidents are unavailable). At PNW preparedness levels 1, 2 and 3, two IMTs must be available for in-State assignment. At PNW preparedness levels 4 and 5, three IMTs must be available for in-State assignment. Exceptions may be made by Board consensus.”

E. Washington Fire Service

WFS Agency Compensation

July 14, 2005

“It is the Board’s intention to continue to encourage involvement of WFS employees on the WIIMTs and to make their home agency whole for the cost of participation.”

April 5, 2000

“Fire districts will be reimbursed for their costs. The board will not pay for backfills for team members. The federal agencies are working to develop a method that will allow them to pay fire districts directly.”

F. Other

Agency Rules

November 14, 2011

The graphic representing the agency relationships was removed from Article 8 as a result of action taken by the Geographic Board on November 14, 2011. Article 8 was modified to address “agency participation” and a statement was added articulating the importance of interagency cooperation and commitment to the success of the WIIMT’s.

Incident Medical Specialist teams

January 19, 2005

“Until IMS Teams obtain approval to operate under WA State Law the following direction is provided:

1. IMS Teams are not part of the pre-cut 50-person IMT roster.
2. IC’s are expected to draw from available local medical support resources. IC’s will request that the Agency Administrator provide direction on the use of medical support services in their delegations of authority.
3. IC’s must be aware that IMS teams do not have authority to perform on state,

private or tribal lands in the State of Washington.

July 14, 2004

The February 20, 2004 guidance is re-affirmed with additional clarification that an incident commander is expected to draw from available local medical support resources before ordering an IMS team.

July 14, 2004

The Board is committed to use of medical resources in ways that meet local and Washington state protocols. It agrees that additional information will assist the Board in reaching a decision about how or whether to continue to use IMS teams on non-federal lands in Washington, and has placed a high priority in obtaining that information. Until then, the Board will rely on WIIMT adherence to its existing guidance to utilize local medical support resources prior to ordering an IMS team to minimize potential conflicts with local and State protocol.

July 14, 2004

On behalf of the Board, Walkup will contact Jack Cvitanobic at Washington State Department of Health to describe the Board's questions and ask about what would be necessary to obtain from DOH a statewide variance (or, failing that, a mechanism to obtain an incident-by-incident variance) to provide authority and specific protocols that will allow IMS teams to function on non-federal lands in Washington. He would also ask for a review of the proposed NWCG Medical Unit Standards and Limited Request for EMT Recognition and ask for comments from DOH's perspective. Walkup will share with the Board what he learns as soon as possible.

July 14, 2004

Shramek will make a request today to Mark Kahley, PNWCG-SC Chair, to add this topic to the July 21, 2004 Steering Committee agenda. If it can be added, Ensley will represent the Board and (a) request that the 2004 Northwest Mobilization Guide be amended to reflect this Board's direction on use of IMS teams, and (b) ask the Steering Committee to consider the merits of formally bringing the IMS Steering Committee under the auspices of the Steering Committee.

July 14, 2004

On behalf of the Board, Walkup will draft and Shramek will send by the end of July a letter to Richard Warthen (with a copy to the PNWCG-SC chairman) that describes the situation and indicate that the Board would like to invite him to participate in a future Board meeting on the subject of IMS teams.

February 20, 2004

"The August 2003 decision was re-affirmed. It was amplified to include an expectation that an incident commander will specifically raise and discuss the issue of medical support resources with the requesting agency administrator, and request that the AA provide direction in his or her delegation order."

August 1, 2003

“IMS teams are not part of the pre-cut 50-person IMT. If needed, they are to be ordered separately outside of the IMT dispatch process.”

Lessons Learned

July 14, 2004

The following lessons will be incorporated to post-season discussions with incident commanders and agency administrators:

- Agency administrators should strive to make a decision to order a WIIMT prior to 1500 in order to minimize the length of time that will pass before an effective team transition. Orders placed after 1800 may result in an inability to transition prior to the next day's operational period.
- Consider using small planes to rapidly transport C&G staff if doing so will facilitate a rapid, effective team transition.
- One Board member should attend each WIIMT closeout as the Board's representative.