

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title:** Assistant Wildland Fire Management Officer

**Class Code:** 090815

**Pay Grade:** GI

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### **A. Purpose:**

Provides direction and leadership to fire crews and volunteer fire departments in suppression of wildland fires on state and private lands, staffs an office, maintains equipment readiness, issues burn permits, and participates in planning and managing prescribed fire to assist in the operation of a designated fire district and plans fuels mitigation and fuels reduction projects.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

The Assistant Wildland Fire Management Officer implements standard procedures to assist in the operation of a fire district.

The Wildland Fire Management Officer plans and directs wildland fire management activities on state and private land in an assigned fire district.

The Division Staff Specialist plans and directs statewide wildland fire management activities and supervises district staff.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Performs presuppression, suppression, and post-suppression duties for wildland fires on state and private lands to provide safety for the public and to preserve natural resources.
  - a. Ensures readiness of fire equipment and personnel.
    - i. Assists in training seasonal fire crews
    - ii. Equips fire engines.
    - iii. Briefs fire crews, including those from Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD).
  - b. Directs and coordinates initial attack forces to initiate suppression.
    - i. Ensures personnel are outfitted in personal protective gear, that all individuals have been briefed on strategy and tactics, and that they follow standard firefighting orders.
    - ii. Monitors progress of suppression efforts and orders additional resources.
    - iii. Releases forces as fires come under control.
  - c. Performs postsuppression duties to complete and document fires.
    - i. Informs other agencies of firefighting efforts that have occurred on their lands.
    - ii. Assists in coordinating with landowners and agencies the rehabilitation of fire lines and repair of property damage due to fire suppression efforts.
    - iii. Investigates origins and causes of fires and provides documentation for the fire files.
    - iv. Completes fire paperwork to meet accounting and record keeping needs.
2. Maintains equipment and supplies at a ready status in order to be able to respond effectively to emergency and prescribed fire needs.

- a. Schedules fire engines owned by Fleet and Travel Management for maintenance and repair.
  - b. Maintains department-owned equipment mounted on fire engines through continuous diagnosis, repair, replacement, and cleaning.
  - c. Maintains and repairs department-owned wheeled vehicles, trailers, generators, and other equipment.
  - d. Washes and rolls hoses, sharpens, and paints tools, sands and oils tool handles.
  - e. Fabricates parts for mounting, containing, and securing equipment on the engines.
  - f. Wires lights, bars, and sirens.
  - g. Organizes and stows equipment the same way on all fire engines to preserve time in finding resources during fires.
3. Assists with supervision of seasonal fire crews to ensure the work of the unit is carried out according to standards and procedures.
- a. Participates in review of applications and makes recommendations for hires.
  - b. Issues letters to those hired including starting dates and rates of pay.
  - c. Conducts new hire orientation and initiates and oversees physical fitness training.
  - d. Assigns work daily, provides training, and monitors quality of completed work.
  - e. Makes sure all seasonal employees are fully trained in safety procedures and properly trained to implement firefighting procedures and tactics.
  - f. Teaches crew members to complete fire-related paperwork and ensures it has been done correctly.
  - g. Participates in seasonal employees' performance evaluations.
4. Issues permits for private and commercial fireplaces and burn barrels to ensure compliance with state law and department requirements.
- a. Receives requests from the public to build outdoor fireplaces or burn barrels and explains permit requirements.
  - b. Inspects the area before the fireplace is built to offer direction, and after completion to make sure it meets the guidelines.
  - c. Conducts annual inspections on commercial campground fireplaces, and inspections every third year on those that are privately owned.
  - d. Maintains a database of information pertaining to permits.
  - e. Issues special use permits of shorter duration by checking sites and verifying why permits have been requested; and notifies local VFD and the dispatch center about the issued permits and activities.
5. Plans, prepares, and monitors hazardous fuels reduction projects conducted by private contractors or hand crews on private lands within South Dakota.
- a. Sets-up community meetings to generate interest in Firewise USA practices.
  - b. Educates landowners regarding the need for hazardous fuels reduction programs.
  - c. Facilitates meetings with the individual landowners to do property/structure assessments.
  - d. Coordinates with individual landowners with a project plan outlining what the project entails and how it will be done.
  - e. Conducts media interviews, generates press releases concerning projects, delivers public presentations, and escorts/facilitates media on projects

- f. Attends planning meetings with a variety of agencies for new and future project areas having the greatest potential for reducing fire danger in high-risk urban interface areas.
  - g. Obtains bids from contractors and select a contractor for the project through the request for proposal (RFP) process.
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- 6. Participates in prescribed fire activities to assist in ongoing efforts to prevent fire through reduction of fuel.
    - a. Organizes and facilitates meetings with landowners and contractors to ensure fuels reduction projects meet project specifications and are completed in a timely manner.
    - b. Writes the project prescription to meet the landowner's and Division's needs.
    - c. Recommends available resources and secures and organizes support forces and equipment.
    - d. Notifies VFD and local governments in the area of the proposed burn of time, location, and burn objectives.
    - e. Serves as a liaison between landowners and contractors during duration of the project.
    - f. Develops maps for each project using GPS and GIS (ArcMap);
    - g. Records weather, wind, and humidity in the area on a continuing basis.
    - h. Briefs firefighting crews of the objectives of the burn, ensures they know where the safety zones and escape routes are, and stations them around the fire.
    - i. Ignites fires with methods designated in the burn plan.
    - j. Monitors burned area and cools down hot spots as needed; oversees clean-up and release of resources.
    - k. Conducts inspections upon project completion and monitors project expenses to ensure budget restraints are met.
  - 7. Manages permanent and mobile fire caches to ensure sufficient supplies and equipment at hand and ready for all circumstances.
    - a. Stocks a truck with firefighting supplies and equipment to be used as a mobile cache, and repairs equipment and restocks supplies after each fire event.
    - b. Maintains a district cache by tracking inventory in and out, and replacing supplies and equipment as needed.
    - c. Repairs, repaints, and revitalizes hand tools and equipment in the district cache; and marks them in order to denote ownership.
    - d. Assists with upkeep of a central, division cache.
  - 8. Performs other work as assigned.

#### **D. Reporting Relationships:**

Reports to a Division Staff Specialist or a Wildland Fire Program Specialist. Does not supervise but routinely provides work direction to seasonal employees and advice and guidance to volunteer firefighters.

#### **E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenged to coordinate, organize, and oversee firefighters and other resources from multiple jurisdictions at fire sites. This is challenging because it requires careful and

thorough briefing to ensure each firefighter is aware of the tactics and strategies that will be used on the fire, it requires oversight of firefighters' personal gear and equipment to ensure they are prepared, and it requires specific instructions on safety procedures for the incident. Further challenged to identify high priority areas within or near communities that will benefit from fuels reduction treatments to reduce threats from wildland fire and maintaining contact with multiple landowners and contractors and coordinating several projects concurrently. This is difficult because it requires significant time management and project documentation.

Problems include accomplishing work with limited resources, maintaining equipment prone to breakdown because of constant exposure to rough conditions, finding parts and maintaining older pieces of equipment, and ensuring crews maintain fitness levels.

**F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions include daily work assignments for fire crews; strategies, tactics, logistics, and resources used to control a fire; when it is safe to release forces; whether or not it is economically sound to repair equipment; where to send equipment for repair; whether or not to issue burn permits; recommendations for prescribed fire plans including the objective of the burn, the design and prescription, resources needed, overhead personnel, and operational and logistical procedures; organization of cache inventories; determining size and locations of projects to maximize value while still meeting project specifications, landowner expectations, and grant requirements.

Decisions referred include overall strategies for larger, interagency fires; mobilization of higher-level management teams; approval of equipment maintenance and repair over \$500; assignment of crew members to special projects; issuance of special use permits for one-time use; review of burn plans, areas selected to burn, and budgets for prescribed fire projects; approval of purchases for caches; and final approval of locations for hazardous fuels reduction projects and final project billing.

**G. Contact with Others:**

Daily contact with fire crews to brief them for daily work assignments, oversee physical fitness training, and provide training; with the dispatch center to provide information about the fire district and current activities and conditions; with VFD to provide technical advice and information on preparedness and equipment readiness; and the Urban Interface Specialist to ensure understanding of programs, grant funds, and procedures; weekly contact with VFD and county, state, and federal agencies' representatives to borrow or loan equipment, to share fire suppression efforts, and to provide or share training; and with the dispatch center to keep them informed of progress on fire events, and to request more or release existing support forces; monthly contact with owners of commercial and private fireplaces and burn barrels for the purpose of inspection and issuance or renewal of permits; with landowners and business owners to discuss rehabilitation of fire line or the development of fuel breaks and to ensure projects are meeting expectations and requirements; and contractors to ensure project standards are met.

**H. Working Conditions:**

Fights wildland fires, which are inherently dangerous, in all kinds of terrain and all kinds of wind and weather conditions; is exposed to smoke, dehydration, burns, and heat exhaustion; handles tools by hand such as axes, picks, and chainsaws and performs hard, manual labor; operates or works around heavy equipment such as dozers, fire engines, and aircraft where visibility may be obscured; repairs and maintains heavy equipment, using hand and power tools and welders; and routinely lifts and moves heavy objects.

## **I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- the methods, procedures, equipment, and tools of wildland fire suppression;
- firefighting safety practices and techniques;
- fire behavior and fire potential in various fuels, weather conditions, and terrain;
- vehicle and equipment maintenance, appropriate tools, and welding;
- building maintenance and groundskeeping;
- Firewise USA principles and international wildland-urban interface code..

Ability to:

- provide leadership necessary for training and daily supervision of a diverse group of seasonal firefighters;
- manage a fire including organizing resources, choosing strategies and tactics, overseeing suppression, completing a fire file, and investigating source and cause of the fire;
- interpret and implement fire mobilization plans and quickly locate sufficient personnel and equipment to accomplish fire suppression;
- maintain and operate a fleet of specialized firefighting equipment;
- read maps and understand topographical features and their effect on fire suppression efforts;
- interpret and explain department policies and procedures;
- effectively present instructional material in firefighting and fire use to adult learners;
- maintain physical fitness standards;
- maintain firefighter qualification standards at the designated level;
- communicate effectively.