

FOREST FIRE EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

This is journey level work in the operation of fire suppression heavy equipment in order to control wildfires and perform prescribed burns.

Employees operate crawler tractors and attached plow units and other heavy equipment to establish control lines around fires. Employees make independent determinations on the best course of action to fight a fire considering topography, fire behavior, fuels, weather and other related factors. Work includes supervising a helper in controlling fires, winching out stuck equipment, setting backfires and monitoring fire behavior. Employees also perform routine servicing and general maintenance of all assigned equipment. Work also includes equipment operation on prescribed burns, maintaining or preparing vehicle logs, cost analysis forms, monthly reports and performing other duties as assigned including land measuring, assisting in general forest management and building maintenance. Work may include other duties as assigned.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Complexity of Work - Employees operate fire suppression equipment usually requiring the frequent adjustment of a limited number of controls. Employees also perform maintenance and repair functions which require close measurements, fabricating parts to rough standards and tightening bolts to close torques.

Scope and Variety - Employees perform duties covering a fairly wide variety of relatively simple to moderate work fields including heavy equipment operation, fire fighting, welding and painting, and the maintenance and repair of equipment including tune-ups and minor trouble shooting, repairing trucks and assisting in major repairs and modifications. Work includes operating crawler tractors with towed plows or attached V blades to plow fire control lines, motor graders to rough grade access roads and tractor/trailer trucks to transport equipment. Employees also maintain and service all assigned equipment and assist in the rebuilding of diesel and gas engines, changing transmissions and other major repairs. Employees are usually assigned to a specific fire control district but may operate statewide requiring varying tactics and methods.

Controls Over Work - Employees receive oral assignments for both fire fighting and maintenance activities. Employees are expected to independently perform most fire control work and all routine maintenance assignments. On larger fires the employees usually receive more specific assignments. Most work, and especially fire fighting activities, is reviewed upon completion to insure compliance to established standards and safety practices.

Judgmental Demands - Employees use standard fire fighting and operational procedures, equipment manuals, servicing guidelines and maps. Employees may choose from a variety of fire fighting tactics based on variable conditions and decide on whether to call in additional support.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Potential for Loss - Improper use of tactics in wildfire suppression, site preparation burning or hazard reduction burning may result in extensive property damage to woodlands, buildings and equipment usually belonging to private industry or the general public.

Safety of Others - Decisions made while fire fighting could result in various degrees of bodily injury and/or death from burns and other causes to the employee, assigned personnel or possibly members of the general public.

III. MENTAL AND VISUAL DEMANDS:

Visual Attention - Fire fighting and maintenance work usually requires normal visual attention.

Mental Concentration - Most fire fighting and maintenance work usually require normal mental concentration, although changing conditions or severe fires occasionally require periods of substantial concentration.

IV. PHYSICAL EFFORT:

Intensity of Effort - Work involves heavy arm and leg movements while operating equipment. Maintenance work typically involves walking, standing, bending, stooping and performing handwork in awkward positions.

Frequency and Duration of Effort - The operation of a crawler tractor, motor grader or other heavy equipment required that physical effort be exerted for sustained periods. Maintenance work requires limited strain for a continuous period. Extensive effort may be performed intermittently throughout the day.

V. WORKER SURROUNDINGS AND HAZARDS:

Worker Surroundings - Work subjects employees to flames, smokes, dust, falling trees, poisonous snakes, insects and various weather conditions intermittently when performing fire control work. Maintenance duties exposes the employees to grease, fluids, solvents, welding sparks and other conditions typical of a mechanical shop environment.

Hazardous Conditions - During fire control and prescribed burning activities, employees are exposed to flame and smoke inhalation which may result in health problems, severe injuries or death. Burns, cuts, and sprains to the limbs and body are possible during the more frequent maintenance work.

VI. CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Purpose of Contacts - Employees exchange information with members of the incident command staff to determine appropriate crawler tractor tactics for fire control. When serving as supervisor over a group of division or cooperative forest fire control equipment operators, employees provide direction and explanation of tactics to be implemented. Maintenance work requires the explanation and exchange of technical information to district mechanics when resolving equipment mechanical failures. Occasionally, employees provide interpretive information on mechanized fire control at the educational state forest.

Scope of Contacts - Contacts are usually with co-workers, but may include private industry, state and federal fire control staff, educational state forest visitors and on a limited basis, private land owners.

VII. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Working knowledge of fire fighting methods, tactics and practices. Some knowledge of map scales and symbology, and operational radio procedures. Some knowledge of welding and the maintenance and repair of heavy equipment. Ability to operate various types of heavy equipment at the journey level. Ability to instruct and direct the work of helpers and other operators. Ability to perform strenuous work over extended periods and under adverse conditions.

Minimum Training and Experience Requirements - High school or General Educational Development diploma and completion of two years NC FFEO apprentice training; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Minimum Training and Experience Requirements for Trainee Appointment - High school or General Educational Development diploma and one year of heavy equipment operation experience.

Necessary Special Qualifications - Commercial Drivers License (any state). North Carolina Commercial Drivers License must be obtained within 90 days of employment.

Special Note - This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.