

# Wildland Firefighter Prehospital Care Policy

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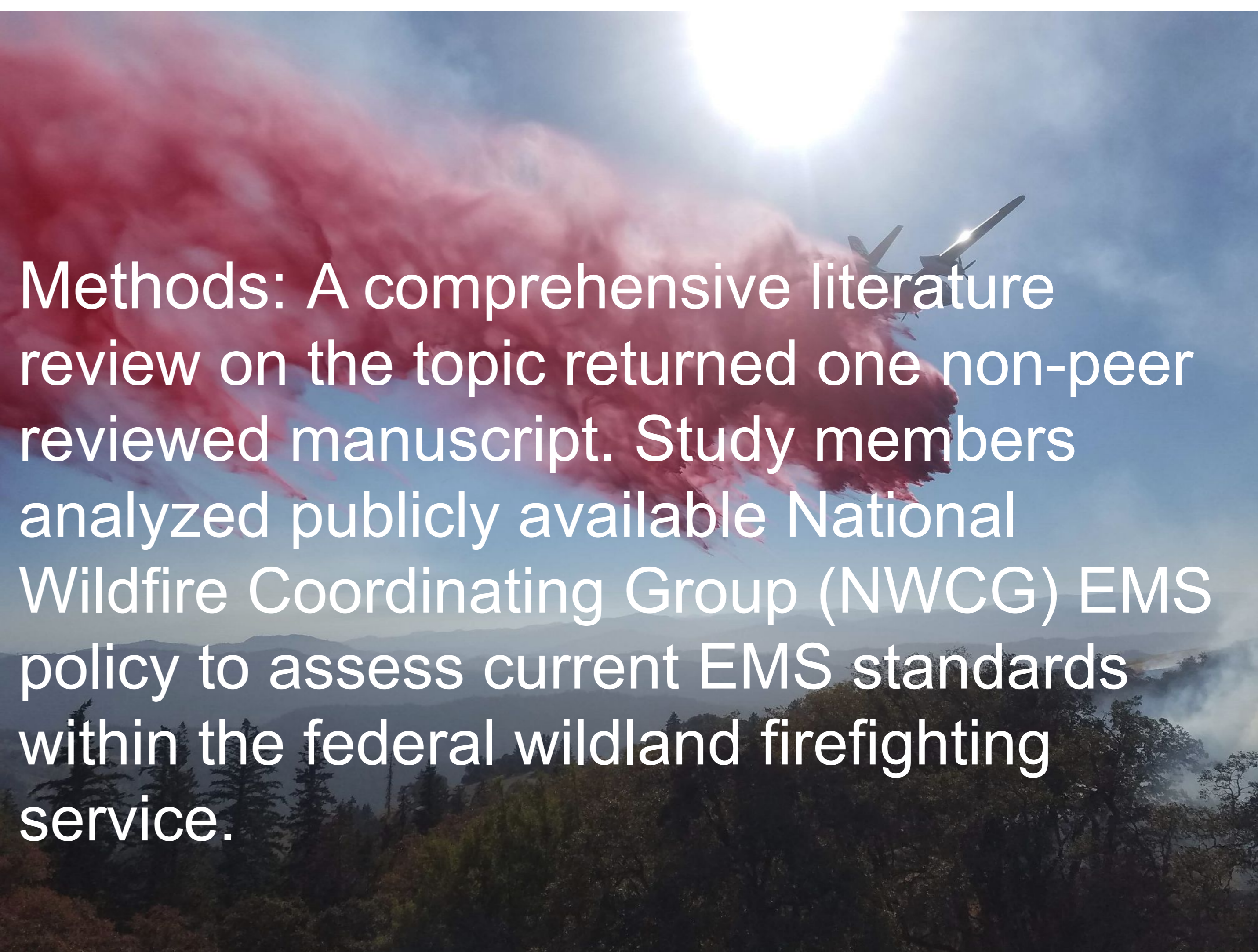
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**Objective:** Defining the role of federal wildland firefighters (WFF) in the context of emergency medical services (EMS) is a gap in the literature. Our work highlights the importance of standardizing and enhancing the EMS capabilities of WFF for 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 literature review on the topic returned one non-peer reviewed manuscript. Study members analyzed publicly available National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) EMS policy to assess current EMS standards within the federal wildland firefighting service.



## Results

The study reveals a lack of standardized, comprehensive support for EMS capabilities among federal wildland firefighters, despite need for their expertise in increasingly 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 (OMSP), are potential models for improving EMS across the entire NWCG.

### Potential Improvements

- Continuous EMS certification and/or licensure support is needed nationally
  - Incentivization of skills would likely support the profession
  - Recognition of TCCC could help improve the qualified pool
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- WFFs, if properly supported, can provide a medical safety net in their rural communities
- An OMSP-like model for wildland specific EMS skills and CME could be instituted across the NWCG
- If WFF EMTs are supported and tracked nationally, they would improve medical surge capacity for disaster response



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