

CHAPTER 10

Objectives, Policy, and Scope of Operation

CHAPTER 10 – OBJECTIVES, POLICY, AND SCOPE OF OPERATION

11 Mission Statement

The principal mission of the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is the cost effective and timely coordination of land management agency successful emergency response for wildland fire. As a partner in the National Response Framework (NRF) and as interagency cooperators, we will also meet the requirements of all-hazard incidents as directed by the NRF or Presidential and Secretarial direction. This is accomplished through planning, situation monitoring, and expediting resource orders between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Areas, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) States, National Association of State Foresters (NASF), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Regions, Forest Service (FS) Regions, National Park Service (NPS) Regions, National Weather Service (NWS) Regions, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regions through the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and other cooperating agencies.

The National Interagency Mobilization Guide identifies standard procedures which guide the operations of multi-agency logistical support activity throughout the coordination system. This Guide is intended to facilitate interagency dispatch coordination, ensuring the timeliest and cost effective incident support services available are provided. It is designed to accommodate amendments as needed and will be retained as current material until amended. Local Mobilization Guides should be used to supplement the National Interagency Mobilization Guide. Geographic Areas will provide NICC two (2) copies of their Mobilization Guide and will provide amendments as issued.

11.1 Total Mobility

Positioning and utilizing resources to meet existing and anticipated incident, preparedness, severity, and wildland and prescribed fire needs regardless of geographic location or agency affiliation.

11.2 Priorities

When competition for wildland fire resources occurs among Geographic Areas, the National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC) at NIFC will establish national priorities and confirm drawdown levels.

When requested, Geographic Areas will establish priorities for their incidents and wildland fires and report them to NICC.

The single overriding suppression priority is the protection of human life – both, that of our firefighters and of the public.

In setting national priorities and drawdown levels, the following criteria should be considered:

- A. Maintaining initial action capability.
- B. Protecting communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources.
- C. Limiting costs without compromising safety.
- D. Meeting agency suppression objectives.
- E. Support to National Response Framework (NRF) taskings.



11.3 Local and Geographic Area Drawdown, Levels, and National Ready Reserve

Drawdown is the predetermined quantity and type of suppression resources that are required to maintain viable initial attack (IA) capability at either the local or geographic area. Drawdown resources are considered unavailable outside the local or Geographic Area for which they have been identified. Drawdown is intended to ensure adequate fire suppression capability for local and/or Geographic Area managers, and enable sound planning and preparedness at all management levels.

Although drawdown resources are considered unavailable outside the local or geographic area for which they have been identified, they may still be reallocated by the Geographic Area or National MAC to meet higher priority obligations.

Local drawdown is established by the local unit and/or the local MAC group and implemented by the local dispatch office. The local dispatch office will notify the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) of local drawdown decisions and actions.

Geographic area drawdown is established by the Geographic Area Multi-Agency Coordination Group (GMAC) and implemented by the Geographic Area Coordination Center. The GACC will notify the local dispatch offices and the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) of Geographic Area drawdown decision and actions.

National Ready Reserve is a means by which the National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC) identifies and readies specific categories, types and numbers of fire suppression resources in order to maintain overall national readiness during periods of actual or predicted national suppression resource scarcity.

National Ready Reserve implementation responsibilities are as follows:

- A. NMAC establishes National Ready Reserve requirements by resource category, type and quantity.
- B. NICC implements NMAC intent by directing individual GACCs to place specific categories, types, and quantity of resources on National Ready Reserve.
- C. GACCs direct local dispatch centers and/or assigned IMTs to specifically identify resources to be placed on National Ready Reserve. Resources must have at least 7 days left in 14 day rotation (extensions will not be factored in this calculation).
- D. GACCs provide NICC specific names of National Ready Reserve resources.
- E. NICC mobilizes National Ready Reserve resources through established ordering channels as necessary. When ordered, National Ready Reserve resources must be en route to the new assignment within specific timeframes.

NMAC will adjust ready reserve requirements as needed. Furthermore, in order to maintain national surge capability, the NMAC may retain available resources within a Geographic Area, over and above the established Geographic Area drawdown level.

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12 Scope of Operation

12.1 General

12.1.1 National Response Framework (NRF)

The National Response Framework (NRF) provides a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident management across a spectrum of activities including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. This Plan identifies the Forest Service as the Primary and Coordinating agency for implementing the Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4, Firefighting and identifies Department of Interior as the Primary Agency, along with USDA, for implementing ESF #11, Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Forest Service and Department of Interior also have Support Agency responsibilities under all 15 Emergency Support Functions.

Activities will be accomplished utilizing established dispatch coordination concepts.

The affected Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) will coordinate ordering points with Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC) and Joint Field Offices (JFO). As necessary, it will pass on to NICC at Boise, Idaho for national response and logistical support when Geographic Area resources are fully committed. In the event of national level shortages or unavailability, the National Response Coordination Centers (NRCC) through the ESF #4 Desk in Washington, DC will pursue resolution of such shortages. Requests that originate from the NRCC will be processed through the Virginia Interagency Coordination Center (VICC) in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Situation and damage assessment information will be transmitted through established fire suppression intelligence channels.

In most cases, federal agencies, when requested to support the NRF, will provide base eight salaries for permanent employees. FEMA will reimburse overtime, travel, and per diem costs for all employees. Base eight salaries will be reimbursed for temporary, Administratively Determined, (AD) and State employees mobilized to assist.

12.1.2 Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)

Requests for support from foreign countries other than those countries with which the Departments of Agriculture and Interior have agreements (Canada and Mexico) and arrangements (Australia and New Zealand) will come to NIFC from the Forest Service International Programs' Disaster

Assistance Support Program (DASP) through the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). OFDA has the responsibility to coordinate the U.S. Government's response to international disasters. See Chapter 42.5, International Emergency Assistance Response Process, Operating Plan for USDA Forest Service.

13 Mobilization/Demobilization

NICC will coordinate the movement of all resources across Geographic Area dispatch boundaries not covered by local operating plans or other direction found in this Guide. When it is reasonable to expect containment prior to the next operational period, dispatch centers at the local level should coordinate directly if the resources are used for initial attack on adjacent jurisdictions. If it becomes evident the incident will not be contained during the first operational period, resources mobilized will be ordered through established ordering channels.

Resource mobilization and reassignments between Northern California Operations and Southern California Operations, and between the Western Great Basin and Eastern Great Basin do not require resource orders through NICC.

Units responding to NICC requests are responsible for ensuring the resources dispatched meet the criteria specified in this Guide and/or the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1, May 2008).

13.1 Work/Rest, Length of Assignment, and Days Off

In order to provide for safe, efficient, and effective support to wildland fire operations, the following policy on work/rest, length of assignments, and incident driving operations is established. This policy applies to ALL firefighters, overhead, dispatchers, and support personnel.

To maintain safe and productive incident activities, incident management personnel must appropriately manage work and rest periods, assignment duration, and shift length for personnel, including casuals (ADs), contracted crews, Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs) and Emergency Equipment Rental Agreement (EERA) resources.

To assist in mitigating fatigue, days off are allowed during and after assignments. If necessary to reduce fatigue, the Type 1 or 2 Incident Commander or Agency Administrator (incident host or home unit) may provide time off supplementary to mandatory days off requirements. For Type 3 – 5 incidents, paid days off should be rare exceptions. However, if necessary, the Agency Administrator (incident host or home unit) may authorize day(s) off with pay.

The Incident Commander or Agency Administrator authority to grant a day off with pay lies within 5 U.S.C. 6104, 5 CFR 610. 301-306, and 56 Comp. Gen. Decision 393 (1977).

A. Work/Rest Guidelines

Work/Rest Guidelines should be met on all incidents.

Plan for and ensure that all personnel are provided a minimum 2:1 work to rest ratio (for every 2 hours of work or travel, provide 1 hour of sleep and/or rest).

Work shifts that exceed 16 hours and/or consecutive days that do not meet the 2:1 work/rest ratio should be the exception, and no work shift should exceed 24 hours. However, in situations where this does occur (for example, initial attack), incident management personnel will resume 2:1 work/rest ratio as quickly as possible.

The Incident Commander or Agency Administrator must justify work shifts that exceed 16 hours and those that do not meet 2:1 work/rest ratio. Justification will be documented in the daily incident records. Documentation shall include mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue.

The Time Officer's/Unit Leader's approval of the Emergency Firefighter Time Report (EFTR), (OF-288), or other agency pay document certifies that the required documentation is on file, and no further documentation is required for pay purposes.

The Work/Rest Guidelines do not apply to aircraft pilots assigned to an incident. Pilots must abide by applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines or agency policy, if more restrictive.

B. Length of Assignment

1. Assignment Definition

An assignment is defined as the time period (days) between the first full operational period at the first incident or reporting location on the original resource order and commencement of return travel to the home unit.

2. Length of Assignment

Standard assignment length is 14 days, exclusive of travel from and to home unit, with possible extensions identified below.

Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the 14 day limit, regardless of pay status, for all personnel, including Incident Management Teams.

3. Days Off

After completion of a 14 day assignment and return to the home unit, two (2) mandatory days off will be provided (2 after 14)

(State regulations may preclude authorizing this for State employees). Days off must occur on the calendar days immediately following the return travel in order to be charged to the incident (5 U.S.C. 6104, 5 CFR 610. 301-306, and 56 Comp. Gen. Decision 393 (1977)). If the next day(s) upon return from an incident is/are a regular work day(s), a paid day(s) off will be authorized.

Pay entitlement, including administrative leave, for a paid day(s) off cannot be authorized on the individual's regular day(s) off at their home unit. Agencies will apply holiday pay regulations, as appropriate. A paid day off is recorded on home unit time records according to agency requirements.

Casuals (ADs) and contract resources are not entitled to paid day(s) off upon release from the incident or at their point of hire.

Home unit Agency Administrators may authorize additional day(s) off with compensation to further mitigate fatigue. If authorized, home unit program funds will be used.

All length of assignment rules apply to aviation resources, including aircraft pilots, notwithstanding the FAA and agency day off regulations.

4. Assignment Extension

Prior to assigning incident personnel to back-to-back assignments, their health, readiness, and capability must be considered. The health and safety of incident personnel and resources will not be compromised under any circumstances. Personnel should anticipate the possibility of an extension when taking an assignment to Alaska.

Assignments may be extended when:

- a. **Life and property are imminently threatened,**
- b. **Suppression objectives are close to being met, or**
- c. **Replacement resources are unavailable or have not yet arrived.**

Upon completion of the standard 14 day assignment, an extension of up to an additional 14 days may be allowed (for a total of up to 30 days, inclusive of mandatory days off and exclusive of travel).

Contracts, Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs) and Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERAs) should be reviewed for appropriate pay requirements and length of assignment. If the contract, I-BPA or EERAs do not address this, the Incident Finance/Administration Section Chief or the procurement official should be consulted as to whether compensation for a day off is appropriate.

Single Resource/Kind Extensions

The Section Chief or Incident Commander will identify the need for assignment extension and will obtain the affected resource's concurrence. The Section Chief and affected resource will acquire and document the home unit supervisor's approval.

The Incident Commander approves the extension. If a convened Geographic or National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (GMAC/NMAC) directs, the Incident Commander approves only after GMAC/NMAC concurrence.

If the potential exists for reassignment to another incident during the extension, the home unit supervisor and affected resource will be advised and must concur prior to reassignment.

Incident Management Team Extensions

Incident Management Team extensions are to be negotiated between the incident Agency Administrator, the Incident Commander, and the GMAC/NMAC (if directed).

A copy of the documentation should be attached to timesheets. The Assignment Extension Form can be found in Chapter 28.11

Upon release from the assignment, regardless of extension duration, two (2) mandatory days off will be provided immediately following the return to the home unit and chargeable to the incident. (See above for compensation and days off guidelines.)

13.2 Incident Operations Driving

These standards address driving by personnel actively engaged in wildland fire or all-hazard response activities, including driving while assigned to a specific incident or during initial attack fire response (includes time required to control the fire and travel to a rest location). In the absence of more restrictive agency

policy, these guidelines will be followed during mobilization and demobilization as well. Individual agency driving policies shall be consulted for all other non-incident driving.

A. Agency resources assigned to an incident or engaged in initial attack fire response will adhere to the current agency work/rest policy for determining length of duty day.

B. No driver will drive more than ten (10) hours (behind the wheel) within any duty day. Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty day limitation, provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of ten (10) hours.

C. A driver shall drive only if they have had at least eight (8) consecutive hours off duty before beginning a shift.

Exception: Exception to the minimum off-duty hour requirement is allowed when **essential** to:

1. Accomplish **immediate** and **critical** suppression objectives, or
2. Address **immediate** and **critical** firefighter or public safety issues.

D. As stated in the current agency work/rest policy, documentation of mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue is required for drivers who exceed sixteen (16) hour work shifts. This is required regardless of whether the driver was still compliant with the ten (10) hour individual (behind the wheel) driving time limitations.

13.3 Initial Attack Definition

Initial Attack (IA) is a planned response to a wildfire, given the wildfire's potential fire behavior. The objective of initial attack is to stop the spread of the wildfire and suppress it at least cost. An aggressive suppression action that is consistent with firefighter and public safety.

An initial attack wildfire is generally contained by resources initially dispatched, without significant augmentation of reinforcements, within two hours after initial attack, and full control is expected within the first burning period.

Dispatch centers are to inform all resources of the name of the assigned Incident Commander and all other pertinent information. All changes in Incident Command leadership will be announced to assigned and incoming resources

during initial and extended attack incidents. This information should also be relayed to Fire Management staff.

Initial attack involving the commitment of resources across recognized dispatch boundaries must comply with the following guidelines:

- A. Resources dispatched are identified in formalized Agreements, Operating Plans, or Memoranda of Understanding and are located on/or adjacent to mutual jurisdictional wildland fire management boundaries.
- B. GACCs may order initial attack airtankers, lead planes, and Aerial Supervision Modules (ASM1) from neighboring GACCs, as defined in Geographic Area Mobilization Guides.
- C. At the time it becomes evident the incident will not be contained during the first operational period, resources involved will be formally ordered through established ordering channels.

13.4 Resource Mobilization

To ensure safe and efficient mobilization of resources to incidents resources are requested and mobilized using the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS). Standard interagency mobilization processes are identified within the Interagency Standards for the ROSS Operations Guide (ISROG) located at the following website: (<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive/ISROG.pdf>). **NICC will not process requests for resources “after the fact.” i.e. requests for resources which have mobilized to an incident prior to receiving a resource order request.**

The Food Service Request Form (see chapter 28.2), the Infrared Aircraft Scanner Request Form (see chapter 28.5), and the Preparedness/Detail Request Form (see chapter 28.7) are the approved forms that, when associated with a ROSS request, satisfy documentation required of resource mobilization.

Prior to incident mobilization, all resources will be requested, by a standard resource categorization and identified with a unique request number through established dispatch channels.

- A. The standard categorization system is:
 - A = Aircraft
 - O = Overhead
 - C = Crews
 - E = Equipment
 - S = Supplies

B. Responsible agency management fiscal codes must be included on each approved form. (See Chapter 21.4 – Cost Coding.).

C. A two letter (alpha) identifier for the state in which the responsible agency is located, followed by a three or four character (alpha and/or numeric) for the responsible agency, and a unique order or incident number containing a maximum of six (6) characters (alpha and/or numeric) will make up the incident/project order number.

D. Resources assigned to incidents will be identified by a two (2) letter (alpha) identifier for the State in which the resource is based, followed by a three (3) or four (4) character (alpha and/or numeric) for the sending agency.

(See http://www.nifc.blm.gov/nsdu/unit_id/Publish.html for list.)

13.5 National Resources

National Resources are those which have national utilization, high demand, limited availability, and unique status reporting requirements identified by NICC. They are:

- A. National Interagency Management Teams (Type 1 & NIMO)
- B. National Area Command Team
- C. National Buying Team
- D. National Interagency Wildland Fire Management Team
- E. Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crew
- F. Smokejumper
- G. National Contract Airtanker
- H. National Contract Lead Plane
- I. National Aerial Supervision Module
- J. Modular Airborne Firefighting System
- K. National Contract Type 1 and Type 2 Helicopter
- L. Smokejumper Aircraft
- M. National Contract Infrared Aircraft
- N. Large Transport Aircraft
- O. National Incident Radio Support Cache Communication
- P. National Contract Mobile Food Services Unit
- Q. Atmospheric Theodolite Meteorological Unit
- R. National Interagency Support Cache (NISC) System
- S. NFES Managed Items
- T. Fire Remote Automatic Weather Station
- U. National Contract Mobile Shower Facilities

13.6 Notification of Commitment of National Resources

When requested, GACCs will notify NICC and adjoining GACCs of the commitment of National Resources within their Area. Notification of national resource commitment will be obtained via ROSS notification and/or via phone call within **fifteen (15) minutes** of commitment when National Resources:

- A. Are committed internally to an incident or are no longer available for dispatch,
- B. Are available again,
- C. Have location changes, or
- D. At the time 50% of the Smokejumpers at home bases are dispatched or committed.

13.7 Unable to Fill (UTF) Procedure

A 48 hour “Unable To Fill” (UTF) policy exists nationally. NICC will return requests to the ordering GACC with a “UTF” no more than 48 hours after receipt, unless notified the order can be filled. NICC will not accept or process any request previously UTF’d unless a new request number is assigned.

13.8 Standard Cubes, Weight, and Gear Policy for all Personnel (Excluding Smokejumpers, Rappellers, and Helicopter Managers – Refer to Chapters 63.2 and 65)

All personnel dispatched off their unit must conform to the following limitations:

- A. One frameless, soft pack, not to exceed 45 pounds.
- B. Web gear or briefcase (not both), not to exceed 20 pounds.
- C. Maximum allowable crew weight, including equipment, is 5,100 pounds.
- D. All personnel baggage weights must be displayed separately from individual weights on flight manifests.
- E. Pre-identified Type 1 Incident Management Team members are authorized additional weight, not to exceed 300 pounds, for equipment per team. The Incident Commander must designate, in advance, which team members are authorized additional weight and make this a matter of record.

13.9 Wildland Fire Weather Forecasts

Geographic Area Coordinating Groups will provide direction and guidance, which will ensure wildland fire weather forecasts are communicated in a timely manner to firefighters on all wildland fires.

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