

2026 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Throughout the 2026 NISRM, subject matter experts, NICC and NMAC have updated topics and descriptions to reflect current policy, improve clarity, and enhance conciseness.

References to specific DOI agencies (BLM, BIA, NPS, FWS) in certain contexts have been replaced or supplemented with references to the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS). Topics and descriptions are changed or updated by NICC and subject matter experts

Chapter 10: Objectives, Policy and Scope of Operations

Mission Statement

Removed *BLM, BIA, USFWS, and NPS*. Replaced with *U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS)*.

NIFC Director's Delegations

Removed *BLM, BIA, USFWS, and NPS*. Replaced with *U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS)*.

National Surge Packages

Removed. NMAC will issue an NMAC memo should they exercise surge packages in 2026.

Initial Attack Response Plans (New Section)

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*

Compacts

Removed *“Recognition of the need for consistency and continuity has led to the development of the Alliance of Forest Fire Compacts. The Alliance includes all eight forest fire compacts in the U.S. and Canada. More information is located at affcompacts.org.”*

Other Nations Support for Large Scale Mobilizations

Removed *“DASP responds to requests and works closely with U.S. Embassy's to determine if several criteria have been met for the U.S. Ambassador to declare a disaster. There needs to be evidence of significant unmet humanitarian needs, U.S. humanitarian assistance will save lives, reduce suffering, and mitigate impact of emergencies, the affected country requests or will accept U.S. government assistance, and response aligns with U.S. government interests and objectives. If that support includes available resources through the land management agencies, DASP will place requests through NICC, which will also be coordinated through the DASP liaison located at NIFC. Small scale requests for disaster assistance or technical assistance are coordinated directly by DASP through the home units of the requested individuals.”*

Replaced with *“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.”*

Chapter 20: Overhead and Teams

NMAC Management of IMTs

Added *“NMAC should request a CIMT to become available before their 7-day unavailability period begins. Only in exceptional circumstances will NMAC ask a CIMT within the 7-day period to roster before the end of that period. A Geographic Area may extend a team's unavailability period to allow additional rest.”*

Added *“Rationales are required by NMAC at PL 5 and when situations warrant the need for a rationale.”* Added the following statement *“The rationale will be submitted by a Coordinating Group Representative or the GACC.”*

CIMT Configuration

Removed *“CIMTs are expected to be fully rostered when available. CIMTs will be considered unavailable for assignment without a minimum roster of the seven Complex Command and General Staff (C&G) plus 17 discretionary qualified positions, for a total of 24 positions.”*

Replaced with *“CIMTs will be considered unavailable for assignment without the minimum 24 positions that must be filled (which includes ordered, filled and enroute) at the time of CIMT mobilization. This minimum ensures every CIMT has the core capability to safely and effectively manage a complex incident from the initial transition period forward. Beyond the minimum of 24, the roster size will be based upon the incident complexities. Additional personnel, trainees, assistants, technical specialists and expanded Command & General (C&G) positions may be added through negotiations between the IC and ordering unit representative.”*

CIMT Configuration

Removed “Roster requests of above 75 personnel must be approved in writing by the host unit AA following roster negotiations through the Pre-Mobilization Incident Management Team (IMT) Call, found at <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents>.

- Personnel may work virtually or on-site, as dictated by GA business rules and IC discretion; however, they still count towards the team’s total size.
- Supporting personnel and functions are not included in the team’s mobilization numbers (i.e., Resource Advisors, Air Resource Advisors, etc.).
- Local unit personnel assigned to work on the incident with the team are not considered team members but additional support.”

CIMT Configuration

Added the “Minimum CIMT Mobilization Configuration (24 Personnel) table.”

CIMT Roster Negotiation

Removed “Mobilization rosters in IROC will be closed at either 75 total positions or at the time of in-briefing. While it is recognized there may be incidents that require large numbers of overhead personnel for safe and effective management, additional personnel should be ordered based upon the specific incident needs rather than by increasing the CIMT roster beyond the approved configuration of 75 total personnel.”

CIMT National Rotation

Added “For 2026, all 38 interagency CIMTs are eligible for mobilization through the national rotation. Additional teams (such as state or local teams) may be integrated appropriately by the GA with NMAC coordination. (See section on Surge Capacity IMTs below.)

- GACCs will ensure their respective CIMTs are available for national rotation and their roster in IROC meets the mobilization configuration standards.
- The national rotation switches every seven (7) days on Thursday, effective 0001.
 - All GA internal rotations will rotate on Thursday.
- All nine GAs appear in the national rotation each week during the year.
- The starting order is alphabetical and continues indefinitely:
 10. Alaska
 11. California
 12. Eastern
 13. Great Basin
 14. Northern Rockies
 15. Northwest
 16. Rocky Mountain
 17. Southern
 18. Southwest
- The national rotation will be posted by April 1 annually.

- *The national rotation will be identified by GA. Each GA will determine which team fills the order based on internal rotations and availability.*
 - *GAs are expected to effectively manage workload distribution across all CIMTs to mitigate fatigue, enable team members to meet home unit responsibilities, provide experience opportunities for all CIMTs, meet training and workforce succession goals, and ensure availability of CIMTs nationally when competition exists.*
 - *NMAC strongly encourages GAs to consider utilizing the national rotation to ensure the distribution of assignments and days committed to incidents.*
 - *NMAC and the GAs has a management goal of three CIMT assignments per calendar year based on historical data.*

Seasonal Differences

May 1 – September 30 (Peak Season)

- *All 9 GAs rotate weekly in a rolling format.*
- *Normal movement: Position 1 → Position 9; all others move up one position.*
- *When a GA fills a national rotation order, that GA immediately moves to the bottom of the list (position 9).*
- *A GA filling an internal order will still maintain the GA position in the national rotation if they have additional CIMT availability.*
- *GAs that are unavailable are skipped for filling orders but retain their relative order in the list (shown as unavailable in the published rotation). This keeps the rotation moving during high-demand periods.*

October 1 – April 30 (Shoulder Season)

- *Only the top two GAs in the rotation are required to maintain an active CIMT roster (ad-hoc rosters are acceptable).*
- *Each Thursday, the top two GAs drop to positions 8 and 9; all others move up two slots.*
- *If a shoulder-season order is placed to NICC, the top available GA fills it. No additional coverage will be requested from GAs lower on the rotation.*

Filling Orders

- *All CIMT orders placed to NICC will be filled from the national rotation, in order, skipping unavailable GAs.*
- *If a GA cannot fill an order for the date/time needed, the order will be UTF'd back to NICC.*
- *GAs that know they will be unable to fill an order must notify the National CIMT Coordinator as soon as possible (ideally at least 3 days in advance) so their status can be updated.*

Assignment Limits and National Capacity Protection

- *After every CIMT within a single GA has received at least one assignment in a calendar year, replacement CIMT orders (and other orders approved by NMAC) will follow a 3:1 ratio*

- *Three assignments filled internally by that GA.*
- *Every fourth assignment filled via the national rotation, targeting long duration fires for CIMT replacement.*
- *Once a CIMT has received two assignments in a calendar year, it becomes ineligible for national-rotation assignments until every CIMT has also received two assignments. CIMTs with two assignments may remain eligible for in GA assignments at the GA's discretion.*
- *After every CIMT has two assignments, there are no further restrictions for mobilization.*
- *During limited CIMT availability this rule may be suspended.*

Prepositioning

- *Prepositioned teams are used before placing new orders to the rotation:*
 - *GACC-prepositioned teams are used first within that GA.*
 - *NICC-prepositioned teams are used first nationally.*
- *Prepositioning of 4 or more days counts as an assignment.*
- *Prepositioning longer than 7 days requires NMAC coordination.*
- *All prepositioned CIMTs may receive an extension up to 21 days to account for unassigned days.*
- *CIMTs ordered through NICC or prepositioned by NICC from the national rotation for staging within a GA will be prioritized for assignment to any new federal incident within that area or when a replacement team is needed within that area.*

Reassignments, Extensions and Cancellations

- *Reassignment before demobilization counts as one assignment.*
- *Out-of-GA reassignments require NMAC approval.*
- *Assignments that begin in one year and extend into the next count toward the initial calendar year assignment data.*
- *If an order is canceled, or the team is released within 3 days of the original order date, the GA returns to its original rotation position and the mobilization does not count as an assignment.*
- *Extension requests are submitted by the GA using established NMAC procedures.*
- *If the IC determines that the CIMT is underprepared for the incident due to experience or comfort levels of the Command and General Staff due to incident complexity, the GA may maintain their place in the national rotation without penalty and the next available GA will be requested to provide a CIMT.*

NICC CIMT Coordinator

Removed *NICC CIMT Coordinator* and *NMAC CIMT Coordinator* sections, replaced with *National CIMT Coordinator* section.

National CIMT Coordinator

Updated the following standard practices:

- *All requests (including extension requests) for CIMTs and NIMOs must be approved by NMAC. This applies to all assignments, internal and external to the GA.*

- *NMAC requires GAs to submit the [Request for CIMT Extension or Assignment](#) for any CIMT request at PL5. These will be submitted by the GACC or a Coordinating Group representative.*
- *Reallocation of assigned CIMTs within the GA will be done in coordination with the NMAC liaison and the National CIMT Coordinator.*
- *When allocating CIMTs, NMAC will consider multiple criteria including, but not limited to: national rotation, availability, number of assignments, workload distribution, and travel/logistical considerations.*
- *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.*
- *Surge capacity CIMTs (which may include state, local government, or ad hoc IMTs) will be part of the allocation and factored in with the above criteria as appropriate.*
- *CIMTs may be allocated to incidents up to 3 days prior to their availability.*
- *To remain flexible in case a higher priority arises and the CIMT needs to be reassigned, CIMTs will not be filled in IROC until they are available or until it's necessary to begin travel.*
- *If CIMT availability is insufficient for potential emerging incidents. As part of the daily prioritization process:*
 - *GAs with multiple committed CIMTs, in coordination with the National CIMT Coordinator, will reprioritize internally to meet any emerging needs.*
 - *GAs with multiple committed CIMTs may be asked to identify CIMT(s) to be reassigned for emerging and exigent needs in a bordering GA.*
 - *All Gas will assure appropriate use of IMTs.*
- *CIMT extensions should be considered and utilized to manage the number of transitions on an incident, to mitigate limited availability of CIMTs, and to reach suppression objectives.*
- *NMAC supports internal GA reallocation. A request is still required when reallocating to ensure the CIMT goes to the highest priority need, which could be outside the GA.*

CIMT Assignments for Suppression Repair

Removed, duplicate language.

Interagency Buying Teams (BUYT)

Removed. See [NMAC Memo](#) regarding 2026 incident procurement guidance.

Payment Teams

Removed, no longer used.

Chapter 30: Crews

U.S. Forest Service Contract Crews

Added “Type 2 contract crews and Type 2 Initial Attack contract crews must be ordered to a specific reporting location, identified by a physical address such as a designated incident, forest or district office, or other government-specified location.”

Type 2 and Type 2IA Crews

Added two tables describing minimum mobilization standards for each crew type.

Chapter 40: Equipment and Supplies

Radio Ordering

Added *“If the ICP or base camp is unknown, the requested equipment must be shipped to the closest field office, ranger station, or other designated government building.”*

Chapter 50: Aircraft

Sterile Cockpit

Added *“Sterile cockpit rules apply within a 5-mile radius of the airport. The flight crew will not perform radio or cockpit communication during that time that is not directly related to safe flight of the aircraft from taxi to 5 miles out and from 5 miles out until clearing the active runway. This would consist of reading checklists, communication with ATC, flight service stations, Unicom, or other aircraft with the intent of ensuring separation or complying with ATC requirements. Communications by passengers or air crew members can be accomplished when the audio panels can be isolated and do not interfere with flight operations of the flight crew.”*

Exception: *When conducting firefighting missions within 5 miles of an uncontrolled airport, maintain a sterile cockpit until departing the traffic pattern and reaching final altitude. Monitor common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF) frequency if feasible while engaged in firefighting activities. Monitor CTAF as soon as practical upon leaving the fire and returning to the uncontrolled airport. When conducting firefighting missions within class B, C, or D airspace, notify dispatch that ATC communications will have priority over dispatch communications.”*

Non-Federally Approved Cooperator Aircraft

Added a link to the new Non-Federally Approved Cooperator Aircraft form.

FS CWN Helicopters

Added *“The incident or dispatch office will communicate any intent to fully demobilize and release a CWN helicopter from an incident to NICC, who will relay the information to the National Rotor-Wing Coordinator as soon as practicable. If the release is anticipated 24 hours or more in advance, notification will be made at that time.”*

FS EU Helicopters

Added *“Any intent to release EU helicopters from a contract extension will be coordinated with the National Rotor-Wing Coordinator, no less than 24 hours prior to release. Only the Contracting Officer and COR have the authority to release any FS helicopter from contract.”*

MATOC Payload Category Tables

Updated for 2026.

Rappellers

Added *“When existing border agreements exist between GACCs, IA loads may be placed forest to forest, if the resource is the closest available. Courtesy notification shall be made to the GACC(s) and NICC at the time the order is placed.”*

Frequencies

Removed *“Frequencies are ordered on an Aircraft “A” request.”* Replaced with *“Frequencies are ordered on a Frequency “F” request.”*

Temporary Flight Restrictions

Added *“Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) regulate the National Airspace System (NAS). The Geographic Area Coordination Center or an assigned Airspace Coordinator (ASCO) will originate TFRs. TFRs are not an administrative function of a local dispatch center.”*

Airspace Coordination

Added *“The National Airspace Coordinator will coordinate Airspace Coordinator (ASCO) assignments to support regional and geographical airspace coordination.”*

Chapter 60: Predictive Services

No changes for 2026.

Chapter 70: Incident Administration

Cost Coding

Removed entire section.

Chapter 80: Forms

Added: Non-Federally Approved Cooperator Aircraft Form