Department of the Interior Standard Position Description
PD Number: DE00700

Classification: Student Trainee (Wildland Fire Management), GS-0499-04

INTRODUCTION

This position is organizationally located on a wildland fire module or crew within one of four fire bureaus within the Department of the Interior (Department); however, this position may be assigned work on interagency crews where the crew leader is from a different bureau or agency.

As a Student Trainee in Wildland Fire Management, the position involves periods of formal education and periods of employment as a Wildland Firefighter. The education and employment are part of the Pathways Intern Program. The level of education and experience completed by the student is a major consideration in establishing the level of on-the-job training and work assignments.

MAJOR DUTIES

As a Student Trainee, performs and receives training and development experience in performing the following major duties and responsibilities.

Fire Suppression, Monitoring, and Post-Fire Activities (60%)

As a developmental member of a wildland fire module or crew in fuels management, fire suppression, monitoring, and post-fire activities, applies an understanding of firefighter safety, fire behavior, topography of the area, weather, fuels, and training in fire management work to implement tactical directions on attacking, controlling, or mopping up fires, building or patrolling firelines, cleaning up burned areas within firelines, suppressing spot fires, felling snags or trees, and cutting brush. Conducts and supports chainsaw operations. Performs portable pump operator duties such as pump site selection, set up, and operation. Performs engine operations duties including running the pump, deploying hoselays, completing preventative engine maintenance checks, and effectively using water and additives. Places caches of equipment and supplies at strategic points.

On natural caused fires when applying a strategy other than full suppression may be tasked to observe, collect, and record fire-related data with regards to fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior, fire effects, smoke, and fire location. If human caused, under the direction of an investigator, gathers and preserves evidence for possible actions in prosecuting offenders.

Fire Preparedness (25%)

Maintains equipment and various hand tools such as shovels, chainsaws, Pulaskis, McLeods, water hose, and backpack pumps. Responsibilities for supplies and equipment include: 1) maintains firefighting tools and equipment assigned to the firefighter and to their module, crew, or unit which includes: servicing and maintaining tools and equipment; servicing automotive

equipment, portable pumps, and power equipment; conducting periodic inventories; programming radios and telecommunications equipment; and keeping records of firefighting equipment and supplies; 2) gathers equipment needed to carry out instructions from leaders and supervisors; and 3) maintains proper inventory, refurbishing and resupplying module vehicles with food, water, and supplies.

Participates in physical fitness programs.

May serve as an alternate in other fire program areas such as logistical dispatch, cache warehouse, incident business, and administrative support.

Fuels Management and Prevention (10%)

Assists in gathering data for and participates in fuels management projects such as prescribed fire, and mechanical and biological treatments that improve current vegetation conditions while reducing flammable materials; inventorying fuel beds; and piling vegetation debris.

Participates in fire prevention activities such as inspecting campgrounds and public use areas; assisting with defensible space inspections; attending public education and special events; explaining fire prevention measures to visitors, youth groups, schools, and other public education activities; distributing and explaining fire prevention literature to cooperators, visitors, and the general public; and preparing reports of lost or damaged articles.

Leadership (5%)

May lead one or two firefighters by serving as a situational leader on wildland fires and directing the work of a small crew of firefighters in building firelines, burning out, mopping up, and patrolling firelines. May perform administrative assistance and support such as maintaining receipts for supplies.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

FACTORS

Guidelines

A large body of specialized technical firefighting, safety, fire prevention, and fire organization guides exist and must be thoroughly understood and applied. These guides include manuals, handbooks, training aids, maps and charts, and special instructions and practices pertaining to the use of mechanized equipment, aerial techniques, and other procedures related to fire management work. The trainee will learn and be aware of the guidance, as well as the constantly changing nature of guidelines as new or modified techniques emerge.

At this level, performs work assignments in accordance with established procedures, referring emergency or unusual problems to supervisors via the most appropriate communication method/device.

Complexity

Performs wildland firefighting in a variety of developmental assignments either individually or as a member of a module or crew. The approach may vary based upon terrain, fire intensity, fuels availability, wind velocity, and resource values. Specific tasks, use of tools and methods, and the sequence in which tasks are to be done are determined by evaluation of the situation and issues involved. Consideration must also be given to slope, weather conditions, fuels and other fire behavior factors while performing wildland fire suppression. Decisions made relate to such matters as: (1) selecting routes and methods to reach fires; (2) deciding if fires can be suppressed without additional help or equipment; (3) determining initial response to be taken to control/manage small fires; and (4) ascertaining the cause of fires.

Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts

Contacts include members of the module and crew, including leaders, supervisors, fire management officers, and dispatch; these contacts are to receive and provide instruction, information, and mentorship and to communicate details related to the assignment. Contacts include travelers, campers, visitors, and residents of the area to provide information regarding fire prevention, fire hazards, restricted areas, and routes of travel and to secure cooperation and participation in the fire prevention program.

Supervision Received

At this level, works under the general supervision of more seasoned staff, or other supervisory personnel, and receives general assignments and performs most of the work independently according to established procedures. Suppresses small fires and performs other assigned duties with limited instruction or guidance. The work is subject to periodic observation and inspection for acceptability and compliance with operating procedures and instructions.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

<u>The duties of this position are so rigorous that employment is limited to physically vigorous individuals who must meet established maximum age and physical qualification requirements</u>.

<u>Physical Demands</u>: Arduous exertion for protracted periods of time such as, but not limited to, extensive running, walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, pulling hoses, jumping and twisting, prolonged standing, walking over uneven ground, and recurring bending, reaching, lifting and carrying of items weighing over 50 pounds and shared lifting and carrying of heavier items, and similar activities requiring at least average agility and dexterity.

<u>Work Environment</u>: Forest, range, and desert environments in steep terrain where surfaces may be extremely uneven, rocky, covered with thick tangled vegetation, smoky conditions, etc. Temperatures commonly exceed 100 degrees F and may fall below freezing. Risks include smoke inhalation, fire entrapment, snake or insect bites and stings, exposure to excessive machinery noise, and falling and rolling material. Employee must adjust and cope with exposure to weather elements, dust and smoke, poor bivouac and eating situations under an unpredictable

set of circumstances. Firefighters may be required to live in backcountry camps for extended periods of time. The hazardous nature of the work requires that personal protective equipment be worn (e.g., boots, hard hat, gloves, flame resistant clothing). Work may require travel by fixed-wing or rotor-wing aircraft.

This is a testing designated position (TDP) under the Department of the Interior Drug-Free Workplace Program.

Incumbent is subject to medical examination and must pass the work capacity test for arduous positions.

Position may require a valid state driver's license to operate light vehicles and 4X4 vehicles.

When this position description is used in helitack, wildland fire module, or hotshot operations specific qualification requirements apply (e.g., Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations, National Wildfire Coordinating Group Guidance).