

NPS FIRE & AVIATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR SEVERITY FUNDING REQUESTS

Allow five working days for review and approval of severity funding requests. Evaluate your park's situation and adjoining agency plans, anticipate your needs, and call the regional fire staff to let them know that you plan on placing an initial severity funding request or that you'll be requesting an extension of severity funding. Keep in mind that severity funding authorizations are normally for 30 days, although there are instances where severity may be approved for less than 30 days.

1. **Preparedness reviews** must be completed for area and satellite parks before the severity funding request is drafted. Copies of the summary for each park are to be provided electronically to the RFMO or his/her designee. The park's fire management plan should identify specific resources needed to enhance initial attack at planning level 4 or 5.

2. **Step-up or severity?** Step-up plans address intermittent periods in or out of fire season when fire danger is very high or extreme. Step-up plans are for short duration (a maximum of usually 3-5 days) and cover such events as lightning activity level, red flag warning in effect, park IA resources depleted by 50%, or higher visitor numbers. Any combination of two or more would increase the geographic preparedness level from 3 to 4. Step-up activities (LAL, ERC/BI's, wind, high visitor numbers, etc.) must be specified in the park's fire management plan and approved by the superintendent. Step-up plan break-points must be supported by Fire Family Plus runs. Additional staffing as well as the ordering of other resources must be identified and approved in the Park's Fire Management Plan to reinforce initial attack.

3. For severity funding requests, the following sections must be included:
 - a. **Narrative statement:** The signed and dated request letter will include a brief narrative description of the local interagency fire situation and preparedness level that justifies the request. Identify suppression resources that are available in the surrounding jurisdiction or with other federal/state agencies that would be available for initial attack in the park. Include support for satellite parks that depend on your program. If these units are experiencing similar conditions and are in need of additional initial-attack resources, they should be included in the area park's funding request as appropriate for their situation.
 - b. **Quantification of need** addresses the criteria that demonstrates that severity is needed; fuel, weather conditions or both; and expected duration. Are there any other specific or special criteria that are relevant to your situation?
 - c. **Situation**
 - **Fire danger models** graphically contrast the current seasonal trend for ERC and BI with historic fire danger indices for the same station or set of stations (using Special Interest Group {SIG}). Ensure to include your local ERC and BI or other relevant indicator charts.
 - **Precipitation/drought** includes the U.S. Drought Monitor plus one or more indices, such as the Standardized Precipitation Index, Palmer Drought Index or KBDI.
 - **Fuel loading** includes qualitative information comparing current to average conditions, if unusual.
 - **Live and dead fuel moisture** references current values, historic average values and comparison to all-time worst conditions, plus NDVI and WFAS. Specify your local onsite values and whether they are calculated by NFDERS or you are measuring fuels directly.
 - **30-day weather outlook** that is done by a NWS or Fire Weather unit.
 - **Recent fires in park/area** include number of fires and acreage.

d. **Itemized list of requested resources**

- The NPS Severity Cost Estimator (http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_severity_funding.html) must be used for all severity requests.
- Indicate resource type, quantity and cost for resources staged by the park.
- Also identify additional supervision and/or leadership or management support that will be needed and at what cost. Be very specific on your cost estimates – indicate AD levels and rates, or WG or GS rates, as well as the number of pay periods used in the estimate. If you're ordering additional resources, but don't know the hourly rate, then use an average hourly GS rate.
- Estimate the costs for resources and additional management support based on the locality costs for your unit's area.
- Since severity funding requests must be coordinated with your IA partners, indicate by type, quantity and cost (summary) the resources your cooperators have requested under their severity funding request. Discuss what resources, on an interagency basis, were agreed to be ordered. How will these resources be used in the local or geographic area?
- Be cognizant of unusual costs and justify within the request.

e. **Management of resources:** Who will provide leadership and supervision? Who will resources be working for if there will be severity resources at an NPS satellite unit without an FMO? How will you manage these and your own unit's resources for work/rest requirements, and how will you manage cumulative fatigue for your unit's NPS staff for a long fire season? Identify the plan/chart/calendar that will be used to adhere to work/rest guidelines.

f. **Fire Severity Funding Charges:**

- Fire severity funding is not intended to raise preparedness funding levels to cover differences that may exist between funds actually appropriated (including rescissions) and those identified in the fire planning process.
- Refer to the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation (Red Book) for a complete list of appropriate and inappropriate charges.

g. **Identify the situation or circumstances that will trigger the termination of severity funding.**

h. **Prepared by and approved by:** Who prepared the severity funding request (in case there are questions at the regional/national level); approval of superintendent or his/her acting.

4. Regionally Approved Requests: After the severity funding request is approved at the park level, the request will be submitted for approval to the Regional Director, or his/her designee (typically the RFMO). Upon approval, the regional office will provide a severity funding authorization letter with an account number to the requesting park. Severity events are to be tracked using a Work Breakdown Structure that includes the FireCode and is mapped to the severity functional area, fund 14XP112585, and unit's cost center.

The regional office may modify the request prior to approval. Read the authorization letter carefully prior to proceeding to ensure actions follow the intent of the final authorization. A copy of the authorization and severity request should be uploaded to the shared FY2014 NPS wildland Fire Severity Google Drive with notification to the Operations and Program Planning Leads.

5. Nationally Approved Requests: If the request is over \$100,000, or if it is your second request for severity and cumulatively surpasses \$100,000 it will be reviewed by the region and then uploaded to the shared FY2014 NPS wildland Fire Severity Google Drive with notification to the Operations and Program Planning Leads. Again, the national office may modify the request prior to approval. Allow additional time for NPS-NIFC review. On-going severity requests that cross fiscal years with an

individual or cumulative total over \$100,000 also require approval from the Branch Chief, Wildland Fire.

- 6. Managing and tracking cost:** In preparation for a potential audit, it is recommended that all costs be tracked using ISUITE. Cost will include all Federal, State and Local cooperators.

Ensure that preparedness-funded personnel do not charge their base salary to severity funding unless they are STF and outside their core funded season. Be diligent about taking personnel off severity funding and charging to suppression accounts when fires occur.

Parks should be using blanket purchase agreements (BPA's) to house/feed resources. This will reduce costs and provide a test mechanism for emergency incidents in the park. Manage location of R&R, if it is necessary.

- 7. Severity funding extension request:** If severity conditions persist past the initial 30 day severity authorization, complete a severity funding extension request. The extension request must be received at the national office a minimum of five business days prior to the 30 day expiration. Prior to completing this request, evaluate whether severity resources were sufficient for initial attack/suppression in the area. Include an estimate of cumulative severity spending to date and attach the cost-tracking spreadsheet.