



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

February 26, 2003

Memorandum

To: NWCG Members, Working Team and Advisory Group Chairs

From: Chair, NWCG /s/ J L Stires

Subject: Emergency Incident Driving Regulations

Differences between agency policies regarding emergency response driving have served as sources of confusion for firefighters, coordination center managers, and incident management teams. Due to the inherent risks associated with driving during emergency incident mobilization and demobilization, the NWCG identified the need for a single, comprehensive policy regarding hours of driving limitations. This need was reaffirmed by the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group in its August 11, 2002 memorandum on the subject to the Geographic Area MAC's. The NWCG subsequently tasked the Safety & Health Working Team (S&HWT) to develop interagency emergency incident driving regulations.

The S&HWT researched various agency policies, including those of the USDA Forest Service and the USDI Bureau of Land Management, the "Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2002", interagency work-rest policy, the "Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook 2000", and applicable regulations provided in Department of Transportation (DOT) 49 CFR 383 and 390-397. The attached policy combines the important elements of these policies and regulations and ties them to the national, interagency 2-to-1 work-rest policy.

We feel this standard NWCG policy will eliminate confusion amongst member agencies and provide needed guidance to ensure safer driving for our employees. This policy recommendation should be implemented immediately upon receipt, and will be incorporated in future publications of the "Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook" and the "National Interagency Mobilization Guide".

Attachment

--cc: Chairs, Geographic Area Coordinating Groups

Emergency Incident Hours of Driving

For all incidents requiring the response of a fire protection organization's attack or support units:

1. No driver will drive more than 10 hours (behind the wheel) within any duty-day.
2. Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty-day limitation provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of 10 hours.
3. To manage fatigue, every effort should be made to conduct mobilization and demobilization travel between 0500 hours and 2200 hours.
4. Fatigue counter measures beyond those required by this policy should be employed when conditions require them. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Providing additional drivers operating within the appropriate duty-day limitations.
 - b. Reducing duty-day limitations.
 - c. Expanded rest requirements.
 - d. Alternate travel methods.
5. Non-CDL: For non-Commercial Driving License (CDL) driving, current national interagency 2-to-1 work-rest policy applies. Duty-day will NOT exceed 16 hours.
 - a. Exception: Exceptions to work-rest and duty-day limitations in this category are allowed **ONLY IF** in response to initial attack, **AND** where **essential** to 1) accomplish **immediate** and **critical** suppression objections, or 2) address **immediate** and **critical** firefighter or public safety issues, and **ONLY IF** prior approval is granted and documented by the Agency Administrator responsible for the incident. Mobilization, other than for initial attack, and demobilization are neither immediate nor critical activities.
6. CDL: All driving requiring CDL will be performed in accordance with applicable Department of Transportation regulations found in 49 CFR 383 and 390-397.
 - a. No driver of a vehicle requiring a CDL will drive the vehicle after 15 hours on duty during any duty-day.
 - b. Exception: An additional 2 hours of driving time may be added if: a driver encounters adverse driving conditions, unforeseen emergency situations (breakdown), or to ensure the safety of personnel.

Drivers are responsible to follow these policies and it is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that employees adhere to the proper driving limitations and monitor employee fatigue.