DOI Standard Position Description
PD# DX06200

Classification: Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper), GS-0456-05

INTRODUCTION

This position is organizationally located within a wildland fire smokejumper program for one of four fire bureaus within the Department of the Interior (Department); however, this position may be assigned work on interagency crews where the crew leader is from a different bureau or agency.

The Wildland Firefighter (Smokejumper) at this level is a trained and experienced member of a wildland fire smokejumper program executing fire management activities in fire preparedness, fuels management and prevention, and fire suppression, monitoring, and post-fire. Work may also include all hazard and emergency response activities. The primary mission is to provide users with highly qualified firefighter whom quickly and effectively respond to initial attack, extended attack, and point protection missions via specialized aircraft and parachutes. Secondary missions include the delivery of equipment and supplies via paracargo, providing qualified individuals to incident management teams, remote area fire monitoring, prescribed fire/fuels management and other fire management support.

MAJOR DUTIES

Fire Suppression, Monitoring, and Post-Fire Activities (70%)

As an experienced member of and/or leader within a smokejumper program, parachutes into mountainous, remote, and/or rugged terrain and performs as a wildland firefighter (smokejumper) applying an understanding of firefighter safety, fire behavior, topography of the area, weather, fuels, and training in fire management work to implement tactical directions on attacking, controlling, or mopping up fires, building or patrolling firelines, performing burnouts, cleaning up burned areas within firelines, suppressing spot fires, felling snags or trees, and cutting brush. Coordinates actions with aerial resources, to include helicopter bucket and sling operations, air tanker retardant drops, and air cargo operations. Places caches of equipment and supplies at strategic points.

On natural caused fires when applying a strategy other than full suppression will observe, collect and record fire-related data with regards to fuels, topography, weather, fire behavior, fire effects, smoke, and fire location. If human caused, gathers and preserves evidence for possible actions in prosecuting offenders.

Operates, moves, inspects, and performs preventative maintenance on vehicles and equipment to include crew carriers, fire engines, command vehicles, pickups, and other specialized equipment (i.e., chainsaws, portable pumps). Uses judgment to safely operate, maneuver, and set up vehicles and equipment in a variety of environments including urban, grassland, and mountainous terrain. Ensures adherence to vehicle safety procedures when transporting personnel, fuel, and equipment, considering bridge and road limits, equipment weight and length, and weather effects.

While frequently working in remote areas utilize maps, global positioning system (GPS), and other associated technology to establish, map, and track fire perimeters, and coordinate fire resources.

Implements protection measures for structures, sites, and/or areas of value.

Provides for logistical needs such as food, water, and additional supplies through the dispatch system. Provides medical assistance as needed to firefighting personnel.

Smokejumper - Preparedness (20%)

Serves as a parachute rigger to pack, repair, and maintain parachutes and related smokejumper parachute equipment adhering to agency smokejumper rigger policies and guidelines.

Maintains smokejumper and firefighting equipment, tools, and supplies. Completes all administrative requirements in a timely and accurate manner.

Maintains an active state of readiness to rapidly respond to initial attack fire calls.

Leadership (10%)

May serve as a situational leader on wildland fires by directing the work of a small crew of firefighters in constructing, burning out, mopping up, and patrolling firelines. During wildland fire and hazardous fuels management assignments, may provide on-the-job training opportunities and mentorship to lower graded firefighters on the use of tools and equipment. Performs administrative leadership responsibilities to include maintaining records, such as supply receipts, and providing feedback to supervisors on performance of firefighters being led.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

FACTORS

Guidelines

A large body of specialized technical firefighting, safety, fire prevention, and fire organization guides exist and must be thoroughly understood and applied. These guides include manuals, handbooks, training aids, maps and charts, and special instructions and practices pertaining to the use of mechanized equipment, aerial techniques, and other procedures related to fire management work. Incumbent will learn and be aware of the guidance, as well as the constantly changing nature of guidelines as new or modified techniques emerge.

At this level, smokejumpers carry out their functions completely and independently according to established procedures, referring only emergency or unusual problems to their supervisors via the most appropriate communication method/device. Smokejumpers at this level must use experienced judgment when applying procedures and safety protocols to the specific conditions of the assignment.

The wildland firefighter (smokejumper) possesses knowledge of pertinent policy and regulations relating to safety and operating standards; including basic knowledge of CFR Title 14 Chapter I subchapter D part 65, subpart A and F as it pertains to FAA guidance for parachute rigger certification is required to rig parachutes is accordance with guidelines.

Complexity

As an experienced wildland firefighter (smokejumper), performs wildland firefighting in a variety of assignments as a leader within or member of a module or crew. The work includes a wide variety of technical guidance associated with smokejumper operations. The approach may vary based upon terrain, fire intensity, fuels availability, wind velocity, smoke, and resource values. Specific tasks, use of tools and methods, and the sequence in which tasks are to be done are determined by evaluation of the situation and issues involved. Consideration must also be given to slope, weather conditions, fuels and other fire behavior factors while performing wildland fire suppression. Decisions made relate to such matters as: (1) selecting routes and methods to reach fires; (2) deciding if fires can be suppressed without additional help or equipment; (3) determining initial action to be taken to control/manage small fires, including water delivery options; (4) ascertaining the cause of fires; and (5) recommending action.

The nature of every wildfire situation requires the smokejumper to employ flexibility and judgment in the approach to problems and in the practices applied after selecting from many possible courses of action. Processes and methods are technical and can have catastrophic consequences, thus requiring the smokejumper to properly execute and quickly adjust techniques with changing conditions or circumstances.

Solutions to problems require judgment in applying conventional approaches to general situations.

Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts

Specific contacts include smokejumper crew members, supervisors, managers, and support staff, agency and contract pilots and flight crews, interagency duty officers, Fire Management Officers, land managers, aviation managers, fire dispatch centers, fire suppression cooperators, the full spectrum of agency management personnel through radio, telephone, government email, and in person. Essential and routine contacts also a wide variety of federal personnel and the public to provide information regarding fire prevention, fire hazards, restricted areas and routes of travel and to secure cooperation and participation in the fire prevention program.

The purpose of personal contacts with agency land and fire management officials or cooperators is to provide technical guidance, respond to questions, assist in problem resolution, and facilitate mission objectives. Outreach to prospective employees is to promote the DOI fire program and to facilitate recruitment of a diverse and highly qualified workforce and to provide and maintain a candidate list for the smokejumper hiring process. Contacts are to ensure that safety rules, protocols, and procedures are followed. Contacts include leading and training lower graded firefighters in the operation and maintenance of tools and equipment and in fire management

activities.

Supervision Received

Wildland Firefighters at this level work under a supervisor who provides general work assignments, instructions, and work schedules. The supervisor periodically checks the readiness of equipment, reviews work performance on fires, and ensures that fire plans, safety rules, and equipment maintenance procedures are being followed. Supervisors furnish advice, assistance, and help in determining action to take on hazardous conditions encountered or unusual work problems that occur; however, during emergency or fire situations, firefighters at this level may be in situations where they have limited opportunity to contact their supervisors for help, assistance, or guidance and must use experienced judgment. The supervisor or smokejumper spotter assigns work in broad terms, advises of changes in procedures, and is available for assistance when required.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

The duties of this position are so rigorous that employment is limited to physically vigorous individuals who must meet established maximum age and physical qualification requirements.

Physical demands include arduous exertion for protracted periods of time such as, but not limited to, extensive running, walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, pulling hoses, jumping and twisting, prolonged standing, walking over uneven ground, and recurring bending, reaching, lifting and carrying of items weighing over 120 pounds for 5 miles or more through rugged terrain, and shared lifting and carrying of heavier items, and similar activities requiring at least average agility and dexterity. The smokejumper is expected to parachute into this remote terrain under hazardous conditions.

Work environments include forest, range, and desert environments in steep terrain where surfaces may be extremely uneven, rocky, covered with thick tangled vegetation, smoky conditions, etc. Temperatures commonly exceed 100 degrees F and may fall below freezing. Risks include smoke inhalation, fire entrapment, snake or insect bites and stings, exposure to excessive machinery noise, and falling and rolling material. Employee must adjust and cope with exposure to weather elements, dust and smoke, poor bivouac and eating situations under an unpredictable set of circumstances. Firefighters may be required to live in backcountry camps for extended periods of time. The hazardous nature of the work requires that personal protective equipment be worn (e.g., boots, hard hat, gloves, flame resistant clothing). Work will require travel by fixed-wing or rotor-wing aircraft. The majority of the work is performed outdoors in a wide variety of weather and terrain conditions or in a crowded airplane.

Incumbent risks death or serious injury during parachute jumps, cargo dropping, or firefighting.

The duties of this position are so rigorous that physical examination and fitness tests are required to ensure that the employee assigned can perform the duties without physical injury to self or others.

This is a Testing Designated Position (TDP) under the Department of Interior Drug Free Workplace Program.

Position requires a valid state driver's license. May require additional specialized training and certification to operate specialized vehicles and equipment.