

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

8631

(1987)

A visit with unit administrative personnel and headquarters staff gives the lookout a chance to meet some of the support personnel with whom they may later interact.

A visit to the emergency command center allows lookouts to meet the people with whom they will be exchanging smoke and weather information. It also gives them a chance to see what happens after the lookout makes his/her smoke report.

If the opportunity arises, it is also beneficial for the ECC officers to visit the lookout facilities to get an idea of what the lookout can and cannot see.

A visit to the fire station that will be providing primary support to the lookout familiarizes him/her with fire station operations.

If helicopter training is given at the fire stations, try to get lookouts involved. It may give an opportunity for the lookouts to view their area from a new perspective. Helicopter powerline or back country road inspections are another opportunity to familiarize lookouts with their area.

Lookout supervisors can offer to allow lookouts a chance to ride with them on road orientation trips. These also give the lookout another perspective of the area and provides a chance to see some of the landmarks closeup. The better a lookout knows the area, the more effective the lookout will become. During these trips, the lookout can meet other CDF personnel in the stations.

Weather training can be done at each lookout so the unit fire weather specialist has an opportunity to discuss the weather program with the lookout.

Basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training is valuable. The lookout must know how to use the equipment in the first-aid kits. CPR may be required for a visitor or other member of the public. There are usually enough of these basic classes being put on at the station level that the lookouts can easily be accommodated.

Fire extinguisher training should also be given so the lookouts know how to effectively use the extinguishers provided. This can easily be done by station personnel on a routine trip to the lookout.

New lookouts should be able to spend a couple of days on the job with an experienced lookout as an information exchange and a confidence builder.

Stress management training would also be appropriate if given at the local level.

Final Note:

It is very easy to overlook and ignore the individuals who provide this valuable detection service. The saying "out of sight is out of mind" sometimes comes true with respect to lookouts. Lookout personnel, however, are full-fledged members of the fire protection team. The more they are included in relevant activities and training, the more efficient they can become. If we expect them to perform as professionals, then we must prepare them as professionals, with adequate training and support.

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