



Date: March 12, 2013

To: Dan Smith, National Wildfire Coordinating Group

From: Chair, National Wildfire Coordinating Group Risk Management Committee

Subject: Emergency Medical Services in Western Regional Action Plan of the Cohesive Strategy

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), Risk Management Committee (RMC), would like to convey our support for the Action and Tasks found in section 3.2.d of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy: Phase III, Western Regional Action Plan, February 2013. This Action currently reads:

“3.2.d Action: Improve firefighter safety and health by: increasing the recognition and acceptance of certification of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responders on incidents from state to state.”

Many wildland firefighters are also state licensed Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers. This state licensure does not allow them to use their training and skills to help a fellow firefighter when assigned to a wildland fire outside the borders of their licensing state. Unlike a state driver’s license which is accepted in all states, the EMS credential comes with many stipulations on where it can be used.

The Risk Management Committee, and many others in the wildland fire community, has recognized this issue as a problem of some significance and we have identified it as one of our highest priorities. We continue to support our Incident Emergency Medical Subcommittee (IEMS) as they work on this issue. However, the scope and complexity is well beyond that of the NWCG, and indeed, the wildland fire community. It requires state governments to allow firefighter/Emergency Medical Technicians to take care of their own without fear of repercussion when working outside their state of licensure.

While some inroads have been made for resources ordered to large incidents as EMS providers the action found in the Western Regional Action Plan is a significant stride in a positive direction. This action and its associated tasks are a direct benefit to firefighting resources regardless of their employing agency.

This issue is national in scope and the RMC would like to see it addressed as such. The RMC is encouraged by the action item in the Western Regional Action Plan and we are hopeful it will carry over to other regions of the Cohesive Strategy.

Any support that could be provided to this action will be greatly appreciated.

Cc: NWCG Executive Board

Janette Peterson, Chair, Incident Emergency Medical Subcommittee