

Wildland  
Firefighter



Apprenticeship Program

# Student Letter

Wildland Fire Training & Conference Center  
3237 Peacekeeper Way McClellan, CA 95652

By signing below, I certify that I have read, understand and agree to comply with all rules and regulations contained within this letter as it pertains to the Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program and residing at the McClellan Business Park.

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Full Name

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



DUTY



RESPECT



INTEGRITY



# Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program

## Student Letter

Dear Attendee,

Congratulations on your acceptance into the National Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program (WFAP). The following information should help you get acquainted with the program, and the requirements for the Foundational and Core Academies which are held at the Wildland Fire Training and Conference Center (WFTC) in Sacramento, California. We are extremely proud of the WFTC and desire to maintain its condition for as long as we are here. Forest Service leaders at all levels strongly support Fire Management's goal to provide a state-of-the-art facility, capable of meeting today's demand for high-quality and professional training. In order to fully realize this goal a few common sense policies and rules must be in place to consistently guide our use. Your compliance will help us maintain our high training standards and the quality of our facilities for many years to come.

### **Facility**

The WFTC is located in McClellan Business Park, North of Interstate 80 and off Watt Avenue at 3237 Peacekeeper Way, Sacramento, CA 95652. A Map and directions are available in the pre-work section of the program web site [www.wfap.net](http://www.wfap.net). Stores, restaurants, recreation and services are all within a short drive. A fitness center, gas station, restaurant and several other amenities are also located inside the business park.

### **Program Orientation for Apprentices**

If you have not been contacted already, the Regional Coordinator or Apprenticeship Unit Manager will contact you soon regarding the administrative requirements of the program. This individual will be your contact for the program. They will explain the requirements of the program to you including your Training, Mobility, and Department of Labor Agreements.

### **Air Travel**

Those traveling by air will fly into Sacramento International Airport (SMF). Flight itineraries must be forwarded to [wfap@fs.fed.us](mailto:wfap@fs.fed.us) a minimum of fourteen days prior to arrival. Be sure to include your name and cell phone number so we can contact you. Transportation to and from the airport will be provided by WFAP. You will be picked up in an agency vehicle by Logistics Staff who can be reached at #916-202-8346. You should call this number upon landing to let the driver know that you will be waiting at the curb in front of baggage claim.

**\*\*Check in between 1400-1600 on Sunday only. Those arriving by air on Saturday will have housing available for that evening as long as prior arrangements have been made with the WFAP.**

**\*\*Graduation from the Core Academies have been canceled. Academy close out and Dorm check out will take place on the final day. Plan on being committed till approximately 1030 and plan your travel accordingly.**

### **Privately Owned Vehicles**

Per California State Law, all vehicles must be registered and insured. All students must possess a valid Driver's License from their state of residence. All vehicles must be parked in designated parking areas only. **Vehicles not parked in designated parking areas will be subject to towing and removal.** Adhere to the posted speed limit at all times. Vehicle use between the dorms and the training center should be kept to a minimum.

### **Prerequisite for Foundational Academy Attendance**

All students must have completed the following courses *prior* to arrival at Foundational Academy:

- Fire and Aviation Management Operations (S130, S190, L180, ICS100)
- Agency Specific New Employee Orientation **\*\*Agency Certificate Required\*\***

In addition to the courses listed above, employees must complete a minimum of 500 hours of work experience prior to attending the Foundational Academy. This experience must have been in Work Process Category 2: Wildland Fire Preparedness, Suppression and Fuels Management. You will not be able to attend the Foundational Academy until you have completed this work experience.

### **GI Benefits for Education**

You must be registered with the Dep't of Labor/Apprentice to qualify for GI Bill benefits. The VA will determine which Chapter you are eligible for based on type and length of service. Inform your Supervisor, Unit Apprentice Manager and Regional Coordinator of your interest in using education benefits.

### **Drug Testing**

Drug testing requirements vary by Agency. Your Regional Coordinator or Unit Manager will inform you of the drug testing requirements/policies set forth by your Agency.

## Uniforms and Field Gear

The Academy stresses a professional appearance. **Having a full uniform complement is required.** Your uniform must always be clean and pressed. There are irons available in each dorm and there are several dry cleaners in the area. **A dirty, wrinkled and/or incomplete uniform is unacceptable.** There will be frequent inspections to ensure that uniform requirements are heeded. Your Regional Coordinator or Unit Manager is aware of the uniform and field gear requirements. It is **your** responsibility to work with this individual to procure uniforms, nameplates, agency badges and field gear prior to arriving at the academy.

### **Required uniform components for all Apprentices:**

- 2 each - short sleeve uniform shirt
- 1 each - long sleeve shirt uniform shirt
- 2 pair - dark green field uniform trousers (not Nomex or mint green trousers)

- 2 each - name plate (1 ea. for shirt and jacket)
- 1 each - agency badge
- 1 each - uniform belt (black or brown leather, not cloth or web)
- 1 each - agency tie (clip or traditional)
- 1 pair - professional dress shoes (black or brown leather, no sports/skating or clog style)
- 1 each - Agency Jacket (3-season, rain fleece or Gortex)

### **Optional Uniform Components (BLM, USFS, Fish and Wildlife and Park Service)**

Agency ball cap, beanie or any hat with your Module or forest/district name on it are permitted outside of the training center. Non-agency ball caps and/or hats are not allowed.

It can be rainy and cold in the Sacramento area from January through May. Make sure to have the appropriate uniform components for all field exercises, come rain or shine.

Non-agency jackets are not allowed in the training center (e.g. fire module Carhartt, forest safety award fleece etc). **Non-agency jackets are not a part of the agency uniform and may be worn up to the doors of the training center, but like all hats, must be removed when you enter the academy building.**

### **Required Field Gear**

- 1 each - helmet w/ chin strap
- 1 pair - goggles or safety glasses
- 1 pair - gloves
- 1 each - IA pack (Mystery Ranch, Eagle, FSS, Hotline, etc.)
- 1 each - fire shelter w/case
- 4-6 each - canteen, 1 qt.
- 1 each - headlamp w/ batteries
- 1 each - individual first aid kit
- 1 pair - ear plugs
- 1 each - 10" file w/ handle and guard
- 1 each - nomex fire shirt
- 1 each - nomex fire pants
- 1 set - rain gear
- 1 pair - leather boots, minimum 8" height w/ vibram soles

Field exercises will require nomex pants and shirt, leather boots and full field gear. You are expected to arrive "fire ready." Prepare yourself and your gear as you would for a fire assignment.

### **Miscellaneous items to bring**

In addition to the field gear and uniforms, please bring the following:

- Incident Response Pocket Guide
- Compass (smoke chaser type)

- GPS (if available)
- Pens, pencils, writing paper
- Personal toiletries including a towel
- Casual wear appropriate for evenings and weekends
- Good running shoes and clothing required for physical training and recreation
- All study/pre-work materials included in this letter

### **Training Curriculum and Hours**

Foundational and Core Academy training consists of approximately 8 combined weeks of formal instruction, 8 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Attendees will not be compensated for more than 8 hours per day while at the Academy unless specifically scheduled and approved by the National Program Manager. Classes are scheduled to start daily at 0730 or 0800 and end at 1630 or 1700 with an hour lunch break.

#### **The formal curriculum consists of the following:**

##### **Foundational Academy Courses:**

- Academy Orientation
- Human Performance Optimization
- S-131 Advanced Firefighter
- I-200 Basic ICS
- S-270 Basic Air Operations
- L-280 Followership to Leadership
- Fire Prevention (including FI-110)
- Wildland Fire Skills Simulation
- Land Navigation
- Weather Observations
- Communications and Radio Use

- After Action Reviews
- Fire shelter and Entrapment Avoidance
- Tactical Decision Making

##### **Core Academy Courses:**

- S-290 Intermediate Fire Behavior
- L-380 Fire Line Leadership
- Fuels Management
- S-219 Ignition Operations
- Staff Ride
- Career Development

## Academic Standards

All tests will be closed-book written tests except for the manipulative skill tests. Missing 25% or more hours of a course **or** missing the final exam will result in an “incomplete.” The apprentice will be required to make up the coursework in a formal academy setting.

All classes must be passed with a 70% or higher. You will be allowed to re-test only ONCE during the academy. Apprentices will be allowed to review their tests prior to the retake but will not be allowed to remove the tests from the classroom. Re-tests will be given outside of scheduled course hours so as not to interfere with ongoing courses. For courses with more than one approved exam, retakes will not be the same exam as originally given. Regardless of how high the score is on the retake, the minimum required passing score (70%) will be recorded. A test failure in a second course will result in the Apprentice being removed from the Academy and Apprenticeship Program. The removed individual may reapply and may be selected for future Academies.

### **Reasonable Accommodation Requests**

Individuals who may have learning disabilities are responsible for notifying and working with their home units to determine any reasonable accommodation requests **prior** to arriving at the Academy. The Academy needs to be notified at least **60 days** prior to the assigned Academy start date. (Please reference the Apprenticeship Program 2016 Operations Plan, Page 8 – 6. Reasonable Accommodation).

## Academy Regulations and Expectations

The Wildland Fire Training Center has a code of conduct. The Apprenticeship program also maintains standard protocol for acceptable behavior. You will be expected to adhere to both sets of policies.

- There will be no days off during weekdays while at the Academy. This policy is firm.
- The Academy has zero tolerance for cheating.
- Possession of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia and/or consumption of illegal drugs will result in your immediate removal from the Academy and are grounds for termination.
- Medical Marijuana as per the U.S. Forest Service/ Bureau of Land Management policy: U.S. Forest Service personnel are Federal employees, doing Federal duties, usually on Federal lands. Therefore Federal law applies to USFS personnel. Title 21 U.S. Code 812 classifies marijuana as a controlled substance. 21 U.S. Code 844 (a) makes possession of any controlled substance a misdemeanor crime, punishable by as much as one year in Jail, and a **minimum** fine of \$1,000.

The U.S. Supreme Court has confirmed that the California medical marijuana law does not protect a user/grower/possessor from Federal law. In *U.S. v. Oakland Cannabis Buyers Coop.*, (2001), the Supreme Court ruled: “ we hold that medical necessity is not a defense to manufacturing and distributing marijuana”, and “...nothing in our analysis, or the statute, suggests that a distinction should be drawn between the prohibition on

manufacturing and distributing and the other prohibitions of the (U.S. code)..."

There is also a Federal administrative law prohibiting marijuana use. In 1986 President Reagan signed Executive Order 12564 "Drug-Free Federal Workplace" that states, in Section 1: **Persons who use illegal drugs are not suitable for Federal employment.**

### **Key considerations for employees:**

- **Marijuana growing, use, or possession, (regardless of whether the grower, user, or possessor has a State authorization) is in violation of Federal criminal law. It is illegal. The Department's Employee Responsibilities and Conduct regulation prohibits employees from engaging in criminal conduct.**
- **Employees are subject to corrective action, including removal from federal service for any marijuana-related activity, regardless whether the activity is permitted under State law.**
- Possession and/or consumption of alcohol is not permitted within government facilities. This includes parking lots, dormitories, training facilities, adjacent lawns or any space owned or leased by the government.
- There is zero tolerance for harassment or hostile work environment. This includes physical, verbal and/or threats of abuse, and sexual, racial or any form of harassment. Violations will result in appropriate corrective action and may be grounds for termination.
- Professionalism is expected at all times in your attire, attitude and demeanor – on and off of duty – for the duration of your assignment and while in travel status. Public inebriation, failing to be fit for duty, or disrespect towards instructors, staff, peers or public will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate corrective action.
- Theft, vandalism, extortion, gambling or other unlawful acts are prohibited. Property damage as a result of unprofessional behavior will be billed to the offender(s) and will result in appropriate corrective action.
- The use of any tobacco products (smoking, chewing or snuff tobacco) in government facilities or vehicles is prohibited. Dispose of tobacco in the proper outside receptacles.
- Weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited at the Academy and will result in immediate removal from the program.

### **Weapons Are Defined as:**

- Any knife with a blade that is non-folding or retractable
- Any folding knife that has an overall length (blade & handle in open position) greater than 8.5", or a blade greater than 4 inches
- Any knife that has a blade spring released by a push button or switch
- Any gun, rifle or any device that shoots projectiles, no matter how it is propelled (CO compressed air, spring, gun powder etc.) This includes facsimiles of guns

- Any ammunitions, propellant, projectiles, explosives, etc. are prohibited
- Any device or projectile that releases via a taut string, band or cord (bows and arrows, sling shots, etc.)
- Any device associated with the martial arts (nunchucks)
- Any device designed to be a weapon (blackjacks, saps, brass knuckles, etc.)
- Any device that could be used to inflict pain or injury to a person or animal, or damage or destroy any real property. Includes such items as blasting caps, firecrackers, explosives, or tool handles
- Any other device deemed to be a weapon by a staff member

### **Training Facility and Classroom Use Policies**

- It is imperative to always be on time and to have your classroom materials with you. On time shall be defined as sitting in your seat and ready to learn -- not walking into the classroom when class starts. **Tardiness is unacceptable and will be grounds for corrective action.** The first offense shall result in a letter of corrective action and a personal phone call to the Division Chief explaining the reason for said letter. The second offense will result in removal from the Academy.
- Classrooms will be left neat, clean and orderly. All chairs and tables shall be returned to their proper place.
- Hallway discussions and related noise from large groups can be distracting to others.  
Students are encouraged to take breaks outside. During inclement weather breaks can be taken in the cafeteria.
- Certain footwear, specifically “logger” type boots and some “lugged” soled shoes tend to leave black marks on flooring, walls, doors, etc. For this reason WFTC management requests users wear, casual, smooth-soled or otherwise lightly-treaded footwear. There will be times, as when students participate in field exercises and then must immediately return to the classroom, when wearing boots will be necessary. However, whenever possible we ask that casual non-lug soled shoes be worn.
- No radios, iPods, or pagers will be allowed in classrooms.
- Tobacco, ball caps and sunglasses are not allowed inside the training center.
- Food and drink is allowed in all classrooms with the exception of the computer rooms and the simulation room. All beverages shall have spill-proof caps. Should spills occur, or should a group fail to clean up their refuse such that additional janitorial services are required, the cost of such service will be charged to the individual(s) home unit(s).
- Please refrain from leaning against painted surfaces. Belts, pagers, cell phones, knife cases and the like leave marks that require touch-up painting.
- Report all facility maintenance needs or equipment malfunctions to your Academy supervisor immediately.
- Hallway walls are not to be used for training or conference displays. If posters or other

displays are required, arrange for poster display rooms adjacent to assigned rooms, or bring free-standing display mounts.

### **Phones**

***Despite the fact that cellphones can be a valuable tool in the field, they remain a major distraction in the classroom. For this reason a strict policy is in place and shall be enforced:***

- Cell phones shall be turned **OFF or in Silent** while in a learning environment. A learning environment is any in which an instructor or official presenter is speaking or delivering a lesson. this includes lessons delivered during all field activities. Vibrate is **NOT** the same as off or silent. With prior approval from an instructor, it is permissible to utilize cellphone cameras and/or other cell phone tools during field exercises or at times when deemed appropriate. The use of cellphones for this purpose is a privilege and will be taken away if abused.
- Texting is not allowed in the classroom, in the field or during any instructional session. During the Academy all texting between students and/or between students and teachers shall remain professional (i.e. no “sexting” and no inappropriate photos and/or videos shall be shared). **Inappropriate use of cell phones will be grounds for corrective action and/or removal from the Academy.**

### **Meals**

*All students will be required to stay at the dorms with meals provided Monday - Friday in lieu of per-diem. Attendees will be responsible for purchasing their own meals on Saturday and Sunday, and are therefore entitled to per-diem. Meals will be available only during established mealtimes at the Training Center Cafeteria. Please clean off tables and eating areas when finished. Do not waste food by accepting more food than you can eat. Food, dishes, utensils, etc., are not to be removed from the kitchen or dining facilities. No horseplay or loud behavior will be tolerated.*

Be sure to notify your Regional Coordinator or Unit Manager regarding special dietary requests e.g. vegetarian and vegan meals and/or any food allergies. We suggest you submit an email to [wfap@fs.fed.us](mailto:wfap@fs.fed.us) specifying dietary needs so we can be prepared for your arrival. Staff will make a sincere effort to accommodate needs, however expect food choices to be similar to those provided when on fire assignments. In the event that an individual's needs are so specific that the caterer cannot accommodate, there is the option to request per diem from one's home unit.

### Dormitory

#### **Facility Issued Items**

All students will be issued upon arrival:

- Twin sheets & Pillow Case
- Bed Spread
- Blanket
- Pillow

- Each room will have a television, converter box, lamp, phone, shower caddy, remote(s) and alarm clock

### **Dorm Standards and Restrictions**

- Dorm rooms must be kept clean and tidy. All beds will have bed covers and be made daily. Trash will be removed daily and bathrooms kept clean.
- All personal effects must be stored under beds or in closets in an organized manner.
- All rooms will be obstruction/ barrier free to allow access in case of emergency.
- All personal areas will be odor free and organized to allow for proper air circulation
- No unauthorized visitors allowed in dorms.
- Cohabitation is forbidden. Students will be out of the rooms of the opposite sex by 2130.
- Laundry facilities are provided in each dormitory building. Please clean lint trap after each use.
- All lights, water and personal property will be turned off/ disconnected when not in use.
- No pets allowed in the facilities.
- No personal furniture and/or fixtures allowed without approval.
- No candles, incense, kerosene or gas operated appliances, fuel containers, flammable paint or similar fire hazards allowed in the living areas.
- No loud music or TV at any time.
- Quiet time is from 2200 - 0600 hours.
- Do not hang objects from light fixtures or heating/cooling ducts.
- No pictures/posters may be hung on the walls.
- No personal heaters, hot plates, toaster ovens, electric frying pans, etc. are allowed in the dorms.
- Forest service policy prohibits the display and possession of pornographic or otherwise sexually suggestive material in agency owned or leased facilities including vehicles. No pornographic magazines, pictures, videos or DVDs are allowed in the WFTC dormitories or any other Agency facility. Open display of pin-ups, posters, or other depictions of nude or scantily or suggestively-clad persons on Forest Service owned or leased premises will be deemed a violation of Agency policy.
- Immediately report any repairs or service needs to your crew boss or directly to the Academy Coordinator.

**It is understood that facilities management and/or Academy Logistics will do spot checks on dormitory rooms and common areas for Health and Safety Issues. They are allowed access to all dormitories and commons regardless of whether or not the current occupant(s) are present.**

**Any damage to dorm room, furniture and/or linen will be billed to the individual assigned to said room/articles.**

## Physical Fitness expectations

During your time at the Academy we will introduce various fitness programs and philosophies. To prepare yourself, please refer to *Fitness and Work Capacity, 2nd Edition* and *Introduction to FireFit* (PDF downloads are available on the [wfap.net](http://wfap.net) website, or you can go to: [nifc.gov/FireFit](http://nifc.gov/FireFit)) Following the fitness philosophies of these two documents will greatly enhance your chances for success.

**You are expected to arrive physically prepared to perform the duties of a firefighter and to fully participate in all physical training and field exercises.** We will test everyone at the beginning and end of the academies to ascertain fitness levels. The physical fitness standard for the Academy is the Fitness Challenge established by the BLM National Fire Operations. It is important to show up healthy and uninjured so we can help you build a good fitness foundation. If you have an injury or ailment that would prevent you from participating in fitness activities or field exercises, inform your Supervisor **before** you show up to the Academy. **If you arrive unable to fully participate you will be required to return home and complete the Academy at a later date.**

Arriving physically fit and with good running shoes (not cross trainers or basketball shoes) will help prevent injuries. This will help prepare you for your physical training during the academy.

The Work Capacity Test (Pack Test) must be successfully completed prior to arrival at the Academy in order to participate in the Apprenticeship Program. Your Regional Coordinator or Unit Manager shall verify you have passed at the required arduous level within the last 12 months.

## WFAP Physical Training Test Standards

### Adapted from the BLM National Fitness Challenge

The fitness challenge tests participants in four basic exercises - push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups and a timed run of 1.5 mile. Test results are compiled into a final overall score.

Test administrators shall read a description of each exercise (see below) and demonstrate proper form prior to the test.

The individual test exercises are performed as follows: Pull-ups: Starting position is hanging from a bar, hands approximately shoulder width apart, arms fully extended with elbows locked. Hands can be palms away or palms facing the individual. Individual lifts the body until the chin is above the bar and returns to the starting position. This is one repetition. On each repetition the arms must be fully extended and the chin must clear the bar. No kipping or kicking is allowed. Count the number of pull-ups completed in three minutes or when the individual cannot maintain the starting position (lets go of the bar).

Push-ups: Starting position is back straight and parallel with the ground, arms straight with hands approximately shoulder width apart and elbows locked. Individual lowers the body until the arms form a ninety degree angle and returns to the starting position with the arms fully locked. This is one repetition. The back must remain straight throughout the exercise. All resting must occur in the starting position. The buttocks are

not allowed in the air in the starting position. The arms must be fully extended (elbows locked). Count the number of repetitions successfully completed in three minutes or when the starting position can no longer be maintained (arms collapsing, buttocks in the air).

Sit-ups: Starting position is hands behind the ears, back on the ground, legs bent at a forty-five degree angle. Feet can be held by a person or a fixed object. The individual raises the back until the elbows touch the legs, then returns to the starting position (shoulder blades touch the ground). This is one repetition. Exercise mats may be used for padding. Count the number of repetitions completed in three minutes.

The test exercises are performed under the following conditions:

- Exercises may be completed in any order (will be determined by Academy Coordinator)
- 1 ½ mile run: Conducted on flat, smooth surface.
- Each callisthenic event must be completed within three minutes.
- Maximum break between callisthenic events is seven minutes.
- A ten minute warm-up is allowed for the run.
- For more information and to see the scoring charts, go to:  
[http://www.blm.gov/nifc/st/en/prog/fire/fireops/fitness\\_challenge.html](http://www.blm.gov/nifc/st/en/prog/fire/fireops/fitness_challenge.html)

**The Male and Female Student acquiring the most points will be named “Most Physically Fit”**

## Addendums

**The following pre-work is required:**

L-280 (Foundational Academy)

S-219 and L-380 (Core Academy)

Please check details on the [website](#) and bring pre work with you to your academy.

Additional information available on the website: ([www.wfap.net/apprentice](http://www.wfap.net/apprentice))

- Directions for completing on-line college application
- Review *Fitness and Work Capacity, 2nd Edition* and *Introduction to FireFit*
- Map & directions to McClellan Park and WFTC
- National Apprenticeship Standards

Any questions regarding information in this letter should be directed to your Regional Coordinator or Unit Manager. We look forward to working with you at your upcoming Academy.