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Subject: Environmental Management System Implementation

To: All Employees

The Forest Service is now entering its second year of implementing a national Environmental Management System (EMS). Our EMS goals for 2009 build on our 2008 accomplishments while incorporating new elements to ensure continuous improvement.

The 2009 EMS training goal is for all employees who have not yet taken EMS 101 to complete this basic training. EMS 101 is available through AgLearn. In addition, **everyone, including employees who completed EMS 101 last year, will need to review the enclosed refresher**, which reminds each of us what we need to know and what we need to do to support the Forest Service EMS.

In 2008 we established a national EMS infrastructure, named EMS representatives on 142 administrative units, trained nearly 20,000 employees in EMS, and completed management reviews on 124 units. Most importantly, we initiated many fuel saving practices and met the 2008 EMS target of reducing fleet petroleum-based fuel use by two percent.

The EMS targets for cutting fuel consumption will continue for 2009, and an Enterprise Team is helping us develop baseline data and procedures for water and energy conservation goals. This year we are also piloting procedures on 15 national forests for a new significant environmental aspect in vegetation management. The pilot program will monitor vegetation management projects to confirm forest plan consistency and implementation of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) prescribed design criteria and mitigation measures.

Our EMS strategy of starting small and growing within our budget and capability is working. We are learning as we go and using existing practices, procedures, and documentation whenever possible.

Thank you for helping meet our 2008 goals. I am counting on your continued support and participation as we expand our EMS to include vegetation management.

/s/ Abigail R. Kimbell
ABIGAIL R. KIMBELL
Chief

Enclosure





2009 Environmental Management System Refresher

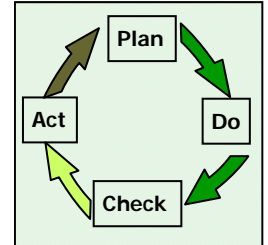


Introduction:

This is the first annual *EMS Refresher*. We will be issuing this *Refresher* every year to give employees a ‘heads-up’ on what to expect from EMS for the coming year. These annual *Refreshers* will be posted on the EMS Intranet Portal which you can navigate to by clicking on EMS in the “Hot Box” of your intranet web page.

What is an EMS?

An EMS provides a systematic approach for continually improving environmental performance. An EMS identifies the major environmental aspects (activities, products, or services) and associated impacts that occur on a National Forest or Grassland. There are controls already in place to manage these impacts – such as NEPA analysis, best management practices (BMPs), and resource monitoring – the EMS simply documents and ensures that these controls are in place and working as intended.



EMS is not a short term project that will be completed on a specific date. It is an ONGOING PROCESS that formalizes the Forest Service’s commitment to adaptive management and continual improvement of the environment.

The EMS is based on the *plan-do-check-act* cycle to establish goals, implement plans to meet the goals, determine progress, and make improvements. The EMS uses the ISO 14001 international standard - the most widely used and respected standard. The EMS will account for performance through monitoring, required audits, and management reviews. Management will take corrective and preventive actions to address the findings and suggested improvements.

EMS involves the whole organization—every employee is required to know our environmental policy and how they contribute. Persons working on behalf of the Forest Service (e.g. contractors, permittees) need to be aware of the environmental policy and how their activities contribute to environmental performance.

As an employee, what you need to know and do:

Environmental Policy – *Know the policy and how you contribute.*

The Environmental Policy is the foundation of an EMS and is the basis for environmental objectives and targets. The Forest Service Environmental Policy (FSM 1331) is:

- “In conjunction with its mission, vision, and guiding principles; the Forest Service is committed to
 - complying with applicable legal and other requirements,
 - pollution prevention, and
 - continual environmental improvement.”

Environmental Objectives – *Make progress in improving the environment.*

1. **Fleet Management** – Reduce petroleum-based fuel consumption by 2% annually nation-wide, increase non-petroleum fuel use by 10 percent annually nation-wide, and use plug-in-hybrid (PIH) vehicles where feasible.

Significant Environmental Aspects – *Demonstrate that impacts on the environment are controlled or minimized.*

1. **Fleet Management** and the impacts on the environment (greenhouse gas emissions) from using petroleum-based fuel. **Work with your local Fleet Manager** and follow your Unit’s action plan.
2. **Vegetation Management** (vegetation treatment projects that use heavy equipment). This significant aspect is being pilot tested on 16 national forests in 2009.

Emergency Preparedness and Response – *Be prepared to report environmental emergencies.*

Nationally identified emergency situations are **1) wildfire starts** and **2) hazardous material spills**, e.g. hazardous chemicals, substances, or wastes or petroleum products. If you should see a wildfire start or experience or see a hazardous material spill, you must report the incident to the closest Dispatch Center, or 911 as back-up.

Finding Notices – *Report environmental problems or exemplary practices for continual environmental improvement.*

An improvement process is available for employees to communicate environmental concerns and best practices to upper management. Work with your local EMS rep or use the Finding Notice Form on the EMS website to initiate a finding notice.

EMS Training – *Take the required EMS Trainings.*

All employees who have not attended EMS 101, either by AgLearn or in a classroom session, must do so in 2009. Permanent employees who took EMS 101 in last year are not required to retake the training in 2009. The revised EMS 101 training module is in AgLearn. Your Unit EMS Rep may also present the training in a classroom session.



2009 Environmental Management System Refresher



For further information, contact your local EMS Reps or visit the EMS website:

National EMS Website:

https://fs.usda.gov/wps/myportal!/ut/p/s.7_0_A/7_0_I94?subject=10024&topic=landing

Additional EMS efforts underway with specific responsibilities:

Environmental Objectives

1. **Energy and Water Conservation** – National level objective to establish baseline measures so the Forest Service can track its progress in energy and water conservation. *Watch for “Eco-tips for Energy and Water Conservation and how you can contribute!”*
2. **Vegetation condition baseline** – National level objective to establish baseline measures.
3. **Watershed condition baseline** – National level objective to establish baseline measures and set priorities.

Additional Information on the Land Management Significant Environmental Aspect

1. **Vegetation Management** (vegetation treatment projects that use heavy equipment) – The procedures (operational controls) of this land management significant aspect are being pilot tested on 16 national forests. The procedures include 4-steps: 1) Use LMP direction to design projects; 2) Make project decisions using NEPA, identifying appropriate mitigation measures and design criteria; 3) Transfer the decision into contract or force account work; and 4) Monitor and document implementation through project administration. The pilots include reviews of selected projects that will be reviewed for the implementation of the above procedures.

Evaluation of Compliance with Legal and Other Requirements

1. **Environmental Compliance Program (ECP) for facilities and hazardous materials** – All Units are being audited periodically. All Units have action plans to correct problems identified in the audits.