

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

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Chapter 7: Associate Director for Resources and Visitor Protection (Chief Ranger)

Originating Office: National Park Service

145 DM 7

7.1 Associate Director for Resources and Visitor Protection (Chief Ranger). The Associate Director provides national level guidance, leadership, and policy direction for the following program functions:

A. Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Division. This division provides oversight, policy guidance and direction for emergency services, law enforcement, special park uses, uniforms, and hazardous materials/oil spill response. The division also coordinates with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLRTC) in Glynco, Georgia, for basic training for resource and visitor protection (law enforcement) rangers and criminal investigators. The division administers the following programs and activities:

(1) Law Enforcement, includes: law enforcement policy, archeological resources protection, national drug control program, emergency law and order funding, case incident reporting, criminal intelligence systems, special and criminal investigations, physical security, background investigations, law enforcement retirement, and special event teams.

(2) Emergency Services, includes:

(a) Coordinating emergency medical services for ill or injured persons within the National Parks, and providing assistance to local agencies through mutual aid agreements.

(b) Coordinating search and rescue services and assistance to local agencies through mutual aid agreements. Incidents range from searching for lost hikers to performing complex technical rescues in high altitude, mountainous environments.

(c) Coordinating dive operations for search, rescue and recovery, natural and cultural resources management, and maintenance management. Program elements such as quality assurance, safety, training, and equipment recommendations, are facilitated through the National Dive Control Board (NDCB).

(d) Coordinating relief to park managers and staffs from incident management when incidents/events exceed local capability and/or infringes on the unit's ability

to maintain normal operations within the park. An Incident Management Team Steering Committee (IMTSC) provides leadership, support and strategic direction to the program. Incident Management Teams (IMT) that consist of two national (Type I) and four regional (Type II) teams. The Incident Command System (ICS) is used to manage all agency/interagency incidents in a uniform manner.

(e) Providing technical assistance, guidance and national-level oversight for permits including; special events, public assembly, commercial filming and photography, rights-of-way, and non-National Park Service managed roadways through park units.

(f) Providing oversight and coordination, technical advice and operational assistance to regional and park staffs that administer, operate, and maintain uniform programs, including standards, criteria, and procedures.

B. Fire and Aviation Division. This division is responsible for developing and managing wildland fire, structural fire, and aviation resources. Each of these functions support an integral part of the Servicewide fire program.

(1) The Wildland Fire Program supports hazard fuel reduction, wildland and urban interface activities, rural fire assistance, prevention and education, wildland fire use, fire research, fire training, safety, and suppression activities.

(2) The Structural Fire Program maintains structural fire capability that meets the needs of complex and unique units of the National Park Service. It develops and implements national policy, standards, and operational and accountability procedures, ensures that all areas within the Service have an appropriate level of structural fire protection that are provided in a safe and cost effective manner by qualified personnel.

(3) The Aviation Management Program provides support to meet diverse agency management objectives to include fire suppression, scientific research, search and rescue, law enforcement, and other aviation related activities.

C. Risk Management Division. This division is responsible for developing programs, procedures, standards, and policies related to occupational safety, occupational health and industrial hygiene, public safety, and workers' compensation. It provides general and technical guidance, consultation, and training for parks and regional offices in these functional areas.

D. Health and Fitness Division. This division performs the following:

(1) administers the medical standards program for employees in arduous duty positions including all commissioned law enforcement officers (Park Rangers, Special Agents, Booker/Jailers) and arduous duty wildland firefighters,

(2) represents the agency as a member of the Interagency Medical Review Board,

(3) coordinates activities with the Office of Risk Management in establishing medical standards, light duty issues, and risk/job analyses,

(4) administers the mandatory fitness program and testing for law enforcement positions and coordinates the voluntary wellness/fitness programs, and

(5) manages the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing program for peer and mental health professionals responding to critical incidents.

E. Wilderness Management Division. This division is responsible for formulating policy and guidance, providing training, developing information and educational materials, and responding to field needs related to wilderness management in the 74 parks in the National Park System with wilderness resources and coordinates with other wilderness management agencies in the Departments of Interior and Agriculture through the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center and the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.

F. Division of Public Health. This division manages the Service's public health needs and initiatives through an interagency agreement with the U.S. Public Health Service. Officer assignments are at the national, regional, and park levels. Officers from the engineering and environmental health professional categories provide technical, programmatic and policy guidance on matters having potential to negatively impact the health of visitors and employees. Primary programs include: Food Service, Water and Wastewater Systems, Vector-borne Disease, Environmental Health, and Environmental Engineering. Public Health officers also serve the specific needs of park programs which require public health expertise such as Concessions, Facility Management, Resource Management, and Risk Management.

G. Regulations and Special Park Uses Division. This division provides oversight, policy guidance and direction for developing and promulgating regulations and permits as they may affect units of the National Park System. Permits could include special events, public assembly, commercial filming and photography, rights-of-way, and roadways through park units that are managed by agencies or organizations other than the National Park Service. Regulations may be written or modified at the national level affecting all units of the National Park System or may be specific to individual park needs or issues.

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