



Burning Issues



Summer 2016

DRONES AND WILDFIRES

During the 2015 fire season, drones flying in and around wildfires shut down or suspended aerial firefighting operations at least 21 times. Drones have interrupted firefighting operations at least 13 times so far this year, on both wildfires and prescribed fires, creating serious safety hazards for pilots and firefighters alike. Flying drones over wildfires is an extremely poor idea.

Drones or Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) are becoming a very popular hobby in America. The term UAS refers to the unmanned aircraft and all of its components including, but not limited to: control stations and software, remote controls (if necessary), control links, payloads, launch and recovery equipment. In recent years, somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million drones have been purchased commercially.

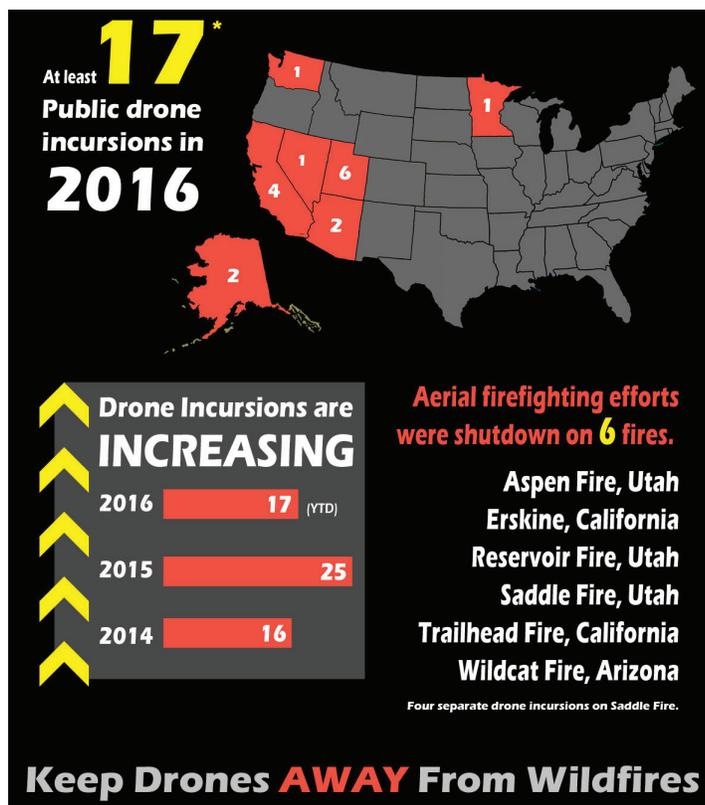
Drone incursions into airspace around active wildfires are increasing. Because these airborne gigs are low flying aircraft, this creates a very serious and real problem for airspace issues on wildland fires. For suppression effectiveness



reasons, firefighting aircraft fly low as well. There have been no mid-air collisions between drones and aircraft, which would be worst case scenario, but aerial firefighting operations have been and will continue to be suspended if drones are anywhere near the fireline with active aerial resources. Grounding aircraft not only results in wildfires potentially growing larger, but can put firefighters into unsafe situations without aerial support and as the fire grows, the associated costs to taxpayers grow as well.

The motivation and drive for these hobbyists seems to revolve around the need and pursuit for “new, awesome video clips” or some footage that could go “viral.” With this many miniature aircraft spread out across the country, some are bound to be in areas where wildfires start. With this drive for the trending or most popular viral video, hobbyists are constantly looking for new and exciting footage, yet innocently, many of them still don’t know about the dangers of flying their whirligigs over wildland fires. Fire aviation experts believe that if drones continue to be flown over fires, it is only a matter of time until a collision occurs between a drone and a firefighting aircraft.

What are we doing about it? NIFC External Affairs and key agency representatives are working with the Federal Aviation Administration to spread the word about flying drones near wildfires. Currently the state of Utah has a prevention/education team specifically tasked with raising the awareness of the issues with drone use. We’ve drafted talking points, key messages, posters, and purchased “If You Fly We Can’t” ads on websites like Amazon and dozens of other websites typically visited by drone users. In these efforts, we’re hoping to proactively prevent a drone-firefighting aircraft collision before it happens.



To date, at least 17 drone incursions have been reported near wildfires.

*This number was current as of July 22, 2016. It is subject to change as situations with drones continue to occur on a regular basis.

BILL KAAGE: THE PROGRAM LEADER'S PERSPECTIVE ON BEING A SURVIVOR

Dan Holmes' "dog tags" hang from Bill Kaage's bedroom dresser.

"Dee (Dan's mother) gave them to me," informs Bill, who was the Fire Management Officer at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in 2004 when Dan lost his life on the Grant West Prescribed Fire there. These "dog tags" with Dan's name were made for Dee by the Wildland Firefighter Foundation.

Bill says that sometimes when he gets up in the morning and it's still dark and he opens his dresser's drawers, he can hear Dan's dog tags click.

"I like that. Just knowing that they are there, having that presence in the room," Bill confides. "I think it helps tie me back to why we're here. I work in wildland fire and I care deeply for the resources that we manage and protect, but it's really all about the people. You've got to remember that—especially at the national level."

Bill continues, "It's awfully easy to get removed from the operations and folks on the ground." "We did a buddy system. We agreed that we would buddy-up. We could cold-call our buddy just to check in and see how they were doing."

The Buddy System

"You don't expect it to be you," Bill says of becoming a survivor of a wildland firefighter line of duty death.

He recalls that after Dan's fatality, he went into ICS crises mode immediately following the tragedy. He offers some insights on how they responded on his unit in the long term. "We did a buddy system. We agreed that we would buddy-up. We could cold-call our buddy just to check in and see how they were doing.

"Besides the buddy system, if you're lucky enough to not be on your own but have a partner or have a family, you've got to talk with them and get to a spot where they can support you. And don't be afraid to reach out with counselors, with therapy, that kind of stuff—if you think that it's appropriate for you."

Bill assures that folks react to tragedy differently. "Give them some space," he says, "but be there to support them because they're going to need support—and you're going to need support."

Insights for Preparing to be a Survivor

Bill has insights on how to prepare for becoming a survivor. He says it should be a topic at pre-season as well as post-season meetings. "You need to make it a part of how you prepare your crew and how you prepare yourself and how you prepare your loved ones for the kind of job you do and the risks associated with your work."

"If you're working in wildland fire, you need to be realistic and know you will be touched by this. These are the kinds of things that can happen to you or your coworkers."

This seasoned fireman is well aware of the "It can't happen to me" syndrome.

"Young people tend to have an idea of their own mortality—with death being something far in the future. When you get older, you start losing that. It (a fatality or serious injury incident) may not impact you directly, but if you're in this business any length of time tragedy will get closer and closer to you—those



ripples from these events. It's almost like you're getting closer to that point where the stone hits the water (the Bull's Eye)."

Bill believes the Granite Mountain tragedy made the concept of being in the center of the Bull's Eye more real for wildland firefighters who may not have been present during South Canyon. "They began to realize that it can happen to me."

"If you're working in wildland fire, you need to be realistic and know you will be touched by this. These are the kinds of things that can happen to you or your coworkers," Bill says. That's why he emphasizes the importance of planning and preparing yourself for such an event—and also to help prepare others for it. "Because, you know, that reality is there. We have very risky jobs and we may do a really good job of planning for operations, but it's very difficult to consider every single scenario every single time."

Making Progress

Bill believes that we are making progress on acknowledging our survivors.

"It's nice to see that we are doing better than we did 10 years ago, than we did 20 years, than we did 30 years ago," Bill says. "Today, I think there's more of a recognition of the importance to taking care of people. I see a lot of work that

we're doing where we are seeking to be better at how we approach the impact of our work on our personal selves. It's not perfect by any stretch of imagination but I think overall, we should feel pretty good about our forward direction, our forward momentum in making progress in prepping people for tragedies."

Gut Punch

"It was a gut punch," Bill says of initially learning of Dan Holmes' accident. "I can remember exactly where I was when I first heard. That news sinks right into the emotional area of your brain."

Bill was on his day off, running errands with his wife, when he got that call on his cell phone.

"I remember it very clearly. It was just after one in the afternoon. Believe me, you don't think it will happen to you when you get a call like that."

Bill says he "hightailed it" for the Park. He explains that, initially, he started interacting with Park staff "taking care of your own and managing the situation, getting help from neighboring units and from outside the Park." Sometime during the first 48 hours, he recalls, he finally found the time to ask himself: "What does this mean for me as an individual? What does it mean to me?"

Today, Bill says he doesn't think about Dan's tragedy every day, "but I think about it on a lot of days. Just a thought will suddenly pop-up into my brain about Dan."

Bill confides, even today, when talking with other survivors who were more intimately engaged with this tragedy—depending on the nature of the discussion—he can still get choked up. "When I look back on it," Bill says, "there were some people who I don't think got to a good place. It's kind of a dark space. And I don't know if they really ever came out of that dark space."

This *Two More Chains* article was reprinted with permission from Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center. Read the entire newsletter at: <http://bit.ly/TwoMoreChainsWinter2016>

STEWART FATHER'S DAY POW WOW – MORE THAN JUST A GATHERING

A pow wow is a gathering of Native Americans who come together to celebrate life, pray for family members, laugh, and socialize.

Over Father's Day weekend, Lt. Garry Sam, BIA Law Enforcement Officer, and his family attended the 2016 Stewart Father's Day Pow wow in Carson City, Nevada. The pow wow was a benefit to develop the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center. When it's complete, the Cultural Center will provide visitors with an impression of the school's history from 1890 to the 1980 closing.

Garry and his wife Elizabeth were asked to be the Head Man and Woman dancers for this pow wow. Head dancers are responsible for leading other dancers in the grand entry, or parade of dancers, that opens a pow-wow. They also lead other dancers during a song.

Garry and Elizabeth are from the Shoshone Paiute tribe of Owyhee, Nevada. The Shoshone and Paiutes are known for their beautiful bead work. Garry's regalia are of a Man's Traditional dancer. He has a fully beaded vest with a staff, shield and eagle fan. Elizabeth's regalia are of a Woman's Traditional dancer. She has a fully beaded buckskin top, along with an eagle fan. Elizabeth does all the bead work on their regalia.

Our family says Lt. Sam, "travels to numerous pow wows in several states. We dance for people who cannot dance. In this way, we teach our children the meaning of life, but for each person the meaning of the pow wow, and their place in that ceremony, can only be defined by himself/herself. When we have joy in our hearts, we dance."



Garry Sam (Left) and Elizabeth Sam (Right) are in dance regalia for the Stewart Father's Day Pow wow.

NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP'S PROGRAM MANAGEMENT UNIT RECEIVES ESTEEMED FEDERAL CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

“The American people deserve a government that is responsive to their needs” reads the first line of the memorandum announcing the Federal Customer Service Awards Program. The program, created by the Executive Office of the President, is designed to recognize, promote, and reward service excellence, professionalism, and outstanding achievement by federal employees. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group’s (NWCG) Program Management Unit (PMU), based at the National Interagency Fire Center, has been selected as a recipient of the 2016 Department of the Interior Customer Service Award based on their leadership and support of the NWCG mission.

The NWCG is an interagency group that provides national leadership to develop, maintain, and communicate interagency standards, guidelines, qualifications and training that enable interoperable operations among federal and non-federal entities. NWCG’s collaboratively developed national standards enable over 30,000 firefighters from federal, state, tribal, and local agencies to operate together, meaning that wildland firefighters from various organizations across the nation can conduct fire management actions in a coordinated and effective manner. This requires common standards for training, qualification, planning, logistics, fireline operations, aviation operations, risk management, and many other areas of wildland fire management.

The NWCG Program Management Unit provides national leadership to accomplish the NWCG mission. This is primarily achieved by supporting the operations of the NWCG committees and their subgroups – the backbone



Secretary Jewell presented the award to Deb Fleming, Paul Schlobohm, Tim Blake and Steve Ellis.

of the NWCG effort. The NWCG committees and subgroups are comprised of hundreds of national leaders and subject-matter experts representing the NWCG member agencies and the various functional areas of wildland fire management. The primary job of the Program Management Unit is to provide leadership and support to these committees.

“For 40 years, NWCG has provided leadership for a seamless response to wildland fire across the nation, with the PMU at the center of this effort. NWCG’s PMU exemplifies collaborative government excellence in public service,” says John Glenn, NWCG Executive Board Chairman.

“We are honored to be selected for this award. Our success is attributable to the hundreds of national leaders and subject matter experts that serve on NWCG committees. Their work directly supports wildland firefighters and enables coordinated wildland fire operations across the nation. This award speaks to the success of that collective effort,” says NWCG PMU manager Sean Cross.

NWCG PMU members Paul Schlobohm, Deb Fleming, and Tim Blake received the 2016 Department of the Interior Customer Service Award at a presentation ceremony in Washington, DC on July 4, 2016. Afterwards, the employees were treated to the famous Washington DC fireworks celebration on the National Mall. Congratulations to the NWCG and its Program Management Unit!



NWCG staff: Sean Cross, Elaine Waterbury, Erin Darboven, Paul Schlobohm, Deb Fleming, and Tim Blake.



NIFC CDOS KEY TO RELIABLE AND SAFE WILDFIRE COMMUNICATIONS

In a small, windowless office in the National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD, also known as the “Radio Shop”), a small group of Communications Duty Officers (CDOs) work 24/7 to obtain and coordinate, the frequency spectrum required to ensure that the thousands of radios and dozens of repeaters assigned to wildfires across the country can operate safely.

The NIICD has Radio Frequency Assignments (RFAs/licenses) for 61 frequencies (27 VHF and 34 UHF). All wildfires require their own set of unique frequencies in order for personnel to operate safely. As fires grow larger, more frequencies are needed to support the increasing numbers of radios, repeaters, and links used for communications. On average, large wildfires require between 16 and 24 frequencies each. Therefore, the frequencies that the NIICD has RFAs for are depleted quickly. It is then up to the CDOs to obtain the necessary frequencies on a temporary basis from other agencies on short notice.

“Our job is to ensure that we are using legal, authorized, protected, clear frequencies to ensure life safety” said Gary Stewart, CDO.

CDOs request additional frequencies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the Federal Aviation Administration. The Departmental Frequency Managers then work with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Interdepartment Radio Advisory Committee and Frequency Assignment Subcommittee to obtain additional frequencies on a temporary basis. In the past, CDOs have obtained frequencies from the U.S. Postal Service, FEMA, Treasury Department, Secret Service, and NASA.

The nation’s spectrum resources are limited and fixed (you can’t make any more), while demand for spectrum is ever increasing -- federal agencies are developing more complex systems to better perform critical missions, and industry is using spectrum to fuel a wireless revolution, connecting smartphones, tablets and other devices and objects at faster and faster speeds.

This is spurring the CDOs to look for new sources of frequencies. In 2015, a record 10.1 million acres of private, state, and federal land burned nationwide and for the first

time CDOs obtained frequencies from the Department of Defense. 2015 was a record year for CDOs as they supported 404 incidents with frequencies and frequency specific equipment. This included the issuing and tracking of 753 discrete frequencies which were reused 3,172 times.

In addition to assigning frequencies, CDOs also coordinate communications equipment and personnel. In 2015, the NIICD issued 352 mountain top repeaters of which 214 contained borrowed frequencies. CDOs also sent out 13 Communication Coordinators (COMCs) to Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs) to work with Communications Unit Leaders (COMLs) and Communications Technicians (COMTs) assigned to wildfires. The COMCs are located at the GACC and are able to work closely with the supply desk on radio orders, and the aircraft desk coordinating air frequencies. They attend the Incident Commanders and aviation conference calls as well as help with briefings. This helps the CDO focus on a national scale and keeps the span of control more manageable.



BOEHLE NAMED AS COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION BRANCH CHIEF FOR NPS FIRE AND AVIATION MANAGEMENT

Tina Boehle has been named Communication and Education Branch Chief for the National Park Service Division of Fire and Aviation Management. She succeeds Roberta D'Amico, who moved to a new position in January 2015.

As branch chief, Boehle will serve as the public affairs specialist for the division, providing leadership and expertise in development and implementation of strategic communication efforts for the division as well as the aviation, structural fire, and wildland fire programs. In addition, she will serve as the lead for the Fire Communication and Education Program for the National Park Service. Other duties include serving as an interagency spokesperson at the National Interagency Fire Center, facilitating national and international media requests regarding national wildland fire activities, critical events, policies, or program status, and providing outreach support to the Visitor and Resource Protection Associateship, under which the division resides. Boehle will begin her new position effective immediately.

"I'm looking forward to continuing to share the mission-critical story of fire and aviation in the National Park Service and working across disciplines to accomplish communication and education goals," stated Boehle.

"I'm pleased to have Tina on board as our Communication and Education Branch Chief. Her experiences and background in multimedia communications, commitment to a team approach in support of the Service's Fire

Communication and Education Program, the Division as well as the Visitor and Resource Protection Associate, will serve us well," said Bill Kaage.

Since July 2001, Boehle has served as the Fire Communication and Education Specialist for the Branch of Communication and Education within the same division. Prior to coming to the National Park Service office at the National Interagency Fire Center, she was an interpretive park ranger at Whitman Mission National Historic Site and Mesa Verde National Park.



Raised in Illinois, Boehle graduated from Illinois State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Spanish. In 2014, she completed her Master of Science Degree in Interactive Media from Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut. Tina and her husband, Brian Fuller, have a 4-year old daughter, Celeste. When not on duty, she enjoys spending time with her family, biking, hiking, and exploring back roads.

INTERAGENCY DISPATCH IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

The Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project (IDIP) Phase I will conclude in September after an intensive 18-month period. The U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Wildland Fire established IDIP in 2014 to implement recommendations from numerous previous studies, reviews and assessments of the dispatch system.

Kolleen Beesley was detailed to FS FAM to lead the IDIP. She assembled a group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from federal and state agencies representing local, geographic area, and national dispatch offices across the country. The group validated that problems previously identified still exist. The SMEs prioritized the issues and then developed plans to implement solutions. For some issues, recommendations could be implemented directly, for example, adoption of a standard Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning tool for dispatch centers, Standardized Interagency Service and Supply Plans (ISSP), Standardized Agreements and a standard Delegation of Authority to Center Managers

and their acting. Other issues were elevated to the attention of senior agency leadership for decisions and resolution (example whether dispatch centers should continue to be responsible for administration of Administratively Determined (AD) positions). Other solutions were handed to appropriate staffs or committees to implement solutions including the Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) group and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) recently chartered National Coordination System Committee (NCSC).

"Change is never easy, so implementing recommendations has been challenging," said Kolleen Beesley. "It's critically important though because dispatch provides support to all wildland fire operations, from prescribed fires to initial attack fires to large fire. We believe that implementing the recommendations will help improve the level of service provided by dispatch to field going personnel as well as improve the lives of dispatchers by reducing their stress, burnout and turnover rate. We all win when dispatch functions well."



NATIVE VEGETATION TAKE ROOT AT NIFC

The lush, dewy emerald green lawn that welcomed visitors to the National Interagency Fire Center headquarters in Boise, Idaho for more than a decade is slowly being converted to native flora. By summer's end newcomers and employees will see a landscape filled with hearty sage brush, bitter brush, along with an understory of native grasses and forbs.

Two large plots lining the entry way to the building were stripped of sod last week to make way for native vegetation. Planting began June 1.

“The plants we’re placing here today are more representative of the lands that we manage,” says Mike Feticc, on detail to NIFC from the BLM Winnemucca District. Feticc and others are working to replant the area with surplus native plants and seeds from the BLM Regional Seed Warehouse the USFS Lucky Peak Nursery both in Boise.

Feticc says the conversion will mean reduced water consumption, lower maintenance cost and be a great benefit to local wildlife.

“We’re doing a lot of chopping,” says Matt Germino holding a Pulaski firmly before striking the ground. Germino and a crew of botanists, ecologists and NIFC staff spent the morning clawing up the soil to plant three sub-species of sage brush.

Yet the hard pan soils were tougher than expected. The soil has supported a thick mat of well-irrigated grass for many years. Armed with power augers, pulaskis and heavy tilling tools, they worked vigorously to dig 6-7 inch holes for the seedlings.

Some weeks ago Germino, a research ecologist with the USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center in Boise, approached NIFC’s Deputy Assistant Director Howard Hedrick to plant an experimental common garden. He liked the idea.



Sagebrush seedlings in front of the Jack Wilson building.

“As a natural resource agency we’re trying to set an example here. We’d like to see more native vegetation everywhere on the campus,” Hedrick said. “It can attract wildlife and provide some habitat for the smaller critters around NIFC – we’re building up the understory and improving the cover,” he said.

Germino is very interested in the sage brush success. In his research, he’s trying to verify how seed sources make a difference to plant survival. The experimental garden he’s planning today will be a proving ground for three sub-species of sage brush commonly used in BLM re-veg projects all over the Great Basin region.

As the hard soils give way to native seedlings, crews will also spread fescue and blue bunch grasses to build an understory to attract the wildlife. Already birds hover in the trees around them. They seem to notice the evolving landscape will help them.

Shelby Stuart, a NIFC mechanical engineer and planting volunteer, says the change is for the better.

“It’s a good addition to the campus and it goes along with what we do here and what we’re trying to protect,” she said.

FUTURE FIREFIGHTERS TOUR NIFC

In the first-of-its-kind customer feedback, a visitor described her recent tour of NIFC as “The best day of my life.” That visitor was 11 years old and part of a June tour group of children Superkids Summer Day Camp.

Del Arizana (daughter of Bureau of Indian Affairs NIFC IT Supervisor Luther Arizana) works for Superkids and had the idea to bring the young group for a special field trip. The 90-minute morning tour was conducted by USFWS Public Affairs Specialist Karen Miranda Gleason, who met the group in the Jack Wilson Building lobby, gave them a pint-sized explanation of NIFC’s mission, and showed them the aerial map of NIFC.

The next stop was a quick walk away to the National Weather Service (NWS) building’s backyard to see a variety of Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) units and learn why firefighters need to monitor the weather. Acting Meteorologist-in-Charge (MIC) Jay Breidenbach provided a fun, hands-on session about measuring and collecting data, including an anemometer and a radiosonde from a weather balloon (released twice daily from NIFC at 0500 and 1700). Each child also received a cloud chart, courtesy of NWS,



Superkids Day camp participants spray water under the supervision of BLM Boise District Fire Crew members.



Superkids Day Camp tour group looks at a Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) with Les Dixon, NIFC Air Tanker Base Manager, USDA Forest Service.

with a quick skyward-looking lesson in identifying and naming cloud types.

Smiles were biggest at the next part of the tour, thanks to Boise BLM fire crew members, who rolled into the NIFC parking lot aboard Engines 1427 and 1428. Firefighters Eddy Almeida, Carlie Swa, Chris Hawkins, Walker Neville, Sean Burke, David Richard, and Janessa Miran, along with Engine Module leader Amos Lee, showed off fire tools, equipment, and supplies, including chainsaws and MRE’s. The crew helped the children try on backpacks and roll out fire hose. Each child then gained a bit of hose-handling experience by using the spray of water to move a leave across the pavement. They were each invited to climb in and out of one of the engines – some taking the liberty to honk the horn -- and received their choice of a small gift from the crew. The engine crews rolled away parade-style with honking horns and waves.

In matching green shirts, the Superkids group then turned a few more heads as they walked across the base single file to the Ramp, in an orderly manner similar to crews occasionally seen doing the same. They were welcomed by BLM Aircraft Attendant Training Leader Don Hubbartt, who explained how fixed-wing aircraft are used to fight fire. Air Tanker Base Manager Les Dixon, from USDA Forest Service, gave the group a close-up look at a Single Engine Air Tanker, showing them where the retardant goes in, and where it comes out.

With temperatures climbing to the 90’s that day, the additional heat of the tarmac made a definite impression on the young visitors. Hot and hungry, with gifts in hand and priceless memories in mind, they exited the Ramp – in single-file, just like firefighters – and enjoyed their bag lunches in the shade before heading back to camp.

LCES AND A FIREFIGHTER'S FINANCES

by Darin Crisp, USFS FAM-IT.

You—intrepid firefighter, modern defender of our natural world—get called to leave home and family venturing deep into the wildlands to battle the orange monster. You arrive late, sleep a little and rise early to fight fire. You eat, sleep, dream Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones, or LCES.

Days later, while checking in at home, you realize someone has charged a bunch of purchases on your credit card. Identity theft. While not as disturbing as burglary, it's a big issue to deal with while on your 14-day assignment. Unfortunately, identity theft is common, and in an instant, your information can be compromised.

No doubt, financial incidents can occur while you are on an assignment. Dealing with them can take time and can potentially create serious safety issues if your attention wanders from working on the fireline. So, how do firefighters protect themselves in advance? LCES, of course.

The key is preparation. Take time to understand how to protect yourself and your family. In effect, apply LCES to your finances. It's a little like getting your finances in order before an "initial attack" is needed.

"Size up" your financial situation by listing your accounts and credit sources, your "green space." Lay out your debts and payment/auto-pay schedules and know your "black line"—the periods between payments, your grace periods before late fees.

You can also prepare "defensive measures."

- Limit the amount any one transaction can take from an account.
- Decide whether or not to put someone else on your accounts, and in what role.

- Develop effective passwords and do not use the same password on all your accounts.
- Change your passwords regularly.

What about building a strong password time after time? Perhaps you might use your Incident Response Pocket Guide to associate a section with an account. Select a certain phrase and include the page number with a hyphen: i.e. "24-PowerlineSafety" for Power Bill. Change the page and phrase every month.

It's important to develop financial "tactical situational awareness." Do not make a financial transaction in a public setting. Public WiFi is easily gathered by an unfriendly agent, and in fact, that person may have put up that hotspot simply to harvest your information. The same goes for ATM transactions. Be aware of your surroundings. Check to make sure that the card slot on the ATM is truly part of the ATM; card skimmers are easily affixed. Look around, as well, for possible cameras that might gather your PIN.

You can take "proactive measures" by placing a temporary credit freeze on your credit report, which requires contacting the credit agencies. Requesting a temporary freeze will stop all credit applications until you lift it. Steve Weisman, in his article "Simple steps to avoid identity theft", (USA TODAY July 2, 2016), discusses this as a risk reduction strategy, along with five other excellent and out-of-the box ideas to protect you and yours.

"Initial Attack"

You've been victimized by Identity Theft. What do you do? Size it up for initial attack. These steps help guide you to the quickest way to mitigate this long-term problem.

- Read through www.ftc.gov/idtheft
- Contact one of the three credit reporting agencies (Experian, Transunion and Equifax)—place a formal fraud alert. Federal law requires that if notified, they contact the other two agencies
- Request a free credit report from each agency. You must contact each one for this and you can get it electronically.
- Create an initial report that describes what happens. Include the above information if it applies.
- Go back to the FTC website (above) and create an Identity Fraud Complaint. You will receive an incident number and a copy of the report. Record this and use it for your Identity Theft Victim Statement and the police report.
- Contact the police department where the incident occurred or where you live. Ask to file an identity theft report. Give them a copy of the FTC report and the FTC Incident Number. You will receive a Case Number, and the identification of the investigating police officer.
- Contact all your credit card companies and other credit companies and make an identity theft report. Include the Police Report Case Number, the investigating officer's identification and the FTC incident number.
- Change ALL your account passwords.
- Contact your cell phone, landline and internet providers as well as utilities and make a report to them too.
- Contact your U.S. Post Office and put through a new change of address card that directs mail to your real address.