

THE RURAL FIRE FIGHTER



NEBRASKA FOREST SERVICE

www.nfs.unl.edu

Happy Holidays from All of Us at the Nebraska Forest Service

To bring Nebraska's red card system in line with the Nebraska Interagency Cooperative Fire Management

Agreement (or just "the agreement"), the wildland fire training and qualification system needs to change.

The agreement was first approved in 2002. Every state within United States Forest Service Region 2 (Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming) has a similar agreement in place. These agreements detail how each state will interact with federal agencies on large wildland fire incidents. Items as complex as authorities, roles and responsibilities and as simple as billing addresses are detailed in this 31 page document. It is renewed every five years. This year, the Nebraska agreement was due for renewal.

The agreement includes two statements that call for change. First, it states, "Resources requested and utilized outside their normal operational jurisdiction for Federal incidents must meet National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualifications and resource typing standards." This requires any firefighter responding outside their fire district to have national qualifications. In addition, the agreement says, "If an agency hosts an NWCG training course for multi-agency participation, course content and instructor competency will meet NWCG standards." This directs signatory agencies to the agreement (including the Nebraska Forest Service and State Fire Marshal's Office Training Division) to provide courses meeting national standards.

To address this responsibility, Nebraska will begin utilizing the training curriculum provided by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. The impact of this change will be relatively minor, primarily influencing the length of the basic red card course, which will now be 36 instead of 16 hours. Firefighters who have previously



The Nebraska Red Card

taken the red card class will not be required to retake the class, but are welcome and will not be restricted from taking it if interested.

A version of the basic leadership course, L-180 Human Factors on the Fireline, is also included in the NWCG course. Firefighters completing the course will receive a certificate for L-180 in addition to certificates for S-130 Firefighter Training and S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior.

In addition, efforts are underway to provide Nebraska firefighters with new access to the remainder of the red card system. The goal is to provide more opportunities to attend 100- and 200-level courses leading to certification at levels above firefighter II such as squad boss, engine boss, etc.

The Nebraska Forest Service and the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office have worked together for more than five years to provide this training to Nebraska firefighters. This training has helped heal the divide created by the mistakes of the 2000 Deadman Complex and allowed Nebraska volunteer firefighters to be utilized extensively for fire suppression, especially during the fires of 2006. These changes represent progress toward the overall goal of making national wildland fire certification available to every Nebraska firefighter. Understandably the increased time commitment required from this change is a concern to everyone, but please do not let that keep you from attending a course. We will make every effort to adjust the training to fit as many time frames as possible.

To view the most recent version of the Nebraska agreement, go to www.nfs.unl.edu/documents/fireprotection/NE_Agreement_2007.pdf. If you have questions about these changes or other wildland fire training questions, please don't hesitate to call.

Tips from Tex

Being a volunteer firefighter makes a lot of folks tell us how proud they are of us thus giving us that bit of pride we need when we are not afraid to admit we are volunteer firefighters. With the training and certifications most of us have, that pride in being a volunteer firefighter is sometimes more meaningful. Mr. Jim Egr once said, "Are we volunteers or professionals doing it for free?" I like the latter one.

But sometimes pride can get in our way. A prime example of this is when it comes time to ask for help. If you're honest with yourself, you know exactly what I'm talking about. With that being said, I'm dropping the pride aside (for all of us) and asking for your help.



Since 2001, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (fire grants) has been awarding millions of dollars to fire departments across the country. Many VFDs in Nebraska have been recipients of these grants

to purchase fire trucks, PPE, fire prevention material and to fund recruiting and retention programs. Some departments have received these grants more than once. Then there have been those VFDs that tried once, failed, and gave up. Others haven't tried because they let that thing called pride get in the way and are afraid to ask for help.

So what I'm asking for is fairly simple and painless. For those that have received grants, whether from the fire grant program or other sources, would you send me a copy of your narrative (all of them if you received more than one)? I will put them together and publish a booklet available at no cost to any department that asks. We are in the business of helping people, but we can't help them if we fail to help ourselves or each other.

Another issue I'd like to address is the Mutual Aid Task Force. One year ago the membership of the NSVFA discussed and voted on forming Mutual Aid Task Force, by mutual aid district, in order to assist in any disaster they may be called upon to provide assistance. This

motion was made with the intent of working with the Nebraska Forest Service and having this list published in the "yellow book" for wildland fires.

During the past year I have spoken with many mutual aid districts, fire departments and rural boards answering many questions and explaining the intent of this program. To this date I have received only 16 responses, out of 53 mutual aid districts, that they want to participate. I am currently working on next year's edition of the "yellow book" and would like to have an even bigger list of mutual aid districts that are interested in this program. If you have any questions or would like me to come out and speak to you about this, give me a call or an e-mail.

Thanks in advance and hope to see you all soon.

Take care and stay safe.

George J. (Tex) Teixeira II, fire resource manager

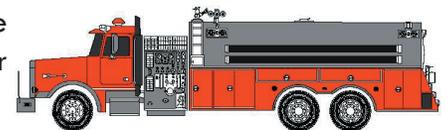
First....Get There!

Apparatus accidents account for an alarming number of line of duty deaths. With winter coming, driving habits need to change. Keep these points in mind as we enter a challenging time of year for apparatus operation.

1. A tanker is a valuable piece of equipment, but resting on its top in the ditch makes it worthless and compounds the problem. Large tankers, especially if water weight is improperly distributed, may "push" through a turn. Obviously, the solution is to slow down! And do we really have to keep banging the drum for seat belt use?

2. Until your diesels get some winter blend in the fuel tanks, anti-gel additives can be valuable to reduce the chances of fuel gelling. Keep fuel tanks full to reduce condensation in the tank and lines.

3. Know your SOPs. Is the pump running when you leave the barn? Is the nozzle flowing water at the scene?



4. Stay on your toes while on scene. Accident scenes, combined with flashing red lights and slick conditions, can be very dangerous to responders. Work closely with law enforcement to control traffic flow around an incident and consider appointing a safety officer.

Fire Prevention is in Season

We will soon be approaching another hunting season in Nebraska. This means many new and different faces visiting your community – people who are not familiar with your potential fire problems. It's not too early to be thinking about a fire prevention program designed for hunters.



With more than 136,500 licenses sold in the state, you could have a tremendous fire risk factor in your fire district. However, these hunters also represent more than 136,500 opportunities to get your fire prevention message out.

Before a fire occurs, you might try some of the following ideas during this year's hunting seasons:

1. Provide sporting goods stores with prevention posters and pamphlets.
2. Provide hunters fire prevention placemats to restaurants that hunters frequent.
3. Hand out fire prevention materials at check-in stations.
4. Place hand-out fire prevention materials under windshield wipers on hunter's cars.
5. Provide radio stations and newspapers with locally oriented fire prevention public service announcements.
6. Contact the Nebraska Forest Service or the Partners In Prevention for fire prevention pamphlets and distribute where hunting supplies are sold.



7. Provide fire prevention materials to filling stations and quick shops that hunters frequent.
8. Have prevention materials available where hunting licenses are sold.

More than likely, you will have many strangers come into your area to hunt. Provide fire prevention information about your area. Let the hunters know the dangers, where they are located and your concerns regarding fire. Fires in CRP areas could very easily trap and/or overtake hunters.

These are just a few ideas. I'm sure you can come up with many more.

Bob E. Vogltance, fire resource manager
Prevention/Public Fire Education

NFS Training Opportunities

Tactical Decision Games/Sand Table Exercises

Description: Intuitive decision making is a vital wildland firefighting skill gained primarily through experience. This class will give firefighters an opportunity to practice decision making and communicating that decision to others through the use of sand table scenarios. Participants will also learn tips to develop local sand table scenarios, including plans to build a sand table for in-house training.

When: February 15 - 17, 2008

Where: Les Lukert Winter Conference, Grand Island

Class Time: 12 hours

For more information, see the Nebraska Society of Fire Service Instructors web site at www.nsfsi.com



Nebraska Wildland Firefighter

Description: Basic wildland fire course designed to be offered in the station for monthly training, rookie classes, fire season refresher, etc. Topics include fire behavior, PPE, safety and initial attack.

When: Available upon request

Where: Your meeting room

Class Time: Variable from 3 to 12 hours

To request this class or others, contact Casey McCoy, wildland fire training manager, at 402.472.6634.

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Feb. 2 - 3 | Nebraska State Fire Chiefs Association
Firefighter Seminar, Fremont |
| Feb. 15-17 | Nebraska Society of Fire Service
Instructors Les Lukert Winter Conference,
Grand Island |

Nugget of the Day

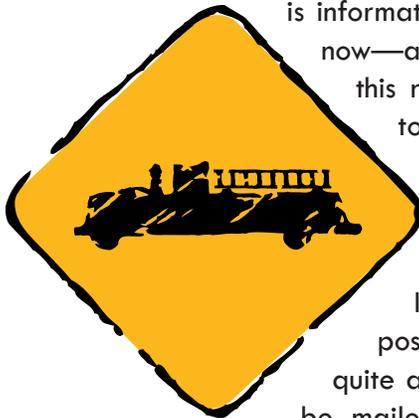
courtesy of www.firenuggets.com

"A fast response may be your last response! Get the trucks to the scene." — District Chief Willcok, Corunna Station, St. Clair Township Fire Dept., stated every winter about safe driving.

Sandy's Corner

Apparently many of you read our last issue's Sandy's Corner because some of the problems we were having with online reporting seem to be working themselves out. I am having fewer and fewer reports with information missing. There are a few that still need to be cleared before the end of the year, and I will be in touch either by phone or mail with those departments.

I'm still receiving reports on the "old" yellow cards. Please throw those away. There is nothing wrong with being thrifty and not wasting paper, but there is information on the new card that is not on the old ones and it is information we need. So right now—as soon as you read this newsletter—please go to your desk (or area where you keep them) and throw them in the trash.



In an attempt to save postage, if you have quite a few monthly cards to be mailed, please tape them together OR simply report all the months on one card. Just write October - 0; November - 0, etc., on the card and send it back.

One suggestion for outgoing fire chiefs, please make sure you give the new fire chief the password and assist them in learning how to report online. Be sure to let them know they can call me if they need additional assistance. If the new fire chief does not or cannot for one reason or another, want to report online, please call me at 402.472.6623 with this information. We have a special mailing list for those who want the yellow card mailed to the department and your department's name will need to be added back to this list.

This will be the last Rural Firefighter for 2007, and I want to say thank you to all of you who have reported during the year. I want to send a special thanks to those departments that took the "plunge" and "dived" right in to our new online reporting. We've had a few problems but nothing we have not been able to solve.

In January, we will be compiling the fire data for our yearly report to the feds. Each year, our time frame changes, and the deadline seems to move up earlier in the year. To help us meet our deadline, please get your reports for 2007 in by January 10th. If you are reporting online, the same date applies. Any data received after this date will not be included in the final report.

Until next year, have a happy and safe holiday season!

Sandy Lineberry, staff assistant



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Be sure to also read Fire Prevention Info, your source of prevention tips and tricks, available quarterly.



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