

RIO GRANDE
INTERAGENCY
CREW
OPERATING
GUIDE

2015

The purpose of the Rio Grande Interagency Crew is to provide a safe, effective, and efficient fire management resource for wildland fires both within and outside of the Rocky Mountain Geographic Area.



2015 RIO GRANDE INTERAGENCY CREW OPERATING GUIDE

The purpose of the Rio Grande Interagency Crew is to provide a **safe**, effective, and efficient fire management resource for wildland fires both within and outside of the Rocky Mountain Geographic Area. A goal is to provide quality-training experiences to advance individual’s qualifications and skills. Crew supervisory personnel (Crew boss, Squad boss and ICT5 level) will be fully NWCG qualified with class course work and minimum hours of qualifying experience. An appropriate mix of properly Red Carded FFT2’s with and without previous experience will be utilized. This crew will provide fire line construction capabilities, and skills in the use of pumps, chainsaws & falling operations, burning operations, and to assist with helitack operations, as crewmembers are qualified.

The crew will endeavor to be available in the spring and fall as well as during the summer fire season, depending on availability of the seasonal workforce.

Minimum Crew Standards for National Mobilization

Minimum Standards	Type 2 with IA Capability	Type 2
Fireline Capability	Initial attack/can be broken up into squads, fireline construction, firing to include burnout	Initial attack, fireline construction, firing as directed
Crew Size	18-20	
Leadership Qualifications	Crew Boss: CRWB 3 Squad Bosses: ICT5	Crew Boss: CRWB 3 Squad Bosses: FFT1
Experience	60% 1 season	20% 1 season
Communications	4 programmable radios	
Sawyers	3 agency qualified (“B” or higher)	None *
Training	Basic firefighter training and/or annual firefighter safety refresher prior to assignment	Basic firefighter training and/or annual firefighter safety refresher prior to assignment
Logistics	No purchasing authority	No purchasing authority
Maximum Weight	5300 lbs	
Dispatch Availability	Available nationally	Variable
Production Factor	.8	.8
Transportation	Transportation needed	Transportation needed
Tools & Equipment	Not equipped	Not equipped
Personal Gear	Arrives with: Crew First Aid kit, personal first aid kit, headlamp, 1 qt canteen, web gear, sleeping bag	
PPE	All standard designated fireline PPE	

*If identified as a Type 2 crew it is also desirable to have at least two fully qualified B fallers on the crew (not in Squad Boss positions) if chainsaws are to be utilized.

The minimum total for the crew is **18** people, while the desired number is **20** people. Efforts will be made to fill a Crew boss Trainee position. At least one EMT, preferably two, is also desirable on the crew.

Crew Boss

The crew boss has the overall responsibility for the crew in all aspects, safety, fireline performance, crew conduct, readiness, time, personnel documentation, and transportation. The crew boss is the primary point of contact for dispatch centers, districts, or fire line supervisors unless otherwise specified.

The Rio Grande Interagency Crew will try and manifest a foreman or (2nd crew boss) who is crew boss qualified and manifest a crew boss trainee as well. The purpose of two crew boss qualified people and a trainee is to maintain safety of the crew by having more experience to work with the trainee and make sure the crew has someone crew boss qualified with it at all times. Having two crew boss qualified people will also ensure that a qualified person is with the crew if the crew boss is needed as an IC. It will **not** be a requirement to have a foreman for the crew to go out as a type 2 I.A. If a trainee is close to completion of his/her task book that person can act as the foreman.

Crew Boss Rotation

The primary crew boss will rotate every pay period. A list will be developed as early in the year as possible.

Squad Bosses

Squad bosses should be aware that the crew maybe organized into three or four squads to respond to various fire suppression activities. This may occur at the time of dispatch or be developed during an assignment.

When the crew is split into I. A. Squads, consideration should be given to selecting squad bosses who are fully qualified ICT 5 or higher.

Squad bosses will be responsible for squad readiness, personnel accountability, equipment needs, and squad member's performance ratings. During I. A. assignments they will maintain Crew Time Reports, and Fire Reports as determined by local area.

Crew/Squad Members

All firefighters must have a current Red Card **with them**. Individuals will be qualified only to the level of their present training/experience under the Wildland Fire Qualification System 310-1 or 509.17 (FS Employees). This includes current certification under the Interagency Chainsaw Certification process for sawyers and physical fitness rating of arduous

Trainee Positions

The FOS will identify crew boss trainees for the entire season. The top 3 priorities would try and stay with the crew and rotate between the 3 the entire season. Keeping only 2-3 Trainees will get them more experience than dropping them back to the bottom of the list after one assignment.

Only those personnel pre-identified as Trainees and that have a Task book with them will be allowed to act in a trainee role. At any time during the assignment the crew boss has the authorization to remove a trainee due to poor performance, critical need for other skills, or other criteria.

Cooperators

In times when the crew may be short on federal employees, the crew can fill positions with non-federal personnel (cooperators) with the following conditions.

- The crew will fill positions with local SLVIFMU employees first, agency next, then cooperators.
- Primary overhead will remain agency personnel.
- Locally a list of cooperators available for assignment will be kept.
- Method of payment will be worked out prior to dispatch.

Evaluations and Documentation

The crew boss will obtain a Fire Crew Performance Rating from each fire line supervisor to whom the crew was assigned. These will be turned into the Fire Operations Specialist (FOS), who will then consolidate the ratings and provide copies to all appropriate units.

The crew boss will evaluate the crew boss trainee and squad bosses in writing on an Overhead Evaluation form. Completion of appropriate items in task books should be coordinated with the incident Training Officer if one is assigned. Task books need to be filled out during down time while on the dispatch, not just at the end of the dispatch.

Each squad boss will submit written evaluations to the crew boss for firefighters under his/hers supervision. These evaluations will be turned into the FOS; they will consolidate and provide copies to all appropriate units.

Each crew boss will make evaluation forms available to all crewmembers at the end of the assignment to allow individuals to rate crew boss and crew boss trainee. These will be turned into the FOS; then they will consolidate and provide copies to the appropriate units.

The crew boss and/or crew boss trainee will draft a narrative of the crew's assignment, achievements, task books completed, IQCS numbers, and other pertinent information then turn them in to the FOS. This information will be used in developing an end of the year report for the districts, forest, dispatch, and field office.

Timekeeping and Travel Documentation

The crew boss will initiate Of 288's for the crew and submit to the incident Finance Section. It is the crew bosses responsibility to get the IQCS numbers and correct charge codes for all agencies that might be on the crew.

All AD hires must have an I-9 completed in advance to dispatch. AD crewmembers should carry a copy with them on the fire assignment.

Meals provided by the government are non-reimbursable. Meals may include a hot meal in a fire camp setting, Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's), sack lunches, military style rations, hot can, or similar meals. If the government provides meals, but you opt not to eat that meal and buy your own meal, do not apply for reimbursement.

Meals purchased when not provided by the government will be reimbursed to individuals following completion and submittal of the agencies specific travel voucher.

Rates for meals vary with location; refer to your Agency's guides. Most will fall under CONUS rate of \$39 per day.

Whether the Government supplies meals or not, FFTR's are entitled to a day incidental and can submit a travel voucher for reimbursement.

The crew boss will provide, to each FFTR, a list of meals that can be claimed upon return to the home unit. It is then up to the individuals to process their own travel voucher.

Crew Conduct

Functioning of the entire crew depends on each individual crewmember.

Crewmembers are expected to arrive at the mobilization point or duty station with all required equipment and PPE. The crew boss may inspect equipment to ensure compliance. Particular attention should be given to boots. Inadequate boots will not only make a crewmember miserable, but can also inhibit the performance of the entire crew. Historically this has been a major concern and persons showing up with inadequate boots will be sent home.

All crewmembers must be willing and prepared for a 14-day with option for extension assignment if needed. National policy states that assignments could involve 18 to 20 days due to travel time to/from or between incidents. Travel time is not counted in a 14 day commitment. Reference current Work/Rest and Length of Assignment guides The 2013 Rocky Mountain Interagency Mobilization Guide (Chap10 pg.7) . Understand that extensions beyond 14 days could be requested of the crew and that any extension will be case by case evaluated and require close adherence to policy. If considering a crew extension, it is recommended to start the process early to acquire home unit approval.

If anyone arrives at the mobilization point (or any time thereafter while on assignment) unfit for arduous duty (drunk, hung over, injured, or otherwise) they could be immediately sent home. On the assignment, anyone showing up in the morning impaired by alcohol or drugs in any way will be immediately sent home. This will likely result in disciplinary action on the home unit. This may lead to the possibility of dismissal. Other inappropriate conduct can result in disciplinary action. Future dispatches with the crew would be highly unlikely.

Remember to be on time regarding wake-up, meals, briefings, departures, etc.. If you need to be away from the crew for whatever reason, let you crew boss or squad boss know where you are. You being late can jeopardize the entire crew. Be aware of how horseplay and games (Frisbee, hackysack) can look to others and where these activities are appropriate.

Offensive language or behavior, or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in immediate disciplinary action.

Our goal is to provide quality work while maintaining a professional appearance and attitude at all times. Each individual's behavior will affect how the crew is seen as a whole.

Expect to be staged and to have idle time. This requires even more attention to proper crew discipline and professional attitude.

It is very likely that you will enjoy your fire crew experiences and look back at them with fond memories. In other words, it is very likely to have fun while good, professional work is accomplished.

Mobilization & Dispatch

After notification of a Resource Order from Pueblo Interagency Dispatch Center (PIDC), The FOS or Acting will initiate contacts to the Forest Fire FMO/AFMO or acting. The FOS will assure a list with names and number of available crew members is maintained during the fire season. A copy of the final Resource Order with manifest will be sent to each PLC Office and any assisting units to keep all offices informed. Personnel have been identified at each District/Field Office to maintain a list from each district by pay period of resources that are available. This list will be forward to the FOS on Monday of each PP (PP13-PP22). The majority of the crew members will be drawn from the San Luis Valley Public Lands Center (Rio Grande NF & San Luis Valley BLM), but FOS or Acting may also contact other agencies within the SLVIFMU and cooperators as needed to fill-out the crew to at least the required minimum of 18 personnel. Other agencies and cooperators that have the potential to supply personnel for the crew are the Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve, Monte Vista/Alamosa/Baca National Wildlife Refuges, Colorado State Forest Service in Alamosa and their associates.

PIDC will coordinate all phases of the crew's dispatch while keeping FOS or Acting informed. This includes travel and meal arrangements.

Any agency needing to pass emergency information on to one of the crew personnel will do so through PIDC. If the PIDC is not available, the crew will go to the Fire Duty Officer for PIDC (primary) or the FOS or acting.

Mobilization point will be based on mode of transportation (air or ground) to incident location.

Air transport:

Pueblo Interagency Dispatch Center will arrange all air transportation for deployment of the crew. (normally Colorado Springs or Pueblo). For both airports, mobilization point is Monte Vista AD site, ***Restricted items for air transport constantly change. Therefore be aware of this and check with your Crew boss prior to travel. *** And depending on air travel vendor (NIFC charter or commercial), there may be limits on number of personnel on crew. I.e., NIFC charters often put several crews on one plane and generally allow no more than 20 people per crew.

Ground (vehicle) transport:

Travel will not begin prior to 0500 hrs and will end by 2200 hrs. This includes departing from your home or home unit to arrive at the crew mobilization point and/or return. Assure that drivers of Forest Service vehicles have Government Drivers license (OF 346) and are current on training. Any single driver is limited to 10 hours with rest stops recommended every 2 hours.

Determination of crew mobilization/departure point should be based upon which station/office is closest to the reporting location. Mobilization point, travel route, vehicle numbers, and ETE/ETA (Estimated Time Enroute/Estimated Time of Arrival) should be relayed to PIDC. Any changes of route or delays should be relayed to PIDC dispatcher as soon as possible. If significant travel time is involved (more than 5 or 6 hours), establish "check-in/status" communication procedure with PIDC.

Mobilization of the crew for out-of-valley dispatches, regardless of mode of transportation, should be done as quickly as possible realizing it may take additional time to assemble crew members from across the valley. Crew or squad assignments within the SLV should take considerable less time and may require 2 hours , with a maximum of 4 hours. An important element will be to assure adequate supervision and briefing has taken place prior to line assignments.

Each unit will provide a vehicle for transportation for their crewmembers to fires, staging area, or airport. Vehicles transporting crewmembers to fires must be high clearance 4x4, required crew cabs. The crew boss will consolidate riders in vehicles to reduce the number of vehicles headed to fire assignments. It is recommended to keep the number of vehicles to five.

Personnel/Equipment

All crewmembers must be currently Red Carded as at least FFT2's, passed a current year pack test at the ARDUOUS level (and maintain an adequate fitness level throughout the season), and completed current year fire training or the annual firefighter safety refresher training prior to accepting any fire assignments. All personnel must have the following equipment when the crew arrives at the designated mobilization point:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Current Red Card | 10. Leather gloves |
| 2. Nomex fire pants and shirt | 11. Sleeping bag |
| 3. Fire shelter w/ hard plastic case | 12. Recommend bringing adequate cash |
| 4. Approved hardhat w/chinstrap | 13. Extra socks |
| 5. Web/line gear | 14. Personal first aid kit |
| 6. 3 or 4 belt canteens | 15. Ear plugs or hearing protection |
| 7. Standard issue red gear bag | 16. Open Position Task Books |
| 8. 8 in. fire fighter equivalent boots w/lug soles | 17. Incident Response Pocket Guide |
| 9. Headlamp with batteries | 18. Other personal gear as needed or preferred |

It is encouraged to have several GPS units among the crew. Remember that you may be on assignment for 14 days without access to laundry facilities, so bring plenty of socks and underwear. Bring athletic shoes or sandals to wear around camp.

All fire line personnel are required to have their fire shelters readily available while on the line. The Crew boss will ensure that fire shelters connected to fire packs are secured in external, easily accessible pouches and that fire shelters are worn at all times.

Each crewmember will know their clothed weight and the weight of their gear. The 2013 Rocky Mountain Interagency Mobilization Guide (Chap10 pg.12) lists limits as follows:

- One frameless, soft pack not to exceed **45** pounds.
- Web gear or briefcase (not both) not to exceed **20** pounds.*
- Maximum allowable total crew weight, including equipment, is **5300** pounds.
- All personnel baggage weights must be displayed separately from individual weights on manifest.
*The Crew boss is allowed a briefcase in addition to their red bag and web gear.

Each unit, except guest individuals, will send adequate support (2 cases of MRE's, 3 cases of Water, 1 case of fuseses, 1 flat of AA's batteries and trash bags, etc) for the initial 24 hours as needed for the crew personnel.

Each identified Crew boss on the rotation should have their own individual crew boss kit, which contains the following at a minimum:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Crew Time Reports | 4. Radio frequency guide/list |
| 2. Emergency Firefighter Time reports | 5. Fire line Handbook / Red Book |
| 3. Evaluation forms | 6. Fire line Safety/Tactics reference |
| 7. Manifest forms | 13. Atlas |
| 8. Calculator | 14. Relevant sections of Fire Business Handbook |
| 9. Phone list | 15. GPS |
| 10. Pocket calendar | 16. Camera |
| 11. Radio cloning cable or plug (2) | 17. Appropriate injury forms |
| 12. Agency phone/credit card | |

In addition, it is anticipated that each Crew boss will have an agency cell phone at a minimum and it is desirable to have a satellite phone as well.

One crew boss/radio kit is available containing manifests, emergency firefighter time reports, crew time reports, crew extension form, three programmable King handheld radios, six radio antennas, two cloning cable, six clam shells. If you have your own radio w/ clamshell and/or chest pack, bring them along. Crew Boss/Radio sign out will occur to Crew boss.

A 20-person first aid kit is located in the Monte Vista AD site cache.

Three chainsaws and related equipment (falling axes, wedges, spare parts) in saw bags are located in Monte Vista AD site cache. Saw mix and fuel containers, as well as fuseses will also be located in the flammable storage area at SLV Cache.

When air transportation is involved in the dispatch, the crew boss needs to be aware of potential problems. Type II crews are allowed to carry chainsaws on charter flights. However, the saws may not be allowed on commercial flights. A potential problem is that a crew could be dispatched with saws on a charter flight and then be assigned to a commercial flight for the return home. Crew bosses need to be aware of this possibility and be sure to inform the Demobilization Unit Leader on the incident of the need to provide return shipping for the saws.

For any dispatch involving air transportation, chainsaw gas tanks will be drained, run dry and allowed to air out for thirty minutes prior to cap replacement. No chainsaw gas or oil may be taken on either charter or commercial fixed wing aircraft.

Be aware that the crew may not be allowed to take either chainsaws or hand tools on air dispatches. If this occurs, the equipment should be left in the crew vehicle or arrangements may need to be made for equipment to return to Monte Vista Fire Cache.

20-person boxes of fire line tools, water and chest type coolers are located in the Monte Vista AD site cache.

Equipment and Tool Rehab

The crew boss will ensure that all crew equipment is replaced on an incident. If unable to replace or restock items on an incident the crew boss will ensure that S-Numbers are obtained on a General Message Form prior to demobilization from an incident. Those S-Numbers will then be turned into the FOS so that the items can be ordered.

The crew will disband from one of the work centers on the forest to help ensure tools and equipment get proper refurbishment. If equipment and tools are not refurbished upon return to the home unit, the crew boss may hold the crew an additional day to complete rehab. If the crew is returning home without adequate days for rehab of crew equipment, each district may need to provide one person to come to Monte Vista for a day or two to complete rehab. The crew boss and FOS will make this determination.

Post Dispatch/Return to Station

Once the crew has returned from the incident, several key items still need to be attended too:

The crew boss needs to notify Pueblo Dispatch that the crew has arrived back on Forest and should give an ETA for each crewmember back to their duty station.

Each crewmember needs to notify the crew boss when they reach their duty station.

All crew equipment including chain saws needs to be cleaned and refurbished and ready for the next crew dispatch. Refurbishing of tools will generally be assigned to the returning crew. Time spent sharpening tools and refurbishing equipment can be charged to the Fire Code. Time spent doing personal laundry and repacking your personal gear **cannot** be charged to the Fire Code. While it is ultimately the responsibility of the Crew boss, tool and equipment cleanup should take place in a timely manner possible after adequate rest is acquired.

A list of needed items for future crew dispatches (saw parts, damaged or lost items, etc.) needs to be left with or sent to the FOS or acting, who will be responsible for ordering and replacing needed items. Be sure to acquire an "S" code prior to departure from the incident for replacement items.

Be cognizant of travel time for **all** crewmembers to return back to their duty station at end of assignment.

Home Unit Supervisors will be responsible for and assist with data entry into SHIPS, time, gov. trip or any other agency appropriate database.

Medical Emergency Contact Procedures

In the event a crewmember receives a serious injury or a fatality occurs while on assignment the crew boss should follow the incident medical plan in the IAP with coordination with the incident. After following initial incident action contact FFMO or FFDO immediately. **Notifications should be speedy and accurate information is imperative.** Once the initial contacts have been made the remaining notifications should be arranged by the home unit. Crewmembers should be encouraged to complete an **Employee Emergency Contact Information form** prior to deployment of an assignment in the event there is an emergency, their personal contacts and notification information will be available and followed by the home unit or an agency contact person (liaison) for specific details. This person explains benefits, determines family wishes, helps the family as needed, and is a focal point for all communication with the family.

Personal Conduct Agreement

Rio Grande Interagency Fire Crew

My signature on this document indicates my understanding that I have a responsibility as a representative of my crew, my employing agency and wildland firefighters in general. I agree to adhere to the basic principles of acceptable social behavior and work ethic, and more specifically:

- I will be ready, willing and able to meet work requirement on time daily; well rested, fed, and equipped with my personal protective equipment (see Rio Grande Crew Operating Guide).
- I understand that a supervisor's directions or instructions are to be followed at all times, provided they are safe and legal. Refusal or failure to follow instructions, thereby taking independent actions that may be unsafe, may subject me to disciplinary action.
- If I disagree with instructions because I feel they are unsafe, I have the right and responsibility to question the supervisor issuing them. If I still feel the unsafe situation has not been resolved, I have the right and responsibility to take my concerns to the next supervisor in the chain of command, i.e. a division supervisor or operations section chief. However, making false, malicious or frivolous complaints could subject me to disciplinary action.
- Any illegal activity will not be tolerated and could result in my arrest by local authorities. Illegal activities include:
 - Non-official use of government vehicles and equipment.
 - Use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs on the incident, during work hours, or in camp.
- I understand that my *off-duty* conduct and behavior is subject to discipline when it:
 - Impairs my performance or the performance of others.
 - Exposes me or other to accident or injury
 - Results in damage to property.
 - Jeopardizes the incident operation.
- I understand that sexual racial or religious discrimination and harassment *are illegal* and will not be tolerated. I will refrain from such conversation, jokes and behavior that may make another person angry or uncomfortable.
- I also understand that I have the right to work in an environment free from such harassment. If I feel harassed, or am made uncomfortable or angry by the actions of others on my crew *or any other crew or overhead*, I have the right and responsibility to take my concerns to my supervisor, the incident Human Resource Specialist, or a Union Representative.

Disciplinary action may include the following:

- **My supervisor will explain the nature of my misconduct and will discuss corrective action.**
- **I may be released from the incident and sent home.**
- **My behavior may be reported to my home unit for further action.**
- **I may not be called for future crew dispatches.**
- ***Illegal* conduct could result in arrest by the local authorities.**
- **The whole crew could be released from the incident and sent home.**

I agree to conduct myself in a professional manner as a wildland firefighter, and to uphold and further the good reputation of the Rio Grande Interagency crew.

Signature _____

Date _____