

## USDA Forest Service Line Officer/Agency Admin FAQs:

**Question:** There is a new [Wildfire Agency Administrator Position Task Book](#) (updated March 2024), what do I do if I already have assignments using the old task book?

**Answer:** The following is from the NWCG Position Task Books site. Trainees who initiated their books using previous versions that have at least one documented experience should continue to use their current task book. Those with no tasks completed should use the new task book. For more information regarding initiation, completion timeframes and more see [About Position Task Books](#).

**Question:** How do I initiate a Wildfire Agency Administrator Position Task Book?

**Answer:** The following is from the NWCG Position Task Book site. To initiate a task book the trainee must meet the required position experience. The task book can be initiated prior to the trainee completing the required training but cannot be completed until the training requirements are fulfilled. For more information see [About Position Task Books](#).

The required experience and training for WFA 1/2/3 can be found in the [Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement](#).

The following is from the WFA1/2/3 Task Book: This task book can be initiated for any line officer or Forest Service employee who is seeking qualification to approve wildfire decision documents, upon recommendation by the Forest Supervisor, Deputy Regional Forester, or Regional Forester. Criteria to be a trainee include one or more of these:

- An individual currently serving as a federal line officer with fire management responsibilities
- An individual the agency is training or has the potential to be an AA
- An individual seeking to enhance their knowledge and responsibilities as an AA responsible for fire management in a practical application setting

**Question:** What role does the evaluator play and how do they fill out the task book? Who can be an evaluator?

**Answer:** The following is from the NWCG Position Task Book site. An evaluator is the person who observes the trainee and the associated task(s) being performed and documents performance in the PTB. The evaluator must either be qualified in the position being evaluated or supervise the trainee. If not qualified in the position, the evaluator can sign off tasks but cannot serve as the Final Evaluator. See [About Position Task Books](#) on Evaluation Record, Evaluator, Final Evaluator, and Certifying Official. Additionally, the task book contains instructions for the position task book evaluation record.

The Redbook Chapter 5 provides the following direction on for Agency Administrator Coaches/evaluators:

Incident or Project Complexity	Minimum Qualification Level to Serve as Agency Administrator Coach/evaluator
Wildfire – Type 1	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 1, WFA1
Wildfire – Type 2	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 2, WFA2
Wildfire – Type 3, 4, 5	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 3, WFA3
Prescribed Fire – High Complexity	Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 1, RXA1

Prescribed Fire – Moderate Complexity	Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 2, RXA2
Prescribed Fire – Low Complexity	Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 3, RXA3

Use the [Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment PMS 236](#) (also in WFDSS) to determine the Complexity Level of the Incident for wildfire.

**Question:** What is the difference between a "coach" and an "evaluator" and who is qualified to sign a task book?

**Answer:** The term coach is defined in the Redbook Chapter 5 as an AA qualified at a level commensurate with the incident or project being managed (e.g., WFA2 or WFA1 for wildfire and RXA2 or RXA1 for prescribed fire). The role of the coach is to advise and support the agency administrator trainee through various aspects of a wildfire incident, prescribed fire, or all-hazards incident.

The term "coach" was used with the Forest Service's previous method of certifying Agency Administrators, it is no longer a position that is being managed as part of the Agency Administrator Qualification standard. Now that the position is tracked and managed through IQCS and has a task book, trainees work with an individual who is qualified in the position at the same level or higher, this person is known as the "evaluator" and can sign tasks in the position task book.

The following is from the [NWCG Position Task Book site](#). An evaluator is the person who observes the trainee and associated task(s) being performed and documents performance in the PTB. The evaluator must either be qualified in the position being evaluated or supervise the trainee. If not qualified in the position, the evaluator can sign off tasks but cannot serve as the Final Evaluator. For more information regarding the role of evaluators, see the [About Position Task Books](#) for more information about Evaluators.

**Question:** Who can be the certifying official in the task book?

**Answer:** The following is from the WFA1/2/3 Task Book. Once a task book has been completed and evaluated for any individual position, the task book holder will submit the completed task book to their respective Unit Training Officer for review and to ensure all required training and experience has been completed. The Task Books will be reviewed and evaluated by the Regional Line Officer Team (RLOT) based on demonstrated experience and training. The RLOT will recommend AA qualification level, to the Regional Forester as the Certifying Official.

The Regional Forester (Certifying Official) certifies that the Position Task book has been completed by signing the inside front cover of an Agency Administrator Task book, based on a recommendation from the RLOT. This cannot be delegated below the regional level. Because Deputy Regional Foresters "are assigned as Line Officers for their functions," and have the authority to act on the RF's behalf, the Deputy Regional Forester with Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) in their portfolio could sign as a Certifying Official (FSM 1236.12).

Regional Foresters can review and certify Agency Administrator advancements (based upon recommendation of the RLOT), at any time throughout the year, based on their own process norms.

**Question:** How does the Forest Service manage individuals who transfer to the Forest Service from another agency that did not require a position task book for Wildfire Agency Administrator? Is there a process to recognize prior learning and experience?

**Answer:** Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a competency-based process that evaluates an individual's experience, formal and non-formal, to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required competencies of an emergency response position. The [NWCG Standards for Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) PMS 309](#) describes the details of the process: RPL is a qualification process used to determine a person's competency to do a job at a prescribed level for the basis of credentialing. RPL measures the candidate's demonstrated knowledge, skills, and experience (the overall performance) against national standard competencies established for specific jobs. The evaluation process focuses on candidates' ability to meet the established standards rather than how they acquired the knowledge, skills, or abilities. Candidates may have acquired their skills in another emergency response/services discipline, through formal training in a field, in the military, or through a combination of career employment experiences. Candidates should not be judged on where or how they learned to do a job, but rather their ability to do the job. Use of RPL for NWCG position qualification shall not circumvent or minimize course and training requirements for specific positions, as defined in the most current edition of [PMS 310-1](#).

**Question:** Now that Complex Incident Management Teams have replaced Type 1 and 2 Incident Management how can a WFA1, WFA2, or WFA3 trainee know what incidents they can take assignments on?

**Answer:** The following is from the WFA1/2/3 Task Book. The task book for trainees is split into three levels. All tasks for each level need to be completed before moving on to the next qualification level. The Common Tasks only have to be completed once, at the WFA3 level.

- At the WFA3 level, the specific tasks can be completed on an incident of Type 3 or greater complexity level.
- At the WFA2 level, the specific tasks must be completed on an incident of Type 2 or greater complexity level AND with a IMT2, IMT1, CIMT, AC or NIMO team.
- At the WFA1 level, the specific tasks must be completed on a Type 1 complexity level incident AND with a IMT1, CIMT, AC, or NIMO team.

**Question:** How is the signing authority for the WFDSS decision determined?

**Answer:** For 2025 the Forest Service qualification levels for approving a WFDSS Decision and to provide Incident Oversight are in the Redbook, chapter 5, and shown below in the table. Use the [Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment PMS 236](#) to determine the Incident Complexity for signing the WFDSS Decision.

Incident Complexity	USFS AA Qualification Level to Approve WFDSS Decisions And Provide Incident Oversight <sup>1</sup>
Type 1	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 1, WFA1
Type 2	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 2, WFA2
Type 3, 4, 5	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 3, WFA3

<sup>1</sup>Authority may be retained at the regional forester level.

**Question:** What are the requirements for WFA1/2/3 to attend refreshers relating to WFDSS?

**Answer:** The Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement requires WFDSS Training Annually. There are several options for completing WFDSS refresher training.

- All units are encouraged to hold WFDSS refreshers for their employees and partners to prepare for fire activity. Agency Administrators are encouraged to attend their local or regional refresher. Work with the organizer and your training officer to document your attendance.
- The Wildland Fire Management Research Development and Application (WFM RD&A) program works with NLOT to host an [annual online refresher](#) each spring. Attendees register for the webinar and can receive a certificate of attendance through the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).
- If you miss the live event, you can watch [the recording](#) of the WFM RD&A/NLOT hosted refresher and receive a certificate of attendance through the [Wildland Fire Learning Portal](#).

**Question:** At the end of fire season how do I make sure my qualified and trainee assignments are properly recorded in the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS)?

**Answer:** In order to receive credit for your qualified and trainee assignments, trainings, licenses, certifications, and instructor experience in IQCS you need to complete the [IQCS Responder Update Sheet](#) each year, submitting it to your training officer. This form documents the assignments you have taken which is needed to maintain currency and documents trainee assignments for task book positions. Work with your training officer to ensure you submit your form by their deadline.

**Question:** I worked on a prescribed fire as a RXA1/2/3 trainee or qualified but wasn't ordered through the IQCS system, how do I make sure this is tracked for my experience record?

**Answer:** Regardless of how you were assigned to a prescribed fire (i.e. through a resource order or not) to make sure your assignments on prescribed fires are captured enter them in the [IQCS Responder Update Sheet](#) each year and submit to your training officer.

**Question:** What training is required for WFA1/2/3 relating to aviation and how is it documented and tracked?

**Answer:** The required training (and experience, certifications, etc.) for WFA 1/2/3 including those relating to aviation are available from the [Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement](#). Provide course certificates to your training officer and complete an [IQCS Responder Update Sheet](#) annually to document trainings and certifications.

**Question:** I've heard about the Incident Strategic Alignment Process (ISAP), how does this relate to the risk informed decision process in WFDSS?

**Answer:** WFDSS is the official decision support platform for all Federal wildfires; ISAP does not replace WFDSS. The intent of WFDSS is to have a scalable decision support system for agency administrators. It uses appropriate fire behavior modeling, economic principles, and technology providing data resources to be displayed in a map interface for strategic decision making. It supports effective wildland fire decisions consistent with Resource and Fire Management Plans. ISAP is a process for IMTs to facilitate a conversation with the AA(s) that builds from the parameters established within the decision (Planning Areas, Critical Values at Risk, Strategic Assessments, Courses of Action). See the [2025 WFDSS/ISAP/RMA talking points](#).

**Question:** Who do I reach out to with questions/comments/feedback about the task book and/or agency administrator questions in general?

**Answer:** Questions/comments/feedback about the WFA task book and/or Agency Administrators in general should be directed to your Regional Line Officer Team (RLOT) representative. RLOT chairs can elevate issues to the National Line Officer Team (NLOT).

**Question:** What training is required prior to initiation the WFA3 task book to become a WFA3 trainee?

**Answer:** Prior to initiating the task book/receiving your redcard with WFA3(t) you must have completed RT-130. Other required training for WFA3 as outlined in the [Fed Supplement](#) must be completed before you can be fully qualified.