



SOUTHERN AREA INTERAGENCY PRIORITY TRAINEE PROGRAM STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Southern Area Interagency Priority Trainee Program is to establish a uniform process to identify, promote, and assist in the development needs of the interagency workforce within the Southern Area. The program has been established to address critical position shortages and support succession planning within the Southern Area as well as to assist in building capacity for Incident Management Teams (IMTs), dispatch, and national incident response.

Definition of a Priority Trainee

This designator reflects someone serving in a trainee position that is in critical need of receiving on the job training to: 1) meet a position job requirement, 2) fill a critical position shortage, 3) recertify a position qualification, and 4) career development. Examples are listed as follows:

1. **Critical Position Shortage** – The Southern Area Coordinating Group (SACG), along with Federal and State agencies have identified critical shortage positions to build capacity on Southern Area IMTs or within agency workforce organizational structure(s). Positions include from the lowest level up in all functional areas with the exception of operations, which will be TFLD and up with the addition of HEQB.
2. **Recertification** – The trainee needs an assignment to meet the requirements to perform fully for a present qualification or for recertification where qualifications have expired.
3. **Career Development** – Established agency development plans for future advancement for career path to meet agency workforce development and succession planning.

Southern Area Priority Trainee Program Process

The Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR) will manage and maintain the Southern Area priority trainee list (PTL). The GATRs will coordinate with each other during heightened incident activity and will share opportunities for mobilization of priority trainees across GACC boundaries. GATRs will coordinate with the GACC, IMT's, NIMO's, and hosting Agency Administrators to ensure the Priority Trainee List is implemented for mobilization. Priority trainees will be mobilized in accordance with the following protocols:

Nominations

Individuals may only submit a nomination for one priority trainee position. An individual's name shall only appear on the priority trainee list once at any given time. This ensures a focused approach on the one priority position and achieving multiple assignments to attain the required qualification.

Rating Criteria

Trainees are rated/scored on the Priority Trainee Nomination Form according to the following criteria:
Required for position description qualification in primary job.

- Responder is currently an IMT member on a Type 1 or Type 2 IMT.
- Assignment is required for recertification (was previously qualified but has lost currency).
- Position Task Book has been reissued due to first PTB expiration.
- All NWCG training courses have been completed in accordance with home agency policy (refer to PMS 310-1/FSFAQG/agency requirement).

Each of these criteria are assigned a point score and used to rank trainees for a given position using the priority trainee nomination form; thus, maximizing the opportunities to achieve incident assignments and position task book completion.

Trainees are required to complete and submit a mandatory responder report upon completing a taskbook. If the trainee is certified for the position by the home unit certifying official, the individual will no longer be mobilized in the trainee position.

Roles and Responsibilities

Trainee, Supervisor and Local Unit Training Officer / Fire Management Officer (FMO)

- The trainee will work with their supervisor to determine if the position is: 1) to meet a job requirement; 2) to fill a critical position shortage; 3) to recertify; or 4) for career development identified in the employee's development plan (DP).
- The Local Unit Training Officer/FMO will review the employee's development plan and training and experience record.
- With approval from the supervisor, a position task book will be initiated in the certification system [Incident Qualification Certification System (IQCS) or Incident Qualification System (IQS)]. The trainee will work with the Unit Training Officer/Fire Management Officer to complete the Priority Trainee Nomination Form for inclusion in the priority trainee program. The Local Unit Training Officer/Forest Fire Management Officer will forward nominations along with consolidated Priority Trainee Mobilization Tracking worksheet to the Southern Area Working Team (SATWT) representative.
- Local Unit Training Officers/FMOs will ensure non-fire management employees (i.e., "militia" employees) are included in the priority trainee program.
- The trainee will submit a mandatory responder report to their Local Unit Training Officer.
- When trainee is recommended for certification, the Local Unit Training Officer/FMO will notify the Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR) to ensure they are no longer mobilized in that trainee position.

Local Unit Training Officer/Fire Management Officer

- The Local Unit Training Officer/Fire Management Officer will submit a copy of the nomination forms to their SATWT representative by March 10th.
- Ensure current PTB's and Incident Qualification Cards are assigned to individual priority trainees.
- Ensure Unit personnel understand the Priority Trainee Mobilization Program Standards and Procedures.
- Serve as a point of contact between the trainees, SATWT representative, the Southern Area GATR and Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC).
- Will provide certification updates to their Southern Area Training Working Team Agency Representative.
- Ensure names are submitted on the nomination form as they appear in the IQCS/IQS.

Southern Area Training Working Team (SATWT) Representatives

- The SATWT will submit the Priority Trainee Mobilization Tracking worksheet for their respective agency to the GATR by March 15th.
- Will establish trainee priorities annually when local priority scores for a position are identical.
- Each SATWT representative will provide certification updates to the Southern Area GATR and SACC.
- Ensures communication link is established between key players.

Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR)

- The Geographic Area Training Representative will maintain the annual Southern Area consolidated Trainee Prioritization Worksheet and provide it to the SACC by March 16th.
- Working with the SACC, Incident Training Specialists, and other GATRs, will solicit assignments for trainees within and outside the Geographic Area based on levels of activity and opportunity.
- Will assist other GATRs in placing their priority trainees on SA incidents when opportunities exist.
- Will use the Priority Trainee Mobilization Tracking worksheet to track individual participation on fire assignments. (This worksheet will be filled out by the SACC and GATR as assignments are filled

and will be used to prepare the final report.)

- Will determine and place a Geographic Area Priority Trainee Coordinator at SACC to assist in coordinating and mobilizing SA priority trainees at higher preparedness levels.

Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC)

- The Southern Area Coordination Center will use the Priority Trainee Mobilization Tracking worksheet to the greatest extent possible for filling all trainee orders received.
- Distribute consolidated Southern Area PTL to Incident Commanders, Southern Area local dispatch centers, State Coordination Centers.
- Will post Southern Area PTL to the SACC website.
- Will honor name requests for priority trainees within the SA and nationally. The ROSS “Special Needs” field must indicate that the name request is for a Priority Trainee. The individual must be listed on the SA priority trainee list to be name requested.

Priority Trainee’s Host Dispatch Centers

- The Host Dispatch Centers will ensure timely and accurate ROSS availability of local priority trainee resources.
- Communicates with the Local Unit Training Officer/Forest Fire Management Officer and SACC regularly with any issues or concerns related to the SA Priority Trainee program and priority trainee assignments.

Priority Trainee

- The priority trainee is responsible for maintaining their availability for trainee assignments in ROSS and shall follow dispatch center statusing procedures. When trainees are unavailable for assignments their status must be changed to “unavailable” in ROSS.
- Will be mobilized according to the highest priority trainee statused in ROSS as *Available National*. If showing unavailable in ROSS, they will not be called for an assignment. However, any trainees identified and nominated for the program should be reasonably available for one or more assignments throughout the season.
- Trainees who list themselves as available in ROSS who subsequently refuse one or more priority trainee assignments when not committed to an incident may be moved to the bottom of or removed the list.

Process Summary

- Trainees will work with local unit Fire Training Officers/ Fire Management Officers to complete the nomination form.
- Local unit Training Officers / Fire Management Officers will prioritize trainees by position and submit consolidated lists to the SATWT representative.
- The SATWT representative will determine trainee priorities by position for their respective Agency following established prioritization procedures.
- The SATWT will set final priorities for each position.
- The Southern Area GATR will compile and maintain the list and provide it to the Southern Area Coordination Center (SACC).

Nomination Timelines

Timeframe	Task	Responsibility
January 28th	Priority trainee announcement and application released to the field.	GATR / SACC
February 29th	Completed applications submitted by trainees to Unit FMO.	Applicants
March 10th	Unit Training Officer / Fire Management Officer prioritizes nominations and forwards nominations to Southern Area Training Working Team (SATWT) representative	Unit Training Officer/Fire Management Officer
March 15th	SATWT compiles all unit nominations, generates Agency-wide consolidated priority trainee list, and provides to the GATR.	SATWT Representatives
March 16th	GATR submits annual Southern Area Priority Trainee List to the Southern Area Coordination Center.	GATR
March 17th	Southern Area Priority Trainee Mobilization processes are implemented for the season.	GATR