

Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group

Health and Wellness Committee Charter

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Health and Wellness Committee is to provide direction and collaborative interagency direction for Firefighter Mental Health and Wellness in Alaska and updates on national direction and guidance. This committee provides comprehensive integration and coordination in support of Firefighter Mental Health and Wellness (including Critical Incident Response), keeps current with national changes and how to incorporate Alaska into the national framework. The committee coordinates the statewide Critical Incident Joint Response Plan.

II. Authority

The Health and Wellness committee is established under the authority of the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (AWFCG): Memorandum of Understanding Sec V.

III. Membership

The core membership of this committee is based on specific skill sets providing subject matter expertise from the AWFCG agencies. It will consist of up to two representatives, a primary and an alternate, from each agency. Committee members should possess knowledge about Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), including the national framework for Critical Incident Response, Peer to Peer Support, and Mental Health for First Responders. If an agency does not have personnel with this type of subject matter expertise, it will be the responsibility of that agency's AWFCG member to be the point of contact to this committee for needed information or data calls. Members will have agency authority and responsibility to work with national and statewide CISM program coordinators or pre-identified points of contact and speak for agency needs. Core committee members will be nominated by their Agency's AWFCG representative.

The committee will request assistance and participation by specific subject matter experts for individual or agency-specific needs. Short-term task groups consisting of a combination of core members and invited specialists may be developed to address specific problems or data requests.

IV. Functions

Develop and maintain a statewide Alaska Critical Incident Joint Response Plan

The committee will coordinate creating an Alaska Interagency Critical Incident Joint Response plan

The committee will coordinate a resource and response list to support the Mental Health and Wellness needs of fire personnel.

The committee will coordinate joint training opportunities to ensure consistency between agencies in Peer to Peer Support, Critical Incident Response processes and general support resources for fire personnel.

Continued evaluation of National CISM and Firefighter support systems to ensure they include Alaska and local agency needs.

Provide guidance to agencies to incorporate Mental Health and Wellness in fire program management.

Identify local and national subject matter experts who can assist with evaluating and reevaluating Alaska Critical Incident Joint Response Plan.

Coordinate with all agencies associated with the AWFCG and needs and requests are being met.

V. Organization and Structure

The core members will elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chair. The Chairperson's responsibilities will rotate between the committee members, with the chairperson and vice-chair's term of office set at one year. Chair and Vice-Chair positions will rotate by agency's represented on this committee.

For the purpose of this committee, a quorum (minimum number required to conduct official business) requires a majority of the core members.

On topics that require a vote, each agency represented by this committee is allowed one voting member.

Task groups may be developed to address specific technical issues that can be resolved with a short term and finite time. Task groups reports and recommendations will be submitted to the committee for approval and/or further action.

VI. Meetings and Reports

Meetings will be held at a minimum once a year at either the spring or fall meeting. Additional meetings may be scheduled when necessary. The Chairperson is responsible for scheduling these meetings.

The committee will keep meeting notes and the Chairperson will maintain storage of minutes and decisions made in committee meetings. These notes will be stored in a format that allows long-term storage and access to all committee members.

Meetings are open to all interested entities.

VII. Member Duties and Responsibilities

A. Chair

1. Establish the time and place for all committee meetings, arrange for meeting facilities and provide agendas prior to meetings.
2. Request attendance of specific individuals at committee meetings.

3. Represent the committee at the AWFCG meetings as necessary.
4. Assemble, collate, and prepare all material to be acted upon by the committee.
5. Maintain minutes, notes and other fields/data as needed.

B. Vice-Chair

1. Serve as the Chair when the Chair is absent.
2. The Vice-chair would become the chair at the end of the term.

C. All members

1. Function as leaders in the fire community in their area of expertise including building and maintaining relations with national, state, and local programs as appropriate.
2. Members will be points of contacts for Health and Wellness topics and their impacts on Alaska Wildland Fire Personnel.
3. Participate in conferences, webinars, and other opportunities to remain in the forefront of Mental Health and Critical Incident Response developments. Members will bring forward to the committee emerging issues, program updates, state-of-the-art changes and enhancements to national and statewide programs.
4. Members will mentor future committee members for continuity and allow the committee to continue to excel.

VIII. Financial Support

Routine costs of members will be borne by the respective agencies. Training costs will be primarily borne by the sponsoring agency, with assistance from other members as needed.

IX. Approval

This charter is effective as of the date signed and approved by the AWFCG. This charter will be reviewed and revised in conjunction with the HWCC. Approval by AWFCG is required for any changes to this charter.

Approval _____ Date: _____

Chair, Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group