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## Chapter 8 Interagency Coordination and Cooperation

### Introduction

Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners. The same capabilities used in wildland fire management will also be used, when appropriate and authorized, on non-fire incidents in the United States, and on both wildland fires and non-fire incidents internationally.

### National Wildland Fire Cooperative Agreements

#### USDOI and USDA Interagency Agreement for Fire Management

The objectives of the *Interagency Agreement for Fire Management Between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) of the United States Department of Agriculture* are:

- To provide a basis for cooperation among the agencies on all aspects of wildland fire management and as authorized in non-fire emergencies.
- To facilitate the exchange of personnel, equipment (including aircraft), supplies, services, and funds among the agencies.

#### DOI, USDA, and DOD Interagency Agreement

The purpose of the *Interagency Agreement for the Provision of Temporary Support During Wildland Firefighting Operations among the United States Department of the Interior, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Department of Defense* is:

- To establish the general guidelines, terms and conditions under which the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) will request, and DOD will provide, temporary support to NIFC in wildfire emergencies occurring within all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. Territories and Possessions, including fires on State and private lands. It is also intended to provide the basis for reimbursement of DOD under the Economy Act.

These and other agreements pertinent to interagency wildland fire management can be found in their entirety at <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm>.

### National Wildland Fire Management Structure

#### Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC)

The WFLC is a cooperative, interagency body dedicated to achieving consistent implementation of the goals, actions, and policies in the National Fire Plan and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. The WFLC provides a forum for

1 high-level dialogues between federal and non-federal entities to set strategic  
2 direction for national fire management.

3 The Council consists of the Department of Agriculture's Undersecretary for  
4 Natural Resources and Environment, the Deputy Undersecretary for Natural  
5 Resources and Environment, and the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service; the  
6 Department of the Interior's (DOI) Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management  
7 and Budget, the Directors of the National Park Service, Bureau of Indian  
8 Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S.  
9 Geological Survey; the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Fire  
10 Administration Administrator; the President of the Intertribal Timber Council;  
11 two state governors selected from the National Governors Association; a county  
12 commissioner serving as a member of the National Association of Counties; a  
13 mayor serving as a member of the National League of Cities; a State Forester  
14 serving at the request of a senior state elected official; and a fire chief serving at  
15 the request of a senior local government elected official.

16 The Council is coordinated by the Department of Agriculture's Deputy  
17 Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment and DOI's Assistant  
18 Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget.

19 **Wildland Fire Executive Council (WFEC)**

20 The WFEC is an advisory council that provides recommendations on national  
21 wildland fire management to the secretaries of Agriculture and Interior through  
22 WFLC. Members include the Director, USDA FS Fire and Aviation  
23 Management; the Director, DOI Office of Wildland Fire; the Deputy  
24 Administrator, DHS U. S. Fire Administration; an NWCG Executive Board  
25 representative; a National League of Cities representative; an Intertribal Timber  
26 Council representative; a Fire Committee representative from the National  
27 Association of State Foresters; a National Association of Counties  
28 representative; an International Association of Fire Chiefs representative, and a  
29 National Governors Association representative.

30 **Federal Fire Policy Council (FFPC)**

31 The FFPC provides a common national federal agency approach to wildland fire  
32 management. FFPC ensures that wildland fire management policies, programs,  
33 activities, and budgets are coordinated and consistent among and between the  
34 member agencies and strives for coordinated and consistent policies and  
35 programs with non-federal partner and cooperator agencies. FFPC sets strategic  
36 policy and program direction, provides coordinated recommendations to the  
37 Secretaries of Agriculture, the Interior, and Homeland Security and resolves  
38 inconsistencies among and between federal wildland fire programs.

39 The FFPC is accountable and has the authority to:

- 40 • Set the vision and provide leadership for the federal wildland fire program.
- 41 • Set national federal strategic wildland fire program goals and priorities.
- 42 • Establish the Fire Executive Council.

1 The FFPC is responsible to:

- 2 • Provide coordinated federal wildland fire management policy direction.
- 3 • Resolve policy and program management inconsistencies.
- 4 • Set strategic budget priorities for wildland fire management.
- 5 • Coordinate and communicate with non-federal entities.

6 The FFPC is composed of the USDA Deputy Under Secretary for National  
7 Resources and Environment; the Chief of the Forest Service and the Deputy  
8 Chief of State and Private Forestry; and for DOI the Assistant Secretaries for  
9 Policy, Management and Budget, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Indian Affairs,  
10 Land and Minerals Management, and Water and Science; the Bureau Directors  
11 of the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National  
12 Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the US Geological Survey; the  
13 Deputy Assistant Secretary – Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency  
14 Management; the Assistant Administrator of DHS-US Fire Administration; and  
15 the Environmental Protection Agency representative.

#### 16 **Fire Executive Council (FEC)**

17 The FEC provides a common, integrated, and coordinated federal agency  
18 approach to wildland fire policy, leadership, budget, and program oversight.  
19 Within the broad strategic direction and vision set by the FFPC, the FEC ensures  
20 that the wildland fire management policies, programs, activities, and budgets are  
21 coordinated and consistent among and between the member agencies. FEC sets  
22 policy and program direction for federal wildland fire program implementation,  
23 provides coordinated recommendations to the FFPC, and resolves  
24 inconsistencies among and between federal wildland fire programs. FEC ensures  
25 policy and program coordination and integration with non-fire management  
26 programs and activities as well as non-federal partners and cooperators.

27 The FEC is accountable and has the authority to:

- 28 • Establish strategic federal fire program budget direction and priorities.
- 29 • Ensure coordinated federal policy development.
- 30 • Develop federal business requirements and priorities.

31 The FEC is responsible and has the authority to:

- 32 • Provide coordinated federal interagency executive level wildland fire policy  
33 leadership, direction, and program oversight.
- 34 • Provide coordinated recommendations and advice to the FFPC.
- 35 • Provide wildland fire policy and program direction to the Fire Management  
36 Board (FMB).
- 37 • Provide strategic policy and program integration with resource  
38 management, aviation, and other related program areas.
- 39 • Coordinate and communicate with other non-federal entities.
- 40 • Set strategic budget direction and recommendations.

- 1 • Establish strategic direction and requirements for wildland fire information
- 2 and technology, wildland fire administrative/business support, scientific and
- 3 research support, and other program areas.
- 4 • Approve wildland fire policy, as appropriate.
- 5 • Resolve policy and program management inconsistencies and differences.
- 6 • Oversee compliance with policy, budget, and program direction.
- 7 • Charter the Fire Management Board.
- 8 • Charter the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) along with the
- 9 Intertribal Timber Council and the National Association of State Foresters.

10 The FEC is composed of the Director and Deputy Directors, USFS Fire and  
11 Aviation Management (USDA); the Director, Office of Wildland Fire, Director,  
12 Office of Aviation Services, Fire Executives from BLM, NPS, BIA, and  
13 USFWS (DOI); and the US Fire Administration Chief, Emergency Support  
14 Branch, National Fire Programs (USDHS-FEMA).

#### 15 **Fire Management Board (FMB)**

16 The FMB provides a mechanism for coordinated and integrated federal wildland  
17 fire program management and implementation. The FMB, taking strategic  
18 policy and program direction from the FEC, directs, coordinates and oversees  
19 the development and implementation of federal wildland fire policy and  
20 programs to provide consistent and cost-effective program management.

21 The FMB is accountable and has the authority to:

- 22 • Coordinate federal program management and oversight.

23 The FMB is responsible for and has the authority to:

- 24 • Provide common, integrated implementation strategies, approaches,
- 25 programs, and oversight for implementing federal wildland fire policies.
- 26 • Provide federal wildland fire program strategy, policy, budget and program
- 27 recommendations to the FEC.
- 28 • Provide recommendations on information and technology requirements,
- 29 priorities, and investments to the Wildland Fire Information and
- 30 Technology Executive Board.
- 31 • Provide recommendations on science and research requirements and
- 32 priorities necessary to support wildland fire program management activities.
- 33 • Identify requirements and recommend priorities for standards necessary to
- 34 ensure interoperability of intergovernmental wildland fire activities and
- 35 operations.
- 36 • Consult with our non-federal partners.
- 37 • Develop recommendations for interagency wildland fire
- 38 administrative/business support needs.

39 The FMB is composed of the USFS Fire and Aviation Management Assistant  
40 Directors (USDA); the Deputy Director, Office of Wildland Fire, the Deputy  
41 Director, Office of Aviation Services, the Fire Directors for BIA, BLM,

- 1 USFWS, and NPS (DOI); and the Wildfire Program Manager, US Fire
- 2 Administration (USDHS-FEMA).

### 3 **National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)**

4 The NWCG is made up of the USFS, BIA, BLM, FWS, and NPS; Intertribal  
5 Timber Council; U.S. Fire Administration (USFA); state forestry agencies  
6 through the National Association of State Foresters (NASF); and the  
7 International Association of Fire Chiefs. The mission of the NWCG is to  
8 provide leadership in establishing, maintaining, and communicating consistent  
9 interagency standards, guidelines, and qualifications for wildland fire  
10 management. Its goal is to provide more effective execution of each agency's  
11 fire management program. The group provides a formalized system to agree  
12 upon standards of training, equipment, qualifications, and other operational  
13 functions.

### 14 **Interior Fire Executive Council (IFEC)**

15 The Interior Fire Executive Council (IFEC) provides interagency coordination  
16 and interagency executive-level wildland fire policy leadership, direction, and  
17 program oversight. IFEC is the focal point for discussing wildland fire policy  
18 issues that affect the DOI and provides a forum for gathering the interests of the  
19 DOI bureaus to formulate a DOI recommendation and/or position to be taken  
20 forward to the Wildland Fire Executive Council (WFEC).

21 The IFEC is composed of the Director, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) and the  
22 four DOI fire directors and their respective senior executives, as well as the  
23 Director, Aviation Management Directorate and a representative from USGS.

### 24 **Office of Wildland Fire (OWF)**

25 The OWF is a Department of the Interior organization responsible for managing  
26 and overseeing all wildland fire management activities executed by the bureaus.  
27 OWF coordinates the Department's wildland fire programs within the  
28 Department and with other federal and non-federal partners, to establish legally  
29 and scientifically based Department-wide policies and budgets, and to provide  
30 strategic leadership and oversight, that result in safe, comprehensive, cohesive,  
31 efficient, and effective wildland fire programs for the nation consistent with the  
32 bureaus' statutory authorities and constraints.

33 For more information about the Office of Wildland Fire and the Federal  
34 wildland fire management organization, follow the links under "About OWF" at  
35 <https://www.doi.gov/wildlandfire>.

## 36 **Multi-Agency Management and Coordination**

### 37 **National Multi-Agency Coordinating (NMAC) Group**

38 National multi-agency coordination is overseen by the NMAC Group, which  
39 consists of one representative each from the following agencies: BLM, FWS,  
40 NPS, BIA, FS, NASF, and the USFA, who have been delegated authority by

- 1 their respective agency directors to manage wildland fire operations on a  
2 national scale when fire management resource shortages are probable. The  
3 delegated authorities include:
- 4 • Provide oversight of general business practices between the NMAC group  
5 and the Geographic Area Multi-Agency Coordination groups.
  - 6 • Establish priorities among geographic areas.
  - 7 • Activate and maintain a ready reserve of national resources for assignment  
8 directly by NMAC as needed.
  - 9 • Implement decisions of the NMAC.

10 The NMAC Operating Plan, NMAC Correspondence, and other resources and  
11 references are at <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/administrative/nmac/index.html>.

### 12 **Geographic Area Multi-Agency Coordinating (GMAC) Groups**

13 Geographic area multi-agency coordination is overseen by GMAC Groups,  
14 which are comprised of geographic area (State, Region) lead administrators or  
15 fire managers from agencies that have jurisdictional or support responsibilities,  
16 or that may be significantly impacted by resource commitments. GMAC  
17 responsibilities include:

- 18 • Establish priorities for the geographic area.
- 19 • Acquire, allocate, and reallocate resources.
- 20 • Provide NMAC with National Ready Reserve (NRR) resources as required.
- 21 • Issue coordinated and collective situation status reports.

### 22 ***NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management***

23 All federal agencies have adopted the *NWCG Standards for Interagency*  
24 *Incident Business Management* as the official guide to provide execution of each  
25 agency's incident business management program. Unit offices, geographic  
26 areas, or NWCG may issue supplements, as long as policy or conceptual data is  
27 not changed.

28 Since consistent application of interagency policies and guidelines is essential,  
29 procedures in the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business*  
30 *Management* will be followed. Agency manuals provide a bridge between  
31 manual sections and the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business*  
32 *Management* so that continuity of agency manual systems is maintained and all  
33 additions, changes, and supplements are filed in a uniform manner.

- 34 • **DOI** – *The Department of the Interior All Hazards-Supplement to the*  
35 *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*  
36 *establishes business management guidelines for the Department of the*  
37 *Interior's (DOI's) all-hazards incidents. The DOI Supplement is available*  
38 *at <https://www.doi.gov/emergency/emergency-policy.cfm>.*
- 39 • **BLM** – *The NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business*  
40 *Management replaces BLM Manual Section 1111.*
- 41 • **NPS** – *Refer to RM-18.*

- 1 • *FWS – Refer to Service Manual 621 FW 1 Wildland Fire Management.*
- 2 • *FS – Refer to FSH 5109.34.*

### 3 **Standards for Cooperative Agreements**

#### 4 **Agreement Policy**

5 Agreements will be comprised of two components: the actual agreement and an  
6 operations plan. The agreement will outline the authority and general  
7 responsibilities of each party and the operations plan will define the specific  
8 operating procedures.

9 Any agreement which obligates federal funds or commits anything of value  
10 must be signed by the appropriate warranted contracting officer. Specifications  
11 for funding responsibilities should include billing procedures and schedules for  
12 payment.

13 Any agreement that extends beyond a fiscal year must be made subject to the  
14 availability of funds. Any transfer of federal property must be in accordance  
15 with federal property management regulations.

16 All agreements must undergo periodic joint review; and, as appropriate,  
17 revision. Assistance in preparing agreements can be obtained from local or state  
18 office fire and/or procurement staff.

19 All appropriate agreements and operating plans will be provided to the servicing  
20 dispatch center. The authority to enter into interagency agreements is extensive.

- 21 • *BLM – BLM Manual 9200, Departmental Manual 620 DM, the Reciprocal*  
22 *Fire Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. 1856, and the Federal Wildland Fire*  
23 *Management Policy and Program Review.*
- 24 • *NPS – Chapter 2, Federal Assistance and Interagency Agreements*  
25 *Guideline (DO-20), and the Departmental Manual 620 (DM-620). NPS-*  
26 *RM-18, Interagency Agreements, Release Number 1, 02/22/99.*
- 27 • *FWS – Service Manual, Departmental Manual 620 DM, and Reciprocal*  
28 *Fire Protection Act, 42U.S.C. 1856.*
- 29 • *FS – FSM 1580, 5106.2 and FSH 1509.11.*

### 30 **Types of Agreements**

#### 31 **National Interagency Agreements**

32 The national agreement, which serves as an umbrella for interagency assistance  
33 among federal agencies is the interagency agreement between the Bureau of  
34 Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Fish and  
35 Wildlife Service of the United States Department of the Interior, and the Forest  
36 Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. This and other national  
37 agreements give substantial latitude while providing a framework for the  
38 development of state and local agreements and operating plans.

**1 Regional/State Interagency Agreements**

- 2 Regional and state cooperative agreements shall be developed for mutual  
3 assistance. These agreements are essential to the fire management program.  
4 Concerns for area-wide scope should be addressed through these agreements.

**5 Local Interagency Agreements**

- 6 Local units are responsible for developing agreements with local agencies and  
7 fire departments to meet mutual needs for suppression and/or prescribed fire  
8 services.

**9 Emergency Assistance**

- 10 Approved, established reimbursable agreements are the appropriate and  
11 recommended way to provide emergency assistance. If no agreements are  
12 established, refer to your Agency Administrator to determine the authorities  
13 delegated to your agency to provide emergency assistance.

**14 Contracts**

- 15 Contracts may be used where they are the most cost-effective means of  
16 providing for protection commensurate with established standards. A contract,  
17 however, does not absolve an Agency Administrator of the responsibility for  
18 managing a fire program.

- 19 Contracts should be developed and administered in accordance with Federal  
20 Acquisition Regulations. In particular, a contract should specify conditions for  
21 abandonment of a fire in order to respond to a new call elsewhere.

**22 Elements of an Agreement**

23 The following elements should be addressed in each agreement:

- 24 • The authorities appropriate for each party to enter in an agreement.
- 25 • The roles and responsibilities of each agency signing the agreement.
- 26 • An element addressing the cooperative roles of each participant in  
27 prevention, pre-suppression, suppression, fuels, and prescribed fire  
28 management operations.
- 29 • Reimbursements/Compensation – All mutually approved operations that  
30 require reimbursement and/or compensation will be identified and agreed to  
31 by all participating parties through a cost-share agreement. The mechanism  
32 and timing of the funding exchanges will be identified and agreed upon.
- 33 • Appropriation Limitations – Parties to this agreement are not obligated to  
34 make expenditures of funds or reimbursements of expenditures under terms  
35 of this agreement unless the Congress of the United States of America  
36 appropriates such funds for that purpose by the Counties of \_\_\_\_\_, by the  
37 Cities of \_\_\_\_\_, and/or the Governing Board of Fire Commissioners  
38 of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 39 • Liabilities/Waivers – Each party waives all claims against every other party  
40 for compensation for any loss, damage, personal injury, or death occurring



- 1 as a consequence of the performance of this agreement unless gross  
2 negligence on any part of any party is determined.
- 3 • Termination Procedure – The agreement shall identify the duration of the  
4 agreement and cancellation procedures.
  - 5 • A signature page identifying the names of the responsible officials shall be  
6 included in the agreement.
    - 7 ○ *BLM* – Refer to Chapter 2, *Agreements with Cooperators (Rangeland*  
8 *Fire Protection Association (RFPA) and Local Fire Department)*.
    - 9 ○ *NPS* – Refer to *DO-20* for detailed instructions and format for  
10 *developing agreements*.
    - 11 ○ *BIA* – Refer to *Notification of Required Use of Cooperative Agreement*  
12 *Template in response to Office of Inspector General’s Independent*  
13 *Report on the “Bureau of Indian Affairs Wildland Fire Suppression”*  
14 *(memo dated September 06, 2013) and Clarification of Authorities on*  
15 *Implementation of the Wildland Fire Cooperative Agreement Template*  
16 *(memo dated May 28, 2014)*.

### 17 **Annual Operating Plans (AOPs)**

18 Annual Operating Plans shall be reviewed, updated, and approved prior to the  
19 fire season. The plan may be amended after a major incident as part of a joint  
20 debriefing and review. The plan shall contain detailed, specific procedures  
21 which will provide for safe, efficient, and effective operations.

#### 22 **General Elements of an Annual Operating Plan**

23 The following items should be addressed in the AOP:

- 24 • **Mutual Aid**  
25 The AOP should address that there may be times when cooperators are  
26 involved in emergency operations and unable to provide mutual aid. In this  
27 case, other cooperators may be contacted for assistance.
- 28 • **Command Structure**  
29 The Incident Command System (ICS) will be used to manage all fires under  
30 federal jurisdiction. Unified command should be used, as appropriate,  
31 whenever multiple jurisdictions are involved, unless one or more parties  
32 request a single agency IC. If there is a question about jurisdiction, fire  
33 managers should mutually decide and agree on the command structure as  
34 soon as they arrive on the fire; Agency Administrators should confirm this  
35 decision as soon as possible. Once this decision has been made, the incident  
36 organization in use should be relayed to all units on the incident as well as  
37 dispatch centers. In all cases, the identity of the IC must be made known to  
38 all fireline and support personnel.
- 39 • **Communications**  
40 In mutual aid situations, a common designated radio frequency identified in  
41 the AOP should be used for incident communications. All incident  
42 resources should utilize and monitor this frequency for incident  
43 information, tactical use, and changes in weather conditions or other

- 1 emergency situations. In some cases, because of equipment availability/  
2 capabilities, departments/agencies may have to use their own frequencies  
3 for tactical operations, allowing the “common” frequency to be the link  
4 between departments. It is important that all department/agencies change to  
5 a single frequency or establish a common communications link as soon as  
6 practical. Clear text should be used. Avoid personal identifiers, such as  
7 names. This paragraph in the AOP shall meet Federal Communications  
8 Commission (FCC) requirements for documenting shared use of radio  
9 frequencies.
- 10 • **Distance/Boundaries**  
11 Responding and requesting parties should identify any mileage limitations  
12 from mutual boundaries where “mutual aid” is either pay or non-pay status.  
13 Also, for some fire departments, the mileage issue may not be one of initial  
14 attack “mutual aid,” but of mutual assistance. In this situation, you may  
15 have the option to make it part of this agreement or identify it as a situation  
16 where the request would be made to the agency having jurisdiction, which  
17 would then dispatch the fire department.
    - 18 ○ *BLM – Agreements/AOPs with Department of Defense, best practices*  
19 *(including UXO protocols) are located on the BLM Fire Operations*  
20 *website [http://web.blm.gov/internal/fire/fire\\_ops/toolbox.htm](http://web.blm.gov/internal/fire/fire_ops/toolbox.htm).*
  - 21 • **Time/Duration**  
22 Responding and requesting parties should identify time limitations (usually  
23 24 hours) for resources in a non-reimbursable status, and “reimbursable  
24 rates” when the resources are in a reimbursable status.
  - 25 • **Qualifications/Minimum Requirements**  
26 The National Wildfire Coordinating Group publication, *National Incident*  
27 *Management System: Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide* (PMS 310-  
28 1), outlines the minimum requirements for training, experience, physical  
29 fitness level, and currency standards for wildland fire positions, which all  
30 participating agencies have agreed to meet for national mobilization.
    - 31 ○ During initial action, all agencies (federal, state, local and Tribal)  
32 accept each other’s standards. Once jurisdiction is clearly established,  
33 then the standards of the agency(s) with jurisdiction prevail.
      - 34 ■ *BLM/BIA – BLM/BIA may accept the standards of any local*  
35 *cooperator through the duration of an incident when the*  
36 *cooperator has a current cooperative fire response agreement with*  
37 *BLM/BIA, and the cooperator is in compliance with the agreement.*  
38 *Personnel from agencies that do not subscribe to the NWCG*  
39 *qualification standards may be used on agency managed fires, and*  
40 *must only be assigned to duties commensurate with their*  
41 *competencies, qualifications, and equipment capabilities.*
    - 42 ○ Prior to the fire season, federal agencies should meet with their state,  
43 local, and Tribal agency partners and communicate the qualification/  
44 certification standards that will apply to the use of local, non-federal  
45 firefighters during initial action on fires on lands under the jurisdiction  
46 of a federal agency.

- 1     ○ The Geographic Area Coordinating Group should determine the  
2     application of 310-1 qualification/certification standards for  
3     mobilization within the geographic area.
- 4     ○ On a fire where a non-federal agency is also an agency with legal  
5     jurisdiction, the standards of that agency apply.
- 6     ○ The AOP should address qualification and certification standards  
7     applicable to the involved parties.
- 8     ● **Reimbursement/Compensation**  
9     Compensation shall be as close to actual expenditures as possible. This  
10    should be clearly identified in the AOP. Vehicles and equipment operated  
11    under the federal excess property system will only be reimbursed for  
12    maintenance and operating costs.
- 13    ● **Cooperation**  
14    The annual operating plan will be used to identify how the cooperators will  
15    share expertise, training, and information on items such as prevention,  
16    investigation, communication plans, safety, training, ICS, and the  
17    integration of resources.
- 18    ● **Agency Reviews and Investigations**  
19    Annual operating plans should describe processes for conducting agency  
20    specific reviews and investigations. AOPs should also describe processes  
21    for accident notifications to the appropriate fire managers, line officers, and  
22    dispatch/coordination centers.
- 23    ● **Dispatch Centers**  
24    Dispatch centers will ensure all resources know the name of the assigned IC  
25    and announce all changes in incident command. Geographic Area  
26    Mobilization Guides, Zone Mobilization Guides, and Local Mobilization  
27    Guides should include this procedure as they are revised for each fire  
28    season.
- 29    **Fiscal Responsibility Elements of an Annual Operating Plan**  
30    Annual Operating Plans should address the following:
- 31    ● The level of communication required with neighboring jurisdictions  
32    regarding the management of all wildland fires, especially those with  
33    multiple objectives.
- 34    ● The level of communication required with neighboring jurisdictions  
35    regarding suppression resource availability and allocation, especially for  
36    wildland fires with objectives that include benefit.
- 37    ● Identify how to involve all parties in developing the strategy and tactics to  
38    be used in preventing wildland fire from crossing the jurisdictional  
39    boundary, and how all parties will be involved in developing mitigations  
40    which would be used if a wildland fire does cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- 41    ● Jurisdictions, which may include state and private lands, should identify the  
42    conditions under which wildland fire may be managed to achieve benefit,  
43    and the information or criteria that will be used to make that determination

- 1 (e.g., critical habitat, hazardous fuels, and land management planning  
2 documents).
- 3 • Jurisdictions will identify conditions under which cost efficiency may  
4 dictate where suppression strategies and tactical actions are taken (i.e., it  
5 may be more cost effective to put the containment line along an open  
6 grassland than along a mid-slope in timber). Points to consider include loss  
7 and benefit to land, resource, social and political values, and existing legal  
8 statutes.
  - 9 • The cost-sharing methodologies that will be utilized should wildfire spread  
10 to a neighboring jurisdiction in a location where fire is not wanted.
  - 11 • The cost-share methodologies that will be used should a jurisdiction accept  
12 or receive a wildland fire and manage it to create benefit.
  - 13 • Any distinctions in what cost-share methodology will be used if the reason  
14 the fire spreads to another jurisdiction is attributed to a strategic decision,  
15 versus environmental conditions (weather, fuels, and fire behavior), or  
16 tactical considerations (firefighter safety, resource availability) that preclude  
17 stopping the fire at jurisdictional boundaries. Examples of cost-sharing  
18 methodologies may include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - 19 ○ When a wildland fire that is being managed for benefit spreads to a  
20 neighboring jurisdiction because of strategic decisions, and in a  
21 location where fire is not wanted, the managing jurisdiction shall be  
22 responsible for wildfire suppression costs.
    - 23 ○ In those situations where weather, fuels, or fire behavior of the  
24 wildland fire precludes stopping at jurisdiction boundaries cost-share  
25 methodologies may include, but are not limited to:
      - 26 a) Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – fire suppression  
27 efforts are primarily on jurisdictional responsibility lands.
      - 28 b) Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – services rendered  
29 approximate the percentage of jurisdictional responsibility, but not  
30 necessarily performed on those lands.
      - 31 c) Cost share by percentage of ownership.
      - 32 d) Cost is apportioned by geographic division. Examples of  
33 geographic divisions are: Divisions A and B (using a map as an  
34 attachment); privately owned property with structures; or specific  
35 locations such as campgrounds.
      - 36 e) Reconciliation of daily estimates (for larger, multi-day incidents).  
37 This method relies upon daily agreed to cost estimates, using  
38 Incident Action Plans or other means to determine multi-Agency  
39 contributions. Reimbursements can be made upon estimates  
40 instead of actual bill receipts.

41 For further information, refer to NWCG Memorandum EB-M-09-009, *Revisions*  
42 *to the Annual Operating Plans for Master Cooperative Fire and Stafford Act*  
43 *Agreements due to Implementation of Revised Guidance for the Implementation*  
44 *of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy*, April 13, 2009.

## 1 **All-Hazards Coordination and Cooperation**

2 All-hazards is defined by NWCG as an incident, natural or manmade, that  
3 warrants action to protect life, property, environment, and public health or  
4 safety, and to minimize disruptions of government, social, or economic  
5 activities. Wildland fire is one type of all-hazard incident. All-hazards incidents  
6 are managed using a standardized national incident management system and  
7 response framework.

### 8 **Stafford Act Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance**

9 The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public  
10 Law 93-288, as amended) establishes the programs and processes for the Federal  
11 Government to provide disaster and emergency assistance to states, local  
12 governments, Tribal nations, individuals, and qualified private non-profit  
13 organizations. The provisions of the Stafford Act cover all hazards including  
14 natural disasters and terrorist events. In response to, or in anticipation of, a  
15 major disaster or emergency as defined by the act, the President “may direct any  
16 federal agency, with or without reimbursement, to utilize its authorities and the  
17 resources granted to it under federal law (including personnel, equipment,  
18 supplies, facilities, managerial, technical, and advisory services) in support of  
19 state and local assistance efforts.”

- 20 • **BIA** – Refer to Chapter 6 for the Stafford Act Amendment Tribal Disaster  
21 Assistance.

### 22 **Homeland Security Act**

23 The *Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296)* established the  
24 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with the mandate and legal authority  
25 to protect the American people from the continuing threat of terrorism. In the  
26 act, Congress also assigned DHS as the primary focal point regarding natural  
27 and manmade crises and emergency planning.

### 28 **Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5**

29 *Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-5), Management of Domestic*  
30 *Incidents, February 28, 2003*, is intended to enhance the ability of the United  
31 States to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive  
32 national incident management system. HSPD-5 designates the Secretary of  
33 Homeland Security as the Principal Federal Official (PFO) for domestic incident  
34 management and empowers the Secretary to coordinate Federal resources used  
35 in response to or recovery from terrorist attacks, major disasters, or other  
36 emergencies in specific cases.

### 37 **National Response Framework**

38 Federal disaster relief and emergency assistance are coordinated by the Federal  
39 Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) using the National Response  
40 Framework (NRF). The NRF, using the National Incident Management System  
41 (NIMS), establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of  
42 domestic incidents. The NRF provides the structure and mechanisms for the

1 coordination of federal support to state, local, and Tribal incident managers; and  
2 for exercising direct federal authorities and responsibilities. Information about  
3 the National Response Framework can be found at  
4 <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/117791>.

5 **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**

6 HSPD-5 directed that the DHS Secretary develop and administer a National  
7 Incident Management System to provide a consistent, nationwide approach for  
8 Federal, State, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently  
9 together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents,  
10 regardless of cause, size, or complexity. To provide for interoperability and  
11 compatibility among federal, state, and local capabilities, the NIMS will include  
12 a core set of concepts, principles, terminology, and technologies covering the  
13 incident command system; multi-agency coordination systems; unified  
14 command; training; identification and management of resources (including  
15 systems for classifying types of resources); qualifications and certification; and  
16 the collection, tracking, and reporting of incident information and incident  
17 resources. Information about the NIMS can be found at  
18 <https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>.

19 **Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes**

20 Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes are the components of the NRF  
21 that detail the mission, policies, structures, and responsibilities of federal  
22 agencies. They are utilized for coordinating resource and programmatic support  
23 to the states, tribes, and other federal agencies or other jurisdictions and entities  
24 during Incidents of National Significance. Each ESF Annex identifies the ESF  
25 coordinator and the primary and support agencies pertinent to the ESF. USDA-  
26 FS and USFA are the Co-coordinators of ESF #4 – Firefighting. USDA-FS  
27 coordinates at the national and regional levels with FEMA, state agencies, and  
28 cooperating agencies on all issues related to response activities. USFA  
29 coordinates with appropriate state agencies and local fire departments to expand  
30 structural firefighting resource capacity in the existing national firefighting  
31 mobilization system and provides information on protection of emergency  
32 services sector critical infrastructure.

33 The ESF primary agency serves as a federal executive agent under the Federal  
34 Coordinating Officer to accomplish the ESF mission. The ESF support agencies,  
35 when requested by the designated ESF primary agency, are responsible for  
36 conducting operations using their own authorities, subject-matter experts,  
37 capabilities, or resources. USDA-FS is the primary agency for ESF #4 –  
38 Firefighting.

39 See <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/32180?id=7353> for  
40 further information regarding ESF #4.

1 Other NRF USDA-FS and DOI responsibilities are:

ESF Support Annex	USDA-FS Role	DOI Role
#01 Transportation	Support	Support
#02 Communications	Support	Support
#03 Public Works and Engineering	Support	Support
#04 Firefighting	Coordinator & Primary	Support
#05 Emergency Management	Support	Support
#06 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services	Support	Support
#07 Logistics Management and Resources Support	Support	Support
#08 Public Health and Medical Services	Support	Support
#09 Search and Rescue	Support	Primary
#10 Oil and Hazardous Materials Response	Support	Support
#11 Agriculture and Natural Resources	Primary	Primary
#12 Energy		Support
#13 Public Safety and Security	Support	Support
#15 External Affairs	Support	Support

2 **National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP,**  
 3 **40 CFR 300)**

4 The NCP provides the organizational structure and procedures for preparing for  
 5 and responding to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances,  
 6 pollutants, and contaminants. The NCP is required by section 105 of the  
 7 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of  
 8 1980 (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. 9605, as amended by the Superfund Amendments  
 9 and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA), P.L. 99–499, and by section 311(d) of  
 10 the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. 1321(d), as amended by the Oil  
 11 Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA), P.L. 101–380. The NCP identifies the national  
 12 response organization that may be activated in response actions to discharges of  
 13 oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants in  
 14 accordance with the authorities of CERCLA and the CWA. It specifies  
 15 responsibilities among the federal, state, and local governments and describes  
 16 resources that are available for response, and provides procedures for involving  
 17 state governments in the initiation, development, selection, and implementation  
 18 of response actions, pursuant to CERCLA. The NCP works in conjunction with  
 19 the National Response Framework through Emergency Support Function 10 –  
 20 Oil and Hazardous Material Response.

21 **Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act**

22 The *Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-295)*  
 23 amended the Homeland Security Act. This law established the FEMA

1 Administrator as responsible for managing the Federal response to emergencies  
2 and disasters, and for reporting directly to the President. The Secretary of  
3 Homeland Security is the Principal Federal Official, but has no direct authority  
4 for response or coordination. This law also amends the Stafford Act to allow  
5 FEMA, in the absence of a specific request or Presidential declaration, to direct  
6 other Federal agencies to provide resources and support where necessary to save  
7 lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate severe damage.

#### 8 **Presidential Policy Directive-8**

9 *Presidential Policy Directive-8 (PPD-8), National Preparedness, March 30,*  
10 *2011* is intended to strengthen all-of-Nation preparedness. PPD-8 directs the  
11 Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a national preparedness goal and a  
12 national preparedness system in coordination and consultation with other federal  
13 departments and agencies, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, private  
14 and non-profit sectors, and the public. The national preparedness system is  
15 comprised of:

- 16 • National planning frameworks for the prevention, protection, mitigation,  
17 response to, and recovery from national threats. These frameworks are  
18 similar and complementary to the National Response Framework (NRF).
- 19 • Corresponding Federal interagency operational plans.
- 20 • Guidance for the national interoperability of personnel and equipment.
- 21 • Guidance for business, community, family, and individual preparedness.

#### 22 **All-Hazards Coordination and Cooperation**

23 In an actual or potential incident of national significance that is not encompassed  
24 by the Stafford Act, the President may instruct a federal department or agency,  
25 subject to any statutory limitations on the department or agency, to utilize the  
26 authorities and resources granted to it by Congress. In accordance with  
27 Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5, federal departments and agencies  
28 are expected to provide their full and prompt support, cooperation, available  
29 resources, consistent with their own responsibilities for protecting national  
30 security. Personnel assigned to all-hazard incidents may only perform duties  
31 within agency policy, training, and capability.

#### 32 **NWCG Role in Support, Coordination, and All-Hazards Response by** 33 **Wildland Fire Agencies**

34 The National Wildfire Coordinating Group has established guidelines to define  
35 NWCG's role in the preparedness for, coordination of, and support to all-  
36 hazards incidents.

#### 37 **General All-Hazards Guidelines for NWCG:**

- 38 • The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is the foundation of all  
39 response. NWCG principles, procedures, and publications will comply with  
40 and support the NIMS. NWCG expects that all local, State, and Federal  
41 response agencies and organizations will comply with NIMS.



- 1 • NWCG uses the NIMS definition of All-Hazards, which includes wildland  
2 fire. This definition is:
  - 3 ○ All-Hazards: Describing an incident, natural or manmade, that warrants  
4 action to protect life, property, environment, and public health or  
5 safety, and to minimize disruptions of government, social, or economic  
6 activities.
- 7 • NWCG recognizes FEMA's role in overseeing the development,  
8 implementation, and maintenance of NIMS, which includes the Incident  
9 Command System (ICS) and its components (forms, core competencies,  
10 training, qualifications and standards, etc.).
- 11 • NWCG accepts the components of NIMS and will develop an endorsement  
12 process and additional qualifications requirements for positions having  
13 specific wildland fire application.
- 14 • NWCG recognizes and supports the use of position-specific qualifications  
15 from other NIMS compliant disciplines (law enforcement, structure fire,  
16 hazmat, etc.).
- 17 • NWCG supports the ongoing development and maintenance of wildland fire  
18 systems to be adaptable for all-hazards response.
- 19 • NWCG expects that all wildland fire personnel engaged in all-hazards  
20 response, whether at the national, regional or local level will base actions on  
21 both NWCG and agency policies, standards, doctrine, and procedures.
- 22 • NWCG member agencies ensure all personnel responding to all-hazards  
23 incidents are properly trained, equipped, and qualified for their assigned  
24 position.
- 25 • NWCG encourages all wildland fire agencies and personnel to receive  
26 appropriate preparedness training, focusing on general knowledge of all-  
27 hazards response, disaster characteristics, and the effects from these events  
28 on citizens and responders.
- 29 • NWCG encourages all wildland fire agencies and personnel to consider  
30 appropriate risk mitigation measures (e.g., vaccinations, personal protective  
31 equipment, etc.) prior to responding to all-hazards incidents.
- 32 • NWCG coordinates with member agencies to ensure accountability of  
33 wildland fire personnel during all-hazards response.

#### 34 **USFS All-Hazards Guiding Principles and Doctrine**

35 The Forest Service has developed doctrine, known as the *Foundational Doctrine*  
36 *for All-Hazard Response*, outlining the guiding principles, roles, and  
37 responsibilities of the agency during all-hazards response. Forest Service  
38 responders and leadership are expected to follow this doctrine, established to  
39 help ensure the safest response conditions possible.

40 The following principles encompass the guidelines, roles, and responsibilities  
41 established in this doctrine:

- 42 • The intent of Forest Service all-hazard response and support is to protect  
43 human life, property, and at-risk lands and resources *while imminent threats*  
44 *exist*.

- 1 • Personnel should be prepared and organized to support all-hazard responses  
2 by providing trained personnel to utilize their inherent skills, capabilities,  
3 and assets, without requiring significant advanced training and preparation.  
4 Support to cooperators requiring wildland resources will be consistent with  
5 employee core skills, capabilities, and training.
- 6 • As incidents move from the *response phase* to the *recovery phase*, there  
7 should be a shift to demobilizing agency resources.
- 8 • Within all-hazard response environments, agency personnel may encounter  
9 situations in which there is an imminent threat to life and property outside  
10 of their Agency's jurisdiction. These environments include scenarios  
11 ranging from being first on scene at a vehicle accident, to committing  
12 Agency resources to protect a local community. Leaders are therefore  
13 expected to use their judgment and respond appropriately.
- 14 • Wildland resources deployed to all-hazard responses will understand the  
15 dynamic and complex environment and utilize their leadership, training, and  
16 skills to adapt, innovate, and bring order to chaos.
- 17 • Leaders are expected to operate within the incident organizational structure  
18 encountered on all-hazard responses. When such structure is absent, they  
19 will utilize National Incident Management System principles to assure safe  
20 and effective utilization of agency resources.
- 21 • Leaders are expected to operate under existing policies and doctrine under  
22 normal conditions. On all-hazard responses, fire and aviation business and  
23 safety standards may have to be adapted to the situation to successfully  
24 accomplish the mission. When conflicts occur, employees will use their  
25 judgment, weigh the risk versus gain, and operate within the intent of  
26 Agency policy and doctrine.
- 27 • All-hazard response will be focused on missions that we perform  
28 consistently and successfully. Workforce assignments will be directed  
29 toward the core skills developed through our existing training and  
30 curriculum.
- 31 • Agency employees will be trained to operate safely and successfully in the  
32 all-hazard environment. Preparedness training will focus on gaining general  
33 knowledge of all-hazard response, disaster characteristics, as well as the  
34 effects from these events on citizens and responders.
- 35 • Specific operational skills will be facilitated through the National Incident  
36 Management System, working with the responsible agencies who supply  
37 the technical specialists who, in turn, provide the specific skill sets. The  
38 Forest Service will not train or equip to meet every hazard.
- 39 • Wildland employees are expected to perform all-hazard support as directed  
40 within their qualifications and physical capabilities. All employees have the  
41 right to a safe assignment. The employee may suspend his or her work  
42 whenever any environmental condition—or combination of condition—  
43 become so extreme than an immediate danger is posed to employee health  
44 and safety that cannot be readily mitigated by the use of appropriate,  
45 approved protective equipment or technology.

- 1 • Acceptable risk is risk mitigated to a level that provides for reasonable  
2 assurances that the all-hazard task can be accomplished without serious  
3 injury to life or damage to property.
- 4 • All-hazard incident-specific briefing and training will be accomplished  
5 prior to task implementation. This preparation will usually occur prior to  
6 mobilization where incident description, mission requirements, and known  
7 hazards are addressed. Key protective equipment and associated needs for  
8 these all-hazard tasks that wildland employees do not routinely encounter or  
9 perform will be identified. This will be done—and be in place—prior to  
10 task implementation.
- 11 • Agency employees will be provided with appropriate vaccinations,  
12 credentials, and personal protective equipment to operate in the all-hazard  
13 environment to which they are assigned.
- 14 • Additional information can be found in the Forest Service Foundational  
15 Doctrine for All-Hazard Response.  
16 [https://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/conferences/all\\_hazard\\_response.pdf](https://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/conferences/all_hazard_response.pdf)

### 17 **All-Hazard Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and Other Non-Wildland** 18 **Fire IMTs**

19 Different entities have developed IMTs based on ICS core competencies under  
20 the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Federal agencies with IMTs  
21 include the U.S. Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency, USDA’s  
22 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), DOI’s National Park  
23 Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others. In addition, many states  
24 and metropolitan areas have developed All Hazard Incident Management Teams  
25 (AHIMTs). AHIMT consists of personnel from various disciplines (fire, rescue,  
26 emergency medical, hazardous materials, law enforcement, public works, public  
27 health and others) trained to perform the functions of the Command and General  
28 Staff at the Type 3 level. AHIMTs are often sponsored or administered by a  
29 state or local emergency management agency.

30 Many different entities that sponsor an AHIMT or other non-wildland fire IMT  
31 have requested that their personnel be allowed to “shadow” wildland fire IMT  
32 positions during incidents (sometimes referred to as “field training” or “field  
33 mentoring”). The primary purpose of shadowing is to gain insight to complex  
34 incident management. All shadowing events should be coordinated with the  
35 receiving GACCs and the IC at an incident.

- 36 • **DOI** – <https://www.doi.gov/emergency/emergency-policy.cfm>

### 37 **International Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation**

#### 38 **U.S. – Mexico Cross Border Cooperation on Wildland Fires**

39 In April 2015, the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture  
40 signed a Wildfire Protection Agreement with Mexico. The agreement has two  
41 purposes:

- 1 • To enable wildfire protection resources originating in the territory of one  
2 country to cross the United States-Mexico border in order to suppress  
3 wildfires on the other side of the border within the zone of mutual  
4 assistance (10 miles/16 kilometers) in appropriate circumstances.
- 5 • To give authority for Mexican and U.S. fire management organizations to  
6 cooperate on other fire management activities outside the zone of mutual  
7 assistance.

8 National Operational Guidelines for this agreement are located at  
9 <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm>. These guidelines cover  
10 issues at the national level and also provide a template for those issues that need  
11 to be addressed in local operating plans. The local operating plans identify how  
12 the agreement will be implemented by the GACCs (and Zone Coordination  
13 Centers) that have dispatching responsibility on the border. The local operating  
14 plans will provide the standard operational procedures for wildfire suppression  
15 resources that could potentially cross the U.S. border into Mexico.

#### 16 **U.S. – Canada, Reciprocal Forest Firefighting Arrangement**

17 Information about United States – Canada cross border support is located at  
18 <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm>. This chapter provides policy  
19 guidance, which was determined by an exchange of diplomatic notes between  
20 the U.S. and Canada in 1982. This chapter also provides operational guidelines  
21 for the Canada – U.S. Reciprocal Forest Fire Fighting Arrangement. These  
22 guidelines are updated yearly.

#### 23 **U.S. – Australia/New Zealand Wildland Fire Arrangement**

24 Information about United States – Australia/New Zealand support is located at  
25 <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm>. This chapter provides a copy  
26 of the arrangements signed between the U.S. and the states of Australia and the  
27 country of New Zealand for support to one another during severe fire seasons. It  
28 also contains the AOP that provides more detail on the procedures,  
29 responsibilities, and requirements used during activation.

### 30 **International Non-Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation**

#### 31 **International Disasters Support**

32 Federal wildland fire employees may be requested through the FS to support the  
33 U.S. Government's (USG) response to international disasters by serving on  
34 Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs). A DART is the operational  
35 equivalent of an ICS team used by the U.S. Agency for International  
36 Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to provide an on-  
37 the-ground operational capability at the site of an international disaster. Prior to  
38 being requested for a DART assignment, employees will have completed a  
39 weeklong DART training course covering information about:

- 1 • USG agencies charged with the responsibility to coordinate USG responses  
2 to international disaster.
  - 3 • The purpose, organizational structure, and operational procedures of a  
4 DART.
  - 5 • How the DART relates to other international organizations and countries  
6 during an assignment. Requests for these assignments are coordinated  
7 through the FS International Programs, Disaster Assistance Support  
8 Program (DASP).
  - 9 • DART assignments should not be confused with technical exchange  
10 activities, which do not require DART training.
- 11 More information about DARTs can be obtained at the FS International  
12 Program's website, <https://www.fs.fed.us/global/aboutus/dasp/welcome.htm>.

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