

Annual Safety Refresher Guidelines for Nature Conservancy Fire Programs

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NWCG protocols require annual safety refreshers for fire personnel. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for Conservancy staff on this issue.

Who must participate in an annual fireline safety refresher?

All personnel who may be directly involved in fire suppression or prescribed fire activities must participate. You should interpret this to mean that all crew members must attend the safety refresher (see below for information on newly trained crew members). Those persons that might be present on a fire that are not part of the crew such as photographers, communications specialists, your state director, etc., need to be accompanied at all times by a trained crew member who has participated in an annual safety refresher.

Who can lead a safety refresher?

Any qualified person designated by the local burn boss can lead a safety refresher. It is the responsibility of the local TNC burn boss to make sure that the program covers the relevant material in an appropriate manner. A qualified person is defined as someone who:

- has achieved the Squad Boss/FFT1 position

OR

- has completed S-130/S190/I-100, **and**
- has participated in more than 20 prescribed burns OR 20 wildland suppression events. (In either case the primary purpose of the person's participation should not have been for training), **and**
- has filled a leadership role on at least 5 prescribed burns.

How many hours of contact time is required?

The Nature Conservancy requires a minimum of four hours. Some agencies require eight, so consider this if you are including partners in your program.

• Can we use home study/reading to accommodate some of this time?

Prior reading of material or viewing of web sites or videos can provide excellent context for further discussion. Up to one hour of the required four hours may be covered through home study. You must document that this home study has taken place (content and date). Home study materials must be provided or compiled by the burn boss or lead instructor of the course.

Can the safety refresher include a field component?

A field component can provide a valuable safety refresher experience. Make sure you focus on appropriate topics. Don't try to conduct a burn at the same time – you need to concentrate on the safety topics without the distraction of live fire. A burn after your safety refresher is completed is acceptable.

What material should be included?

Fire shelter review and inspection is the only mandatory topic. The remainder of the session should focus on safety issues pertinent to the local program. The NWCG provides a list of suggested topics each year for the annual safety refresher. This list is based on recent incidents as well as standards such as the fire orders, driving safety, fire behavior, weather observations, etc. There are many good resources available through the NWCG web site for use in the annual refresher, including talk outlines for specific topics, videos, and printed materials. The important thing is that the refresher be designed to fit the needs of your program. Different agencies require slightly different components to the refresher, so keep this in mind if your refresher will be conducted in cooperation with partners. You may need to consider training in both styles of fire shelters depending on who attends the class, and what style is in use on the crews they will be staffing.

While you have your crew together is also a good time to administer the pack test.

FWS requires an annual firefighter safety refresher course, covering the Standard Fire Orders, 18 Watch Out Situations, and fire shelter training, for all personnel with wildland and/or prescribed fire management duties, including refuge managers/project leaders and other regular refuge staff.

NPS requires 8 hours of contact time; fire shelter review and inspection is mandatory.

BLM requires 8 hours of contact time; fire shelter review and inspection is mandatory.

Where can I find resource materials?

http://www.nifc.gov/safety_study/annual-refresh/index.htm

Will attending a safety refresher hosted by another organization fulfill the requirement?

Yes, as long as it complies with TNC minimum requirements.

Can attending or teaching S-130/S-190 substitute for the refresher?

Yes. If you have crew who just completed your basic crew training, they do not need the refresher. Instructors at the 130/190 session may also use this as the refresher, provided they were involved in covering safety topics, and participated in fire shelter review/training.

How do we document fire personnel attendance at the safety refresher?

You must maintain a list of all personnel that attend the refresher each year, along with that year's agenda. Each crew member should add the refresher to their own training log. You may need to send a memo to another organization if one of their crew members attend your refresher, or request a memo from them if one of your crew members attend their refresher. Your memo should list the number of contact hours and topics covered.

How do we provide data on the safety refresher attendees in order to receive red cards?

If your staff or volunteers require red cards you must send information on the date of the safety refresher and date of passing the pack test to your Fire Manager, who will send it to the IQCS database coordinator at the National Fire Training Program.