



**STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
POLICY DIRECTIVE**

Policy No. DOC 5.1.6	Subject: WILD LAND FIRE SUPPRESSION CREWS
Chapter 5: OFFENDER PROGRAMS	Page 1 of 4
Section 1: Work Programs	Effective Date: July 2, 2001
Signature: /s/ Mike Ferriter, Director	Revised: 05/16/12

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to develop adult offender wild land fire suppression programs in secure care facilities to select, train, and supervise offenders who demonstrate records of good institutional behavior.

II. APPLICABILITY

Adult secure care facilities Department-owned and contracted, as specified in contract.

III. DEFINITIONS

Contracting Agency - Means the Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

DOC ID Number - Means the Department of Corrections identification number assigned to each offender, previously referenced as the AO number.

IV. DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES

A. General Requirements

1. The facility administrator, or designee, will develop and maintain operational procedures that adhere to requirements established within this policy and by the contracting agency prior to the development and/or deployment of a wild land fire suppression crew; requirements include, but are not limited to, the establishment of the following:
 - a. training and testing schedules based on standard wild land fire fighting curriculum;
 - b. fair and equitable offender compensation plan in cooperation with the contracting agency and in compliance with [DOC Policy 5.1.1, Inmate Assignments](#);
 - c. ensure a contract exists between the facility and contracting agency and is processed in accordance with [DOC 1.2.9, Contracts](#) prior to a crew deployment;
 - d. a process to document inappropriate offender behavior and remove an offender, when necessary, from a crew for inappropriate behavior;
 - e. procedures in conjunction with the contracting agency to address call-out, dispatch and deployment of the wild land fire suppression crew; and
 - f. procedures dictating a minimum of four formal counts during each 24-hour period in accordance with the facility's count schedule and called into the facility regularly.
2. A wild land fire suppression crew may not be sent across state lines or out of the country by the Department nor contracting agency.
3. Offenders convicted of a sex offense, arson, or kidnapping are not eligible for

participation in a wild land fire suppression program.

B. Offender Screening, Selection, Training and Supervision

1. The facility administrator, or designee, must ensure that the Department director, or designee, approves the screening and selection process for offenders considered for the wild land fire suppression program. The screening process must:
 - a. meet criteria established in [*DOC Policy 5.1.3, Adult Offender Community Work Programs/ Projects*](#);
 - b. maintain an ongoing status to ensure a current list of eligible offenders; and
 - c. include physical fitness standards and medical screening to meet the criteria of the contracting agency.
2. Offenders will only be allowed use of equipment once specific training has been completed. Documentation of all training including safety procedures, equipment, tools, and specialty materials shall be kept and updated as necessary.
3. A method of evaluation for each offender will be developed by the participating facility and completed after each deployment.

C. Staff Screening, Selection, Training and Timekeeping Requirements

1. Notice of staff position availability shall include, at minimum:
 - a. training and physical fitness requirements;
 - b. schedule of on and off duty assignments;
 - c. on call expectations;
 - d. security experience and certification requirements;
 - e. compensation;
 - f. requirement of positive communication with offenders and contracting agency; and
 - g. requirement to understand, communicate and enforce emergency procedures for any situation including: escapes, medical emergencies, and evacuations.
2. A fair, equitable, and documented formal screening process must be established that includes, at minimum:
 - a. a subjective application review;
 - b. supplemental questions;
 - c. a personal interview;
 - d. a review of written criteria; and
 - e. physical fitness testing standards.
3. The staff training program shall include, at minimum:
 - a. security and job safety requirements;
 - b. contraband control;
 - c. offender drug and alcohol testing;
 - d. medical and emergency procedures; and
 - e. any additional training required by the contracting agency.
4. Staff shall be given clear expectations for behavior during resting status, including:
 - a. leaving the fire camp site;

- b. attending to personal business including phone calls; and
- c. the use or possession of alcohol or drugs including prescription drugs both during resting status and when on call.

D. Offender Property, Mail, Telephone Use and Visits

1. Each participating facility shall address an offender allowed property list during training and deployment, sending and receiving of mail, telephone calls, and visitation during program participation.

E. Offender Discipline

1. Each participating facility will develop a standard set of rules for offender participation including, at a minimum:
 - a. behavior at fire camp and in training;
 - b. appropriate boundaries and communications with contracting agency staff;
 - c. prohibition of fraternization;
 - d. curfews; and
 - e. offender accountability via disciplinary action and/or removal from crew.

F. Record keeping

1. The participating facility shall maintain a deployment record including, at minimum:
 - a. offender name and DOC ID Number;
 - b. name of the supervising officer(s);
 - c. destination of crew;
 - d. time of departure and return to the facility;
 - e. travel mode and vehicle license number;
 - f. type of voice communication to the facility and call sign of the vehicle or contracting agency;
 - g. destination arrival time;
 - h. time of departure to other work sites and/or return from other work sites;
 - i. unscheduled stops or incidents while travelling;
 - j. time, location and results of all counts;
 - k. a record of all call-ins to the facility;
 - l. a brief description of activities, i.e. team attitude, illness, injuries, disciplinary actions, security concerns, and unusual activities; and
 - m. notifications to local law enforcement agencies.

G. Communications

1. Supervising staff must have communication with the participating facility by radio or land line; communication may be either direct or indirect, through the contracting agency, or through local law enforcement agencies.
2. Staff members accompanying the crew must be equipped with a hand held radio capable of contacting the facility, law enforcement agencies, or the contracting agency base camp. Back up battery supplies must be adequate to ensure uninterrupted contact.

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3. At least one cell phone with extra batteries should accompany the supervisor while on duty. Under no circumstances will cell phones be available to any offender.
4. No offender may be allowed access to Department communication equipment; when an offender must be issued a radio during operations a supervisor must ensure the radio does not have frequencies that might compromise the security of the facility, other crew members, Department personnel, contracting agency personnel, local law enforcement, or public.

H. Transportation and Offender Access to Vehicles

1. All vehicles accompanying or transporting fire crews must be equipped with a hi-band radio capable of communicating either with the facility, local law enforcement, or the contracting agency base camp or headquarters.
2. Offenders may not be allowed to operate a motor vehicle while on duty except in an emergency with no alternative to prevent loss of life.

I. Supervision

1. The participating facility must develop procedures ensuring 24-hour offender supervision, which may consist of a cooperative effort involving facility relief staff, the contracting agency, local law enforcement, Department personnel, and/or private security agencies. The relief and supervision plan must address expectations for relief staff, count procedures, rules for offender crew, and responses to emergency situations.

J. Notifications

1. At all times, the Sheriff where crew is deployed must be apprised of the following:
 - a. where crew is stationed and will be working;
 - b. names of all offenders on the crew; and
 - c. all additional information requested by the Sheriff's Department.

V. CLOSING

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the appropriate administrator or Contracts Management Bureau chief.

VI. REFERENCES

- A. [*The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938*](#)
- B. [*53-1-203, MCA*](#)
- C. [*DOC Policies 1.2.9, Contracts; 5.1.1, Inmate Assignments; DOC Policy 5.1.3, Adult Offender Community Work Programs/ Projects*](#)

VII. ATTACHMENT

None