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SUBJECT: Wildland Fire Suppression/Work-Rest Requirements/Overtime Compensation		
Michael R. Styler, Executive Director		

Background

Wildland fire fighting can require duty days of up to 16 hours and tours of duty which may last up to 28 days exclusive of travel. To provide for fire fighter safety, national level interagency agreements for wildland fire stipulate and require rest periods between assignments. In particular, standards and requirements of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) specify mandatory rest periods after assignments of fourteen or twenty-one days. These agreements include provisions that require fire crews and overhead to stand down for one or more days for purposes of rest prior to accepting new wildfire assignments.

These mandatory rest periods require seasonal employees to take leave without pay and forfeit paid overtime compensation when these days occur during normal duty hours. Career employees forfeit ownership of paid leave and overtime compensation when these days occur during normal duty hours.

Forfeiture of overtime compensation accrued on fire assignments is based on a policy which requires employees to physically be at work for 40 hours before paid overtime or approved compensatory time is earned at time and one-half the employees base rate. This means that an employee who returns from a fire assignment on Wednesday and takes a required two day rest period will loose 16 hours of pay at time and one-half. Seasonal employees do not accrue leave so they must take time off without pay.

Purpose of Work-Rest Requirements

To provide for the safety of employees of the State of Utah involved in wildland fire suppression while in the service of the state or its cooperators by insuring they receive adequate rest prior to assignment to new wildland fires.

Purpose of Policy

To establish guidelines for required work-rest periods and to amend current policy regarding overtime compensation relative to work-rest requirements. The policy applies to employees of the State of Utah involved in wildland fire suppression while in the service of the state or its cooperators.

Work-Rest Policy Statement

Prior to accepting a new fire assignment, it shall be the policy of the State of Utah to require full time, seasonal and part time employees participating as a member of a firefighting crew or as incident overhead on forest, range and watershed fires to take administrative leave for rest and recuperation after wildland fire assignments of long duration.

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Policy Implementation

- A. **Eligible Employees.** Those employees of the Department of Natural resources (DNR) performing fire suppression duties under NWCG standards are eligible for administrative leave for purposes of rest after carrying out assigned duties as described above.
- B. **14-21 Day Assignments.** Supervisors may grant career and seasonal employees up to two days of administrative leave to meet state and interagency rest requirements after wildland fire assignments of 14-21 days in duration, exclusive of travel, before returning to service. Administrative leave approved for seasonal employees without benefits will be recorded in payroll as DOE Code 62 (Miscellaneous Earnings) on the Special Pay Screen solely for the purpose of fulfilling the provisions of the policy.
- C. **28 Day Assignments.** Supervisors may grant career and seasonal employees up to four days of administrative leave to meet state and interagency rest requirements after extended wildland fire assignments of two consecutive 14 day assignments, exclusive of travel, before returning to service. Administrative leave approved for seasonal employees without benefits will be recorded in payroll as DOE Code 62 (Miscellaneous Earnings) on the Special Pay Screen solely for the purpose of fulfilling the provisions of the policy. Pending interagency policy, rest would also be required on the fire after 14 days.
- D. **Rest On the Fire.** Circumstances allowing rest on the fire will be charged to the fire. Rest time will be recorded as base hours if occurring on the employee's scheduled workdays, or as overtime if occurring during the employee's normal days off.
- E. **Normal Days Off.** Rest falling on an employees normal days off will not be compensated and will count towards the required rest period if taken at the employees home base.
- F. **Charges for Administrative Leave.** Any administrative leave granted under provisions of this policy will be a direct charge to the fire or fires on which the work was performed.

Policy Statement - Rest Requirement & Emergency Overtime compensation

For the purposes of meeting interagency work-rest stipulations and providing for fire fighter safety, administrative leave granted upon demobilization from a fire assignment will be considered time worked. Emergency overtime pay accrued on wildland fire assignments will be calculated at overtime rates of time and one-half for all hours in excess of a regularly scheduled workday and all hours worked on regularly scheduled days off.

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However, in instances where the required 40-hour work week has been met, overtime accrued on wildland fire assignments will be calculated at overtime rates of time and one-half for all hours worked in excess of the 40-hour work week.

