

Chapter 17 Fuels Management

Introduction

The purpose of the Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) programs within the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) is to reduce hazardous fuels (HF) and risks to human communities and improve the health of the land by creating fire-resilient landscapes and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.

The DOI and FS, along with other federal, state, tribal, and local partners, will work to ensure effective HFR treatment efforts are collectively planned and implemented. These efforts will be consistent with the direction provided in:

- *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001)*
- *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 13, 2009)*

Policy

The federal fire agencies use the *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide* (NWCG PMS 484) to manage prescribed fire activities. This guide provides standardized procedures specifically associated with the planning and implementation of prescribed fire.

Policy, project planning and implementation priorities, and standards common to all agencies:

- The safety of firefighters and the public is the number one priority when planning and implementing HFR treatment projects;
- All HFR treatment projects will support resource management objectives as identified in their agency specific Land/Resource Management Plans;
- All HFR treatment projects will have plans that contain measurable objectives;
- All HFR treatment projects will comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and all other regulatory requirements;
- All HFR management projects will be tracked and progress will be reported within required timeframes; and
- All HFR projects will be monitored to determine if treatment objectives were met and to document weather, fire behavior, fuels information, and smoke dispersion. Evaluation reports are to be completed and maintained in the project file.

Some programmatic differences are identified in the following agency specific documentation and serve as agency specific direction.

- 1 • *BLM - Refer to IM No. FA IM-2014-001*
- 2 • *FWS - Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17*
- 3 • *NPS - Refer to RM 18*
- 4 • *FS - Refer to FSM 5140*

6 **Reporting HFR Accomplishment**

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8 The HF module of the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System
9 (NFPORS) is the national system for submitting proposed projects for approval,
10 tracking accomplishments of the program, reporting performance, measuring
11 accomplishments, and accountability for all agencies in the Department of
12 Interior.

13
14 Department of Agriculture hazardous fuels treatment accomplishments for the
15 Forest Service are entered into the Forest Service Activity Tracking System
16 (FACTS) as the official system of record for tracking and reporting. This data is
17 shared with NFPORS to facilitate interagency joint reporting needs. Acres
18 treated through Forest Service funded State Fire Assistance grants are recorded
19 directly in NFPORS.

21 **Reporting Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM)**

22
23 Anytime a wildfire starts in or interacts with a fuel treatment area, interagency
24 policy requires that we document the outcome to examine whether the treatment
25 had the desired effect of reduced fire behavior and/or provided opportunities to
26 firefighters for effective management of the wildfire.

- 27 • *BLM - Refer to (IM No. OF&A 2013-027)*
- 28 • *FWS - Refer to Fire Management Handbook, Chapter 17*
- 29 • *NPS - Refer to RM 18 and Documenting Hazardous Fuels Reduction*
30 *Program Treatment Effectiveness Memo, 10/09/2012*
- 31 • *FS - Refer to FSM 5140*

33 **Policy Regarding Planned HF Treatments Burned in a Wildfire**

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35 For DOI agencies, acres burned in a wildfire may only be reported in the
36 NFPORS HFR Module as “Fire Use” if all the following conditions are met:

- 37 • The area burned was in a pre-existing NFPORS treatment unit;
 - 38 • NEPA is complete;
 - 39 • The planned objectives were met; and
 - 40 • The accomplishment is approved by a Regional Fuels Specialist.
- 41
42 • *BLM- Offices will complete a fuels treatment effectiveness assessment and*
43 *input appropriate information into the Fuels Treatment Effectiveness*
44 *Monitoring (FTEM) online tool for all wildfires which start in, burn into, or*
45 *burn through any portion of a fuel treatment area that has been completed*

1 and reported in the Hazardous Fuels Module of the National Fire Plan
2 Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) from fiscal year 2003 to
3 present. If offices have wildfire/treatment intersections that have occurred
4 prior to 2003 or are not in NFPORS, as long as offices can document that
5 fuels dollars were expended on these treatments and the wildfire is recorded
6 in the Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) system, the record
7 should be entered into FTEM. For more information, refer to Instruction
8 Memorandum No. FA IM-2013-027.

- 9 • **BLM-** For policy regarding reporting acres burned in a wildfire, refer to
10 chapter 9 of this document.

11
12 The USFS provides direction for reporting accomplishment from unplanned
13 ignitions in the annual budget advice and by Washington Office interim
14 direction letters.

15 **Prescribed Fire during Preparedness Levels 4 and 5**

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17 Approval is required for implementation of prescribed fires at national
18 preparedness Levels 4 and 5 (Refer to the *National Mobilization Guide*).

- 20 • **FWS-** National Preparedness Level 5 concurrence from Headquarters,
21 Branch of Fire Management must be obtained utilizing Preparedness Level
22 5 Prescribed Fire Concurrence Form.

23 **Federal Agencies Assistance**

24
25 Reference Section VI of the *Interagency Agreement For Wildland Fire*
26 *Management among the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs,*
27 *National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States*
28 *Department Of The Interior, and the Forest Service of the United States*
29 *Department Of Agriculture, effective 2011-2015.*

30
31 Agencies will enter into separate agreements for personnel and other resources
32 provided for planning and implementation of (hazardous fuels management
33 program) treatments and activities. This may or may not result in an exchange
34 of funds subject to the applicable statutory authority used.

35 **Hazard Pay/Environmental Differential for Prescribed Fire** 36 **Implementation**

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38 Current policy is that hazard pay will not be paid for any prescribed fire. Under
39 certain circumstances, hazard pay or environmental differential may be
40 warranted. Offices should contact their servicing personnel office with specific
41 questions.
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1 Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Use on Prescribed Fire

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3 For information regarding use of non-NWCG agency personnel on prescribed
4 fires, see Chapter 13.

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6 Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation

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8 Agencies can contract to conduct all or part of the planning and implementation
9 of prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for HFR
10 projects.

11

12 If a contractor is actively involved in igniting, holding, or mopping up an agency
13 prescribed fire, a Contracting Officer's Authorized Representative (COR) or
14 Project Inspector (PI) will be on site (exceptions can be made for late stage mop
15 up and patrol) to ensure that the prescribed fire objectives are being met and that
16 the terms of the contract are adhered to. The Agency Administrator and/or FMO
17 will determine the qualifications required for the agency representative (COR or
18 PI).

19

20 Use of AD Pay Plan for Prescribed Fire

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22 Refer to the DOI Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency
23 Workers (Casuals) for information regarding the use of emergency workers for
24 prescribed fire. The DOI AD Pay Plan does not allow for use of Casuals for
25 mechanical or chemical reduction projects.

26

27 Forest Service does not have this authority.

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29 Activation of Contingency Resources

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31 In the event an agency activates the contingency resources in their prescribed
32 fire plan, sending units should respond and support the requesting agency
33 immediately to ensure that the public and firefighter safety are not
34 compromised.

35

36 Non-Prescribed Fire HFR Activities

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38 For policy, guidance, and standards for implementation of non-prescribed fire
39 hazard fuel reduction treatments (e.g. mechanical, biological, chemical), refer to
40 agency specific policy and direction.