

1 **Chapter 05**
2 **USDA Forest Service Wildland Fire and Aviation Program**
3 **Organization and Responsibilities**
4

5 **Introduction**
6

7 This document is intended to be a program reference guide that documents the
8 standards for operational procedures and practices for the USDA Forest Service
9 Fire and Aviation Management program. The standards provided in this
10 handbook are based on current agency and interagency wildland fire
11 management policy, and are intended to provide fire and aviation program
12 guidance, and to ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective fire and aviation
13 operations. This document will be reviewed and updated annually.
14

15 **Foundational Doctrine**
16

17 The vision of the Forest Service's Fire and Aviation Management program is to
18 safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable;
19 manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire. To
20 support this vision, five objectives set the foundation for an all-inclusive and
21 comprehensive High Reliability Fire Management program. These objectives
22 are intrinsic for supporting the vision.

- 23 ● Risk Management and Risk Reduction- transforming our workforce into a
24 more refined safety culture.
- 25 ● Implementing fire management programs to protect the ecology of Forest
26 Service lands for multiple uses.
- 27 ● Enhanced and Improved Collaboration and Partnerships.
- 28 ● Learning- utilizing science, research, and innovative practices.
- 29 ● Empowerment of employees in leadership, judgment, and decision making.
30

31 Doctrine is beliefs and teachings which form the fundamental core values of our
32 work. Doctrinal approach goes beyond strict compliance with procedural rules,
33 and promotes risk-based application of wildland fire management principles to
34 improve decision making and firefighter safety. Foundational doctrine has been
35 codified in Forest Service Manual 5100 direction and will guide fundamental
36 wildland fire management policy, practices, behaviors, and customs to be
37 mutually understood at every level of command.
38

39 The following collection of principles and beliefs form the foundational doctrine
40 for fire suppression in the U.S. Forest Service. These principles and beliefs
41 operate at multiple organizational levels, including:

- 42 ● Forest Service Wide (i.e., apply to all employees and activities)
- 43 ● Fire and Aviation Management (i.e., are specific to the fire and aviation
44 management program)
- 45 ● Fire Suppression (i.e., are specific to fire fighting activities).

1 **The Operational Environment**

2 • *Fire Suppression*

- 3 1. No resource or facility is worth the loss of human life, however the
4 wildland fire suppression environment is complex and possesses inherent
5 hazards that can, even with reasonable mitigation, result in harm to fire
6 fighters engaged in fire suppression operations. In recognition of this fact,
7 we are committed to the aggressive management of risk.

8
9 **Mission**

10 • *Forest Service Wide*

- 11 2. The Forest Service is prepared and organized to support national and
12 international emergencies with trained personnel and other assets when
13 requested.
14 3. Agency employees respond when they come across situations where
15 human life is immediately at risk or there is a clear emergency, and they are
16 capable of assisting without undue risk to themselves or others.
17 4. In responding to emergencies, we will bring the same professionalism
18 and passion for safety as we do to non-emergency situations.
19 5. Support for local fire emergencies takes priority over accomplishment of
20 local resource targets. Support of non-local fire emergencies will be at the
21 discretion of the local line officer, as bounded by agency agreements and
22 Regional or National direction.
23 6. A cooperative relationship between the Forest Service and other agencies
24 is essential. The Forest Service is committed to honor its part of the joint
25 responsibility to develop and maintain effective working relationships with
26 its intergovernmental cooperators.

27 • *Fire & Aviation Management*

- 28 7. Fire management is central to meeting the Forest Service mission –
29 conserving natural resources, restoring ecological health, and protecting
30 communities.

31 • *Fire Suppression*

- 32 8. Successful fire suppression is essential to support the Forest Service
33 mission.
34 9. The intent of wildfire suppression is to protect human life, property, and
35 at risk lands and resources.

36
37 **Leadership and Accountability**

38 • *Forest Service Wide*

- 39 10. The hallmarks of Forest Service leadership are action, attitude, and
40 accountability.
41 11. Leaders express clear and concise intent to ensure assignments are
42 managed safely, effectively, and efficiently.
43 12. Leaders regularly monitor operations for effectiveness, and take action
44 when there is recognition of exceptional or problematic employee
45 performance.

1 13. Both positive reinforcement and discipline will be based on individual
2 behavior as measured by adherence to the rules; appropriate application of
3 doctrine, principles, and guidelines; execution of responsibilities
4 commensurate with role; and appropriate use of available information.

5 • *Fire Suppression*

6 14. Demonstrated fitness for command is a requirement for leadership
7 positions associated with fire fighting.

8

9 **Roles and Relationships**

10 • *Forest Service Wide*

11 15. Commitment to duty, respect for others, and personal integrity are
12 expected. Every employee fosters a work environment that is enjoyable,
13 rewarding, recognizes the value of diversity, and is free of harassment.

14 • *Fire & Aviation Management*

15 16. Line officers with fire management responsibilities will have knowledge
16 and understanding of fire program management.

17 17. Contracted resources will meet identified standards for qualifications,
18 training, productivity, and efficiency necessary to meet emergency response
19 needs.

20 18. It is the Forest Service responsibility to initiate and participate in public
21 education efforts to promote support for necessary fire management
22 activities.

23

24 • *Fire Suppression*

25 19. Every Forest Service employee has a responsibility to support fire
26 suppression emergencies in a manner that meets identified needs, and is
27 within their qualifications and capabilities.

28

29 **Operations**

30 • *Forest Service Wide*

31 20. Employees are expected and empowered to be creative and decisive, to
32 exercise initiative and accept responsibility, and to use their training,
33 experience, and judgment in decision-making to carry out their leader's
34 intent.

35 21. Employees are expected and empowered to make reasonable and
36 prudent decisions to accomplish the agency mission while minimizing
37 exposure to hazards.

38 22. Clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders maximize effectiveness
39 and minimize confusion.

40 • *Fire Suppression*

41 23. When it is time to fight fire, we do so in a manner that maximizes
42 effectiveness of effort, has highest regard for firefighter and public safety,
43 and controls costs.

44 24. Every fire suppression operation is directed toward clearly-defined,
45 decisive, and obtainable objectives.

- 1 25. Command and control must be decentralized to cope with the
2 unpredictable nature of fire. To achieve their leader's intent and accomplish
3 operational objectives, subordinate commanders are required to make
4 decisions on their own initiative, and to coordinate their efforts.
5 26. Unity of effort is maintained and suppression actions are coordinated at
6 all times.
7 27. Using principles requires judgment in application, while adherence to
8 rules does not. In combination, principles and rules guide our fundamental
9 wildland fire suppression practices and behaviors, and are mutually
10 understood at every level of command.
11 28. Rapid deployment and concentration of fire suppression resources at the
12 decisive time and place is essential to successful fire suppression actions.
13 29. Maintaining high capability for initial attack is essential to public and
14 fire fighter safety, accomplishment of management objectives, and cost
15 containment.

16 **Risk Management**

- 17 • *Fire Suppression*
18 30. We practice risk management to minimize the exposure and affects of
19 the inherent hazards in fire suppression while maximizing the opportunities
20 to achieve leader intent.
21

22 **Agency Administrator Positions**

23
24
25 The Forest Service has developed core fire management competencies. They
26 are presented here for reference:

- 27 • Knowledge of fire program management including ability to integrate fire
28 and fuels management across all program areas and functions;
29 • Ability to implement fire management strategies and integrate natural
30 resource concerns into collaborative community protection and ecosystem
31 restoration strategies;
32 • Knowledge to oversee a fire management program including budget,
33 preparedness, prevention, suppression, and hazardous fuels reduction;
34 • Ability to serve as an Agency Administrator during an incident on an
35 assigned unit; and
36 • Ability to provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diversified
37 firefighting workforce that exists in a "safety first" and "readiness"
38 environment.
39

40 **Training and Core Competencies**

- 41 • Attend a regional or national Fire Management Leadership for Agency
42 Administrators training session;
43 • Require a shadow assignment with a fully qualified Agency Administrator;
44 • Receive training or experience with the Wildland Fire Decision Support
45 System (WFDSS); and

- 1 • Ability to provide a Delegation of Authority to Incident Commanders.

2

3 **Line Officer Certification Program**

4 The following principles will guide certification of Agency Administrators in
5 wildfire management:

- 6 • Regional Foresters are accountable for certification of line officers;
7 • Line officer evaluation includes standards for training, background and
8 experience, and demonstrated ability, which will result in a qualitative
9 evaluation of readiness by the Regional Forester;
10 • When the complexity level of a fire exceeds a line officer's certification, a
11 coach will be assigned to advise (but not replace);
12 • This certification program will be periodically evaluated and updated as
13 needed;
14 • Assistance with decision documentation and analysis can be requested
15 through the Wildland Fire Management RD&A- National Fire Decision
16 Support Center (NFDSC); and
17 • The Coaching/Shadowing program, to be administered by each region, is an
18 integral part of this certification program.

19

20 **Line Officers will be evaluated in three basic areas:**

- 21 • Training;
22 • Background and experience; and
23 • Demonstrated understanding of concepts and principles.

24

25 This certification program is a multi-level process where line officers
26 demonstrate competence in one of three levels of managing fires. Those levels
27 would be Working, Journey, and Advanced.

28

29 **Guidelines**

30 In consideration of the appropriate level (Working, Journey, and Advanced) to
31 assign a line officer, the Regional Forester should consider the following
32 guidelines:

- 33 • For individuals that do not meet at least the Working Level, a coach will be
34 assigned to support that line officer in managing Type 3 or higher wildfire
35 incidents.

36

37 **Working Level** - The line officer could manage a low to moderate complexity
38 fire. The line officer should meet the following:

- 39 • **Training:** Fire Management Leadership or National Fire Management for
40 Line Officers, and attend an annual review of line officer WFDSS
41 responsibilities (see appendix N for suggested refresher items).
42 • **Background and Experience:**
43 ○ Successful management of a minimum of one Type 3 or higher fire, or
44 one successful higher complexity fire (Type 2 or higher) quality
45 shadow assignment (consider complexity and size of the fires).

- 1 ○ Management oversight of a low-complexity fire program and/or
2 experience as an Agency Administrator or representative.
- 3 ○ Applicable experience in all hazard or other incident oversight may be
4 considered in lieu of this experience.
- 5 ○ Consider career fire experience.
- 6 ● **Demonstrated Ability:** Successful evaluation by a coach (including
7 feedback from ICs or ACs) that the candidate has demonstrated
8 understanding and application of the responsibilities of an Agency
9 Administrator on smaller low-complexity fires with a basic understanding
10 of the elements of the core competencies.
- 11
- 12 **Journey Level** - The line officer could manage a moderate to high complexity
13 fire. The line officer needs to be certified at the Working Level and should meet
14 the following:
- 15 ● **Training:** Fire Management Leadership or National Fire Management for
16 Line Officers, attend an annual review of line officer WFDSS
17 responsibilities (see appendix N for suggested refresher items).
- 18 ● **Background and Experience:**
- 19 ○ Successful management of a minimum of one Type 2 or higher fire, or
20 one successful higher complexity fire (Type 1) quality shadow
21 assignment, depending on fire experience (complexity and size of the
22 fires should be considered).
- 23 ○ Management oversight of a moderate-complexity fire program, or
24 experience as an Agency Administrator or representative on Type 2 or
25 higher fires.
- 26 ○ Applicable experience in all-hazard or other incident oversight may
27 also be considered in lieu of other guidelines.
- 28 ● **Demonstrated Ability:** Successful evaluation by a coach (including
29 feedback from ICs or ACs) that the candidate has demonstrated
30 understanding and application of the responsibilities of an Agency
31 Administrator on moderate to large complex fires in the core competencies,
32 and other elements that may be relevant.
- 33
- 34 **Advanced Level** - The line officer could manage a high complexity fire. The
35 line officer needs to be certified at the Journey Level, and should meet the
36 following:
- 37 ● **Training:** Fire Management Leadership or National Fire Management for
38 Line Officers, attend an annual review of line officer WFDSS
39 responsibilities (see appendix N for suggested refresher items).
- 40 ● **Background and Experience:**
- 41 ○ Successful management of a minimum of five Type 1 or 2 fires (at least
42 one of which is a Type 1 fire), depending on fire experience
43 (complexity and size of the fires should be considered).
- 44 ○ Management oversight of a moderate to high-complexity fire program.
- 45 ○ Applicable experience in all hazard or other incident oversight may
46 also be considered in lieu of other guidelines.

- 1 ● **Demonstrated Ability:** Successful evaluation by a coach (including
2 feedback from ICs or ACs) that the candidate has demonstrated
3 understanding and application of the responsibilities of an Agency
4 Administrator on large complex fires in the core competencies, and other
5 elements that may be relevant.
6

7 **Other Considerations**

8 Core competencies, consistent with Fire Doctrine principles, include:

- 9 ● Safety;
10 ● Strategies and tactics for cost containment;
11 ● Incident management processes;
12 ● Understanding of decision support tools;
13 ● Situational awareness of resource availability & allocation;
14 ● Understanding fire agreements and cost apportionment;
15 ● WFDSS experience;
16 ● Monitoring and evaluation of fire operations;
17 ● Risk management; and
18 ● Social/political awareness and interpersonal relations.
19

20 Other training opportunities to achieve core competencies - Additional training
21 opportunities/suggestions:

- 22 ● Upper levels of fire leadership and fire management courses;
23 ● Function as the Line Officer in sand table exercises and training simulations
24 in S-420, S-520, and other fire courses;
25 ● Participate in advanced risk management training;
26 ● Get assigned to a Type 1 or Type 2 team as a training assignment (e.g.
27 shadow Plans) and see the world from their viewpoint;
28 ● WFDSS training (see the WFDSS homepage <http://wfdss.usgs.gov> for
29 training materials);
30 ● Include risk management and fire management topics during annual line
31 officer meetings;
32 ● Attend staff rides (staff rides need to include a stand that portrays the line
33 officer perspective);
34 ● Participate in prescribed fires and/or attend prescribed fire training;
35 ● Participate in other leadership and/or decision-making training;
36 ● Attend L-580 *Leadership is Action*;
37 ● For additional information, a copy of the *Line Officer Desk Reference for*
38 *Fire Program Management* can be downloaded at:
39 http://www.wfmrda.nwcg.gov/line_officer_resources.php
40

41 **Guidance on the Selection of Coaches**

42 Coaches can be current or former line officers. The Regional Forester
43 determines the level of certification for which a coach is qualified.

44 Criteria for individuals serving as Coaches are as follows:

- 1 • Must be a “Journey” level line officer in dealing with large fire incident, or
- 2 rated at an experience level commensurate with incident being managed;
- 3 Present and past Agency Administrators can serve as coaches, including
- 4 retirees that were qualified/experienced; and
- 5 • Must be willing and able to serve as a Coach.

7 **Specific Agency Administrator Responsibilities for Fire and Aviation at the**

8 **Field Level**

10 **Responsibilities**

- 11 • Integrate fire and fuels management across all functional areas.
- 12 • Implement fire management strategies and integrate natural resource
- 13 concerns into collaborative community protection and ecosystem restoration
- 14 strategies on the unit.
- 15 • Manage a budget that includes fire preparedness, prevention, suppression,
- 16 and hazardous fuels in an annual program of work for the unit.
- 17 • Ensure the GSA Wildland Fire Equipment Catalog is used as the primary
- 18 and mandatory source of supply for wildland fire suppression equipment,
- 19 supplies and protective clothing. Any deviation must follow the
- 20 requirements listed in FSH 6309.32 - Required Sources of Supplies and
- 21 Services and FAR 8.002 - Priorities for Use of Government Supply Sources.
- 22 The deviation must be supported by a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) that
- 23 documents the specific reason the stock item does not meet the job
- 24 requirements and is signed by the applicable line officer. The purchasing
- 25 official must confirm that the JHA supports the alternate purchase.
- 26 • Perform duties of Agency Administrator and maintain those qualifications.
- 27 • Provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diverse workforce in a "safety
- 28 first" environment.
- 29 • Support and participate in wildfire prevention.

31 These responsibilities are based on current policy and provide program guidance
32 to ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective fire and aviation operations.

34 **Preparedness**

- 35 • Take all necessary and prudent actions to ensure firefighter and public
- 36 safety.
- 37 • Ensure sufficient qualified fire and non-fire personnel are available to
- 38 support fire operations at a level commensurate with the local and national
- 39 fire situation.
- 40 • Ensure accurate position descriptions are developed and reflect the
- 41 complexity of the unit. Individual Development Plans promote and enhance
- 42 FMO currency and development.
- 43 • Provide a written Delegation of Authority to FMOs that provides an
- 44 adequate level of operational authority at the unit level. Include Multi-
- 45 Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group authority, as appropriate.

- 1 • Identify resource management objectives to maintain a current Fire
2 Management Plan (FMP) that identifies an accurate level of funding for
3 personnel and equipment.
- 4 • Develop preparedness standards that are in compliance with agency fire
5 policies.
- 6 • Management teams meet once a year to review fire and aviation policies,
7 roles, responsibilities, and delegations of authority. Specifically address
8 oversight and management controls, critical safety issues, and high-risk
9 situations such as transfers of incident command, periods of multiple fire
10 activity, and Red Flag Warnings.
- 11 • Ensure fire and aviation preparedness reviews are conducted each year and
12 include the key components of the record of decision for the nationwide
13 aerial application of fire retardant on National Forest System land.
- 14 • Meet annually with cooperators and review interagency agreements to
15 ensure their continued effectiveness and efficiency.
- 16 • Meet annually with local US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA
17 Fisheries specialists to ensure the avoidance maps reflect changes during
18 the year on additional species or changes made for designated critical
19 habitat, and reporting and monitoring guidelines are still valid and being
20 applied.
- 21 • Convene and participate in annual conferences and fire reviews.
- 22 • Agency Administrators, Fire Program Managers, and/or Safety and Health
23 Program Managers shall conduct after action reviews on all Type 3 fires
24 and a minimum of 10% of their unit's Type 4 and 5 fires and document
25 their inspections in the incident records.

26 27 **Suppression**

- 28 • Ensure use of fire funds is in compliance with Agency policies.
- 29 • All fires must utilize the WFDSS to inform and document decisions related
30 to course of action, resource allocations, and risk management
31 considerations. WFDSS will be used to approve and publish decisions on
32 all fires that exceed initial attack or include a resource management
33 objective. See table below for WFDSS approval authorities.
- 34 • Personally attend reviews on Type 1 and Type 2 fires. Ensure Agency
35 Administrator representatives are assigned when appropriate.
- 36 • Provide incident management objectives (all wildfires must have a
37 protection objective), written delegations of authority, and a complete
38 Agency Administrator briefing to Incident Management Teams.
- 39 • Ensure briefings include any applicable information for avoidance areas and
40 waterways per the nationwide aerial application of fire retardant direction,
41 mapping, and cultural resources. Include the reporting requirements in the
42 briefing if a misapplication of fire chemical occurs. Provide resource
43 advisors if the use of aerially applied fire retardant is expected and the unit
44 has mapped avoidance areas (which include waterways and 300' or larger

- 1 buffers) and otherwise evaluate the need for resource advisors for all other
 2 fires, and assign as appropriate.
- 3 • For all unplanned human-caused fires where responsibility can be
 4 determined, ensure actions are initiated to recover cost of suppression
 5 activities, land rehabilitation, damages to the resource, and improvements.
 - 6 • Ensure structure exposure protection principles are followed.

8 Responsibilities and Oversight

- 9 • Agency Administrators are responsible for all aspects of fire management.
- 10 • Agency Administrators will ensure that all Forest Service employees and
 11 employees of interagency partners working on Forest Service jurisdiction
 12 wildfires clearly understand direction.
- 13 • Agency Administrators must approve and publish decisions in WFDSS and
 14 issue delegations of authority to the Incident Commander. The Agency
 15 Administrator authority is based on incident type.

Incident Type	USFS Approval*
Type 1	Regional Forester level with National oversight
Type 2	Forest Supervisor level with oversight by the Regional Forester
Type 3,4,5	District Ranger level with oversight by the Forest Supervisor

17 *This Authority may be delegated to the next level provided that the line
 18 officer at the next level meets Line Officer wildfire response certification
 19 requirements.

- 21 • Critical long duration wildfire oversight roles include ensuring that:
 - 22 ○ Up-to-date Published decisions are completed and documented in
 23 WFDSS.
 - 24 ○ Hazards are identified and risk assessments are incorporated into
 25 Published Decisions.
 - 26 ○ Coordination with partners and potentially affected parties is conducted
 27 (including smoke impacts). Unified command is implemented early if
 28 necessary.
 - 29 ○ Resource capacity and availability are adequately assessed to meet
 30 expectations.
- 31 • This oversight role should address concerns of the states, cooperators, and
 32 the public including air quality impacts from multiple wildfires.

34 Risk Management Framework

35 Sound decision making relies on identifying reasonable objectives for protection
 36 of critical values at risk, while considering the amount and quality of exposure
 37 to firefighters and the likelihood of success. The Forest Service is committed to
 38 using a risk management framework that is comprised of three (3) key elements:

- 1 Pre-season preparedness work is critical to success when a fire starts.
- 2 • Build capacity of our decision makers and their key stakeholders to manage
- 3 the uncertainty and inherent risks of fires.
- 4 • Complete landscape level risk assessments by developing a common
- 5 understanding of what are the values to be protected and can be summed up
- 6 best by answering these questions; ‘What is important?’, ‘Why is it
- 7 important?’, ‘How important is it?’, and ‘What are the consequences?’
- 8 • Complete a risk analysis, in concert with key stakeholders and partner
- 9 agencies, to predetermine the range of acceptable response strategies for
- 10 protecting the identified values at risk while balancing firefighter and public
- 11 exposure.
- 12
- 13 During incident phase focuses on a Seven (7) Step Risk Management Process:
- 14 1. Complete an incident Risk Assessment
- 15 • Develop an assessment of what is at risk (from preseason work or input
- 16 from key stakeholders), and the associated probabilities and potential
- 17 consequences.
- 18 2. Complete a Risk Analysis
- 19 • Consider alternatives (objectives, strategies and tactics) against desired
- 20 outcomes, exposure to responders, probability of success and values to
- 21 be protected.
- 22 3. Complete Two-Way Risk Communications
- 23 • Engage community leaders, local government officials, partners, and
- 24 other key stakeholders of the incident to share the risk picture and enlist
- 25 input.
- 26 4. Conduct Risk Sharing Dialogue
- 27 • Engage appropriate senior line officers and political appointees (as
- 28 necessary) regarding the potential decision aimed at obtaining
- 29 understanding, acceptance, and support for the alternatives and likely
- 30 decision.
- 31 5. Make the Risk Informed Decision
- 32 6. Document the risk: assessment, analysis, communication, sharing and
- 33 decision in WFDSS
- 34 7. Continue Monitoring and Adjusting as necessary or as conditions change.
- 35 After the incident: As a learning organization we should always strive to
- 36 improve how we conduct our business. We should endeavor to learn from each
- 37 incident and apply those lessons.
- 38 • Complete an incident after action review.
- 39 ○ Engage key stakeholders of the incident to be involved
- 40 ○ Review what worked, what did not work and suggestions for
- 41 improvement
- 42 • Conduct a peer review after action process
- 43 ○ Engage others who have had similar incidents to learn strategies for
- 44 improvement
- 45 • Implement plans for improvement

- 1 ○ Make use of lessons learned in real-time if possible

2

3 The following Risk Assessment and Risk Decision questions are designed to
4 inform fire management decisions by stimulating thinking and prompting
5 dialogue, analyzing and assessing risk, and recognizing shared risks and
6 communicating those risks within the Agency and with partners and
7 stakeholders.

8

9 ● Risk Assessment:

- 10 1. What are the critical values at risk?
- 11 2. What is the chance the critical values will be impacted, and if so what
12 are the consequences?
- 13 3. What are the opportunities to manage fire to meet land management
14 objectives?
- 15 4. What are the possible low probability/high consequence events?
- 16 5. Who are the stakeholders that should be consulted prior to making a
17 decision?

18 ● Risk Decision:

- 19 6. What alternatives (objectives, strategies, and tactics) are being
20 considered?
- 21 7. What is the exposure of responders for the alternatives being
22 considered?
- 23 8. What is the relative probability of success associated with the
24 alternatives being considered?
- 25 9. What alternative provides for the best balance between the desired
26 outcome and exposure to responders?
- 27 10. What are the critical thresholds that will trigger reconsideration of the
28 proposed alternative and how will they be monitored?

29

30 **Safety**

- 31 ● Review safety policies, procedures, and concerns with field fire and
32 aviation personnel.
- 33 ● Ensure timely follow-up actions to program reviews, fire preparedness
34 reviews, fire and aviation safety reviews, and management reviews.
- 35 ● Monitor the fire situation and provide oversight during periods of critical
36 fire activity and situations of high risk.
- 37 ● Ensure there is adequate direction in fire management plans to maintain fire
38 danger awareness.
- 39 ● Take appropriate actions with escalating fire potential.
- 40 ● Ensure appropriate investigation or Lessons Learned analyses are conducted
41 for incidents, entrapments, and serious accidents.

42

43 **Fuels**

- 44 ● Complete a fuels treatment effectiveness assessment on all wildfires which
45 start in or burn into a fuel treatment area.

- 1 • Enter results of the assessment in the Fuels Treatment Effectiveness
2 Monitoring (FTEM) database found at: www.nwportal.fs.usda.gov within
3 90 days of control of the fire. Reference FSM 5140.
4
- 5 **Prescribed Fire**
- 6 • Provide program leadership by visiting prescribed fire treatment projects
7 and providing leader's intent to prescribed fire personnel.
- 8 • Ensure compliance with National and Regional Office policy and direction
9 for prescribed fire activities and ensure that periodic reviews and
10 inspections of the prescribed fire program are completed.
- 11 • Adhere to procedures for Regional and/or National level approvals for new
12 and continued prescribed fire activities at National Preparedness Levels 4
13 and 5 as described in the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide*.
- 14 • Ensure a Prescribed Fire Plan is written and approved for each project prior
15 to implementation in accordance with the *Interagency Prescribed Fire*
16 *Planning and Procedures Guide* available at:
17 www.nwcg.gov/pms/RxFire/rx.htm
- 18 • Review Prescribed Fire Plans:
- 19 ○ Ensure that the prescribed fire plan has been reviewed and
20 recommended by a qualified technical reviewer.
- 21 ○ Ensure that prescribed fire plans are designed to achieve desired
22 conditions as described in Land and Resource Management Plans and
23 project-specific NEPA decision document.
- 24 • Approve Prescribed Fire Plans:
- 25 ○ Minimum qualifications for Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, other
26 Line Officers and formally delegated "Acting" Line Officers to approve
27 prescribed fire plans are:
- 28 ■ Completing a National or Regional Fire Management Leadership
29 course, or
- 30 ■ Completing an Agency Administrator Workshop at the National
31 Prescribed Fire Training Center, or
- 32 ■ Qualifying in a Type 1 or 2 Command and General Staff position
33 (currency not required), or
- 34 ■ Qualifying as a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss (RXB1 or RXB2) or
35 Prescribed Fire Manager (RXM1 or RXM2) (currency not
36 required).
- 37 ○ Attending an agency administrator session at the National Prescribed
38 Fire Training Center (PFTC) may be substituted for the minimum
39 training requirement for approving prescribed fire plans only.
- 40 ○ Authority to approve prescribed fire plans is held at the Forest
41 Supervisor level but may be delegated in writing to other qualified line
42 officers or staff. Delegations should be based on meeting the minimum
43 training or experience described above and demonstrated ability.
44 Documentation that supports the delegated authorities should be
45 included in the individuals training records.

- 1 ○ Approve prescribed fire plan amendments and determine the need for
- 2 additional technical review of proposed plan amendments prior to
- 3 approval.
- 4 ● Reauthorize all prescribed fire plans if more than one year has elapsed since
- 5 last authorization.
- 6 ● Report all instances of prescribed fires resulting in a wildfire declaration
- 7 and/or air quality Notice-of-Violation as required in FSM 5140.

9 **Fire Management Position Requirements**

10 The *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standard (IFPM)*
11 and *Forest Service Fire Program Management Standard (FS-FPM)* will be used
12 in conjunction with specific agency requirements when filling vacant fire
13 program positions, and as an aid in developing Individual Development Plans
14 (IDPs) for employees.

16 **Specific Fire Management Staff Responsibilities for Fire Operations at the** 17 **Field Level**

19 **Preparedness**

- 20 ● Use sound risk management practices as the foundation for all aspects of
- 21 fire and aviation management.
- 22 ● Ensure that only trained and qualified personnel are assigned to fire and
- 23 aviation duties.
- 24 ● Develop, implement, evaluate, and document fire and aviation training
- 25 program to meet current and anticipated needs.
- 26 ● Establish an effective process to gather, evaluate, and communicate
- 27 information to managers, supervisors, and employees. Ensure clear concise
- 28 communications are maintained at all levels.
- 29 ● Ensure fire and aviation management staffs understand their roles,
- 30 responsibilities, authority, and accountability.
- 31 ● Develop and maintain effective communication with the public and
- 32 cooperators.
- 33 ● Regardless of funding level, provide a safe, effective, and efficient fire
- 34 management program.
- 35 ● Organize, train, equip, and direct a qualified work force. An Individual
- 36 Development Plan (IDP) must be provided for incumbents who do not meet
- 37 new standards. Establish qualification review process.
- 38 ● Take appropriate action when performance is exceptional or deficient.
- 39 ● Ensure fire and aviation policies are understood, followed, and coordinated
- 40 with other agencies as appropriate.
- 41 ● Ensure that adequate resources are available to implement fire management
- 42 operations.
- 43 ● Provide fire personnel with adequate guidance, training, and decision-
- 44 making authority to ensure timely decisions.

- 1 ● Develop and maintain agreements, annual operating plans, and contracts on
- 2 an interagency basis to increase effectiveness and efficiencies.
- 3 ● Develop, maintain, and annually evaluate the FMP to ensure accuracy and
- 4 validity.
- 5 ● Ensure budget requests and allocations reflect preparedness requirements in
- 6 the FMP.
- 7 ● Develop and maintain current operational plans. (e.g., dispatch, pre-attack,
- 8 prevention).
- 9 ● Ensure that reports and records are properly completed and maintained.
- 10 ● Ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability in planning and expenditures.
- 11 ● Assess, identify, and implement program actions that effectively reduce
- 12 unwanted wildland fire ignitions and mitigate risks to life, property, and
- 13 resources.
- 14 ● Work with cooperators to identify processes and procedures for providing
- 15 fire adapted communities within the wildland urban interface.

16

17 **Suppression**

- 18 ● Provide for and personally participate in periodic site visits to individual
- 19 incidents and projects.
- 20 ● Utilize the Organizational Needs Assessment and/or Complexity Analysis
- 21 to ensure the proper level of management is assigned to all incidents.
- 22 ● Ensure incoming personnel and crews are briefed prior to fire and aviation
- 23 assignments.
- 24 ● Coordinate the development of Published Decisions within WFDSS with
- 25 local unit staff specialists for all fires that escape initial attack.
- 26 ● Ensure effective transfer of command of incident management occurs and
- 27 safety is considered in all functional areas.
- 28 ● Monitor fire activity to anticipate and recognize when complexity levels
- 29 exceed program capabilities. Increase managerial and operational resources
- 30 to meet needs.
- 31 ● Complete cost recovery actions when unplanned human-caused fires occur.
- 32 ● Ensure structure exposure protection principles are followed.
- 33 ● Ensure all misapplications of wildland fire chemicals are reported and
- 34 appropriate consultation conducted as needed (see Chapter 12).
- 35 ● Ensure 5% assessment of fires less than 300 acres that had aerial fire
- 36 retardant used and have avoidance areas as a result of the record of decision
- 37 for the nationwide aerial application of fire retardant on National Forest
- 38 System land is completed and documented for misapplication reporting.
- 39 ● Ensure all assessments of impacts to threatened and endangered species or
- 40 cultural resources are conducted by trained and qualified resource
- 41 personnel.

42

43 **Safety**

- 44 ● Ensure completion of a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) for fire and fire aviation
- 45 activities, and implement applicable risk mitigation measures.

- 1 • Ensure work/rest and R&R guidelines are followed during all fire and
2 aviation activities. Deviations are approved and documented.
- 3 • Initiate, conduct, and/or participate in fire management related reviews and
4 investigations.
- 5 • Monitor fire season severity predictions, fire behavior, and fire activity
6 levels. Take appropriate actions to ensure safe, efficient, and effective
7 operations.

8

9 **Prescribed Fire**

- 10 • Ensure a written, approved burn plan exists for each prescribed fire project.
- 11 • Prepare and implement all prescribed fire plans in accordance with the
12 *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Procedures Guide* available at:
13 www.nwcg.gov/pms/RxFire/rx.htm
- 14 • Ensure that the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss assigned to each project is
15 qualified at the appropriate level as determined by project complexity (see
16 the *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Procedures Guide* at
17 www.nwcg.gov/pms/RxFire/rx.htm for specific guidance).
- 18 • Review and update all prescribed fire plans as necessary to comply with
19 policy or procedures and submit to agency administrator for review and
20 approval.
- 21 • Submit amendments to prescribed fire plans to the agency administrator for
22 approval.
- 23 • If more than one year has elapsed since approval, a prescribed fire plan will
24 be reviewed to ensure assumptions are still valid and conditions have not
25 changed, updated as necessary, and resubmitted to the agency administrator
26 for approval.

27

28 **Structure Exposure Protection Principles**

29

30 **Mission and Role**

31 A significant role of the Forest Service is to manage natural resources on public
32 land, and management of unwanted wildland fire is a primary mission in that
33 role. Wildland firefighter training, tools, and personal protective equipment are
34 based on the wildland environment. This does not prevent using wildland
35 tactics in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) when risks are mitigated.
36 Wildland firefighter training for the WUI, however, is centered on the concepts
37 of preventing wildland fire from reaching areas of structures and/or reducing the
38 intensity of fire that does reach structures. Fire suppression actions on structures
39 that are outside federal jurisdiction, outside the scope of wildland firefighting
40 training, or beyond the capability of wildland firefighting resources are not
41 appropriate roles for the Forest Service.

42

43 Forest Service leadership will express clear and concise “leader’s intent” to
44 ensure structure protection assignments are managed safely, effectively, and
45 efficiently. Leaders are expected to operate under existing policies and doctrine

1 under normal conditions. Where conflicts occur, employees will be expected to
2 weigh the risk versus gain, and operate within the intent of Agency policy and
3 doctrine.

4

5 **Strategic Principles**

- 6 • The Forest Service actively supports creation of Firewise and Fire Adapted
7 Communities and structures that can survive wildland fire without
8 intervention. We support the concept that property owners have primary
9 responsibility for reducing wildfire risks to their lands and assets.
- 10 • The Forest Service will actively work toward applying Firewise concepts to
11 all Forest Service owned structures, facilities, and permitted use to serve as
12 a model to publics and communities.
- 13 • The Forest Service will apply strategy and tactics to keep wildland fires
14 from reaching structures, as prudent to do so, considering risk management
15 for firefighters and publics, fire behavior, values at risk including natural
16 resources, availability of firefighting resources, and jurisdictional
17 authorities.
- 18 • The Forest Service will be proactive in developing agreements with
19 interagency partners to clarify its structure protection policy.
- 20 • The Forest Service structure protection role is based on the assumption that
21 other Departments and agencies will fulfill their primary roles and
22 responsibilities. The Forest Service will not usurp individual, local, or state
23 responsibility for structure protection.
- 24 • Prior to task implementation, a specific structure protection role briefing
25 will be accomplished.

26

27 **Tactical Applications**

28

29 **Structure Protection Definition**

30 Actions taken in advance of a fire reaching structures or other improvements are
31 intended to safely prevent the fire from damaging or destroying these values at
32 risk. For the Forest Service, structure protection involves the use of standard
33 wildland fire suppression tactics and control methods; including the use of
34 standard equipment, fire control lines, and the extinguishing of spot fires near or
35 on the structure when safe and practical.

36

37 **USFS Role**

38 As documented in a Forest Service doctrinal principle, “Agency employees
39 respond when they come across situations where human life is immediately at
40 risk or there is a clear emergency, and they are capable of assisting without
41 undue risk to themselves or others”. This principle serves as a foundational
42 basis for the roles employees play in structure protection.

43

44 Pursuant to this “structure protection” policy provided above, Forest Service
45 personnel may engage support from other cooperators in structure protection
46 activities when 1) requested by local government under terms of an approved

1 cooperative agreement or 2) when operating within a unified command. The
2 agency is permitted, without agreement, to render emergency assistance to a
3 local government in suppressing wildland fires, and in preserving life and
4 property from the threat of fire, when properly trained and equipped agency
5 resources are the closest to the need, and there is adequate leadership to do so
6 safely. The agency will NOT routinely provide primary emergency response
7 (medical aids, fire suppression, HAZMAT, etc... as identified on "run cards" or
8 preplanned dispatch scenarios) nor will the agency supplant the local
9 government responsibility to do so.

10

11 The contents of a cooperative agreement will clearly define the responsibilities
12 of partners. Regarding structural fire protection, typical Forest Service
13 responsibilities in the case of mutual aid, initial attack, extended attack, or large
14 fire support include:

- 15 • To provide initial attack through extended attack actions consistent with
16 application of wildland fire strategy and tactics.
- 17 • To supply water in support of tribal, state or local agencies having
18 jurisdictional responsibility for the fire. This would include the use of water
19 tenders, portable pumps, hose, tanks, and supporting draft sites.
- 20 • To assist or supply foam or chemical suppressant capability with engines or
21 aerial application.
- 22 • To assist local authorities in the event of evacuations.
- 23 • To assist local authorities by assessing (triaging) structures for defensibility
24 from wildfire.
- 25 • To coordinate with local authorities on actions taken by Private Structure
26 Protection Companies.

27 As such, there should not be an expectation that the Forest Service will:

- 28 • "Wrap" or set up and administer sprinklers around privately owned
29 structures.
- 30 • Remove fuels immediately surrounding a structure such as brush,
31 landscaping, or firewood.

32

33 As addressed above, the Forest Service will apply strategy and tactics to keep
34 wildland fires from reaching structures, as prudent to do so, considering risk
35 management for firefighters and publics, fire behavior, values at risk including
36 natural resources, availability of firefighting resources, and jurisdictional
37 authorities.

38

39 The Forest Service shall not:

- 40 • Take direct suppression actions on structures other than those that tactically
41 reduce the threat of fire spread to them.
- 42 • Enter structures or work on roofs of structures for the purpose of direct
43 suppression actions.

44

1 In consideration of Forest Service owned or leased structures outside of
2 structure fire protection areas these same policies apply. The use of Firewise
3 principles and aggressive fire prevention measures will be employed for Forest
4 Service structures at every opportunity.

5
6 If a Forest Service structure is determined to be at risk, “wrapping” or other
7 indirect protection methods for the structure can be authorized by the Agency
8 Administrator. Documentation of these decisions needs to be placed in the fire
9 documentation package and the unit files. Any employee engaged in
10 “wrapping” or other indirect methods of protection operations will be
11 thoroughly briefed and trained in correct safety and personal protection
12 equipment procedures, especially if the use of ladders or climbing on the
13 structure is necessary. In any case, the Forest Service holds that no structure is
14 worth the risk of serious injury to an employee in an attempt to protect that
15 structure or facility from fire.

16

17 **Local Government Role**

18 Local government has the responsibility for emergency response, including
19 structure protection, within their jurisdiction. This responsibility is usually
20 found within the fire agencies’ charter and is substantiated by tax dollar revenue
21 (sales and/or property tax).

22

23 **Cost**

24 Local governments assume the financial responsibility for emergency response
25 activities, including structure protection, within their jurisdictions. Local
26 government will order resources deemed necessary to protect structures within
27 their jurisdiction. Local agencies will not be reimbursed for performing their
28 responsibilities within their jurisdiction.

29 **Tactical Operating Principles**

30 When engaging in structure protection activities, as defined above, Forest
31 Service personnel will apply the following principles:

- 32 • The first priority for all risk-decisions is human survival, both of firefighters
33 and the public.
- 34 • Incident containment strategies specifically address and integrate protection
35 of defendable improved property and wildland values.
- 36 • Direct protection of improved property is undertaken when it is safe to do
37 so, when there are sufficient time and appropriate resources available, and
38 when the action directly contributes to achieving overall incident objectives.
- 39 • Firefighter decision to accept direction to engage in structure protection
40 actions is based on the determination that the property is defendable and the
41 risk to firefighters can be safely mitigated under the current or potential fire
42 conditions.
- 43 • A decision to delay or withdraw from structure protection operations is the
44 appropriate course of action when made in consideration of firefighter
45 safety, current or potential fire behavior, or defensibility of the structure or
46 groups of structures.

Release Date: January 2015

05-19

- 1 • Firefighters at all levels are responsible to make risk-decisions appropriate
2 to their individual knowledge, experience, training, and situational
3 awareness.
- 4 • Every firefighter is responsible to be aware of the factors that affect their
5 judgment and the decision-making process, including: a realistic perception
6 of their own knowledge, skills, and abilities, the presence of life threat or
7 structures, fire behavior, availability of resources, social/political pressures,
8 mission focus, and personal distractions such as home, work, health, and
9 fatigue.
- 10 • An individual's ability to assimilate all available factors affecting
11 situational awareness is limited in a dynamic wildland urban interface fire
12 environment. Every firefighter is responsible to understand and recognize
13 these limitations, and to apply experience, training and personal judgment
14 to observe, orient, decide, and act in preparation for the "worst case".
- 15 • It is the responsibility of every firefighter to participate in the flow of
16 information with supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Clear and concise
17 communication is essential to overcome limitations in situational
18 awareness.