

## **NWCG CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT ISSUE PAPER #52 MODIFICATION OF THE POSITION and TASK BOOKS FOR TASK FORCE LEADER and STRIKE TEAM LEADER**

### **BACKGROUND**

The position task books for the Task Force Leader (TFLD) and Strike Team Leader (STL) were last updated in March of 1999. In the 2000 version of the PMS 310-1, the qualifications requirements for TFLD were raised.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

The current TFLD and STL position task books and PMS 310-1 positions are separate. The tasks defined in each position task book vary slightly in very few of the task's contents, making them nearly identical (comparison attached).

The October 1994 ICS Position Descriptions and Responsibilities defines the position as Task Force/Strike Team Leader. The 1998 version of the Fireline Handbook Chapter 8 - Operations, describes the position as one position, defining the Task Force/Strike Team Leader position tasks identically. The draft 2004 Fireline Handbook splits the positions, but the position descriptions Critical Safety Responsibilities and Other Duties are identical.

The position requirements and task book for Division and Group Supervisor are the same in the Fireline Handbook, 310-1, Division/Group Supervisor position task book, and the ICS Position Descriptions and Responsibilities national training curriculum.

Strike teams are generally ordered and formed off the incident. Strike Team Leaders manage "specified combinations of the same kind and type of resources." An example of a strict interpretation of this statement means that an engine strike team must be composed of all the same type of engines, e.g. all type 3. Inclusion of one type 4 engine to that strike team would constitute making it a task force, since the composition would no longer be strictly of the same type. It should be noted that outside California it is rare that the strict definition is applied consistently. For example, it is infrequent in other geographic areas that an engine strike team can be assembled without mixing type 3, 4 and even 6 engines because of fewer available resources, particularly at higher planning levels.

Task forces are usually formed on the incident from available resources, generally to accomplish specific duties over a few operational periods. Task Force Leaders manage "any combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need." An example of a task force would be a combination of a hand crew with a dozer assigned to indirect line preparation. Another example would combine engines with a tender to urban interface structure protection.

Span of control issues for the TFLD and STL positions are equivalent. By definition, adding responsibilities or a mix of resources beyond the span of control appropriate for a TFLD requires a Group Leader.

One course, Task Force/Strike Team Leader, S-330, is used to prepare individuals for both positions. The course is designed to prepare the student to successfully complete either position task book as a trainee on a wildland fire incident. The level of tactical, strategic, supervisory and leadership knowledge, experience and judgment are equivalent for the TFLD and the STL positions.

Separating the position's qualification requirements has created a stumbling block for competent individuals seeking DIVS qualifications. The 1993 PMS 310-1 required the STL be qualified as any single resource boss (SRB), and the TFLD be qualified as any SRB and ICT4. The 2000 PMS 310-1 maintained the STL qualification, but changed the TFLD qualification to include any STL position or any *two* SRB positions plus ICT4.

In practice it has been difficult for otherwise competent and qualified individuals to obtain position certification in both the TFLD and STL positions. The chaotic nature of incident occurrence and an individual's availability do not coincide frequently enough for them to acquire certification in more than one leader position. Frequently their employing or neighboring unit utilizes only one main type of resource, making it difficult to become certified in more than one SRB position.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the Subject Matter Expert group revising S-330 that the positions for TFLD and STL be combined. A revised position task book for the TFLD and STL is attached. It is also recommended that the prerequisite training and position certification requirements for TFLD and STL be combined, just as they are for the Division and Group Supervisor positions. Minimum qualification should be any SRB and ICT4. Required training should be S-215, S-330, and S-390. Additional training which supports development of knowledge and skills should be I-300 and L-380.

### ACTION REQUIRED

Approval from the IOSWT for combining the positions of Task Force Leader and Strike Team Leader.

Approval from the IOSWT for modification of the position task book for Task Force Leader and Strike Team Leader, concurrent with the revision of PMS 310-1 and the other position task books.

APPROVED  
(circle one)

DENIED

SIGNATURE

Bob Leaverton  
IOS WT Chair

2/26/04  
Date

cc: Training Working Team

# Task Comparison between STL and TFLD Position Task Books

1. Order of the bullets slightly differ, language identical.

Tasks 2 – 8 are identical.

9. One bullet point differs;

- Identify effective use of assigned resources.
- Identify effective use of a combination of resources.

10. First subtask words in slightly different order;

- Brief Single Resource Bosses using information from IAP.
  - Safety (Standard Fire Orders, Watch Out Situations, LCES, and Wildland/Urban Interface [WUI] Watch Out Situations).
- Brief Single Resource Bosses using information from IAP.
  - 1) Safety (Standard Fire Orders, Watch Out Situations, Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) Watch Out Situations, and LCES).

11. Tasks are identical.

12. One bullet differs;

- Inspect and locate line in advance of line construction.
- Inspect and locate line in advance of line construction, if applicable.

13. Three bullets slightly differ;

- Contact Division/Group Supervisor, etc., to review tactical observations and IAP.
- Contact Division/Group Supervisor to review tactical observations and IAP.
- Compare objectives vs. accomplishments. Determine with crew.
- Comparing objectives vs. accomplishment, adjust use of combinations of resources as conditions warrant to maximize effectiveness.
- Identify need for additional assistance, logistical support and replacements due to slow progress or unexpected events.
  - Identify types of resources; e.g., air, etc.
- Identify need for additional assistance, logistical support and replacements due to slow progress or unexpected events.

14. Tasks are identical.

15. One bullet slightly differs;

- **Request additional resources, logistical support, and/or replacements through supervisors based on IAP, briefings, and discussions.**
- **Request additional resources, logistical support, and/or replacements through supervisor based on IAP, briefings, and discussions.**

Tasks 16-28 are identical.

29. Tasks are identical, except for the title strike team and task force, as applicable.

Spelling error in Task Force leader bullet, "logical needs" instead of "logistical needs."