Chapter 18
Reviews and Investigations

Introduction

Reviews and investigations are used by wildland fire and aviation managers to assess and improve the effectiveness and safety of organizational operations. Information (other than factual) derived from safety reviews and accident investigations should only be used by agencies for accident prevention and safety purposes.

Multiagency Cooperation

Many reviews and investigations involve cooperation between Federal, State, County, and Municipal Agencies. To comply with each agency’s authorities, policies, and responsibilities, a multi-agency review or investigation may be necessary. A multiagency Delegation of Authority should be provided to outline roles, responsibilities, and expected deliverables.

The Team Leader or delegating official(s) should establish cooperative relationships with the other agencies involved in the review or investigation to ensure policies and responsibilities are met. This may involve negotiations, cooperative agreements, and coordination with the agency Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) or the agency official who signs the Delegation of Authority.

Federal Interagency Investigations

Close calls or accidents that involve interagency (USFS or DOI) personnel and/or jurisdiction (e.g. USFS firefighter injured on FWS jurisdictional wildland fire & vice versa) shall be reviewed or investigated cooperatively and conducted at the appropriate level as outlined in this chapter.

Agency Administrators will ensure that affected agencies are involved throughout the review/investigation process.

When an incident does not meet the serious accident criteria, the affected Agency Administrators should jointly decide what type and level of investigation will be conducted based on agency processes outlined in this chapter. Questions should be addressed to your agency wildland fire safety program manager.

Reviews

Reviews are methodical examinations of system elements such as program management, safety, leadership, operations, preparedness, training, staffing, business practices, budget, cost containment, planning, and interagency or intra-
agency cooperation and coordination. Reviews do not have to be associated with a specific incident. The purpose of a review is to ensure the effectiveness of the system element being reviewed, and to identify deficiencies and recommend specific corrective actions. Established review types are described below and include:

- Preparedness Reviews;
- After Action Reviews;
- Fire and Aviation Safety Team Reviews;
- Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team Reviews;
- Large Fire Cost Reviews;
- Individual Fire Reviews;
- Lessons Learned Reviews; and
- Escaped Prescribed Fire Reviews.

### Review Types and Requirements

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<th>Type</th>
<th>When Conducted</th>
<th>Delegating or Authorizing Official</th>
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<tr>
<td>Preparedness Review</td>
<td>Annually, or management discretion</td>
<td>Local/State/Region/National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Action Review</td>
<td>Management discretion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and Aviation Safety Team Review</td>
<td>As fire activity dictates</td>
<td>Geographic Area Coordinating Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team Review</td>
<td>As aviation activity dictates</td>
<td>State/Regional Aviation Manager or MACG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Fire Cost Review</td>
<td>Refer to NWCG Memorandum #003-2009</td>
<td>Agency Director</td>
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<td>Individual Fire Review</td>
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<td>Local/State/Region/National</td>
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<td>Lessons Learned Review</td>
<td>Management discretion</td>
<td>Local/State/Region/National</td>
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### Preparedness Reviews

Preparedness Reviews assess fire programs for compliance with established fire policies and procedures outlined in the current *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and other pertinent policy documents.

Preparedness Reviews identify organizational, operational, procedural, personnel, or equipment deficiencies, and recommend specific corrective actions. Interagency Preparedness Review Checklists can be found at: http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_intgncy_prepcheck.html
After Action Reviews (AAR)

An AAR is a learning tool intended for the evaluation of an incident or project in order to improve performance by sustaining strengths and correcting weaknesses. An AAR is performed as soon after the event as possible by the personnel involved. An AAR should encourage input from participants that is focused on:

- What was planned?
- What actually happened?
- Why it happened?
- What can be done the next time?

An AAR is a tool that leaders and units can use to get maximum benefit from the experience gained on any incident or project. When possible, the leader of the incident or project should facilitate the AAR process. However, the leader may choose to have another person facilitate the AAR as needed and appropriate. AARs may be conducted at any organizational level. However, all AARs follow the same format, involve the exchange of ideas and observations, and focus on improving proficiency. The AAR should not be utilized as an investigational review. The format can be found in the Interagency Response Pocket Guide (IRPG), PMS #461, NFES #1077. Additional AAR information is available at http://wildfirelessons.net/AAR.aspx

Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST) Reviews

Fire and Aviation Safety Teams assist Agency Administrators during periods of high fire activity by assessing policy, rules, regulations, and management oversight relating to operational issues. They can also do the following:

- Provide guidance to ensure fire and aviation programs are conducted safely.
- Assist with providing immediate corrective actions;
- Review compliance with OSHA abatement plan(s), reports, reviews, and evaluations; and
- Review compliance with Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations.

FAST reviews can be requested through geographic area coordination centers to conduct reviews at the state/regional and local level. If a more comprehensive review is required, a national FAST can be ordered through the National Interagency Coordination Center.

FASTs include a team leader, who is either an Agency Administrator or fire program lead with previous experience as a FAST member, a safety and health manager, and other individuals with a mix of skills from fire and aviation management.

FASTs will be chartered by their respective Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG) with a Delegation of Authority, and report back to the GACG.
FAST reports will include an executive summary, purpose, objectives, methods/procedures, findings, recommendations, follow-up actions (immediate, long-term, national issues), and a letter delegating authority for the review. FAST reports should be submitted to the Geographic Area Coordinating Group with a copy to the Federal Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FFAST) chair within 30 days. See Appendix L for sample FAST Delegation of Authority.

**Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team (ASTAT) Reviews**
Refer to Chapter 16 for ASTAT information.

**Large Fire Cost Reviews**
Information on large fire cost reviews can be found in Chapter 11 (Incident Management), and at http://www.nwcg.gov/general/memos/nwcg-003-2009.html

**Individual Fire Reviews**
Individual fire reviews examine all or part of the operations on an individual fire. The fire may be ongoing or controlled. These reviews may be local, state/regional, or national. These reviews evaluate decisions and strategies, correct deficiencies, identify new or improved procedures, techniques or tactics, determine cost-effectiveness, and compile and develop information to improve local, state/regional, or national fire management programs.

**Lessons Learned Reviews (LLRs)**
The purpose of a LLR is to focus on the near miss events or conditions in order to prevent potential serious incident in the future. In order to continue to learn from our near misses and our successes it is imperative to conduct a LLR in an open, non-punitive manner. LLRs are intended to provide educational opportunities that foster open and honest dialog and assist the wildland fire community in sharing lessons learned information. LLRs provide an outside perspective with appropriate technical experts assisting involved personnel in identifying conditions that led to the unexpected outcome and sharing findings and recommendations.

A LLR should be tailored to the event being reviewed. The scope of the review should be commensurate with the severity of the incident. A LLR will not be substituted for a Serious Accident Investigation (SAI) or Accident Investigation (AI), should the criteria for either of those be met, but may be used as a supplement to the SAI or AI.

- FS- Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) may be used for incidents meeting the AI criteria.

A LLR will be led by a facilitator not involved in the event. A facilitator should be an appropriate fire management expert who possesses skills in interpersonal communications, organization, and be unbiased to the event. Personnel involved in the event will be participants in the review process. Depending
1 upon the complexity of the event, the facilitator may request assistance from
2 technical experts (e.g., fire behavior, fire operations, etc.).
3 The LLR facilitator will convene the participants and:
4 • Obtain a Delegation of Authority from appropriate agency level. See
5   appendix J for a sample LLR Delegation of Authority;
6 • Identify facts of the event (sand tables maybe helpful in the process) and
7   develop a chronological narrative of the event;
8 • Identify underlying reasons for success or unintended outcomes;
9 • Identify what individuals learned and what they would do differently in the
10   future;
11 • Identify any recommendations that would prevent future similar
12   occurrences;
13 • 24 and 72 hour reports may be produced, but are not required; and
14 • Provide a final written report including the above items to the pertinent
15   Agency Administrator(s) within two weeks of event occurrence unless
16   otherwise negotiated. Names of involved personnel should not be included
17   in this report (reference them by position).

18 A copy of the final report will be submitted to the respective agency’s national
19 fire safety lead who will provide a copy to the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned
20 Center (LLC). E-mail: llcdocsubmit@gmail.com
21 • FS - The Forest Service has combined the Accident Prevention Analysis
22   (APA) with the Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA). A guide for the FLA
23   process is available at http://wildfirelessons.net/documents/FLA_Guide.pdf

24 Escaped Prescribed Fire Reviews
25 An escaped prescribed fire is a prescribed fire which has exceeded, or is
26 expected to exceed, its prescription. Escaped prescribed fire review direction is
27 found in these agency documents:
28 Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures
30 • BLM - IM No. OF&A 2012-005
31 • FWS - Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17
32 • NPS - RM-18, Chapter 7 & 17
33 • FS - FSM 5140

34 Investigations
35 Investigations are detailed and methodical efforts to collect and interpret facts
36 related to an incident or accident, identify causes (organizational factors, local
37 workplace factors, unsafe acts), and develop control measures to prevent
38 recurrence.
39 Distinct types of wildland fire incidents and accidents have specific
40 investigation requirements.
Wildland Fire Incident and Accident Types and Definitions

- **Serious Wildland Fire Accident**
  An unplanned event or series of events that resulted in death; injury, occupational illness, or damage to or loss of equipment or property. For wildland fire operations, a serious accident involves any of the following:
  - One or more fatalities;
  - Three or more personnel who are inpatient hospitalized as a direct result of or in support of wildland fire operations;
  - Property or equipment damage of $250,000 or more; and/or
  - Consequences that the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) judges to warrant Serious Accident Investigation.

- **Wildland Fire Accident**
  An unplanned event or series of events that resulted in injury, occupational illness, or damage to or loss of equipment or property to a lesser degree than defined in “Serious Wildland Fire Accident”.

- **Near-miss**
  An unplanned event or series of events that could have resulted in death; injury; occupational illness; or damage to or loss of equipment or property but did not.

- **Entrapment**
  A situation where personnel are unexpectedly caught in a fire behavior-related, life-threatening position where planned escape routes or safety zones are absent, inadequate, or compromised. Entrapment may or may not include deployment of a fire shelter for its intended purpose. Entrapment may result in a serious wildland fire accident, a wildland fire accident, or a near-miss.

- **Fire Shelter Deployment**
  The removing of a fire shelter from its case and using it as protection against fire. Fire shelter deployment may or may not be associated with entrapment. Fire shelter deployment may result in a serious wildland fire accident, a wildland fire accident, or a near-miss.

- **Fire Trespass**
  The occurrence of unauthorized fire on agency-protected lands where the source of ignition is tied to some type of human activity.
Investigation Types and Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wildland Fire Event</th>
<th>Investigation Type</th>
<th>Management Level Requiring Notification</th>
<th>Management level that determines review type and authorizes review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious Wildland Fire Accident</td>
<td>Serious Accident Investigation (SAI)</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildland Fire Accident</td>
<td>Accident Investigation (AI)</td>
<td>BLM/NPS-National</td>
<td>Region/State/Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FS- FLA may be used</td>
<td>FS/FWS-Management Discretion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrapment</td>
<td>SAI, AI, LLR, depending on severity</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Shelter Deployment</td>
<td>SAI, AI, LLR, depending on severity</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near-miss</td>
<td>LLR, AAR</td>
<td>Management Discretion</td>
<td>Region/State/Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Trespass</td>
<td>Fire Cause Determination &amp; Trespass Investigation</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 In the event that a wildland fire entrapment or fatality occurs, immediate notification to NICC is required. A Wildland Fire Entrapment/Fatality Initial Report (PMS 405-1) should be completed and mailed to NICC electronically or by fax machine within 24 hours. Submit this report even if some data is missing. The PMS 405-1 is located at the following web site: http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/coord_forms.htm.

2 Higher level management may exercise their authority to determine the type of review or investigation.

- **BLM** - BLM Accidents that involve fire and aviation employees or equipment will be investigated according to the requirements stated in this chapter. Investigations will occur regardless of land jurisdiction. Facts will be collected, causes (organizational factors, local workplace factors, unsafe acts) identified, and an accident investigation report produced. The report will include recommended corrective actions and control measures. Report issuance and follow-up will be through established command channels. BLM Agency Administrators may jointly delegate authority to investigate accidents in cases of mixed jurisdiction or employee involvement. Joint delegations must ensure that BLM investigation
requirements are met. The Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) process may be used as a supplemental element to required BLM accident investigation processes.

- **FS-** Forest Service Line Officers are the deciding officials regarding what type of accident investigation or analysis method is to be used for accidents or near misses occurring under Forest Service jurisdiction. FLAs are a type of Lessons Learned Review.

### Investigation Processes

**Processes Common to All Wildland Fire Accident Investigations**

- **Site Protection** - The site of the incident should be secured immediately and nothing moved or disturbed until the area is photographed and visually reviewed by the investigation team. Exact locations of injured personnel, entrapments, injuries, fatalities, and the condition and location of personal protective equipment, property, and other equipment must be documented.

- **Management of Involved Personnel** - Treatment, transport, and follow-up care must be immediately arranged for injured and involved personnel. The Agency Administrator or delegate should develop a roster of involved personnel and supervisors and ensure they are available for interviews by the investigation team. The Agency Administrator should consider relieving involved supervisors from fireline duty until the preliminary investigation has been completed. Attempt to collect initial statements from the involved individuals prior to a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) session.

- **Delegation of Authority** - A Delegation of Authority shall be issued to the investigation team leader. The Delegation of Authority will outline roles, responsibilities, and expected deliverables. Delegation of Authority templates are available at http://www.nifc.gov/safety/safety_reptsInvest.html

- **Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)** - CISM is the responsibility of local Agency Administrators, who should have individuals pre-identified for critical incident stress debriefings. Also refer to the Agency Administrator’s Guide to Critical Incident Management (PMS 926), available at: http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pms926.doc. Individuals or teams may be available through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) or Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs).

### Wildland Fire Serious Accident Investigation Process

**Fire Director Responsibilities**

The Fire Director(s) or designee(s) of the lead agency, or agency responsible for the land upon which the accident occurred, will:

- Notify the agency safety manager and Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO);
• Immediately appoint, authorize (through Delegation of Authority), and deploy an accident investigation team;
• Provide resources and procedures adequate to meet the team’s needs.
• Receive the factual and management evaluation reports and take action to accept or reject recommendations;
• Forward investigation findings, recommendations, and corrective action plan to the DASHO (the agency safety office is the “office of record” for reports);
• Convene an accident review board/ board of review (if deemed necessary) to evaluate the adequacy of the factual and management reports and suggest corrective actions;
• Ensure a corrective action plan is developed, incorporating management initiatives established to address accident causal factors; and
• Ensure Serious Accident Investigations remain independent of other investigations.

Agency Administrator Responsibilities
• Develop local preparedness plans to guide emergency response.
• Identify agencies with jurisdictional responsibilities for the accident.
• Provide for and emphasize treatment and care of survivors.
• Ensure the Incident Commander secures the accident site.
• Conduct an in-briefing to the investigation team.
• Facilitate and support the investigation as requested.
• Determine need and implement Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM).
• Notify home tribe leadership in the case of a Native American fatality.
• Prepare and issue the required 24 Hour Preliminary Report unless formally delegated to another individual.

Notification
Agency reporting requirements will be followed. As soon as a serious accident is verified, the following groups or individuals should be notified:
• Agency Administrator;
• Public affairs;
• Agency Law Enforcement;
• Safety personnel;
• County sheriff or local law enforcement as appropriate to jurisdiction;
• National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) through the local dispatch center and GACC. Provide a Wildland Fire Entrapment/Fatality Initial Report (PMS 405-1) directly to NICC within 24 hours;
• Agency headquarters; and
• OSHA (within 8 hours if the accident resulted in one or more fatalities or if three or more personnel are inpatient hospitalized).
Notification to the respective agency’s fire national safety/risk management lead is required.

**Designating the Investigation Team Lead**

The 1995 Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture states that serious wildland fire-related accidents will be investigated by interagency investigation teams. Following initial notification of a serious accident, the National Fire Director(s) or their designee(s) will designate a Serious Accident Investigation Team Lead(s) and provide that person(s) with a written Delegation of Authority to conduct the investigation and the means to form and deploy an investigation team.

- **BLM** - The Fire and Aviation Directorate Safety Program Manager mobilizes SAI teams in coordination with the SAI Team Leader.

Accidents involving more than one agency will require a collaboratively developed Delegation of Authority that is signed by each of the respective agencies.

**Serious Accident Investigation Team (SAIT) Composition**

SAI Team members should not be affiliated with the unit that sustained the accident.

- **Team Leader (Core Team Member)**
  A senior agency management official, at the equivalent associate/assistant regional/state/area/division director level. The team leader will direct the investigation and serve as the point of contact to the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO).

- **Chief Investigator (Core Team Member)**
  A qualified accident investigation specialist is responsible for the direct management of all investigation activities. The chief investigator reports to the team leader.

- **Accident Investigation Advisor/Safety Manager (Core Team Member)**
  An experienced safety and occupational health specialist or manager who acts as an advisor to the team leader to ensure that the investigation focus remains on safety and health issues. The accident investigation advisor/safety manager also works to ensure strategic management issues are examined. Delegating Officials or their designee may, at their discretion, fill this position with a trained and qualified NWCG Safety Officer, Line (SOFR), Safety Officer, Type 2 (SOF2), or Safety Officer, Type 1 (SOF1).

- **Interagency Representative**
  An interagency representative will be assigned to every fire-related Serious Accident Investigation Team. They will assist as designated by the team leader and will provide outside agency perspective. They will assist as assigned by the Team Leader and will provide a perspective from outside the agency.
• Technical Specialists
  Personnel who are qualified and experienced in specialized occupations, activities, skills, and equipment, addressing specific technical issues such as specialized fire equipment, weather, and fire behavior.

• Public Affairs Officer
  For investigations with high public visibility and significant news media interest, a public affairs officer (PAO) should be considered a part of the team. The PAO should develop a communications plan for the team, be a designated point of contact for news media, and oversee all aspects of internal and external communications. Ideally, the PAO should be qualified as a Type 1 or Type 2 public information officer and be familiar with SAI team organization and function.
  
  - BLM - All media related documents (news releases, talking points, etc.) should be cleared through NIFC Public Affairs prior to external release.

Core SAI Team members are required to take the Interagency Serious Accident Investigation Course 1112-05 prior to serious accident investigation assignment. This training is also required every 5 years for recurrency.

• FS/BLM/FWS - This training is required every 5 years to retain currency.

SAI 24 and 72 Hour Reports
Final 24 and 72 hour reports will be approved by the SAI delegating official, then sent to the agency fire safety/risk management lead for national distribution, which may include posting through the NWCG Safety Alert System.

• 24-Hour Preliminary Report - This report contains known basic facts about the accident. It will be completed and forwarded by the responsible Agency Administrator to the SAI delegating official. Names of injured personnel will not be included in this report. Personnel may be referenced by position.

• 72-Hour Expanded Report - This report provides additional factual information, if available. The information may include the number of victims and severity of injuries. The focus should be on information that may have immediate impact on future accident prevention. This report will be completed and forwarded by the SAI team to the SAI delegating official. Names of injured personnel will not be included in this report. Personnel may be referenced by position.

SAIT Final Report
Within 45 days of the incident, a final report consisting of a Factual Report (FR) and a Management Evaluation Report (MER) will be produced by the investigation team to document facts, findings, and recommendations and forwarded to the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) through the agency Fire Director(s).
Factual Report and Management Evaluation Report formatting can be found on the NIFC website at: http://www.nifc.gov/safety/accident_resources.htm

- **Factual Report** This report contains a brief summary or background of the event, and facts based only on examination of technical and procedural issues related to equipment and tactical fire operations. It does not contain opinions, conclusions, or recommendations. Names of injured personnel are not to be included in this report (reference them by position). Post-accident actions should be included in this report (emergency response attribute to survival of a victim, etc).

Factual Reports will be submitted to Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center (LLC) by the respective agency’s fire safety/risk management leads. E-mail: llcdocsubmit@gmail.com

- **Management Evaluation Report (MER)**
  The MER is intended for internal use only and explores management policies, practices, procedures, and personal performance related to the accident. The MER categorizes findings identified in the factual report and provides recommendations to prevent or reduce the risk of similar accidents.

**Accident Review Board/Board of Review**
An Accident Review Board/Board of Review is used by some agencies to evaluate recommendations, and develop a corrective action plan. Refer to the respective agency’s Safety and Health policy.

**Wildland Fire Accident Investigation Process**
Accident investigations and reports should be commensurate with the complexity and/or severity of the accident. Investigations and reports may range from large investigation teams producing in-depth reports to first-level supervisors initiating investigations and reporting injury/property damage in agency reporting systems.

**Notification**
When an accident occurs, agency notification requirements will be followed. Notification requirements universally include:
- Local dispatch center
- Unit Fire Management Officer
- Agency Administrator

**Investigation Team Membership**
Investigation team membership should be commensurate with the complexity and/or severity of the accident. An investigation team should consist of a team leader and an adequate number of technical specialists and subject matter...
experts. For complex investigations, team membership may also include a chief
investigator, a safety advisor/manager, and additional technical specialists, and a
writer/editor. Team members may have dual roles (e.g., chief investigator/safety
advisor).

Investigation Methodology

Accident Investigations (AI) are detailed and methodical efforts to collect and
interpret facts related to an accident and to provide specific recommendations to
prevent recurrence. The AI should include the following actions:

- Visual inspection of involved site, equipment, or material;
- Detailed analysis of equipment or material, as necessary;
- Interviews with involved personnel, witnesses, managers, and other
  pertinent persons;
- Collection and review of written statements;
- Review of records, archives, plans, policies, procedures, and other pertinent
documents;
- Consideration of environmental, equipment, material, procedural, and
  human factors as they related to the incident; and
- Development of specific findings and related recommendations for the AI
  report.

AI 24 and 72 Hour Reports

24 and 72 hour reports should be completed when a formal AI will be
conducted. Final 24 and 72 hour reports will be approved by the AI delegating
official, then sent to the agency fire safety/risk management lead for national
distribution, which may include posting through the NWCG Safety Alert
System.

- 24-Hour Preliminary Report- This report contains known basic facts about
  the accident. It will be completed and forwarded by the responsible Agency
  Administrator to the next higher level (e.g. District Manager forwards to
  Sate Director). Names of injured personnel will not be included in this
  report. Personnel may be referenced by position.
- 72-Hour Expanded Report- This report provides additional factual
  information, if available. The information may include the number of
  victims and severity of injuries. The focus should be on information that
  may have immediate impact on future accident prevention. This report will
  be completed and forwarded by the AI team to the AI delegating official.
  Names of injured personnel will not be included in this report. Personnel
  may be referenced by position.

AI Final Report

Within 45 days of the accident, a final report including facts, findings, and
recommendations shall be submitted to the senior manager dependent upon the
level of investigation (e.g., local Agency Administrator, State/Regional Director,
and Agency Fire Director or their designee). If a lower level investigation is
conducted, a courtesy copy of the final report shall be sent to the respective agency’s national fire safety/risk management lead. The Final Report (minus names of employees— they should be referenced by position) will be submitted to Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center (LLC) by the respective agency’s National Fire Safety Leads. E-mail: llcdocsubmit@gmail.com

Accident Investigation Report Standard Contents

• **Executive Summary** - A brief narrative of the facts involving the accident including dates, locations, times, name of incident, jurisdiction(s), number of individuals involved, etc. Names of injured personnel or personnel involved in the accident are not to be included in this report (reference them by position).

• **Narrative** - A detailed chronological narrative of events leading up to and including the accident, as well as rescue and medical actions taken after the accident. This section will contain who, what, and where.

• **Investigation Process** - A brief narrative of actions taken by the investigation team. This narrative should include investigation team membership, Delegation of Authority information (from who and contents, include a copy as an appendix), investigative actions and timeline (when the team conducted interviews, inspections, site visits, etc.), and if other sources were consulted (i.e. professional accident reconstruction experts, equipment manufacturers, etc.). This section should also address if environmental, equipment, material, procedural, and human factors were present, and state how findings/recommendations were developed.

• **Findings/Recommendations**
  - **Findings** are developed from the factual information. Each finding is a single event or condition. Each finding is an essential step in the accident sequence, but each finding is not necessarily causal or contributing. Findings should only include information necessary to explain the specific event or condition. Findings must be substantiated by the factual data. Findings should not include opinion or speculation.
  - **Discussion** - This provides explanation or information pertinent to a specific finding.
  - **Recommendations** - Recommendations are proposed actions intended to prevent similar accidents. Recommendations should be directly related to findings, should not contain opinion or speculation, and should identify the specific individual responsible for completing the recommended action. Recommendations will be evaluated and may be incorporated into future operational direction through established processes.

• **Conclusions and Observations** - Investigation team’s opinions and inferences, and “lessons learned” may be captured in the section. This section is not required.
• Reference Materials
  - Maps/Photographs/Illustrations - Graphic information used to document and visually portray facts.
  - Appendices - Reference materials (e.g., fire behavior analysis, equipment maintenance reports, agreements, Delegation of Authority).
  - Records - Factual data and documents used to substantiate facts involving the accident.

An AI Delegation of Authority template, AI report template and examples of AI reports can be found at the NIFC Safety website: http://www.nifc.gov/safety/safety_reportsInvest.html

Fire Cause Determination and Trespass Investigation

Introduction
Agency policy requires determination of cause, origin, and responsibility for all wildfires. Accurate fire cause determination is a critical first step for a successful fire investigation and for targeting fire prevention efforts. Proper investigative procedures, which occur concurrent with initial attack, more accurately pinpoint fire causes and can preserve valuable evidence that would otherwise be destroyed by suppression activities. Fire trespass refers to the occurrence of unauthorized fire on agency-protected lands where the source of ignition is tied to some type of human activity.

Policy
The agency must pursue cost recovery, or document why cost recovery is not required, for all human-caused fires on public lands. The agency will also pursue cost recovery for other lands under fire protection agreement where the agency is not reimbursed for suppression actions, if so stipulated in the agreement.

For all human-caused fires where negligence can be determined, trespass actions are to be taken to recover cost of suppression activities, land rehabilitation, and damages to the resource and improvements. Only fires started by natural causes will not be considered for trespass and related cost recovery.

The determination whether to proceed with trespass action must be made on “incident facts,” not on “cost or ability to pay.” Trespass collection is both a cost recovery and a deterrent to prevent future damage to public land. It is prudent to pursue collection of costs, no matter how small. This determination must be documented and filed in the unit office’s official fire report file.

The Agency Administrator has the responsibility to bill for the total cost of the fire and authority to accept only full payment. On the recommendation of the State/Regional Director, the Solicitor/Office of General Counsel may compromise claims of the United States, up to the monetary limits ($100,000).
established by law 31 U.S.C. 3711[a], 4 CFR 103-104, and 205 DM 7.1 and 7.2. The Solicitor/Office of General Counsel will refer suspension or termination of the amount, in excess of $100,000, exclusive of interest, penalties, or administrative charges, to the Department of Justice.

Unless specified otherwise in an approved protection agreement, the agency that has the land management jurisdiction/administration role is accountable for determining the cause of ignition, responsible party, and for obtaining all billable costs, performing the billing, collection, and distribution of the collected funds. The agency with the fire protection responsibility role must provide the initial determination of cause to the agency with the land management jurisdiction/administration role. The agency providing fire protection shall provide a detailed report of suppression costs that will allow the jurisdictional agency to proceed with trespass procedures in a timely manner.

Each agency’s role in fire trespass billing and collection must be specifically defined in the relevant Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. The billing and collection process for federal agencies is:

- For example, a federal agency fire occurs on another federal agency’s land and is determined to be a trespass fire. BLM provides assistance, and supplies costs of that assistance to the federal agency with jurisdictional responsibility for trespass billing. The responsible federal agency bills and collects trespass, and BLM then bills the federal agency and is reimbursed for its share of the collection.

- For example, where BLM administered land is protected by a state agency, the billing and collection process is:
  - The state bills BLM for their suppression costs. The BLM will pursue trespass action for all costs, suppression, rehabilitation, and damages, and deposits the collection per BLM’s trespass guidance.

Initiation of fire cause determination must be started with notification of an incident. Initial attack dispatchers are responsible for capturing all pertinent information when the fire is reported and throughout the incident. The initial attack Incident Commander and the initial attack forces are responsible for initiating fire cause determination and documenting observations starting with their travel to the fire. If probable cause indicates human involvement, an individual qualified in fire cause determination (INVF or cooperator equivalent) should be dispatched to the fire.

Agency references:

- BLM - 9238-1
- FWS - Fire Management Handbook
- NPS - RM-18, Chapter 6 and RM-9
- FS - FSM 5130 and FSM 5300

CHAPTER 18 REVIEWS & INVESTIGATIONS

18-16 Release Date: January 2013
Related Policy Documents

These documents provide specific direction related to incident and accident investigations.

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<tr>
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<td>FSM-5100 and FSH-6709.11, FSM 5720 (Aviation), FSM 5130 (Ground Operations), FSM 6730 (Specific policy), FSH 6709.12 Chapter 30 (General guidance), and most recent Accident Investigation Guide, for specific guidance.</td>
<td>For specific guidance.</td>
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<td>Interagency</td>
<td>Information on accident investigations may be found at: <a href="http://www.nifc.gov/safety/accident_resources.htm">http://www.nifc.gov/safety/accident_resources.htm</a>. For reporting use PMS 405-1, Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Initial Report, on the NWCG website.</td>
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