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Abstract

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Abstract

Objective: Defining the role of federal wildland firefighters (WFF) in the context of emergency medical services (EMS) is a gap in the literature. Our work highlights the importance of standardizing and enhancing the EMS capabilities of federal WFF for their own occupational safety and well-being, while emphasizing their potential for responding to all disasters and providing medical safety net in rural communities.

Methods: A comprehensive academic literature review on the topic returned one non-peer reviewed manuscript. Study members analyzed National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) EMS policy to assess current EMS standards within the WFF service.

Results: The study reveals a lack of standardized, comprehensive support for EMS capabilities among federal WFF, despite need for their expertise in wide-ranging emergency situations. There are few incentives for individuals to obtain and maintain EMS certification. Various innovations, such as the Alaska Fire Medic Program and the BLM Operational Medical Support Program, are potential models for improving EMS across the entire NWCG.

Conclusions: To enhance the safety, professionalization, and efficiency of WFF, the NWCG should consider standardizing EMS guidelines, especially in providing consistent support for medical certifications. EMS certified WFF could contribute to nationwide disaster response capabilities if supported by NWCG.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <http://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.217>.