

# National Wildland Fire Preparedness Levels

## *A Summary of the Nation's Wildfire Response Stages*

The National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC), composed of wildland fire representatives from each wildland fire agency based at the National Inter-agency Fire Center (NIFC), establishes Preparedness Levels throughout the calendar year to ensure suppression resource availability for emerging incidents across the country. Preparedness Levels are dictated by fuel and weather conditions, fire activity, and fire suppression resource availability throughout the country.

The five Preparedness Levels range from the lowest (1) to the highest (5). Each Preparedness Level includes specific management actions and involves increasing levels of BLM resource commitments. As Preparedness Levels rise, so does the need for Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and suppression resources, which include wildland fire crews, engines, helicopters, airtankers and other aircraft, and specialized heavy equipment, such as bulldozers. Many of these resources and teams are Federal and state employees.

IMTs are specialized teams of experienced, interagency wildland fire personnel who manage large, complex wildland fire incidents. IMTs manage wildland fires so that local units can free up their resources to focus on new and emerging incidents.



**Preparedness Level 1 (PL 1)**

During this time, fire personnel are able to suppress wildfires in their respective geographic areas without requesting additional wildland fire resources from other areas or from the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), based at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Fire activity is typically below normal at this level.



**Preparedness Level 2 (PL 2)**

At this stage, several geographic areas are experiencing high to extreme fire danger, though they are able to manage fire activity without requesting many wildland fire suppression resources from other areas. Few of the country's IMTs are assigned to wildland fire incidents.



**Preparedness Level 3 (PL 3)**

This stage typically involves two or more geographic areas requiring significant amounts of wildland fire suppression resources from other areas. At this point, NICC is moving an increased amount of wildland fire suppression resources around the country, including IMTs.



**Preparedness Level 4 (PL 4)**

This level involves three or more geographic areas experiencing large, complex wildfires requiring IMTs. Geographic areas are competing for wildland fire suppression resources and about 60 percent of the country's IMTs and wildland firefighting personnel are committed to wildland fire incidents.



**Preparedness Level 5 (PL5)**

This is the highest level of wildland fire activity. Several geographic areas are experiencing large, complex wildland fire incidents, which have the potential to exhaust national wildland firefighting resources. At least 80 percent of the country's IMTs and wildland firefighting personnel are committed to wildland fire incidents. At this level, all fire-qualified BLM employees become available for wildfire response.



# National Wildland Fire Preparedness Levels



- Very minimal fire activity
- No Incident Management Team (IMT) mobilization. IMTs are specialized teams of experienced, interagency wildland fire personnel who manage large, complex wildland fire incidents
- Very few personnel committed to wildfires



- High to extreme fire danger in several geographic areas
- 5 to 18 large wildland fire incidents are occurring across the country
- 2 to 7 IMTs are mobilized to wildland fires
- 400 to 5,000 wildland fire suppression personnel are committed to wildfires throughout the country



- Two or more geographic areas require significant wildland fire suppression resources from other areas
- 15 to 32 large wildland fires are occurring across the country
- 7 to 13 IMTs are mobilized to wildland fires
- 3,900 to 8,800 wildland fire suppression personnel are committed to wildfires throughout the country
- The National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), based at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho, is moving an increased amount of wildland fire suppression resources around the nation



- Three or more geographic areas have large, complex wildfires that require IMTs
- 25 to 52 large wildland fire incidents are occurring across the country
- 15 to 25 IMTs are mobilized to wildland fires
- 8,000 to 17,000 or more wildland fire suppression personnel are committed to incidents throughout the country
- Geographic areas are competing for wildland fire suppression resources and about 60 percent of the country's IMTs and firefighting crews are committed to wildland fires



- This is the highest level of wildland fire activity. Several geographic areas are experiencing large, complex wildland fire incidents that have the potential to exhaust national wildland firefighting resources
- 38 to 85 large wildland fires are occurring across the country
- 31 to 38 IMTs are mobilized to wildland fires
- 14,000 to more than 20,000 wildland fire suppression personnel are committed to incidents
- At least 80 percent of the country's IMTs and wildland firefighting crews are deployed to wildland fire incidents
- The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture release internal correspondence requesting wildland fire assistance and support from all available employees

