

CHAPTER 10

OBJECTIVES, POLICY AND SCOPE OF OPERATION

MISSION STATEMENT – NATIONAL INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER

The principal mission of the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is the cost-effective and timely coordination of land management agency emergency response for wildland fire. As a partner in the National Response Framework (NRF) and as interagency cooperators, NICC will also meet the requirements of all-hazard incidents as directed by the NRF or Presidential and Secretarial direction. NICC accomplishes this through planning, situation monitoring, and expediting resource orders between the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), the National Weather Service (NWS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), and other cooperating agencies.

PURPOSE

The National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization identifies standard procedures that guide the operations of multi-agency operational and logistical support activity throughout the national coordination system. These standards are intended to facilitate interagency dispatch coordination, ensuring timely and cost-effective incident support services are provided. It is designed to accommodate amendments as needed and will be retained as current material until amended. Local and Geographic Mobilization Guides should be used to supplement the National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization.

TOTAL MOBILITY CONCEPT

The national coordination system uses the total mobility concept to position and utilize resources to meet existing and anticipated incident, preparedness, severity, wildland and prescribed fire needs regardless of geographic location or agency affiliation.

To accomplish total mobility, all resources will be tracked and assigned in the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) application regardless of incident type or location.

PRIORITIES

When competition for wildland fire resources occurs among Geographic Areas, the National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC) at NIFC will establish national priorities.

The delegation of authority for NMAC states:

“NMAC is the national level authority for directing and controlling firefighting resource allocations between Geographic Areas to ensure priority objectives are met, with full authority to take appropriate actions to implement their decisions.”

When requested, Geographic Areas will establish priorities for their incidents and wildland fires and report them to NICC.

The single overriding suppression priority is the protection of human life – both that of our firefighters and of the public.

In setting national priorities and drawn down levels, the following criteria will be considered:

- Protecting communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources.
- Maintaining initial attack capability.
- Limiting costs without compromising safety.
- Meeting agency suppression objectives.
- Support to National Response Framework (NRF) taskings.

Resource allocation decisions are based on the following considerations:

- Wildland fire suppression.
- Emergency Support Function (ESF) / National Response Framework.
- Agency Prescribed Fire operations.
- International cooperation.
- Suppression repair.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

National Resources are resources in high demand, with limited availability that require unique status reporting at NICC. They are:

- Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMT).
- National Incident Management Organization Teams (NIMO).
- Area Command Teams.
- Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crews.
- Large and Very Large Airtankers.
- Modular Airborne Firefighting System.
- Type 3 Multi-Engine Water Scoopers.
- National Aerial Supervision Modules and Lead Planes.
- Exclusive-Use Air Tactical Aircraft and personnel.
- Smokejumpers and Smokejumper Aircraft.
- National Contract Type 1 and Type 2 Helicopters, helitack (including rappel) and associated contract personnel.
- National Contract and agency owned Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and modules.
- National Infrared Aircraft (Agency and Contract).
- Large Transport Aircraft.
- National Contract Mobile Food Services Units.
- National Contract Mobile Shower Facilities.
- Incident Remote Automatic Weather Stations.
- National Interagency Support Cache (NISC) System.
- National Fire Equipment System (NFES) Managed Items.

When requested by NMAC, GACCs will notify NICC when National Resources are assigned within their Geographic Area.

LOCAL AND GEOGRAPHIC AREA DRAWDOWN LEVELS

Drawdown is the predetermined number of fire suppression resources required to maintain viable initial attack (IA) capability at either the local or Geographic Area.

Drawdown resources are considered unavailable outside the local or Geographic Area for which they have been identified. National Resources may be reallocated by NMAC in coordination with NICC and the Geographic Areas to meet higher priority obligations.

Local drawdown is established by the local unit and/or the local MAC Group and implemented by the local dispatch office. The local dispatch office will notify the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) of local drawdown decisions and actions.

Geographic Area drawdown levels are established by the Geographic Area Multi-Agency Coordination Group and implemented by the GACC. The GACC will notify local dispatch offices and NICC of Geographic Area drawdown decisions and actions.

NATIONAL READY RESERVE

National Ready Reserve (NRR) is a means by which NMAC identifies and readies specific categories, types, and quantities of fire suppression resources to maintain overall national readiness during periods of actual or predicted national suppression resource scarcity.

National Ready Reserve implementation responsibilities are:

- NMAC establishes National Ready Reserve requirements by resource category, type, and quantity.
- NICC implements NMAC intent by directing individual GACCs to place specific categories, types, and quantities of resources on National Ready Reserve.
- GACCs direct local dispatch centers and/or assigned IMTs to specifically identify resources to be placed on National Ready Reserve.
- NICC mobilizes National Ready Reserve resources through established ordering channels, as necessary.

National Ready Reserve resources must meet the following requirements:

- May be currently assigned to ongoing incidents.
- Must be able to demobilize and be enroute to the new assignment in less than 2 hours.
- Resources must have a minimum of 7 days left in a 14-day rotation (extensions will not be factored in this calculation).
- May be assigned to incidents after being designated ready reserve, in coordination with NICC; and
- Designated ready reserve resources may be adjusted daily.

NMAC will adjust ready reserve requirements as needed. Furthermore, to maintain national surge capability, NMAC may retain available resources within a Geographic Area, over and above the established Geographic Area drawdown level.

SCOPE OF OPERATION

National Response Framework (NRF)

The NRF provides a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident management across a spectrum of activities including prevention, protection, mitigation, and recovery. The NRF identifies the Forest Service as the Primary and Coordinating agency for implementing the Emergency Support Function (ESF)#4, Firefighting with the scope of coordinating firefighting activities and providing personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of state, tribal and local agencies involved in wildland, rural and urban firefighting operations. The NRF also identifies the Department of Interior (DOI) as a Primary Agency, along with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), for implementing ESF #11, Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Forest Service and DOI also have Support Agency responsibilities under all 15 Emergency Support Functions.

Activities will be accomplished utilizing established dispatch coordination concepts. The affected GACC will coordinate ordering points with Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC) and Joint Field Offices (JFO). As necessary, coordination activities will pass on to NICC for national response and logistical support when Geographic Area resources are fully committed. In the event of national level shortages or unavailability, the National Response Coordination Centers (NRCC) through the ESF #4 Desk in Washington, DC will pursue resolution of such shortages. Requests that originate from the NRCC will be processed through the Virginia Interagency Coordination Center (VICC) in Roanoke, VA. Situation and damage assessment information will be transmitted through established fire management intelligence channels.

In most cases, federal agencies, when requested to support the NRF, will provide base eight salaries for permanent employees. FEMA will reimburse overtime, travel, and per diem costs for all employees. Base eight salaries may be reimbursed for temporary, Administratively Determined (AD) and state employees mobilized to assist.

MOBILIZATION/DEMOBILIZATION

The NICC will coordinate the movement of all resources across Geographic Area dispatch boundaries not covered by local operating plans, agreements or other direction found in this guide. When it is reasonable to expect containment prior to the next operational period, dispatch centers at the local level should coordinate directly if resources are used for initial attack on adjacent jurisdictions. If it becomes evident the incident will not be contained during the first operational period, resources mobilized will be ordered through established ordering channels.

Resource mobilization and reassignments between Northern California Operations and Southern California Operations do not require resource orders placed through NICC. The NICC must be notified of the movement of National Resources.

Units responding to non-compact requests are responsible for ensuring the resources dispatched meet the criteria specified in this Guide and/or the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1*.

Resources assigned to emergency incidents will follow sending agency dispatch procedures for travel to the incident. Incident agency dispatch procedures will be followed for return travel from the incident with the hosting dispatch office making travel arrangements and providing airline tickets or travel information to individuals and resources as needed. Travel arrangements made

outside of incident agency dispatch procedures may not be reimbursed without proper approvals and authorization. Commercial and/or contract transportation methods may be used.

During demobilization of resources, emphasis will be placed on having personnel home no later than 2200 hours local time. Occasionally, the availability of large transport aircraft will dictate demobilization timeframes.

WORK/REST

This section states work/rest policy for the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Other agencies, state and local governments, and cooperators should reference policy specific to their organization.

To mitigate fatigue, agency administrators, fire managers, supervisors, incident commanders (IC), and individual firefighters should plan for and ensure that all personnel are provided a minimum 2:1 work/rest ratio (for every 2 hours of work or travel, provide 1 hour of sleep and/or rest). Work shifts that exceed 16 hours and/or consecutive days that do not meet the 2:1 work/rest ratio should be the exception. When this occurs, the following actions are required:

- Personnel will resume 2:1 work/rest ratio as quickly as possible.
- The IC or agency administrator will justify work shifts that exceed 16 hours and/or consecutive days that do not meet 2:1 work to rest ratio. Justification will be documented in the daily incident records, made available to the employee by the finance section/local unit, and must include mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue.
- The time officer's/unit leader's approval of the Emergency Firefighter Time Report (OF-288), or other agency pay document, certifies that the required documentation is on file and no further documentation is required for pay purposes.

The work/rest guidelines do not apply to aircraft pilots assigned to an incident. Pilots must abide by applicable *Federal Aviation Administration* guidelines, or agency policy if more restrictive.

LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT

Refer to the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management, PMS 902*, as the authoritative source for definitions in this section.

Portions of this section states specific policy for the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Other agencies, state and local governments, and cooperators should reference policy specific to their organization.

Assignment Definition

An assignment is defined as the time (days) between the first full operational period, excluding travel, and the last operational period. The last operational period is the last full day worked, excluding all travel. Assignments include staging/preposition, prescribed fire, and fuels treatments.

Length of Assignment

Standard assignment length is 14 days, exclusive of travel from and to the home unit, with possible extensions identified below. **Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the 14-day limit, regardless of pay status, for all personnel, including incident management teams (IMT).** Contracted aircraft are not restricted by length of assignment. In order to limit disruption to operations, reduce strain on the ordering system and reduce unnecessary mobilization and demobilization of these high-cost resources, exclusive-use aviation personnel are encouraged to utilize a personnel rotation schedule that meets staffing criteria required of the resource. When numerous internal rotations of staffing Exclusive-Use aircraft occur, consideration for aircraft exchange shall be given by aviation managers and coordinators. Requests for such an exchange shall be coordinated with all parties involved including the aircraft manager, IMT or hosting unit, GACC, NICC and applicable National Aircraft Coordinator. The ability to grant such requests during high fire activity or planning levels may be limited due to extenuating circumstances.

14-day Scenario



Days Off

To assist in mitigating fatigue, days off are allowed during and after assignments. Agency administrators (incident host or home unit) may authorize time off supplementary to mandatory days off requirements.

The authority to grant a day off with pay lies within 5 U.S.C. 6104, 5 CFR 610.301-306, AND 56 COMP. GEN. DECISION 393 (1977).

After completion of a 14-day assignment and return to the home unit, three mandatory days off will be provided (also referred to as “3 after 14”). Days off must occur on the calendar days immediately following the return travel in order to be charged to the incident (SEE SECTION 12.1-2.) (5 U.S.C. 6104, 5 CFR 610.301-306, AND 56 COMP. GEN. DECISION 393 (1977)). For off-site/remote assignments, days off must occur on the calendar days immediately following last operational shift worked. If the next day(s) upon return from an incident is/are a regular workday(s), a paid day(s) off will be authorized. Regulations may preclude authorizing this for non-National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and State/local employees.

Pay entitlement, including administrative leave for a paid day(s) off, cannot be authorized on the individual’s regular day(s) off at their home unit. Agencies will apply holiday pay regulations, as appropriate. A paid day off is recorded on home unit time records according to agency requirements. Administratively Determined (AD) personnel are not entitled to paid day(s) off upon release from the incident or at their point of hire.

Contract resources are not entitled to paid day(s) off upon release from the incident or at their point of hire.

- *DOI – After completion of a 14-day assignment and return travel, the mandatory days off will be charged to administrative leave if they fall on a regularly scheduled workday.*

Home unit agency administrators may authorize additional day(s) off with compensation to further mitigate fatigue. If authorized, home unit program funds will be used.

Assignment Extension

Extensions beyond 14-day assignments should be made sparingly. Consider the health, readiness, and capability of incident personnel prior to authorizing back-to-back assignments. The health and safety of incident personnel and resources will not be compromised under any circumstance. Assignments may be extended when:

- Life and property are imminently threatened.
- Suppression objectives are close to being met.
- A military battalion is assigned.
- Replacement resources are unavailable or have not yet arrived.

The assignment is a planned event (e.g., fuels treatment, prescribed fire implementation) with fatigue mitigations (e.g., shorter workdays, adequate rest in hotels, etc.).

Upon completion of the standard 14-day assignment, an extension of up to an additional 14 days may be allowed (for a total of up to 30 days, inclusive of mandatory days off, and exclusive of travel).

21-day Scenario



A 21-day assignment is exclusive of travel from and to home unit. Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the 21-day assignment, regardless of pay status, for all personnel, including IMTs.

30-day Scenario



An assignment longer than 22 days is exclusive of travel from and to home unit. Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the assignment, regardless of pay status, for all personnel, including IMTs. For an assignment exceeding 21 days, two mandatory days off will be provided prior to the 22nd day of the assignment.

For an assignment exceeding 21 days, two mandatory days off will be provided prior to the 22nd day of the assignment. Upon completion of the assignment and return to the home unit, three mandatory days off will be provided.

Contracts, incident blanket purchase agreements (I-BPA), and emergency equipment rental agreements (EERA) should be reviewed for appropriate pay requirements and length of assignment. If the contract, I-BPA, or EERA do not address this, the incident

Finance/Administration Section chief or the procurement official should be consulted as to whether compensation for a day off is appropriate.

Single Resource/Kind Extensions

The section chief or IC will identify the need for assignment extension and will obtain the affected resource's concurrence. The section chief and affected resource will acquire and document the home unit supervisor's approval.

The IC approves the extension. If a convened Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (GMAC) or the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) directs, the IC approves only after GMAC/NMAC concurrence.

If the potential exists for reassignment to another incident during the extension, the home unit supervisor and the affected resource will be advised and must concur prior to reassignment.

CIMT Length of Assignment and Mandatory Unavailability

The assignment length and unavailability period for CIMTs is determined based on the Incident Commander's (IC) travel and follows the process outlined below:

- Day 1 will be the first full day following IC travel to the reporting location on the original resource order, whether it is staging/preposition, to shadow, or the first day in command of the incident.
- For a 14-day assignment, transfer of command may happen on day 14 or the morning of day 15, provided travel back to the home unit begins on day 15. Closeouts, evaluations, and other final processes should be conducted prior to day 15.
- Should an extension be approved, the transfer of command will occur no later than the final extension date.
- Requests to NMAC for a CIMT to be available again prior to the 7-day unavailability period should occur prior to the start of the 7 days. Only in exceptional circumstances will a CIMT be asked by NMAC within the 7-day period to roster prior to the end of the 7 days.
- The day following return travel by the IC will be day 1 of the CIMT unavailability period. The CIMT will be available to roster after a full 7 days have passed. Agency approved days off are included in the 7-day unavailability period.
- Tracking days will be completed by the Geographic Areas and shared with the NICC CIMT Coordinator for planning purposes.

Incident Management Team Extensions

Incident management team extensions are to be negotiated between the incident agency administrator, the IC, and the GMAC/NMAC, if directed.

Maximum Consecutive Days Worked – Home Unit

During extended periods of activity at the home unit, personnel will have a minimum of 2 days off in any 21-day period. Home unit is defined as the duty station.

- *FS – During extended periods of activity in support of local fire management, personnel will have a minimum of 2 days off in any 14-day period.*

INCIDENT OPERATIONS DRIVING

These standards address driving by personnel actively engaged in wildland fire or all-hazard response activities, including driving while assigned to a specific incident or during initial attack fire response (includes time required to control the fire and travel to a rest location). In the absence of more restrictive agency policy, these guidelines will be followed during mobilization and demobilization as well. Individual agency driving policies shall be consulted for all other non-incident driving.

Agency resources assigned to an incident or engaged in initial attack fire response will adhere to the current agency work/rest policy for determining length of duty day.

- No driver will drive more than 10 hours (behind the wheel) within any duty day.
- Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty day limitation provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of 10 hours.
- A driver shall drive only if they have had at least 8 consecutive hours off-duty before beginning a shift. Exception to the minimum off-duty hour requirement is allowed when essential to:
 - Accomplish immediate and critical suppression objectives, or
 - Address immediate and critical firefighter or public safety issues.
- As stated in the current agency work/rest policy, documentation of mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue is required for drivers who exceed 16-hour work shifts. This is required regardless of whether the driver was still compliant with the 10-hour individual (behind the wheel) driving time limitations.

INITIAL ATTACK DEFINITION

Initial Attack (IA) is a preplanned response to a wildland fire, given the wildland fire's potential. Initial attack may include size-up, patrolling, monitoring, holding action, or suppression. Initial Attack will take priority over extended attack incidents.

Dispatch centers are to inform all resources of the name of the assigned Incident Commander and all other pertinent information. All changes in Incident Command leadership will be announced to assigned and incoming resources during initial and extended attack incidents. This information should also be relayed to Fire Management staff.

Initial attack involving the commitment of resources across recognized dispatch boundaries must comply with the following guidelines:

- Resources dispatched are identified in formalized Agreements, Operating Plans, or Memoranda of Understanding and are located on/or adjacent to mutual jurisdictional wildland fire management boundaries.
- At the time it becomes evident the incident will not be contained during the first operational period, at the request of the sending unit, resources assigned will be formally ordered through established ordering channels.

INITIAL ATTACK RESPONSE PLANS

Response Plans

Each local area will maintain and follow a documented pre-planned response plan (e.g., run cards); developed in coordination with land management leadership and in conjunction with a Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP) or other preparedness operation plan as required. Plans must include notification protocols and identify initial attack resources. Local dispatch centers will implement the response plan by mobilizing resources followed by notification of identified Duty Officer.

Daily Resource Status

The status of all available initial attack resources must be updated daily in an integrated application by 1000 local time or within 30 minutes of the designated start time.

Operational Status Tracking

Resources and their parent units will be tracked throughout the incident lifecycle in an integrated application following the Operational Status workflow:

- Daily availability ~ available/unavailable
- Reserved/Committed
- Mobilizing/En Route
- On Scene
- Demobilizing/Returning
- Returned from Assignment/Available Quarters

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

To ensure safe and efficient mobilization of resources to incidents, resources are requested and mobilized using the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC). Standard interagency mobilization processes are identified within the *Interagency Standards for Resource Ordering Guide (ISROG)*.

Except for compact orders, NICC will not process requests for resources “after the fact,” for resources that self-mobilized i.e., requests for resources that have mobilized to an incident prior to receiving a resource order.

NICC will process requests for Task Forces if the requested configuration is clearly identified in the “Special Needs” block on the resource order. If “Special Needs” does not identify the specific configuration, the request will not be processed.

The Mobile Food & Shower Service Request Form, the Aircraft Flight Request/Schedule Form, and the Preparedness/Detail Request Form are the approved forms (*Chapter 80*) that, when associated with an IROC request, satisfy documentation required for the resource to be mobilized.

Responsible agency management fiscal codes must be included on each approved form.

The NICC will process resource orders for planned events. The NICC will not process overhead resource orders for training unless it is required for an AD hire, or for a unique situation (agency approval required).

Prior to incident mobilization, all resources will be requested, by a standard resource categorization (A = Aircraft; O = Overhead; C = Crews; E = Equipment; S = Supplies) and identified with a unique request number through established dispatch channels.

A two (2) letter (alpha) identifier for the State in which the responsible agency is located, followed by a three (3) or four (4) character (alpha and/or numeric) identifier for the responsible agency, and a unique order or incident number containing a maximum of six (6) characters (alpha and/or numeric) will make up the incident/project order number.

Resources assigned to incidents will be identified by a two (2) letter (alpha) identifier for the State in which the resource is based, followed by a three (3) or four (4) character (alpha and/or numeric) identifier for the sending agency.

A complete list of Unit Identifiers can be found on the *Unit IDx* website.

Compacts

The Weeks Act of 1911 authorized states to enter into compacts for the protection of forests and watersheds. Today there are eight Forest Fire Compacts in the United States and Canada representing almost all U.S. states and Canadian provinces/territories.

The purpose of forest fire compacts is to facilitate the sharing and coordination of resources, information, prevention efforts, training, fire management knowledge, and lessons learned. Compacts allow for the exchange of resources between states, provinces and territories by using established procedures incorporating agency specific standards and terms.

State and federal agencies use the national interagency mobilization system as authorized in master cooperative wildland fire agreements. Forest fire compact orders are often processed in the national interagency mobilization system under the authorities of the forest fire compacts. Resources shared under compact authorities remain under compact control for the duration of their assignment and are separate from national interagency mobilizations. The two systems sometimes overlap, and understanding compact mobilizations is an important part of dispatching.

WILDLAND FIRE ENTRAPMENT/FATALITY

Entrapment: A situation where personnel are unexpectedly caught in a fire behavior-related, life – threatening position, where planned escape routes or safety zones are absent, inadequate, or have been compromised. An entrapment may or may not include deployment of a fire shelter for its intended purpose. This situation may or may not result in injury. They include “near misses.”

If a wildland fire entrapment or fatality occurs, it should be reported immediately to NICC. A *Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Initial Report* should be completed within twenty-four (24) hours and emailed to the NICC Coordinator on Duty (COD). Please Submit this report even if some data is missing to:

NICC COD: nicc.cod@firenet.gov

Subsequent to the Initial Report, the investigation and review shall be conducted following agency specific policies and NWCG Guidelines.

UNABLE TO FILL (UTF) PROCEDURE

A 48 hour “Unable to Fill” (UTF) policy exists nationally. NICC will return requests to the ordering GACC with a “UTF” no more than 48 hours after receipt, unless notified the order can be filled. NICC will not accept or process any request previously UTF’d unless a new request number is assigned.

STANDARD CUBES, WEIGHT, AND GEAR POLICY FOR ALL PERSONNEL

All personnel, (excluding Smokejumpers, Rappellers, and Helicopter Managers), dispatched off their unit must conform to the following limitations:

- One frameless, soft pack, not to exceed 45 pounds.
- Web gear or briefcase (not both), not to exceed 20 pounds.
- Maximum allowable crew weight, including equipment, is 5,300 pounds (6,625 pounds for 25 person crews).
- All personnel baggage weights must be displayed separately from individual weights on flight manifests.
- Pre-identified Complex Incident Management Team members are authorized additional weight, not to exceed 300 pounds, for equipment per team. The Incident Commander must designate, in advance, which team members are authorized additional weight and make this a matter of record.

NATIONAL FIRE PREPAREDNESS PLAN

NMAC establishes National Preparedness Levels throughout the calendar year. Burning conditions, fire and non-fire activity, and resource availability dictate Preparedness Levels, with resource availability remaining the primary concern. Preparedness Levels address wildland fires, prescribed fires, all-hazard response, and international assistance.

At Preparedness Levels 4 or 5, agencies may continue or initiate prescribed fire operations if the Regional or State Office approves the proposed action. The approving office must base its decision on a risk assessment and evaluate the impacts on area resources and activities. At any Preparedness Level, NMAC may curtail new prescribed fire (Rx) applications to meet national resource needs for emergency operations. Refer to specific agency guidance for additional direction.

WHY PREPAREDNESS LEVELS ARE ESTABLISHED

Preparedness Levels are established to:

- Identify the level of wildland fire and non-fire activity, severity, and resource commitment nationally.
- Identify actions to be taken at NIFC and Geographic Areas to ensure an appropriate level of preparedness/readiness for the existing and potential situation.
- Guide and direct Geographic Area Fire Management activities when essential to ensure national preparedness or in response to the national situation.

The NICC will monitor national wildland fire activity and Geographic Area Preparedness Levels and will recommend a National Preparedness Level to NMAC. Significant resource commitments

to non-fire incidents may also affect National Preparedness Levels. National Preparedness Levels will also respond to the Homeland Security Advisory System.

Officials determine National Preparedness Levels from the ground up and use them to guide resource allocations, including in Geographic Areas not experiencing significant activity, to ensure sufficient resources are available to support the national situation.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA PREPAREDNESS LEVELS

Geographic Area Preparedness Plans should be prepared in accordance with Agency Directives. Copies of Geographic Area Plans should be forwarded to NICC.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

Preparedness Level 1

Geographic Areas accomplish incident management objectives utilizing local resources with little or no national support. There is little risk of drawing down capability in any geographic area to support incident operations.

- Conditions are not favorable to support significant wildland fire activity in most Geographic Areas.
- Resource capability is adequate with little or no mobilization of resources occurring through NICC.
- Potential for emerging significant wildland fires is expected to remain minimal.

Preparedness Level 2

Active Geographic Areas may require national support to accomplish incident management objectives. Resource capability remains stable enough nationally to sustain incident operations and meet objectives in active Geographic Areas. There is a low to moderate probability that drawing down resources from non-active Geographic Areas may pose a risk should existing conditions change.

- Significant wildland fire or non-fire activity is increasing in a few Geographic Areas.
- Resources within most Geographic Areas are adequate to manage the current situation, with light to moderate mobilization of resources occurring through NICC.
- Potential for emerging significant wildland fires is normal to below normal for the time of year.

Preparedness Level 3

Mobilization of resources nationally is required to sustain incident management operations in active Geographic Areas. National priorities are established to address the demand for shared resources among active Geographic Areas. There is a moderate to high probability that drawing down resources from non-active Geographic Areas may pose a risk should existing conditions change.

- Significant wildland fire or non-fire activity is occurring in multiple Geographic Areas with Incident Management Teams (IMTs) actively engaged.
- Mobilization of resources through NICC is moderate to heavy.

- Potential for emerging significant wildland fires is normal for the time of year.

Preparedness Level 4

National Resources are heavily committed. National mobilization trends affect all Geographic Areas and regularly occur over larger distances. National priorities govern resources of all types. Heavy demand on inactive/low activity Geographic Areas for available resources.

- Significant wildland fire or non-fire activity is occurring in multiple Geographic Areas with a substantial commitment of IMTs.
- NICC increasingly engages GACCs to coordinate and fill orders for available resources.
- Potential for significant incidents emerging in multiple Geographic Areas indicates that resource demands will continue or increase.

Preparedness Level 5

National Resources are heavily committed, and additional measures are taken to support Geographic Areas. Active Geographic Areas must take emergency measures to sustain incident operations. Inactive/low activity Geographic Areas are reaching drawdown levels.

- Full commitment of National Resources is ongoing.
- NICC coordinates resource requests with GACCs as resources become available.
- Potential for emerging significant wildland fires is high and expected to remain high in multiple Geographic Areas.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL ACTIONS TAKEN BY NICC/NMAC

The NICC and/or NMAC will take the following specific actions at each corresponding Preparedness Level, regardless of activity or time of year. At any Preparedness Level, NMAC may assume NICC responsibilities based on resource allocation and activity.

Preparedness Level 1

- NICC produces the Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR) weekly on Fridays or as needed based on significant activity.
- NMAC meets as needed to accomplish administrative and procedural business.
- NICC manages national resource allocations as coordinated with NMAC based on pre-established prioritization criteria and resource mobilization guidelines.
- The CIMT Coordinator will monitor and coordinate CIMTs.

Preparedness Level 2

- NICC produces the IMSR daily Monday through Friday.
- NMAC meets on a regular basis to ensure situational awareness nationally as well as assessing resource commitment and availability.
- NICC manages national resource allocations as coordinated with NMAC based on pre-established prioritization criteria and resource mobilization guidelines.
- NICC will actively engage with the Geographic Areas for the assessment and coordination of Incident Management Teams.

Preparedness Level 3

- NICC produces the IMSR daily.
- NMAC will assume management of Type 1 and Type 2IA Crew assignments.
- NMAC will monitor CIMT assignments and may engage with GAs as necessary to achieve team experience objectives, ensure proficiency, manage fatigue, or for other reasons.
- NMAC activates the following support functions:
 - Crew Coordinator
 - SMKJ Coordinator
- NMAC implements a formal meeting schedule to align with the national situation.
- Geographic Areas must identify a CIMT Coordinator to serve as the communication link with the CIMT Coordinator for all CIMT actions.

Preparedness Level 4

- NMAC will manage all crew assignments.
- NMAC will manage all CIMT assignments. CIMT rationale forms may be required for all requests.
- NMAC will evaluate the need for activations of military and/or international assistance.
- NMAC meets daily Monday through Friday and on weekends as needed.

Preparedness Level 5

- NMAC may activate additional support functions as needed.
- NMAC receives requests for and assembles/allocates surge packages.
- NMAC may activate military and/or international assistance.
- NMAC has delegated authority and may actively manage all suppression resources as needed.

MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATING GROUPS (MAC) ORGANIZATION

Multi-Agency Coordinating Groups (MAC) at the National and Geographic Area levels should activate in accordance with the needs identified in the National or Geographic Area Mobilization Guides.

As the number and complexity of wildland fires increases, and as agency involvement, impacts, and competition for resources grow, agencies must expand the normal coordination system to ensure the efficient use of critical national resources.

When the National Preparedness Level reaches 5, Geographic Areas may need to activate their MAC Groups to support geographic area response to requests and direction from NMAC,

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) Organization

During National Preparedness Levels 4 and 5, NMAC conducts daily briefings and meetings. Through intergovernmental coordination, NMAC provides national direction, prioritization, allocation, and oversight for wildland fire operations. Additional information about NMAC can be found on the [NICC](#) website.

NIFC Directors' Delegations

The USFS, USWFS, NASF, and FEMA Directors at NIFC have written, delegated authority, from their respective agency heads to represent their agency on all matters related to wildland fire operations. NMAC Roles/Responsibilities are:

- Establish national priorities amongst the Geographic Areas.
- Direct, allocate or reallocate resources amongst or between Geographic Areas to meet national priorities.
- Anticipate and identify future national fire management resource requirements (prepositioning).
- Provide oversight of general business practices between NMAC and GMAC groups.
- Distribute and archive decisions, direction, and best management practices.
- Provide an NMAC member as the media spokesperson assisting NIFC External Affairs for issues of national importance (as requested).
- NMAC members are responsible for dissemination of written correspondence to their respective agencies.
- Determine National Preparedness Levels (PLs).
- Determine national fire resource availability to support non-fire/all-hazard operations.
- Determine activation, coordination, and involvement of military and international resources.
 - Requests for assistance from the military that may include MAFFS, military ground support, etc.
 - Requests for assistance from foreign countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Mexico, etc.
- Manage Area Command Teams.
- Provides liaison and oversight to the Incident Commanders Advisory Council (ICAC).
- Manage Complex Incident Management Team rotations, monitor work/rest cycles, and may modify national rotations.

NMAC Support Function Responsibilities:

At any time regardless of Preparedness Levels NMAC may activate additional support functions. The following standard practices will apply when the specific role is activated:

Incident Management Team Coordinator:

- Coordinates with NICC and the GA to implement NMAC decisions.
- Tracks all IMT utilization.
- Provides recommendations to NMAC for team assignments.

Crew Coordinator:

- Coordinates with NICC and the GA to implement NMAC decisions.
- Tracks all Type 1 and 2IA crew assignments.
- At PL 4 and 5, NMAC may delegate tracking of all crew types.
- Provides crew allocation recommendations to NMAC.

- Works directly with GAs to track crew needs and availability.

Smokejumper Coordinator:

- Coordinates with NICC and the GA to implement NMAC decisions.
- Tracks all smokejumper movement and availability.
- Assists NMAC and the NICC in prioritizing competing booster requests.

Responsibilities of GMACs:

- Determine and set Geographic Area priorities.
- Acquire, allocate, and reallocate resources.
- Issue coordinated Situation Assessment Statements.

MAC Group Coordinator

Agencies should assign a MAC Group Coordinator when they activate a MAC Group. The MAC Group Coordinator facilitates multi-agency decision-making. The Coordinator obtains and summarizes multi-agency information to support collective decisions at the MAC Group level and to implement agency priorities. MAC Group Coordinator Responsibilities:

- Ensure MAC Group decisions are communicated and implemented through established channels.
- Arrange for and manage facilities and equipment necessary to support the MAC Group function.
- Facilitate the MAC Group decision process by ensuring the analysis and display of information that will assist the MAC Group, or their representatives, in keeping abreast of the total situation.
- Provide the data necessary for setting priorities, resource allocation and other collective decisions.

Complexity

As complexity increases, management must become more involved. Complex situations include multiple problem fires, multiple agency involvement, or high competition for resources. Agencies may activate MAC Groups during the most complex situations or when a Preparedness Level directs activation. MAC Groups provide direction for off-incident coordination and support. They set priorities, allocate resources, and issue coordinated situation assessments to the media. MAC Groups operate at all organizational levels.

The host agency's dispatch unit manages communications to and from the incident(s) through established dispatch channels. These communications include ICS-209s, supplemental intelligence worksheets, situation assessments, analyses, prognoses, and fire behavior and weather information.

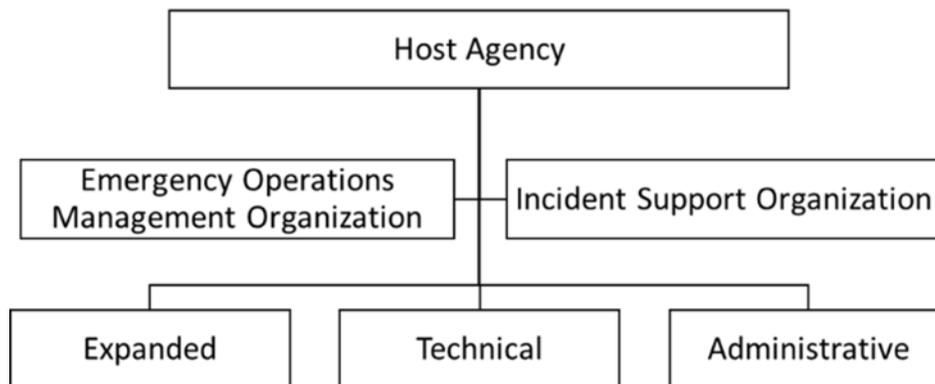
The Agency Administrator communicates specific direction and policy directly to the Incident Commander(s), and Public Affairs contacts the Incident Information Officer(s) for media information and news releases. Personnel must avoid redundant contacts.

INCIDENT SUPPORT ORGANIZATION (ISO)

Agency Administrators are responsible for emergency operations. They provide general guidance and interact with the MAC Group. Typically, some or all of their responsibilities are delegated to personnel who can devote more complete attention to the situation. Often, the unit Fire Management Officer (FMO) has responsibility for the ISO and as a representative on the local MAC Group. Routine initial attack and other dispatch functions continue but are separated from the ISO. Each office shall maintain a Dispatch Operating Plan, which will include authorities, roles, and responsibilities for Expanded Dispatch personnel, procedures for routine and emergency operations, the resource order process, job aids, and references for the integration of Buying Teams and sources of supply. The ISO works to provide logistical support to the host agency and the incident(s). The ISO is implemented to address the increased business volume and to supplement established organizations. Staffing positions in an ISO are to be based on need rather than a preconceived organizational chart.

The ISO reports to the Agency Administrator and is composed of functional branches: Expanded Dispatch, Technical Support, and Administrative Support. The functional branches coordinate and cooperate to support the host agency and the incident(s).

Incident Support Organization (ISO)



Expanded Dispatch Organization

The Expanded Dispatch function of the ISO relieves the host agency's dispatch unit by focusing exclusively on the large or complex incident(s).

Expanded Dispatch Functional Areas

- Overhead
- Crews
- Aircraft, Logistical
- Equipment
- Supplies

The volume of orders and complexity of the incident(s) determines staffing levels and the degree of expertise required of the Expanded Dispatch organization. In less complex situations, one (1)

dispatcher can handle more than one (1) functional area. Additional personnel may also work within the Expanded Dispatch,

The Expanded Dispatch Supervisory Dispatcher (EDSP) is a facilitator accomplishing the direction provided by the Center Manager or Fire Management Officer, who has delegated authority from the Agency Administrator. Facilitation is accomplished by adequately staffing and supervising the operations of the Expanded Dispatch organization, maintaining positive and effective liaison with the host agency and incident management team(s), and assisting in clarifying the roles and responsibilities for the ISO and the host agency dispatch unit as needed. The individual filling this position must be a qualified EDSP and capable of performing all functions within the Expanded Dispatch organization.

An Expanded Dispatch Coordinator (CORD) is normally assigned in the most complex situations where there are considerable external influences affecting the ISO, a local MAC Group is in place, or where span of control within the ISO and/or Expanded Dispatch becomes an issue.

Technical Support

The Technical Support function of the ISO provides specialized skills, which assist off-incident support operations. These can vary from situation to situation. Common Technical Support functions are telecommunications, caching of supplies, transportation services, equipment inspection, aviation ramp services, mobilization or demobilization center management, and security.

Administrative Support

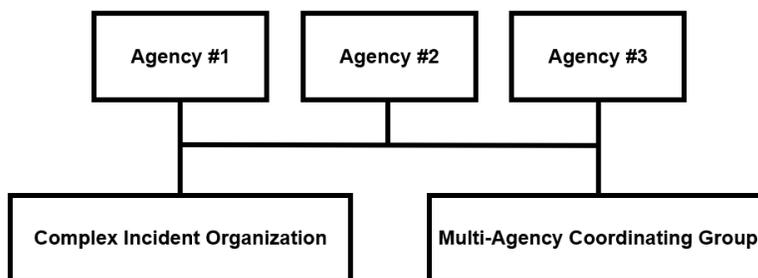
The Administrative Support function of the ISO provides administrative services for the host agency, ISO, and incident(s). These can vary from situation to situation. Common Administrative Support functions are equipment and personnel timekeeping, procurement services such as a Buying Team(s), hiring of local ADs or casual employees, follow-up on local compensation and claims actions, providing fiscal advice, and vendor payments.

An Incident Business Advisor (INBA) may be ordered by the Agency Administrator to assist with incident business.

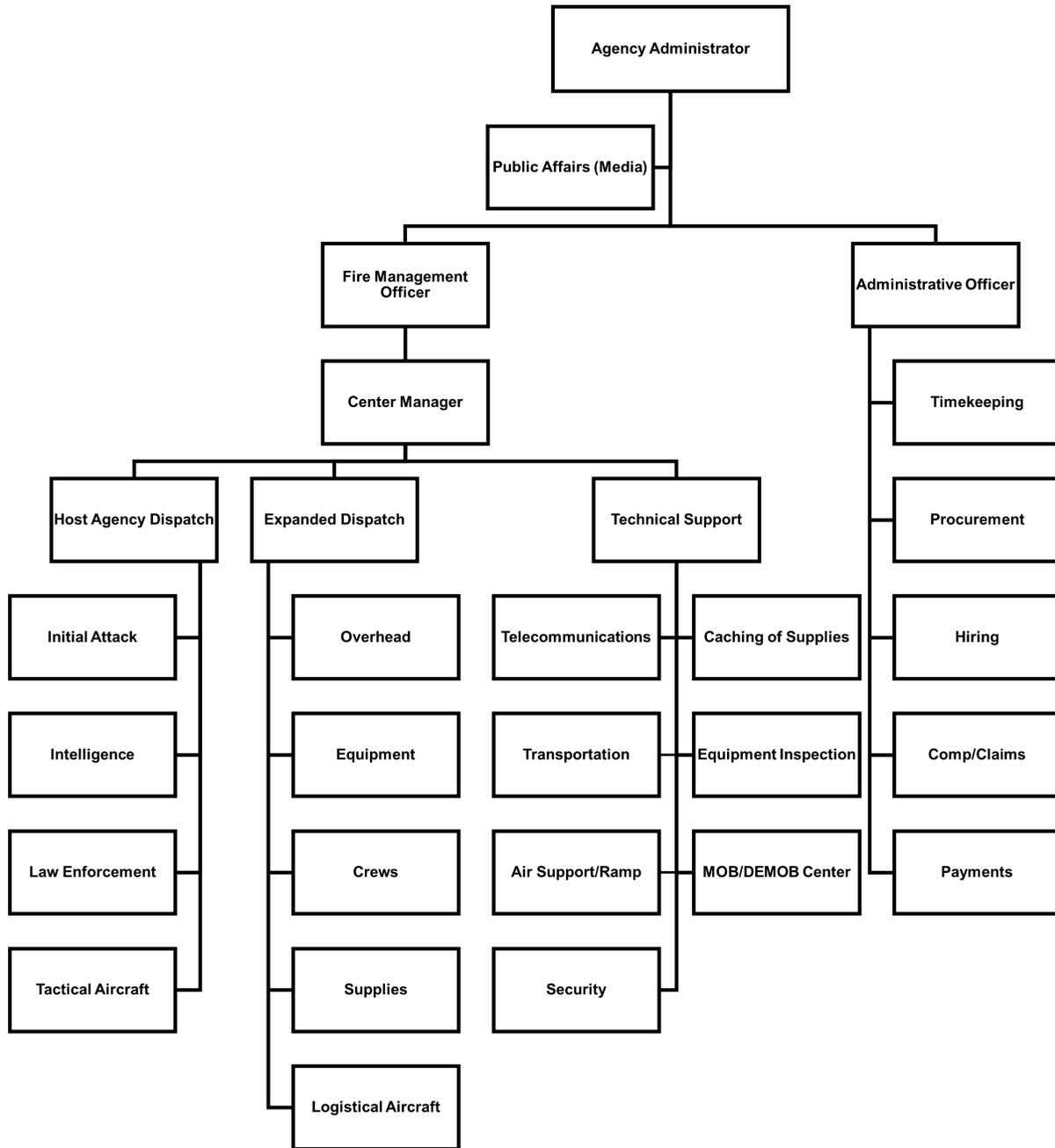
Example Organizations

ISOs are implemented to address the increased business volume and to supplement established organizations. Staff positions in an ISO are to be based on need rather than a preconceived organizational chart. (See ISO Organizations on the following pages.)

Incident Support Organization (ISO), Example – Complex Incident:



Incident Support Organization (ISO), Example:



MOBILIZATION PROCEDURES FOR MILITARY ASSETS

It is advisable that units and field level users intending to order and utilize military resources obtain copies of the *Military Use Handbook*.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

International Arrangements and Agreements, and respective Operating Plans, can be found [here](#).

Canada Support

Mobilizations involving the United States of America (USA) and Canada are governed and directed by the diplomatic note, Reciprocal Forest Fire Fighting Arrangement Operational Guidelines, and by local initial attack agreements. Requests to Canadian agencies will normally be made after USA resources are depleted, shortages are projected, or reasonable timeframes cannot be met. All requests for use of Canadian Resources must be ordered through NICC, except for local mutual aid that does not include provisions for any reimbursement. The USA may request airtankers from Canada only after all available contract and Call-When-Needed (CWN) aircraft have been mobilized. The USA may request helicopters from Canada after all available contract and CWN helicopters have been mobilized.

Australia and New Zealand Support

Mobilizations involving the USA, Australia, and New Zealand are coordinated through NICC, and are defined in the Wildfire Arrangements between the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture of the United States and the Australian and New Zealand Participating Agencies and in the Annual Operating Plan for these Arrangements. Request to Australian and New Zealand Participating Agencies will normally be made after USA resources are depleted, shortages are projected, or reasonable timeframes cannot be met.

Mexico Support

Mobilizations involving the United States and Mexico for fires within ten (10) miles either side of the U.S. – Mexico border are defined in the Wildfire Protection Agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture of the United States and the Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries of the United Mexican States for the Common Border.

Mobilizing USA resources for suppression assistance within Mexico beyond the ten (10) mile zone must be approved and coordinated by NICC.

Other Nations Support for Large Scale Mobilizations

The NICC coordinates Requests For Assistance (RFA) for firefighting support from foreign countries that are under arrangements with the US Forest Service and Department of Interior, namely Canada, Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand. The NICC will also assist with requests for firefighting support to other foreign countries in coordination with the US Forest Service Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP) through Department of State's Office of International Disaster Response.

Process for International Mobilization of Federal Resources

International fire assignments are unique. The approval process for federal government employees has been expedited through the State Department and specific agencies, from 60-90 days to 3-7 days. Due to the condensed process, it is critical the sending unit completes and submits all required documents in a timely manner. The NICC International Coordinator must have all completed documentation to ensure State Department and agency clearance prior to the employee receiving country clearance. Clearance must be completed and approved prior to travel beginning.

Dispatch Procedures for International Mobilization

International fire assignments are managed by the NICC, and any questions should always be directed to the NICC International Coordinator. Once an order has been filled by a local dispatch center, they will ensure the completion of the following steps within the appropriate time allowed:

- Ensure the resource is aware of all attached documentation within the order (i.e.: briefing packets, Special Needs documents, etc.)
- International Manifest is accurately completed and returned in a timely manner. The manifest must be submitted to NICC no later than **72 hours** before the Needed Date and Time on the Resource Order Form.
 - Failure to meet the 72-hour timeframe will result in the order being canceled.
- Vehicle Information is completed (if applicable) within the manifest.
- Travel can be arranged but not implemented until notification is received from the NICC International Coordinator that they are cleared for travel. (This process may be different based on which country we are providing assistance/support.)
 - A copy of the itinerary is required to be submitted with the international manifest.
- Once the manifest is received by the NICC, it is sent to be reviewed for international travel clearance. (This may take 48 hours or longer)

Once NICC receives confirmation the traveler is cleared through their respective agency, and State Department Electronic Country Clearance (ECC) is confirmed, the resource and/or resources host dispatch center will be informed of the resources approval to mobilize.

No travel can occur until this confirmation is received.

ORDERING PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

All agencies have designated ordering procedures for incident and wildland fire support and services. These established ordering channels provide for: rapid movement of requests, agency review, efficient utilization of resources, and cost effectiveness.

Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs)

The GACCs act as focal points for internal and external requests not filled at the local level. GACCs are located in the following areas:

ALASKA – Fort Wainwright, Alaska: <https://fire.ak.blm.gov/>

EASTERN – Milwaukee, Wisconsin: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/eacc/>

GREAT BASIN – Salt Lake City, Utah: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/>

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA OPERATIONS – Redding, California: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/oncc/>

NORTHERN ROCKIES – Missoula, Montana: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

NORTHWEST – Portland, Oregon: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/>

ROCKY MOUNTAIN – Lakewood, Colorado: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/>

SOUTHERN – Atlanta, Georgia: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/sacc/>

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OPERATIONS – Riverside, California: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/oscc/>

SOUTHWEST – Albuquerque, New Mexico: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/>

Name Requests

Each geographic area has the ability to evaluate each name request from their area, if there is an outstanding need for the requested resource capability within that geographic area or ongoing suppression efforts, it may be denied.

All name requests not filled by the item being requested will be returned to the requesting unit with the appropriate associated documentation i.e., Unable to honor this request due to outstanding needs within the geographic area.

Name Requests on Budgeted, Severity or Non-Suppression Funds

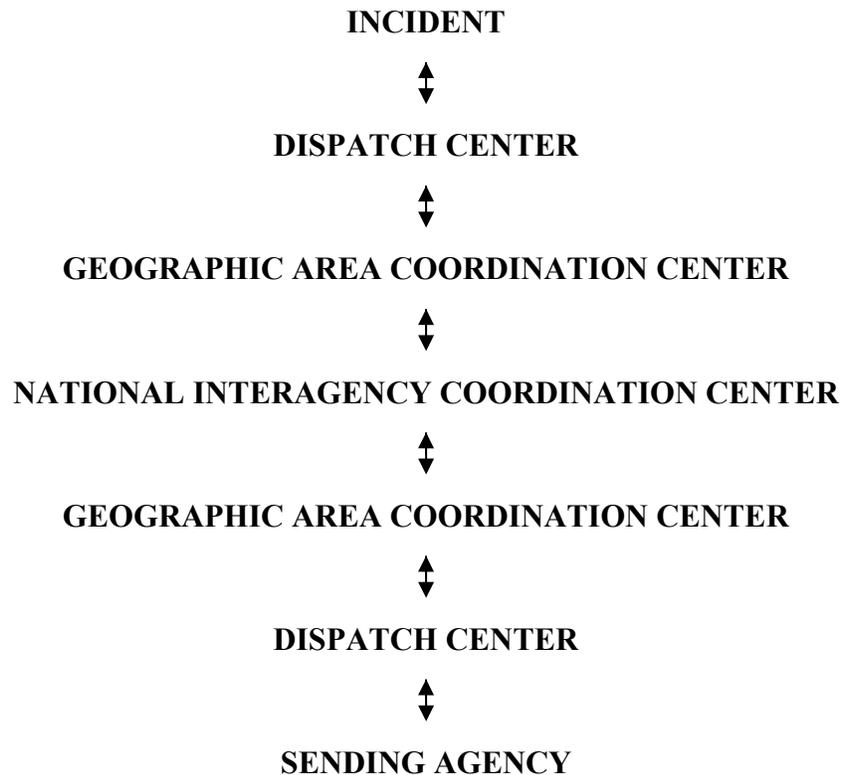
Name requests charged to severity, budgeted/programmed, or non-suppression funds are acceptable and will be processed without delay.

Severity requests often involve strategic movement of resources from area with lower fire potential, being directed by agency managers and/or duty officers and will be honored. Refer to Chapters 20 (Overhead) and 40 (Equipment) for additional information.

Ordering Process for All Orders

Resource order requests will be processed using IROC. Resource order requests as the result of an incident, preparedness, severity, and wildland or prescribed fire will follow the established ordering channel displayed below.

At the point in this flow when an order can be filled, reverse the process to ensure proper notification back to the incident or requesting office. Local agency dispatch offices should use mutual aid agreements with cooperators whenever possible.



Support to Border Fires

Border fires are defined as a wildland fire that has crossed the boundary from one (1) Geographic Area into another or where the fire is expected to cross the boundary within two (2) burning periods.

Whereas both Geographic Areas have a vested interest and authority to provide resource support to the incident, they may order directly from each other in support of the incident. The following protocols apply:

- A single ordering point will be designated to ensure proper assignment and demobilization of resources. The incident will remain with the originating unit for situation reporting and prioritization.
- The dispatch organization designated as the single ordering point may place orders to either GACC using established ordering channels, however the GACC of the originating unit dispatch is authorized to place orders with NICC.
- Prior to initiating border fire support operations, concurrence and agreement must occur between the two GACCs and NICC. To maintain effective coordination and ensure that the appropriate resources are mobilized, communication will be necessary between both GACCs and the ordering unit dispatch organization.

MOBILIZATION AND DEMOBILIZATION INFORMATION

Travel information for resources will be transmitted by using IROC. Each travel segment will identify mode of travel, carriers name with flight numbers, departure and arrival locations with estimated departure time and estimated arrival time (ETD/ETA) using the local time and time zone.

NON-INCIDENT RELATED ORDERING

Resource acquisition not related to an incident, preparedness, severity, and wildland fire may also follow these ordering procedures. The use of appropriate cost coding procedures is required.