

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence 2020-15

May 4, 2020

To: Area Command Teams

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)

Subject: Area Command Accomplishments - 2020 COVID-19 Wildfire Response Plan Assignment

In December 2019, the first identified outbreak of the quick spreading and highly contagious COVID-19, also known as the Coronavirus was in Wuhan, China. The United States began to see COVID-19 cases in January 2020 and continue to see spread across the country. COVID-19 is a disease that causes a wide range of illness symptoms that may range from mild to severe depending on the individual who may be infected. Many governmental agencies and organizations started to implement various tactics to mitigate exposure to the Coronavirus to the general public and employees. For those governmental agencies and organizations that have a responsibility to manage wildland fire to protect life, property, and resources, it is our responsibility to maintain our capabilities at all levels, even during a time where we as a nation must do our part to mitigate exposure to reduce spread of the Coronavirus. To that end NMAC assigned three Area Command Teams and tasked them with an overall mission of ensuring our Nation has a standardized approach to manage wildland fire at all levels and on an interagency basis. The Area Command Teams (ACT) were in-briefed on March 17th and presented a Delegation of Authority (DoA) for the development of Wildland Fire Response Plans (WFRP). An additional Type 2 Incident Management Team (IMT2) was ordered to work with ACT#2 Sexton for development of the Eastern Area WFRP.

Area Command Teams and Type 2 IMT assignments:

- Team 1 Stutler: Rocky Mountain, Northwest, Alaska
- Team 2 Sexton: Southern Area, Great Basin, Northern Rockies
- Team 3 Jalbert: Southwest, Southern/Northern California (Hawaii)
- Silver IMT2 Goldman –Eastern Area

This was a very non-typical assignment for Area Command to undertake, as a situation like this and of such magnitude has never been dealt with. The teams were required to work as separate entities yet produce a product that was required to be not only understandable but usable. The teams were also asked to produce these plans while working virtually and using technology that was somewhat familiar but which they had not used to a great extent.

Through joint leadership and clear intent, the ACTs decided to treat the IMT2 as another ACT during this assignment. Because of this clear intent and the development of a Centralized Planning Branch the teams were able to fully meet the objectives of the DoA:

- Coordinate with Federal, State, County, and Tribal health officials to liaise and identify issues as they relate to COVID-19 and wildland fire response.
- Develop Wildland Fire Response Plans, focusing on wildland fire response for:
 - Maintaining initial attack capability at all levels



National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

- Maintaining extended attack capability at all levels
 - Maintaining dispatch and coordination capabilities at all levels
 - Identify and/or develop, and document procedures to mitigate impacts due to potential exposure to COVID-19 during an incident.
-
- Identify and/or develop, and document protocols, to be included in Wildland Fire Response Plans, on how to manage potential COVID-19 exposure incidents for Initial and Extended Attack incidents.
 - Identify and/or develop, and document protocols for Incident Management Teams (IMT) to mitigate COVID-19 exposure concerns, and provide to IMTs, and all Units.
 - Identify and/or develop, and document protocols for wildland fire response to areas with known exposure to COVID-19, to be included in Wildland Fire Response Plans.
 - Ensure that the Wildland Fire Response Plans do not contradict any currently developed protocols by any Agency.
 - Ensure that the Wildland Fire Response Plans are developed to promote interagency coordinated response to Wildland Fire Management in regards to COVID-19.

The teams have met the objectives set forth in the delegation of authority, within the allocated time frame as negotiated in the initial in-brief and have met the expectations that were given. Additionally the Area Commanders worked together as a team, used innovation such as developing the Central Planning Branch, ensuring consistency and developing a standard template for the plans (WFRPs), made outstanding use of technology, and finally, produced a useful product that will be foundational for guiding fire operations in an interagency environment nationally. They collaborated with a wide variety of partners, cooperators, stakeholders, state and local health organizations and a host of other entities. They showed leadership and professionalism with the interagency Coordinating Groups, listened, attended CG meetings and worked through an unprecedented situation and adapted to different group and geographic dynamics.

Additional accomplishment: trainees and non-typical positions (OSC1) were used throughout the process to help the ACT meet the objectives of this assignment. Although these trainees were not on a fire assignment the requirements for completing the WFRPs were far more complex than the traditional fire assignment typical of Area Command. This assignment required strong and effective communication skills during all aspects their work, virtual with a wide variety of individuals and groups to complete the task.

ACT#1 Trainees:

- Mike Minton, ACDR recommended certification.
- Joe Reinarz, ACDR recommended certification.
- Vicki Clay, ACLC recommended recertification since she had previously held the position.
- Gwen Sanchez, ACPC, did not complete task book.
- Brad Bernardy, ACAC, did not complete task book.

ACT#2 Trainees:

- Rick Young, ACDR, did not complete task book
- Sue Zahn, ACLC, did not complete task book
- Bob Gear, ACPC, did not complete task book
- Lorri Benfield, ACPC, did not complete task book
- Mike Kerrigan, ACAC, did not complete task book
- Frank Guzman, LOFR, did not complete task book

ACT#3 Trainees:



National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

- Jay Kurth-ACDR, did not complete task book
- Jim Ferguson-ACDR, did not complete task book
- Josh Taylor-ACPC, did not complete task book
- Tim Stepanovich-ACAC, did not complete task book

Finally, NMAC would like to thank the Area Command Teams for a job well done!

/s/ Joshua Simmons
Chair, NMAC

