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Route To:

Subject: Agency Administrator Coach-Shadow Program

To: Regional Foresters

We initiated a Line Officer Certification Program in 2007 to add further rigor to fire leadership by Line Officers. We also began a coaching/mentoring program to give more on-the-ground experience for an Agency Administrator (AA). While the AA program has evolved substantially, shadowing opportunities remain essential for preparing Line Officers to act as Agency Administrators during wildland fires or other critical incidents. The number of complex incidents has continued to increase demand for skilled, certified Agency Administrators. The concept and value of shadow/coach/mentoring has expanded, and I feel it is time to clarify intent and expectations around coaching and mentoring programs.

The Coaching-Shadow program was identified as a valuable method for facilitated exposure to many situations an Agency Administrator is likely to encounter, as well as the infrastructure that is part of managing on-going incidents. The refined guidelines for the program are as follows:

1. A Shadow assignment is an enrichment experience. As such, it is observational, and does not imply certification as a result. It does, however, provide tremendous context for AAs around all aspects of Incident Management. It is an important experience along the road to certification.
2. The Coaching-Shadow program may either be one-on-one opportunities, or in a 'team' structure. A Shadow is a trainee or lower-qualified AA not performing the duty of AA, but who is observing a qualified designated AA during an incident for increasing understanding of the duties. A Coach is a qualified journey- or advanced AA.
3. A Coaching – Shadow Team is a Coach and a group of 3-5 Shadows who may travel to multiple incidents and support sites to increase Shadows' level of understanding. These are typically short-term assignments, not the full duration of an incident, and may include visits to active fire areas.
4. The Coach facilitates training opportunities and documents experiences and the level of engagement of trainee(s), but does not provide evaluation for shadow assignments. At the end of the assignment, the Coach will lead an After Action Review (AAR) with the group.

5. The Shadow will maintain a journal or other form of documentation of experiences and will follow up with their home unit to review the experience and agreed upon documentation of the assignment. Following the assignment, the Shadow provides feedback on the quality of the experience and the Coach to the Regional Coaching/Shadow coordinator.
6. Each Region should establish a Regional coordinator responsible for implementation of the Coaching-Shadow program throughout fire season. The coordinator will facilitate determination of priority needs for Shadow assignments within the Region. The Coordinator(s) also maintains the list of qualified AAs (and levels), Coaches, Trainees, and their availability, and finds personnel to fill requests.

These recommendations are intended to provide consistency across Regions, and incorporate flexibility for Regional Foresters. Regional Foresters remain accountable for certification of Agency Administrators.

I am encouraged by the involvement of Line Officers in fire management and by the new programs being developed to facilitate that learning.

/s/James E. Hubbard

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cc: FAM leadership