

National Interagency Coordination Center
Incident Management Situation Report
Thursday, August 11, 2016 – 0530 MT
National Preparedness Level 3

National Fire Activity

Initial attack activity:	Light (113 new fires)
New large incidents:	7
Large fires contained:	2
Uncontained large fires:**	29
Area Command Teams Committed:	0
NIMOs committed:	1
Type 1 IMTs committed:	5
Type 2 IMTs committed:	8

**Uncontained large fires include only fires being managed under a full suppression strategy.

[Link](#) to Geographic Area daily reports.

One MAFFS C-130 air tanker and support personnel each from the 153rd Airlift Wing, (Wyoming Air National Guard) and the 302nd Airlift Wing, (Colorado Springs, Air Force Reserve) have been deployed to Boise, ID in support of wildland fire operations.

One Convair 580 airtanker group from British Columbia has been deployed to Billings, MT in support of wildland fire operations.

Southern California Area (PL 3)

New fires:	13
New large incidents:	1
Uncontained large fires:	5
Type 1 IMTs committed:	3
Type 2 IMTs committed:	2

Soberanes, San Benito-Monterey Unit, Cal Fire. Cal Fire IMT 1 (Derum) and IMT 1 (Vontillow). Seven miles northwest of Big Sur, CA. Timber, chaparral and tall grass. Moderate fire behavior with short-range spotting, flanking and backing. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, road, area and trail closures in effect.

Pilot, San Bernardino, NF. IMT 2 (Wakoski). Three miles west of Lake Arrowhead, CA. Timber, chaparral and brush. Active fire behavior with group torching, short-range spotting and flanking. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, road, trail and area closures in effect.

Mineral, Fresno-Kings Unit, Cal Fire. Cal Fire IMT 1 (Gouvea). Nine miles southwest of Coalinga, CA. Brush and grass. Active fire behavior with uphill runs and backing. Structures threatened. Road closures in effect.

* **Horseshoe**, Inyo NF. IMT 2 (Laeng). Twelve miles southwest of Lone Pine, CA. Timber and brush. Moderate fire behavior with isolated torching, creeping and smoldering. Structures threatened. Evacuations and road closures in effect.

Clark, Inyo NF. Transfer of command from IMT 2 (Laeng) back to the local unit occurred yesterday. Seven miles east of June Lake, CA. Timber, brush and short grass. Minimal fire behavior. Road and area closures in effect. Sage grouse habitat threatened.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Soberanes	CA-BEU	68,698	1,606	50	Ctn	8/31	4,822	-33	99	291	21	68	107.5M	ST

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Pilot	CA-BDF	7,861	125	64	Ctn	8/14	1,662	187	47	85	12	0	6.8M	FS
Mineral	CA-KFU	5,000	4,200	10	Ctn	8/19	1,114	299	30	76	15	2	988K	ST
* Horseshoe	CA-INF	400	---	25	Ctn	8/14	266	---	6	16	5	0	100K	FS
Clark	CA-INF	2,819	0	90	Ctn	8/12	513	-39	10	21	27	0	3.4M	FS

Great Basin Area (PL 4)

New fires:	19
New large incidents:	2
Uncontained large fires:	6
Type 1 IMTs committed:	1
Type 2 IMTs committed:	2

Pioneer, Boise NF. IMT 1 (Wilkins) and IMT 2 (Chadwick). Eight miles north of Idaho City, ID. Timber. Active fire behavior with isolated torching and spotting. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, road, area and trail closures in effect.

Strawberry, Great Basin NP. IMT 2 (DeMasters). Started on BLM land five miles west of Baker, NV. Timber, brush and short grass. Active fire behavior with wind-driven runs and backing. Structures threatened. Road, trail and area closures in effect.

* **Power line**, Fort Hall Agency, BIA. Seven miles southeast of American Falls, ID. Brush and short grass. Active fire behavior with running and creeping. Residences threatened. Road and area closures in effect.

Dry Creek, Sawtooth NF. Six miles northwest of Stanley, ID. Timber. Moderate fire behavior with single tree torching, creeping and smoldering. Residences threatened. Trail closures in effect.

Overland, Ely District Office, BLM. Forty miles northeast of Eureka, NV. Chaparral, brush and short grass. Active fire behavior isolated torching and creeping. Road and area closures in effect. Sage grouse habitat threatened. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping.

Broad Mouth, Bear River Area, Utah DOF. Fifteen miles northwest of Tremonton, UT. Brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior. Structures and sage-grouse habitat threatened. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping.

* **Grimms**, Dixie NF. Fifteen miles north of Escalante, UT. Timber and brush. Moderate fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Last report unless significant activity occurs.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Pioneer	ID-BOF	64,786	435	37	Ctn	9/30	1,500	-80	38	44	10	5	33.3M	FS
Strawberry	NV-GBP	4,700	100	20	Ctn	8/19	348	186	12	9	4	0	150K	BLM
* Power line	ID-FHA	788	---	0	Ctn	8/12	67	---	0	10	0	0	60K	BIA
Dry Creek	ID-STF	788	7	50	Ctn	8/11	195	9	7	4	2	0	1.1M	FS
Overland	NV-ELD	8,900	-10	22	Ctn	8/14	243	90	7	8	2	0	350K	BLM
Broad Mouth	UT-BRS	20,616	0	61	Ctn	8/14	68	-91	2	4	0	3	1.7M	ST
* Grimms	UT-DIF	120	---	40	Comp	UNK	18	---	0	1	0	0	28K	FS

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Lone Pine	ID-FHA	9,226	0	100	Ctn	---	63	-72	1	5	0	0	900K	BIA

Northwest Area (PL 3)

New fires: 12
 New large incidents: 1
 Uncontained large fires: 7
 Type 2 IMTs committed: 3

Juntura Complex (2 fires), Vale District, BLM. IMT 2 (Gales). Thirty miles southwest of Vale, OR. Brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior with backing, creeping and smoldering. Structures and sage grouse habitat threatened.

Rail, Wallowa-Whitman, NF. IMT 2 (Harrod). Five miles west of Unity, OR. Timber. Moderate fire behavior with single tree torching, running and backing. Road, trail and area closures in effect.

Kewa, Colville Agency, BIA. Transfer of command from IMT 2 (Goff) back to the local unit will occur tomorrow. Thirty-one miles southwest of Colville, WA. Timber, closed timber litter and brush. Minimal fire behavior. Evacuations and road closures in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

Orejana Flat, Burns District, BLM. Thirty miles northeast of Frenchglen, OR. Timber, brush and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior. Structures and sage grouse habitat threatened. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping

Gibbon, Pendleton Unit, ODF. Twenty miles east of Pendleton, OR. Timber, brush and short grass. Minimal fire behavior with backing.

* **Heritage**, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Eleven miles east of The Dalles, OR. Brush and short grass. Moderate fire behavior with spotting and uphill runs. Structures threatened.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Juntura Complex	OR-VAD	24,301	0	65	Ctn	8/14	422	-9	11	15	4	0	485K	BLM
Rail	OR-WWF	11,503	98	10	Ctn	8/31	717	-51	19	21	8	0	7.1M	FS
Kewa	WA-COA	1,889	0	75	Ctn	8/12	386	-111	10	5	1	0	4M	BIA
Orejana Flat	OR-BUD	897	-3	80	Ctn	8/15	78	-59	2	6	0	0	350K	BLM
Gibbon	OR-973S	266	111	30	Ctn	8/12	60	---	3	4	2	0	331K	ST
* Heritage	OR-CGF	900	---	85	Ctn	8/11	67	---	1	18	1	0	47K	FS

Rocky Mountain (PL 3)

New fires: 17
 New large incidents: 2
 Uncontained large fires: 5
 Type 1 IMTs Committed: 1
 NIMOs Committed: 1

* **Hunter Peak**, Shoshone NF. IMT 1 (Pechota). Fifteen miles southeast of Cooke City, MT. Closed timber litter, brush and short grass. Extreme fire behavior with crowning, spotting and running. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, road, trail and area closures in effect.

* **Babaganoush**, Wind River/Bighorn Basin District, BLM. Forty-five miles south of Cody, WY. Timber, brush and short grass. Extreme fire behavior with group torching, spotting and short crown runs.

Whit, Park County. Transfer of command from IMT 1 (Pechota) back to the local unit will occur today. Started on BLM land 12 miles west of Cody, WY. Timber, brush and tall grass. Moderate fire behavior with isolated torching and creeping. Structures threatened. Trail and area closures in effect.

Beaver Creek, Routt NF. NIMO (Quesinberry). Twenty-four miles north of Walden, CO. Timber and brush. Moderate fire behavior with crowning, spotting and running. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, road, area and trail closures in effect. Sage grouse habitat threatened.

Lava Mountain, Shoshone NF. Twenty miles northwest of Dubois, WY. Timber, heavy logging slash and short grass. Minimal fire behavior. Road and trail closures in effect.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Total	Crw	Eng	Heli			
* Hunter Peak	WY-SHF	1,400	----	0	Ctn	10/1	102	---	2	10	5	0	250K	FS
* Babaganoush	WY-WBD	200	---	0	Ctn	8/20	54	---	0	5	3	0	100K	BLM
Whit	WY-PAX	12,387	111	95	Ctn	8/24	419	-51	9	29	3	8	5.6M	BLM
Beaver Creek	CO-RTF	35,543	114	41	Ctn	10/21	234	2	1	28	4	17	18.9M	FS
Lava Mountain	WY-SHF	14,644	0	90	Ctn	9/1	197	-11	2	15	2	0	18.2M	FS

Northern Rockies Area (PL 2)

New fires:	16
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	2
Type 2 IMTs committed:	1

Roaring Lion, Bitterroot NF. Five miles southwest of Hamilton, MT. Timber. Minimal fire behavior. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, road, trail and area closures in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday. Last report unless significant activity occurs.

Copper King, Lolo NF. Transfer of command from IMT 2 (Thompson) back to the local unit will occur 8/13. Seven miles east of Thompson Falls, MT. Timber. Minimal fire behavior. Residences threatened. Road, area and trail closures in effect.

Race Horse Gulch, Flathead Agency, BIA. Twenty-two miles east of Plains, MT. Timber and tall grass. Minimal fire behavior.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Total	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Roaring Lion	MT-BRF	8,274	0	65	Comp	9/30	299	-219	4	11	4	65	7.6M	FS
Copper King	MT-LNF	1,465	0	18	Ctn	10/31	325	-44	7	12	6	0	5.1M	FS
Race Horse Gulch	MT-FHA	4,580	9	40	Ctn	8/15	146	-10	6	2	0	0	500K	BIA

Northern California (PL 3)

New fires:	21
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	1

Cold, Sonoma–Lake Napa Unit, Cal Fire. Seven miles west of Winters, CA. Chaparral and grass. Minimal fire behavior. Road and area closures in effect.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Total	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Cold	CA-LNU	5,731	0	97	Ctn	8/13	111	-531	2	7	2	2	10.5M	ST

Southern Area (PL 2)

New fires:	11
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	2

Horse Creek Ranch, Texas A&M Forest Service. Started on private land 10 miles southeast of Paint Rock, TX. Brush and tall grass. Active fire behavior with torching and running. Structures threatened.

Hognose, Sabine National Wildlife Refuge, FWS. Twenty-nine miles southwest of Lake Charles, LA. Tall grass. Minimal fire behavior. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Total	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Horse Creek Ranch	TX-TXS	6,623	5,123	85	Ctn	8/11	22	-14	0	2	1	0	NR	PRI
Hognose	LA-SBR	502	0	80	Ctn	8/12	17	0	0	0	1	0	64K	FWS

Eastern Area (PL 1)

New fires:	0
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	1

Poverty Island, Michigan Agency, BIA. Started on BLM land 17 miles south of Garden, MI. Heavy logging slash. No new information. Last report unless new information is received.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Total	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Poverty Island	MI-MIA	127	---	20	Ctn	UNK	15	---	0	0	0	0	200K	BLM

Southwest Area (PL 2)

New fires:	3
New large incidents:	1
Uncontained large fires:	0

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Chge	Total				Chge	Total	Crw	Eng	Heli			
* Priscilla 002	NM-N5S	840	---	100	Ctn	---	23	---	0	10	0	0	1K	ST

N5S – Capitan District, New Mexico State Forestry

Active Incident Resource Summary						
GACC	Fires	Cumulative Acres	Crews	Engines	Helicopters	Total Personnel
AICC	0	0	0	0	0	0
NWCC	17	237,831	51	128	17	2,022
ONCC	1	5,731	2	7	2	111
OSCC	8	128,573	201	511	81	8,725
NRCC	16	18,301.5	25	52	15	1,130
GBCC	19	169,421.4	82	108	24	3,022
SWCC	8	20,536	0	16	1	149
RMCC	7	65,775	12	91	17	1,066
EACC	0	0	0	0	0	0
SACC	9	16,791	0	9	2	73
Total	85	662,959.9	373	922	159	16,298

Fires and Acres Yesterday (by Protection):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Area	FIREs	1	1	1	0	7	2	12
	ACRES	1	11	40	0	1	0	53
Northern California Area	FIREs	1	0	0	0	19	1	21
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	180	0	180
Southern California Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	12	1	13
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	6,942	1,883	8,825
Northern Rockies Area	FIREs	2	2	0	0	7	5	16
	ACRES	0	55	0	0	2	0	57
Great Basin Area	FIREs	2	5	0	0	8	4	19
	ACRES	788	4	0	100	12	971	1,875
Southwest Area	FIREs	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
	ACRES	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rocky Mountain Area	FIREs	0	3	0	0	8	6	17
	ACRES	0	200	0	0	150	1,901	2,251
Eastern Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	11	0	11
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	169	0	169
TOTAL FIRES:		7	11	1	0	72	22	113
TOTAL ACRES:		790	270	40	100	7,456	4,755	13,411

Fires and Acres Year-to-Date (by Protection):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIREs	0	178	0	0	325	14	517
	ACRES	0	392,566	0	0	104,823	3	497,392
Northwest Area	FIREs	244	147	23	22	914	432	1,782
	ACRES	10,857	101,347	289	1,331	5,944	12,083	131,851
Northern California Area	FIREs	83	5	1	23	1,774	269	2,155
	ACRES	134	11	1	3	28,558	8,736	37,443
Southern California Area	FIREs	11	67	6	32	2,181	251	2,548
	ACRES	5,971	26,855	269	1,067	89,612	92,450	216,224
Northern Rockies Area	FIREs	551	78	9	22	860	278	1,798
	ACRES	3,470	3,603	1,426	1,852	32,954	15,009	58,314
Great Basin Area	FIREs	23	519	6	28	458	323	1,357
	ACRES	10,108	230,872	3	3,270	72,447	117,043	433,743
Southwest Area	FIREs	601	210	10	59	924	951	2,755
	ACRES	25,965	66,462	6,975	32,191	129,951	236,062	497,606
Rocky Mountain Area	FIREs	595	332	11	17	877	358	2,190
	ACRES	21,344	22,630	614	2,017	474,330	67,988	588,923
Eastern Area	FIREs	490	0	25	19	5,218	359	6,111
	ACRES	2,007	0	1,087	910	30,662	7,154	41,820
Southern Area	FIREs	341	0	25	54	14,542	436	15,398
	ACRES	132,782	0	245	27,567	909,067	43,343	1,113,004
TOTAL FIRES:		2,939	1,536	116	276	28,073	3,671	36,611
TOTAL ACRES:		212,638	844,346	10,909	70,208	1,878,348	599,871	3,616,320

Ten Year Average Fires (2006 – 2015 as of today)	48,137
Ten Year Average Acres (2006 – 2015 as of today)	4,540,116

Prescribed Fires and Acres Yesterday (by Ownership):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern California Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern California Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Rockies Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Basin Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southwest Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	230	230
Rocky Mountain Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Area	FIREs	1	0	0	0	17	0	18
	ACRES	80	0	0	0	143	0	223
TOTAL FIRES:		1	0	0	0	17	4	22
TOTAL ACRES:		80	0	0	0	143	230	453

Prescribed Fires and Acres Year-to-Date (by Ownership):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIREs	0	7	0	0	2	1	10
	ACRES	0	31,664	0	0	1,566	38	33,268
Northwest Area	FIREs	9	22	6	0	0	152	189
	ACRES	8,752	1,991	356	0	0	24,097	35,196
Northern California Area	FIREs	4	1	9	8	0	126	148
	ACRES	41	90	3,356	328	0	8,244	12,059
Southern California Area	FIREs	0	5	4	1	0	136	146
	ACRES	0	71	422	760	0	3,587	4,840
Northern Rockies Area	FIREs	12	12	53	11	14	149	251
	ACRES	5,316	4,358	12,318	651	698	14,894	38,235
Great Basin Area	FIREs	4	22	6	5	36	74	147
	ACRES	110	2,296	3,584	128	915	26,112	33,145
Southwest Area	FIREs	8	30	3	8	1	114	164
	ACRES	894	26,591	92	2,331	2	62,893	92,803
Rocky Mountain Area	FIREs	16	33	58	24	76	69	276
	ACRES	1,286	2,908	26,221	10,952	4,482	27,771	73,620
Eastern Area	FIREs	87	0	347	23	900	182	1,539
	ACRES	45,614	0	50,949	5,774	61,444	56,182	219,963
Southern Area	FIREs	18	0	182	65	10,165	914	11,344
	ACRES	1,910	0	160,866	51,546	667,900	831,657	1,713,879
TOTAL FIRES:		158	132	668	145	11,194	1,917	14,214
TOTAL ACRES:		63,923	69,969	258,164	72,470	737,007	1,055,475	2,257,008

*** Changes in some agency YTD acres reflect more accurate mapping or reporting adjustments. ***

Additional wildfire information is available through the Geographic Areas at <http://gacc.nifc.gov/>

Canada Fires and Hectares

PROVINCES	FIRES YESTERDAY	HECTARES YESTERDAY	FIRES YEAR-TO-DATE	HECTARES YEAR-TO-DATE
BRITISH COLUMBIA	11	0	763	93,969
YUKON TERRITORY	0	0	49	16,375
ALBERTA	6	2	1,184	611,710
NORTHWEST TERRITORY	1	2,859	178	196,683
SASKATCHEWAN	1	0	347	230,966
MANITOBA	0	0	184	35,571
ONTARIO	13	9	567	86,838
QUEBEC	9	20	515	32,623
NEWFOUNDLAND	1	0	80	10,959
NEW BRUNSWICK	0	0	252	253
NOVA SCOTIA	0	0	223	628
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	0	0	6	19
NATIONAL PARKS	0	0	52	6,434
TOTALS	42	2,890	4,400	1,323,029

* 1 Hectare = 2.47 Acres

Predictive Services Discussion: Scattered showers and thunderstorms will continue in the Southwest and across the central Rockies. Isolated showers will develop in the northern Rockies. Rain and scattered thunderstorms will continue across the Southeast to New England. Scattered showers and thunderstorms will move into the Upper Midwest. Conditions will remain hot in the Plains, warm in the East, and cool across the Rockies. The West will begin warming. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms will continue in southern Alaska and spread across the west. Temperatures will warm statewide with the Interior becoming much warmer.

<http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/outlooks.htm>



This Day in History is a brief summary of a powerful learning opportunity and is not intended to second guess or be judgmental of decisions and actions. Put yourself in the following situation as if you do not know what the outcome will be. What are the conditions? What are you thinking? What are YOU doing?

Helicopter Longline Accident - August 11th, 2004

Incident Summary: August 10th 2004, firefighters arrive to suppress two lightning fires nearby each other on the Wenatchee National Forest. The area is heavily wooded and mountainous. That evening the firefighters request supplies be flown into a drop zone they have established in a creek bed. The firefighters estimate the trees in the drainage to be an average of 80 feet tall with some 120 foot tall trees near the drop zone. A 150 foot longline is requested. The next morning, a Bell 205 A1 helicopter is dispatched with a tandem sling load to deliver to the firefighters, one net for each fire.

A pink flagging "X" is placed near the stream on a sand bar at the southern end of a cut bank overlooking the sand bar. There is a tall snag located on the cut bank. The helicopters approach is from the SW perpendicular to the drainage and the snag is on the helicopters right side. One of the firefighters establishes communications with the pilot and says that if he doesn't like the drop zone they chose that it is okay to choose his own spot. The pilot acknowledges the firefighter and indicates that he will give it a try. The pilot is not told about the snag. The pilot places both nets on the drop zone; one of the firefighters unhooks their net and re-hooks the load for the other crew. The helicopter begins to lift to depart. Near the top of the snag, the pilot (sitting left seat) slowly turns the nose to the left. The tail of the helicopter strikes the snag causing the helicopter to spin, and impacts the ground just upstream of the drop zone. The pilot is killed.

Size up - The snag was cut down and measured at 169'5" tall. Adding the height of the cut bank to the height of the snag, the tree was 172'11" above the drop zone surface. The longline was measured and was 160 feet long. The strike marks were found 15'4" down from the top of the snag.

- When you and your crew are sizing up a potential cargo drop zone, what are some methods to estimate tree and obstacle height?

L - A pilots' ability to see their surroundings is fairly limited, especially when looking down at an external load. The ability of the ground personnel to see the helicopter in relation to the surrounding hazards can often be better. When a helicopter pilot is working with an external load consider yourself and your crew to be a "Lookout" for that pilot just as you would other members of your crew. Watch the main rotor and tail rotor, not just the load. When any hazard encroaches on the safety circle (zone) communicate it immediately. Never assume that the pilot sees it or that someone else will say something. IF YOU SEE SOMETHING...SAY SOMETHING.

- In addition to trees and snags, as a lookout for a helicopter, what other hazards will you be looking out for?

C - You and your crew must be able to communicate with the pilot by radio. Before the helicopter arrives at your site, brief the pilot on hazards including trees and their estimated height. It is generally considered better to over-estimate the height than to under-estimate it.

- When communicating to a pilot, how do you refer to the direction of a hazard in reference to the helicopter? (IRPG cover)

E - Helicopters delivering external loads via longline will be flying in the Height-Velocity Curve (aka "dead man's curve", [page 11-1 IHOG](#)) which diminishes the pilot's ability to land safely or recover from a loss of control or power.

- Consider the pilots and your crews' escape routes if the helicopter were to lose control or power. Where will it go? Where will you go?

S - Consider the safety zone and a safety circle to be very similar places. It needs to be big enough for the helicopter to operate without hazards and is considered to be a minimum of 1 1/2 times the rotor diameter. The rotor diameter of this helicopter was 48 feet. The snag was 36 feet from the drop zone marker.

- Refer to page 49 in your IRPG for safety circle sizes. How big should the safety circle (zone) be for a Type III? Type II? Type 1?

[Incident Response Pocket Guide \(IRPG\) page 52 – Longline Missions](#)
[USFS Accident Review \(IAT website\) – click thru to page 8 of 9](#)

[USFS Aviation Safety Alert 04-08 – Clearance from Obstacles During External Load Operations](#)

[NTSB Factual Report #SEA04TA158](#)

[Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide \(IHOG\) Chapter 11, Cargo Transport](#)

[A-219 – Interagency Helicopter Transport of External Loads](#) course material (note: A-219 was created in response to this accident)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.