

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

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To: Geographic Area Coordination Groups, Geographic Area Coordination Centers

From: National Multi Agency Coordinating Group

Subject: Incident Name Protocols

Incident naming conventions and protocols have existed for some time and must be revisited periodically. When units, incident commanders, or dispatch centers name a wildfire, thought should be given to ensure it is relevant and appropriate. Most agency policies and guidance recommend that fires be named after geographic locations or landmarks. Sensitivity should be used in selecting an incident name that will not reflect negatively on the unit, fire organization, or agency. What may seem to be a purely innocent name to the local unit may in fact have negative repercussions far beyond the fire itself.

Be mindful of naming a fire something that may be construed as offensive, derogatory or inappropriate to any ethnic, religious or political group. Avoid using names that are considered slang or may be construed as unprofessional. If in doubt, rename the fire.

The following are examples that should be avoided:

- "Fire" in the name of the incident. Fire is the Incident Type which is redundant to include in the incident name.
- Naming a fire after a person.
- Naming a fire after private property or a company (ex: "Jeep" or "Bar T Ranch").
- Naming a fire that includes the phrase "Dead Man" or "Deadman."
- Naming a fire after another catastrophic fire (one that experienced fatalities, high property losses, etc.).
- Naming a fire after a well-publicized event that could cause confusion (ex: "Eclipse" or "Super Bowl").
- Using cute or funny fire names, or using a play on words to name a fire. What may be funny to one person or group may not be to another.

The National Multi Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) has established policy that the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) will follow regarding fire names. Any fire that is deemed to be inappropriately named or potentially offensive will not be reported in the National Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR) using the name, but will be reported using the incident number in Block 2 of the ICS-209. It will continue being reported on the IMSR by the incident number until the name is changed by the local unit.

/s/ Dan Buckley
NMAC Chair

