Disclaimer: All Best Practices are provided as a guide for departments by the Pennington Co. Fire Service Board. These are for general guidance and should be modified by each department based on their own individual rules or standard operating guidelines/policies. Each department within Pennington Co. is ultimately liable for its own operations and practices.

PREMISE: Pennington County receives funds from the Secure Rural School and Community Self-determination Act (SRSCSA), through the US Forest Service. The SRSCSA has set out specific rules on what and how these funds can be expended.

PURPOSE: To establish the basic, but not all inclusive, guidelines for the expenditure of SRSCSA, generally referred to as Title III. This SOP is to assist in clarifying the justification and documentation that maybe required to expend funds.

SCOPE: This SOP applies to any agency, organization, group, or person(s) that requests assistance from Title III funds, whether they might be 2008 Reauthorization Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-determination Act or prior funds.

HISTORY: Original Release July 2010
Revised September 8, 2010
Reviewed February 12, 2014

OPERATING PRACTICE:

1. Annual and Reoccurring procedures
   A. Fire Service Board each year must provide for a 45 day comment period prior to expenditure of funds, this comment period will be done in accordance with SRSCSA guidelines
   B. Any purchases exceeding $25,000 or group of similar items will require formal advertising bids in accordance with State of South Dakota bid laws

2. Request for Funds
   A. Any agency, organization, group, or person(s) requesting to utilize Title III funds will make application to the Pennington County Fire Service Board (FSB).
   B. The FSB will act on the request per their guidelines.
   C. The FSB may consider requests that they deem in the best interest of Pennington County.
   D. The request for funding will include the following information:
       1. Detailed description of the project
       2. Reasonable cost estimates, formal quotes or bids are not required
       3. If requesting reimbursement for expenses, original invoices, cancelled checks, credit card statements or invoices, or other proof of costs incurred must be submitted.
       4. Cost sharing by the requesting party
       5. Documentation necessary to justify requested cost sharing
E. The requestor must indicate they have the necessary funds in place at the time of request.

1. Requests for advance funding or approval of funding based on future matching funds will not be considered by the FSB.

3. Documentation Needed – Different projects or funding requests may require different documentation or a combination of documentation to properly justify expending the funds. Following are some of the items that maybe required to provide the documentation:

A. Geographical Area – funding that might be based on acres or square miles of a request. This would need to be all inclusive for all types of incidents or projects for a period of time. (for example: search for lost person, might need to include the total number of acres or square miles searched on National Forest vs private land, then a proportional share of each)

B. Actual Hours – funding for some equipment or incidents may be based on hours of use. This would need to be all inclusive of all hours used. (e.g., equipment that could be used for other operations beside those on National Forest land. Need to include all hours used for all operations or anticipated projects. Total hours per year the equipment is used and then a proportional share for hours used or anticipated on National Forest vs private, state, county land.)

C. Mileage – funding for some equipment or projects maybe based on mileage. This would need to be all inclusive for all the miles driven by a particular piece of equipment. (for example: equipment that is driven on highways or used for purposes other than those on National Forest would need to document all miles for a given time period.

D. Usage – funding for some equipment or projects maybe determined by number of times used. (e.g., rescue equipment has really neither hours, mileage, but simply the number of times use. The number of times used must be documented for all events and a proportional share determined.)

E. Personnel – funding of personnel costs must include documentation of assigned to a particular incident, crew time reports, payroll sheets, time on/of an incident, or other incident documentation. Volunteer time may be reimbursed at established rates per SD Wildland Fire Suppression personnel rates of equal job duty.

F. Combination –a combination of any of the above to provide the necessary documentation.

G. Additional Documentation – additional documentation maybe requested by the Pennington County Auditor’s office and/or the State of South Dakota Department of Legislative Audit.

H. Calls – funding for some equipment or incidents may be based on the number of calls in a given period of time. (for example: a request for a brush truck would need to include all the calls this piece of equipment went on, including medical, structure, wildland, etc, not just calls to wildland fires on National Forest land.)
4. Past History – normally a history of the past three (3) years is adequate to establish the justification. However, in some instances a longer period of time may be used. In instance where there is no history, then reasonable justification must be provided as to how the information was derived.

5. Financial Reimbursement – if an agency is requesting reimbursement for expense’s or items purchased the requesting agency must provide reasonable proof of payment to a vendor or individual before reimbursement will be made to the agency.

6. Reimbursement rates will be based on SD Wildland Fire Suppression cooperative agreement for like vehicles, equipment or rates as established by other recognized counties or exact costs. Pickup’s, suburban’s, whether ½ ton, ¾ ton or 1 ton will be considered strike team leader vehicles.