

Boots in the Forest

MATERIALS HANDLER & WAREHOUSE FOREMAN

Hi, I'm Randy Scott, a materials handler and warehouse foreman for the Boise National Forest in Boise, Idaho. I manage the storage of excess materials for the various departments of the supervisor's office. My biggest task is operating a Type 3 fire cache to support local incidents.

Where were you when this photo was taken?

This is the Type 3 command trailer that I stock and deliver to local incidents during fire season. It carries supplies such as water, Gatorade, MREs, hose, and additional items to help firefighters on the line.



What were you doing that day?

The winter months are relatively slow, so I spent most of the day cleaning the warehouse and ensuring that things are organized and ready come fire season.

What kind of training or education do you need for this job?

This position is heavily based around data entry and tracking inventory. Organization skills, attention to details, and efficiency make things run smoothly, and help to get things quickly to the people, the firefighters, on the ground.

What is a typical day for you?

There really isn't a typical day. During fire season, I could be doing anything from receiving inventory to pulling supplies to readying the command trailer, while simultaneously checking out rental vehicles to incident management team members. The most important part of this job is being on top of things and supporting resources.

What kind of footwear do you typically wear?

I wear heavy-duty work boots that can withstand long days in the warehouse and make me equipped to head out with the command trailer into the field.



Randy makes his way down from the upper levels of the Type 3 fire cache that he manages.

What do you like most about your job?

This building is my world. But more importantly, what I do here makes a difference to the Boise National Forest. I love being able to hunt and take my dogs out into this Forest that we help to maintain.

FIRE CACHES

The purpose of a fire cache is to ensure firefighters and support personnel can be resupplied with standardized equipment during a fire.

Typical items found in a fire cache include:

- Gloves
- Goggles
- Nomex clothing
- Canteens
- Hardhats
- Sleeping bags
- Tents
- Fire shelters
- Hand tools
- Pumps
- Chainsaws
- Radio kits
- Helicopter operations gear

“I’m here for one reason—to support the people on the ground: the firefighters. My biggest priority is to get stuff out to them.”

If you had to pick another occupation, what would it be?

I started out working for the Forest Service as an equipment operator. I really loved my time doing that because the forest was my office. Some of the best days were when I finished a project. I could look back at the smooth, level surface and say, “I did this.”

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The Forest Service’s first fire caches were small and somewhat primitive.



Fire Tool Cache
Fishlake NF



Green Creek Fire Tool Cache, 1921
Sawtooth NF



McKee Draw Fire Cache
Ashley NF



Stevens Creek Fire Cache, 1957
Manti-La Sal NF