Department of the Interior Standard Position Description
PD Number: DX00600

Classification: Lead Wildland Firefighter, GS-0456-08

INTRODUCTION

This position is a Lead of 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.

The Lead Wildland Firefighter (Lead) is an experienced leader and member of a wildland fire module or crew, exercising leadership for and executing fire management activities in fire preparedness, fuels management and prevention, and fire suppression, monitoring, and post-fire. Work may also include all hazard and emergency response activities. Fire modules or crews include Hand Crews, Engine Crews, and Helitack Crews. Specific specialty areas of work within fire modules or crews include aviation, fire engine operation, fire management planning, fuels management, helitack, and prevention.

MAJOR DUTIES

Leadership (25%)

Leads three or more regularly assigned firefighters and may provide situational leadership for additional firefighters based on the fire assignment. The Lead is responsible to the supervisor for ensuring that the work assignments are carried out by performing the work described under "Lead Authority Exercised."

Fire Suppression, Monitoring, and Post-Fire Activities (50%)

As an experienced leader within 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: 1) mentor and instruct lower graded employees on crewmember duties; 2) plan action and direct utilization of fireline resources on less complex fires; and 3) for more complex fires, direct assigned suppression operations and recommend and implement tactical strategy 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. Adjusts actions based on changing information and evolving situational awareness. Uses firing devices on a firing operation according to the ignition/firing plan (verbal or written). Coordinates with aircraft for aviation support missions. Coordinates module or crew logistics and places caches of equipment and supplies at strategic points.

On natural caused fires when applying a strategy other than full suppression will observe, collect, and record fire-related data with regards to fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior, fire effects,

smoke, and fire location. If human caused, gathers and preserves evidence for possible actions in prosecuting offenders.

Operates, moves, inspects, and performs preventative maintenance on vehicles and equipment to include crew carriers, fire engines, command vehicles, pickups, and other specialized equipment. Uses judgment to safely operate, maneuver, and set up vehicles and equipment in a variety of environments including urban, grassland, and mountainous terrain. Ensures adherence to vehicle safety procedures when transporting personnel, fuel, and equipment, considering bridge and road limits, equipment weight and length, and weather effects.

In addition, performs the following duties specific to the crew or module assigned:

- **Engine**: Drives and operates a wildland fire engine, positioning the engine for proper use and operation. Performs/conducts engine operations techniques, including tandem operations, mobile attack, pump and roll, firing and holding operations, stationary attack, engine protection, simple and progressive hoselays. Ensures adequate supply of water and chemical agents are maintained to the fire, particularly on critical areas of the fireline. Locates water sources and checks for volume and cleanliness for engine resupply. Performs specialized duties such as water handling specialist or maintenance of specialized equipment used to respond to wildland urban interface/intermix situations.
- **Crews**: Identifies lookout locations and assigns lookout. Scouts fireline in critical areas and patrols fireline for spot fires and slop overs, leading fireline construction implementation and determining adjustments based on current conditions. Reassesses and adjusts escape routes and safety zones. Directs water handling logistics and operations for crew (e.g., portable pumps, hoses, fold-a-tanks). Leads mop-up and suppression repair efforts on assigned portion of line. Gathers intelligence, independently scouts and assesses fuels, and leads suppression crews. Leads and assesses complex tree felling operations.
- **Helitack**: Plans, coordinates, and directs helicopter operations in support of mission requests. Directs aviation and briefs pilots, contract personnel, and crews on mission requirements. Provides radio communications to dispatch and/or ground firefighter and navigates with use of maps. Directs aviation safety processes in coordination with pilot. Ensures aircraft tracking procedures are in place and followed. May serve as a rappeller, short hauler, or spotter.

Fire Preparedness (15%)

Directs the operation and use of special tools and equipment such as, but not limited to power saws, portable pumps, firing devices, and communication equipment (e.g., programming radio frequencies), and makes decisions as to when, where, and how equipment can be utilized to the greatest advantage. Directs and ensures proper assembly of equipment and supplies needed for fire assignments or daily work assignments. May serve as a subject matter expert on regional, state, and/or national interagency committees. Assists in the development and implementation of training programs (mandatory, formal, and informal) to comply with policy, regulations, and employee development. Assists with managing assigned property by procuring, maintaining, and inventorying tools and equipment to meet individual crew needs, including hand tools, chainsaws, firing equipment, food and water provisions, and personal protective equipment to

ensure that assigned personnel meet fire readiness standards on a daily basis. Ensures the maintenance of crew fleet equipment by coordinating repairs and scheduling maintenance with approved maintenance facilities. Secures temporary replacement of vehicles as needed.

Ensures assigned crew members and equipment for the specific fire assignments or daily work assignments are in a state of readiness for the assignment or initial attack. Develops and implements a physical training program to enhance the ability of crewmembers to perform the required arduous firefighting duties.

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

In addition, performs the following duties specific to the crew or module assigned:

- **Engine**: Ensures Normal Unit Stocking (NUS) inventories are current. Checks for missing or damaged items and replaces as appropriate. Ensures pump tests and daily engine preventative maintenance equipment checks are completed. Ensures the engine is kept in a full state of readiness for emergency fire dispatch and other fire management activities and project work.
- **Crews:** Ensures vehicles are kept in a full state of readiness for emergency fire dispatch (e.g., safety gear is ready, vehicles are fueled and ready, equipment is loaded, firing devices are loaded).
- **Helitack**: Directs the readiness and assembly of helicopter support accessories and helicopter safety equipment. Coordinates helicopter performance planning with pilot and directs activities based on aircraft capabilities. Ensures completion of helicopter planning documents (e.g., load calculations, aviation safety plan, daily logs). Assists in development of aviation safety planning documents. May provide training and oversight of specialized aviation operations (e.g., helirappel, short-haul, aerial ignition, cargo let-down, single skid toe-in, hover entry/exit, and aerial tagging and capture of animals). Under the guidance of a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), participates in contract administration activities.

Fuels Management and Prevention (10%)

Directs moderately complex fuels management projects or participates in more complex projects by conducting project assessments and gathering data (e.g., fuel quantity and conditions), planning (e.g., drafting or reviewing fuels management plans, assessing and recommending fuel treatment alternatives), preparing (e.g., ensuring proper training, placement, and instruction of crews), and implementing (e.g., ignition, holding, mop-up, and rehabilitation) treatments. Fuels management projects include prescribed fire, and mechanical and biological treatments; inventorying fuel beds; and piling vegetation debris. May be required to use/operate specialized firing equipment.

Leads and/or participates in fire prevention promotional activities such as conducting educational field trips; attending and presenting for public education and special events; explaining fire prevention measures to visitors, youth groups, schools, and other public education activities; and distributing and explaining fire prevention literature to cooperators, visitors, and the general public.

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. Incumbent 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, Wildland Firefighters carry out their functions completely and independently according to established procedures, referring only emergency or unusual problems to their supervisors via the most appropriate communication method/device. Firefighters at this level must use experienced judgment when applying procedures and safety protocols to the specific conditions of the assignment. At this level they are also applying experienced judgement to independently lead crews on fire suppression activities that require judgement to safely prepare for and implement suppression strategy; this may involve developing incident action plans and directing fireline resources. They are also using experienced judgment to draft fuels management plans and to direct moderately complex hazard fuel reduction projects.

Complexity

As a Lead, performs wildland firefighting in a variety of assignments. 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, smoke, and other fire behavior factors while performing wildland fire suppression. A myriad of considerations must be weighed and evaluated when drafting and reviewing plans for and preparing and executing fuel management projects. The Lead must identify, evaluate, and consider the interrelationships of fire and the physical environment in order to select the most appropriate methods from among varied alternatives.

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 plan, direct, and communicate details related to the assignment. Contacts also include visitors, private landowners, tribal representatives, utility industry, or local residents. Contacts with the general public during incident operations may be with landowners to resolve operational tactics, encourage and/or require evacuation, or to ensure the safety of others including the public. 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. Contacts are to ensure that safety rules, protocols, and procedures are followed. Contacts include leading and training firefighters in the operation and maintenance of tools and equipment and in fire management activities.

Supervision Received

Wildland Firefighters at this level work under general supervision. Firefighters at this level follow standard procedures and practices and perform their work assignments with limited supervision or guidance. They plan and carry out program objectives without detailed instructions. They function independently in the field, relying on their own experience, expertise, and judgment; supervisors provide assistance on difficult or unusual problems only. The supervisor checks work for overall adequacy, compliance with policies and procedures, accomplishment of program objectives, and the effectiveness of overall implementation.

Lead Authority Exercised

Leads three or more regularly assigned firefighters with a base level of GS-07 and may provide situational leadership for additional firefighters based on the fire assignment. The Lead is responsible to the supervisor for ensuring that the work assignments are carried out by performing the following: 1) Distribute and balance the workload among the firefighters and assure timely accomplishment of the assigned tasks; 2) Keep in touch with the status and progress of work, and make day-to-day adjustments in accordance with established priorities, obtaining assistance from the supervisor on problems that may arise; 3) Estimate and report on expected time of completion of work, and maintain records of work accomplishments and status reports as requested; 4) Instruct firefighters in specific tasks and job techniques and provide written instructions, reference materials, and supplies; 5) Give on the job training to new firefighters in accordance with established procedures and practices; 6) Maintain a current knowledge and answer questions of other firefighters on procedures, policies, directives, and safety practices and obtain needed information or decisions from supervisor on problems that come up; 7) Check work in progress or spot check work not requiring review and review completed work to see that supervisor's instruction have been met; 8) Ensure work standards are met and adjust based on current conditions; 9) Monitor working conditions and make adjustments to ensure overall health, wellness, and safety of the team and may be delegated authority to approve leave and time and attendance; 10) Provide guidance to team on making travel arrangements and may be delegated authority to approve travel arrangements; 11) Inform employees of available services, including employee assistance programs, and employee engagement activities; 12) Resolve simple, informal complaints of employees and refer others to supervisor; 13) Report to supervisor on performance, progress and training needs of employees, and conduct concerns and issues; 14) Serve as a technical advisor to the first level supervisor in the recruitment and hiring process; and 15) Provide information to supervisor as requested concerning promotions, reassignment, recognition of outstanding performance, and other employee needs.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

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.

Physical Demands: 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.

Work Environment: 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 requires a valid state driver's license to operate light vehicles and 4x4 vehicles. May require additional specialized training and certification to operate specialized vehicles and equipment.

Position may require the incumbent to obtain and maintain a commercial driver’s license (CDL).

When this position description is used in helitack, wildland fire modules, 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).

Qualifications and additional required training specified in the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Qualifications Standards and Guide may apply.