Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations

Department of the Interior
U.S. Wildland Fire Service

Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

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May 2026

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Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations

May 2026

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3833 S. Development Avenue
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May 21, 2026

To: Agency Personnel

From: Director/Chief, U.S. Wildland Fire Service
Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service

Subject: *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*

Director/Chief, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, and Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, have directed the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Group (ISOG) to annually revise, publish, and distribute the Federal *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, and issue errata to this document.

The *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, states, references, or supplements policy and provides program direction for the U.S. Wildland Fire Service and U.S. Forest Service fire and fire aviation program management.

Employees engaged in fire suppression and fire management activities will comply with interagency and agency-specific health, safety, and fire management policy documents.

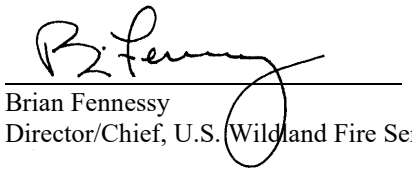
For the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, this document serves as transitional policy and supplemental guidance following the unification of DOI fire and aviation programs in January 2026. This document addresses specific action items contained in the Secretary's Order No. 3448, *Establishment of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service*; Wildland Fire Management Direction from Secretary Burgum | April 8, 2026; U.S. WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE MEMORANDUM No. 2026-002, Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Roles and Responsibilities During Transition; and U.S. WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE MEMORANDUM, No. 2026-006, Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Authorities During Transition.

For the USDA Forest Service, this document provides guidance for implementing safe and effective fire and aviation management operations based on policy in *Forest Service Manual 5100* and *5700*.

This document addresses specific action items that are contained in the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (February 13, 2009).

The contents of this book are not to be modified. Supplemental agency-specific direction of a more restrictive nature may be issued separately.

Suggestions for modification of the publication should be sent to your agency representatives listed on this page.



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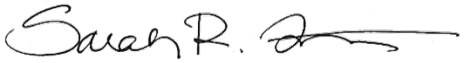

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Chapter 1
Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Doctrine Overview

Scope

The *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* states, references, or supplements policy for U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) fire and fire aviation program management. Original source policy is stated or referenced throughout this handbook. This handbook attempts to reference policy, rather than paraphrase policy to limit duplication.

The *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* is intended to comply with and support the *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (January 2001*)* and the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (February 13, 2009) and other existing Federal policy.

Purpose

The *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* provides fire and fire aviation program management direction for USWFS and USFS managers. Employees engaged in fire management activities will continue to comply with all agency policies. Other references, such as the *National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Incident Response Pocket Guide* (*IRPG*), PMS 461, provide operational guidance.

Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001)

The *Review and Update of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (pp. 21-22) established the following guiding principles as fundamental to the successful implementation of the *2001 Federal Fire Policy*.

1. **Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.**
2. **The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process.** Federal agency land and resource management plans set the objectives for the use and desired future condition of the various public lands.
3. **Fire management plans (FMP), programs, and activities support land and resource management plans (LRMP) and their implementation.**
4. **Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities.** Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost of either doing or not doing an activity. Net gains to the public benefit will be an important component of decisions.
5. **Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives.** Federal agency administrators are adjusting and reorganizing programs to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. As part of this process, investments in fire management activities must be evaluated against other agency programs in order to effectively accomplish the overall mission, set short- and long-term priorities, and clarify management accountability.
6. **FMPs and activities are based upon the best available science.** Knowledge and experience are developed among all wildland fire management agencies. An active fire research program combined with interagency collaboration provides the means to make these tools available to all fire managers.
7. **FMPs and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.**
8. **Federal, State, Tribal, local, interagency, and international coordination and cooperation are essential.** Increasing costs and smaller work forces require that public agencies pool their human resources to successfully deal with the ever-increasing and more complex fire management tasks. Full collaboration among Federal agencies and between the Federal agencies and international, State, Tribal, and local governments, and private entities results in a mobile fire management workforce available for the full range of public needs.
9. **Standardization of policies and procedures among Federal agencies is an ongoing objective.** Consistency of plans and operations provides the fundamental platform upon which Federal agencies can cooperate, integrate fire activities across agency boundaries, and provide leadership for cooperation with State, Tribal, and local fire management organizations.

2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy

The *2001 Review and Update of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (pp. 23-25) established the following policies:

1. **Safety**
   Firefighter and public safety is the first priority. All FMPs and activities must reflect this commitment.
2. **Fire Management and Ecosystem Sustainability**
   The full range of fire management activities will be used to help achieve ecosystem sustainability, including interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.
3. **Response to Wildland Fire**
   Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into LRMPs and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fires is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to the fire.
4. **Use of Wildland Fire**
   Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as nearly as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role. Use of fire will be based on approved FMPs and will follow specific prescriptions contained in operational plans.
5. **Rehabilitation and Restoration**
   Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health, and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.
6. **Protection Priorities**
   The protection of human life is the single, overriding priority. Setting priorities among protecting human communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources will be based on the values to be protected, human health and safety, and the costs of protection. Once people have been committed to an incident, these human resources become the highest value to be protected.
7. **Wildland Urban Interface**
   The operational roles of the Federal agencies as partners in the wildland urban interface (WUI) are wildland firefighting, hazardous fuels reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance. Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of Tribal, State, or local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural fire protection activities under formal fire protection agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding. (Some Federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with structural protection.)
8. **Planning**
   Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved FMP. FMPs are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires based on the area's approved land management plan (LMP). Fire management plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected, and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations.
9. **Science**
   Fire management plans and fire programs will be based on a foundation of sound science. Research will support ongoing efforts to increase our scientific knowledge of biological, physical, and sociological factors. Information needed to support fire management will be developed through an integrated interagency fire science program. Scientific results must be made available to managers in a timely manner and must be used in the development of LMPs, FMPs, and implementation plans.
10. **Preparedness**
    Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of LRMPs through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.
11. **Suppression**
    Wildland fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives.
12. **Prevention**
    Agencies will work together and with their partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.

13. **Standardization**
    Agencies will use compatible planning processes, funding mechanisms, training and qualification requirements, operational procedures, values-to-be protected methodologies, and public education programs for all fire management activities.
14. **Interagency Cooperation and Coordination**
    Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners.
15. **Communication and Education**
    Agencies will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations.
16. **Agency Administrator and Employee Roles**
    Agency administrators will ensure that their employees are trained, certified, and made available to participate in the wildland fire program locally, regionally, and nationally as the situation demands. Employees with operational, administrative, or other skills will support the wildland fire programs, as necessary. Agency administrators are responsible and will be held accountable for making employees available.
17. **Evaluation**
    Agencies will develop and implement a systematic method of evaluation to determine effectiveness of projects through implementation of the *2001 Federal Fire Policy*. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution of areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.

Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 13, 2009)

On February 13, 2009, the Fire Executive Council (FEC) approved *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy*. This guidance provides for consistent implementation of the *1995/2001 Federal Fire Policy*, as directed by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council." (Page 3, *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy,* February 13, 2009).

The following guidelines should be used to provide consistent implementation of Federal wildland fire policy:

1. Wildland fire management agencies will use common standards for all aspects of their fire management programs to facilitate effective collaboration among cooperating agencies.
2. Agencies and bureaus will review, update, and develop agreements that clarify the jurisdictional inter-relationships and define the roles and responsibilities among local, State, Tribal, and Federal fire protection entities.
3. Responses to wildland fire will be coordinated across levels of government regardless of the jurisdiction at the ignition source.
4. Fire management plans will be intergovernmental in scope and developed on a landscape scale.
5. Wildland fire is a general term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland. Wildland fires are categorized into two distinct types:
   a. ***Wildfires*** – Unplanned ignitions or prescribed fires that are declared wildfires.
   b. ***Prescribed Fires*** – Planned ignitions.
6. A wildland fire may be concurrently managed for one or more objectives and objectives can change as the fire spreads across the landscape. Objectives are affected by changes in fuels, weather, topography; varying social understanding and tolerance; and involvement of other governmental jurisdictions having different missions and objectives.
7. Management response to a wildland fire on Federal land is based on objectives established in the applicable LMP/RMP, and/or the FMP.
8. Initial action on human-caused wildfire will be to suppress the fire at the lowest cost with the fewest negative consequences with respect to firefighter and public safety.
9. Managers will use a decision support process to guide and document wildfire management decisions. The process will provide situational assessment, analyze hazards and risk, define implementation actions, and document decisions and rationale for those decisions.

Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 13, 2009), page 7.

Definitions

Key policy definitions selected from appendix A of the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* as updated by Fire Management Board (FMB) Memorandum 19-004a, *Updated Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Terms and Definitions* issued October 11, 2019. Suppression strategy types terminology and definitions added from FMB Memorandum No. 26-002, *Federal Wildland Fire Terminology and Systems/Tools Alignment Requirements*.

Direct Extinguishment Strategy: Firefighters engage the active flame front directly to stop fire spread.

Indirect Confinement Strategy: Firefighters work away from the active flame front to steer or contain the fire.

Initial Response: The initial decisions and actions taken in reaction to a reported incident.

Initial Attack: An aggressive action to put the fire out by the first resources to arrive, consistent with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected.

Prescribed Fire (see also "Wildland Fire"): A wildland fire originating from a planned ignition in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations to meet specific objectives.

Suppression: All the work to extinguish a fire or limit wildland fire spread.

Wildfire: A wildland fire originating from an unplanned ignition, such as lightning, volcanos, unauthorized and accidental human caused fires, and prescribed fires that are declared wildfires.

Wildland Fire (includes wildfires and prescribed fires): Any non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation or natural fuels.

Other Definitions

Extended Attack: Actions taken on a wildfire that has exceeded the initial response.

Extended-attack Incident: An incident that exceeds the capability of the initial attack resources and/or organization to successfully manage the incident to conclusion.

Fire Operations Doctrine

Purpose of Fire Operations Doctrine

Fire operations doctrine states the fundamental principles on the subject of fire operations. This doctrine establishes a particular way of thinking about fire operations and provides a philosophy for leading firefighters in fire operations, a mandate for professionalism, and a common language. Fire operations doctrine does not consist of procedures to be applied to specific situations so much as it sets forth general guidance that requires judgment in application.

The Nature of Fire Operations

Fire is a complex, dynamic, and often unpredictable phenomenon. Fire operations require mobilizing a complex organization that includes management, command, support, and firefighting personnel, as well as aircraft, vehicles, machinery, and communications equipment. While the magnitude and complexity of the fire itself and of the human response to it will vary, the fact that fire operations are inherently dangerous will never change. A firefighter, utilizing the best available science, equipment, training, and working within the scope of agency doctrine and policy can still suffer serious injury or death.

Wildland Fire Operations Risk Management

The primary means by which accidents are prevented in wildland fire operations is through aggressive risk management. This safety philosophy acknowledges that while the ideal level of risk may be zero, a hazard-free work environment is not a reasonable or achievable goal in fire operations. Through organized, comprehensive, and systematic risk management, fire personnel will determine the acceptable level of risk that allows for safety yet still achieves fire operations objectives. Risk management is intended to minimize the number of injuries or fatalities experienced by wildland firefighters.

Fire Preparedness

Fire preparedness is the state of being ready to provide an appropriate response to wildfires based on identified objectives. Preparedness is the result of activities that are planned and implemented prior to fire ignitions. Preparedness requires identifying necessary firefighting capabilities and implementing coordinated programs to develop those capabilities. Preparedness requires a continuous process of developing and maintaining firefighting infrastructure, predicting fire activity, implementing prevention activities, identifying values to be protected, hiring, training, equipping, prepositioning, and deploying firefighters and equipment, evaluating performance, correcting

deficiencies, and improving operations. All preparedness activities should be focused on developing fire operations capabilities and on performing successful fire operations.

Fire Operations Command Philosophy
It is essential that our philosophy of command support the way we conduct fire operations. First and foremost, in order to generate effective decision making in fire operations, and to cope with the unpredictable nature of fire, commander intent must be lucid and unambiguous, and lines of authority must be clearly articulated and understood. Subordinate commanders must make decisions on their own initiative based on their understanding of their commander's intent. A competent subordinate commander who is at the point of decision may understand a situation more clearly than a senior commander some distance removed. In this case, the subordinate commander must have the freedom to take decisive action directed toward the accomplishment of operational objectives. However, this does not imply that unity of effort does not exist, or that actions are not coordinated. Unity of effort requires coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly understood objective. Unified, coordinated action, whether between adjacent single resources on the fireline or between the highest command level and the most subordinate firefighter, is critical to successful fire operations.

Fire Leadership
Leadership is the art of influencing people in order to achieve a result. The most essential element for success in the wildland fire service is good leadership. Good leaders provide purpose, direction, and motivation for wildland firefighters working to accomplish difficult tasks under dangerous, stressful circumstances. Leaders often face difficult problems to which there are no simple, clear-cut, by-the-book solutions. In these situations, leaders must use their knowledge, skill, experience, education, values, and judgment to make decisions and to take or direct action—in short, to provide leadership. All firefighters, regardless of position, must provide leadership.

Fire Suppression
The purpose of fire suppression is to protect values at risk of loss by putting the fire out in the safest, most effective, and efficient manner. Every firefighter, whether in a management, command, support, or direct suppression role, should be committed to maximizing the safe, effective, and efficient engagement of capable firefighters in suppression action.

Principles of Suppression Operations
Wildland fire leaders implement command decisions and maintain unity of action by using the common principles of suppression operations to improve decision making and firefighter safety. The principles of Risk Management; Standard Firefighting Orders and Watch Out Situations; Lookouts, Communication, Escape Routes, Safety Zones (LCES); and the Downhill Checklist guide our fundamental fire suppression practices, behaviors, customs, and are mutually understood at every level of command. These principles are not absolute rules and require judgment in application.

Principles of Fire Suppression Action
The principles of fire suppression action provide a framework for developing fire suppression strategy and for conducting fire suppression operations. Again, these are not absolute or immutable rules. These five principles provide a consistent set of considerations with which to evaluate decisions, plans, and actions in different situations.

1. **Objective**
   Objectives direct every fire suppression operation toward a clearly defined, attainable end state.
2. **Speed and Focus**
   Speed is rapidity of action. Focus is the convergence of appropriate resources at the desired position to initiate action. Speed and focus results in increased likelihood of successful suppression actions.
3. **Positioning**
   Positioning of fire suppression resources ranges from single resource offensive or defensive reactions to changing fire conditions, to prepositioning of multiple resources based on predicted activity and values at risk. Positioning should always be undertaken with speed and focus in mind and with sufficient time for positioning to occur before operations begin. Positioning using strategic and opportunistic movement increases the effectiveness of fire suppression resources.
4. **Simplicity**
   Simplicity provides clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders. Simplicity contributes to successful actions, maximizing effectiveness and minimizing confusion.
5. **Safety**
   Safety is fundamental to successful suppression action. Safety not only contributes to successful actions; it is indispensable to them.

Cost-Effective Fire Operations

Maximizing the cost effectiveness of any fire operation is the responsibility of all involved, including those that authorize, direct, or implement those operations. Cost effectiveness is the most economical use of the suppression resources necessary to accomplish mission objectives. Accomplishing fire operations objectives safely and efficiently will not be sacrificed for the sole purpose of "cost savings." Care will be taken to ensure that suppression expenditures are commensurate with values to be protected, while understanding that other factors may influence spending decisions, including the social, political, economic, and biophysical environments.

Chapter 2
U. S. Wildland Fire Service Program Organization and Responsibilities

Introduction

This chapter provides policy and guidance for the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS). Standards provided in this chapter are based on Department of the Interior (DOI) and USWFS policy and are intended to ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective fire and aviation operations. Employees engaged in fire management activities, including fire program management, fire suppression, and fire program/incident support, will adhere to the standards in this chapter.

Mission Statement

The goal of the new USWFS is to achieve an integrated, cost-efficient, and operationally more effective Federal wildland fire management organization that meets unified and coordinated response needs and resource and safety objectives. The guiding program principles and priorities are to reduce wildfire risk, create fire-resilient landscapes, promote fire-adapted communities, and safely and effectively respond to wildfires through strong Federal, Tribal, State, and local collaboration.

U.S. Wildland Fire Service SharePoint and Website

The U.S. Wildland Fire Service SharePoint is only accessible to Department of the Interior employees. Tribal wildland fire employees who are unable to access the SharePoint site should contact wildlandfire@ios.doi.gov to request access. USWFS documents will be posted to the USWFS SharePoint as they are created or updated.

The U.S. Wildland Fire Service Website is accessible to the public and contains a wide variety of information specific to the fire service.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Employee Conduct

All U.S. Wildland Fire Service personnel will be provided with a workplace free of harassment and unlawful discrimination. The Department is committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, genetic information (including family medical history), status as a parent, marital status, or political affiliation, and free from illegal retaliation. Discrimination, in any form, has no place in our organization and will not be tolerated. Discrimination includes sexual or non-sexual harassment; any discriminatory act, policy, practice, or procedure that denies equal opportunity; or any conduct that demeans the dignity of another person.

All personnel have a responsibility to carry out this policy and create a work environment that a reasonable person would not consider intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

Managers and supervisors have a duty to act when they observe or become aware of allegations of harassing and/or discriminatory conduct. Managers and supervisors must make every effort to provide a work environment free of harassment and/or illegal discrimination and ensure subordinates are aware of the policy and its requirements. The manager/supervisor who receives the report of, or otherwise becomes aware of, harassing conduct must promptly contact the servicing human resources officer (HRO). If the reported activity poses a security risk or there is a threat of immediate physical harm, law enforcement must be notified immediately.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Workplace harassment of any kind may also be a form of discrimination if it involves unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age (over 40), disability, sexual orientation, or genetic information. Behavior that is hostile and/or intimidating creates an abusive or offensive work environment and there will be consequences to those who are found to have engaged in harassing conduct.

All allegations of harassment (sexual or non-sexual) will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and promptly. Contacting home unit Human Resources (HR) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) offices when harassment of any kind occurs while on fire assignment is critical.

Reprisal against an individual who reports harassment of any kind is illegal. Reprisal is the wrongful threatening or taking of either unfavorable action or withholding favorable action from another solely in response for their opposing employment discrimination or participating in an EEO activity protected by employment discrimination statutes.

An employee who engages in harassment or discrimination faces consequences ranging from verbal warnings and letters of reprimand, up to termination from employment, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. Managers and supervisors who do not act when they know or suspect that harassment or discrimination is occurring also face discipline. Contractor staff may be subject to comparable penalties from their employers. A contractor who fails to enforce this policy may have its contract terminated. Visitors to fire camps who engage in harassment may be removed and prevented from returning.

Fire leaders at all levels have the responsibility to serve as role models of appropriate behavior, and should confront any form of discrimination, harassment, or other improper behavior when it is observed or reported. Supervisors have a duty to act when they become aware of harassment of any kind and will be held accountable for responding to and stopping harassment while on fire assignments.

All reports of alleged discrimination will be taken seriously, promptly investigated, and handled with professionalism, dignity, and fairness. Incident personnel who believe they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or reprisal, should be directed to their home unit EEO manager or an EEO counselor within 45 days of the alleged discriminatory matter.

Department of the Interior Personnel Bulletin No. 18-01, *Prevention and Elimination of Harassing Conduct*, updates and amends the Department's policy on providing a work environment free from harassment.

All questions or concerns regarding harassment, sexual harassment, or any form of illegal discrimination should be directed to 986-200-3428.

Doug Burgum, Secretary of the Interior, 2026 Wildland Fire Management Direction

Secretarial Order 3448, issued January 12, 2026, established the United States Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) within the Office of the Secretary. The USWFS will oversee all aspects of the Department's wildland fire operations and activities.

Given the Department of the Interior's responsibilities to safeguard communities, landscapes, habitat and critical infrastructure, we will enter this season with the presumption of a full suppression strategy applied to every wildfire under DOI management.

Suppression actions must be prompt, decisive and based on values at risk—balanced with firefighter safety and a clear assessment of probability of success. Until conditions permit, all unplanned ignitions will receive a suppression response, using direct or indirect strategies as conditions dictate.

While indirect approaches may occasionally be warranted, direct suppression should remain the default. DOI firefighters are empowered to assess and mitigate risk while responding to wildfires and have the full support of Department leadership in carrying out this mission.

Prescribed burns play an important role, WHEN CONDITIONS PERMIT.

When Geographic Areas or the nation reach Preparedness Level 3 or higher, prescribed fire may not be used without express approval from the Geographic Area Fire Chief or their designee. If a Geographic Area escalates into PL3, prescribed fires already underway will be extinguished unless explicit authorization is granted to continue.

Fire response, however, is only one component of safeguarding the nation from catastrophic wildfires. The USWFS must make full use of available authorities and resources to reduce fuel loads and hazardous vegetation before fires start.

The above information is a concise overview; comprehensive direction can be viewed on the USWFS SharePoint site. Wildland Fire Management Direction from Secretary Burgum | April 8, 2026

Definitions

Agency Administrator: A USWFS geographic area fire chief or unit fire chief exercising assigned authority for wildland fire management decisions, including wildfires and prescribed fires. The Agency Administrator (AADM) qualification is not required for a USWFS agency administrator.

Bureau Representative (or DOI Bureau Representative): An individual designated by a DOI Bureau to represent its interests and retained authorities in wildland fire management, consistent with USWFS Transition Guidance, and applicable Bureau direction.

Authorities/Actions

The following guidance is from *Policy Memorandum 2026-006, Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Authorities During Transition*. Below is the full memorandum attachment. Additional transition guidance can be found in the Policy Library on the USWFS SharePoint site.

Purpose
This United States Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) policy provides clear and efficient standards and procedures for assigning authorities, facilitates management control over exercising authority, and ensures authority is exercised at the lowest practical level.

Responsibilities
The Director and the Deputy Directors are responsible for ensuring that the ability to exercise authority is assigned to the most appropriate organizational level.

All USWFS Officials are responsible for:
- Ensuring that authorities are exercised within legally stated limits.
- Assigning and reassigning the ability to exercise authorities to the appropriate level of the organization and ensuring full documentation in writing of the assignment/reassignment.

Derivation of Authority
Secretary's Order No. 3448, *Establishment of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service*, created the USWFS on January 12, 2026, and delegated to the Director, USWFS, "all authority necessary…to fulfill the Department's wildland fire mission," including any current or future statutory wildland fire authorities applicable to any DOI Bureau or Office.

200 DM 2.3 requires that "[r]edelgations of authority within a bureau or office will be issued as part of the bureau or office directives system." Until the USWFS establishes a directives system, the authority delegated to the USWFS Director in Secretary's Order No. 3448 may only be assigned, not formally delegated or re-delegated, by the USWFS Director to other positions within the USWFS to exercise.

For all USWFS positions with assigned authority, the deputy position for that office holds those assigned authorities when the primary is not available (for example, a Geographic Area Deputy Fire Chief shares all authorities held by Geographic Area Fire Chief).

While the USWFS generally assigns authority to the lowest organizational levels consistent with efficient program management, officials at higher organizational levels can exercise authority that has been reassigned to their subordinates unless expressly prohibited by law.

Geographic Area Authority
The Geographic Area (GA) Fire Chiefs are authorized to perform in their respective GA. The GAs are shown on the National Interagency Coordination Center's Geographic Area site at: https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/geographic-areas.

Assignments, Reassignments and Actings
The attached table serves as written notification of assignment/reassignment by the USWFS Director for the ability to exercise specific authorities within the USWFS. Any official to whom authority is assigned in the table below, or to whom authority has been assigned by other appropriate means, may, in writing, reassign or authorize reassignment of such authority, unless reassignment of authority is specifically prohibited or is limited. The written notice must be signed by the official reassigning the authority and sent to the position receiving the authority. Assignments must be limited by either an end date or an end condition (e.g., "until the wildfire is called out or "until superseded or revoked").

Employees detailed or temporarily promoted to positions covered in this authority policy will assume the responsibilities and ability to exercise authorities assigned to that position and will sign documents as "Acting."

An individual may be designated as an acting official for a specified period of time if the USWFS position with the assigned authority is unavailable. These designations must be in writing and include the specified time period an individual will serve in an acting capacity. Individuals serving in an acting capacity must use judgment in exercising these authorities. This includes considering the relative importance of an issue, whether the issue could or should be deferred, and the known preference of the individual for whom that person is exercising authority.

Actings may be designated either by individual designation (e.g., Mark Pierce will be acting from January 12 – January 15 or Mark Pierce will be acting from July 3 until further notice.) or by a standard acting rotation (e.g., Joe Smith will be acting for January, Mary Johnson will be acting for February, etc.). These designations should also include any necessary limitations on authorities for an individual serving in an acting capacity.

Only one individual may be designated to exercise authority for a specified period of time, unless a unique situation applies.

Unique Situations

Individuals serving in an exercising authority capacity assume all the authorities of that position unless authorities are withheld. If an authority is withheld, a designated exercising authority official for that authority will be assigned to ensure continuity of operations. An example for the USWFS of a unique situation would be if a local unit had multiple wildfire incidents with incident management teams assigned and needed additional support to serve as the USWFS Agency Administrator, who is assigned the ability to exercise wildfire authorities such as signing a cost share agreement, for each incident. The USWFS Unit Chief could provide a reassignment of authority to a USWFS employee to be the acting USWFS Unit Chief for an individual incident, reassigning only the authorities related to wildfire incidents for a USWFS Agency Administrator, but would withhold the other authorities held by a USWFS Unit Chief.

Reassignment of an authority does not preclude that USWFS official from later revoking that authority from the lower level or requiring concurrence to exercise that authority from a higher-level official. An assignment or reassignment of authority may be revoked at any time by providing written notice to the position(s) involved.

Authorities/Actions Table
Authority/Action Column: This column contains specific authorities. All the authorities/actions to which a legal authority is attached are not listed individually but may be summarized in one descriptive statement.

USWFS Officials Columns: These columns indicate the USWFS national, geographic area or unit official authority is assigned to. Authorities may be exercised at the level(s) marked in USWFS Officials Columns. For example, an "X" in the "GA FC/ GA DFC" column indicates that all GA Fire Chiefs and GA Deputy Fire Chiefs hold that authority.

Abbreviations used in columns include:
D/DD - USWFS Director and Deputy Directors
GA FC/GA DFC – USWFS Geographic Area Fire Chief and Geographic Area Deputy Fire Chief
Unit FC – USWFS Unit Fire Chief

Symbols used in the column and their definition:
An "X" indicates that the authority is assigned to all within that category and may be **reassigned to a lower level by the official designated with that authority.**

An asterisk (*) indicates that the authority **may not be reassigned below the designated official,** except as annotated in an accompanying note (if applicable). Limitations may be in accordance with regulations or may be at the discretion of the higher-level authority.

A number (e.g., "[1]") indicates either a specific position receiving authority or an explanatory note for that activity.

While the table contains many authorities within the USWFS, it does not contain every single one, nor can it contain assignments made, revoked, or changed following the issuance of the authority policy. Additionally, there may be situations where an authority may be reassigned in writing by an official that is provided such discretion.

Notes: This column provides additional information and clarity regarding which functional position has a given authority and those authorities that may not be reassigned. For example, if the "D/DD" column is checked for an activity in Aviation, the "Notes" column might provide additional clarity that the authority is with the Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. When "Bureau or Bureaus" is used in the Notes column, it refers to the four land management Bureaus in the Department of Interior (Department or DOI) – (1) Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), (2) Bureau of Land Management (BLM), (3) National Park Service (NPS), and (4) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Administrative	Serve as the Hiring Official for emergency firefighters in accordance with the Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals) for both wildland fire and all-hazard needs.	X[1]	X[1]	X[1]	1 - This may only be reassigned to an AD Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals) subject matter expert (SME) at the respective level (e.g., Unit FC may redelegate to the Unit's AD Pay Plan SME). Multiple SMEs within an administrative unit may receive this reassignment.
	Approve advanced written requests for non-wildfire travel for actual per diem or lodging costs up to 300 percent of the allowable per diem or lodging allowance for the locality.	X	*		When a traveler has a resource order for wildfire or all-hazard incident travel, the USWFS has provided prior approval for actual per diem or lodging costs up to 300 percent of the allowable per diem or lodging allowance for the locality; no separate advanced written approval is required.
	Approve requests, in writing, to domicile a government vehicle at an employee's residence in connection with official temporary duty travel.	X	*	*	This approval is not the same as the Home-to-Work approval for fieldwork activities under 41 CFR 102-5, which requires approval by the Secretary of the Interior.
	Approve Administrative leave.	X	*	*	Administrative leave under 5 U.S.C. 6329a and 5 C.F.R. Part 630, Subpart N, O, and P is discretionary and does not constitute an entitlement. Assigned officials may approve administrative leave under their line of authority on an ad hoc, event-specific, or otherwise time-limited basis. Consistent with regulatory intent, administrative leave is to be used sparingly and is generally limited to brief periods.
Agreements	Sign national level agreements to facilitate mutual assistance for wildland fire management activities such as prevention, training, preparedness, fuels management, suppression, and post-fire activities.	X			

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Agreements (continued)	Sign Statewide Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements	X	*		
	Sign local agreements tiered to a Statewide Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements.	X	*	*	
	Sign fire operating plans committing funds and/or resources in support of national, state and/or local level agreements for mutual assistance.	X	*	*	
	Sign interagency agreements for wildland fire management to include, but not limited to, agreements for: initial response, protection, offset, and dispatch or coordination centers.	X	X	X	Signature on an agreement should be at the level the agreement covers. For example, an agreement at the local level would be signed by the USWFS Unit FC.
	Sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) related to the wildland fire program.	X	X	*	
	Sign financial assistance agreements related to the wildland fire program.	X	X	*	
	Sign agreements and MOUs that are ONLY for aviation operations and aviation management.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign wildfire cost share agreements for multi-jurisdictional wildfires. ‡	X	*	*	
	Sign Tribal 638 agreements.	X[1]			1 - Only Self Determination Officers/Specialists (Awarding Officials for contracts and grants under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), P.L. 93-638). 638 agreements may vary and each agreement should be referenced for what authorities may be assigned to the Tribe and what is retained by the USWFS.
Aviation	Sign Single-Skid, Toe-In and Hover Exit/Entry Procedures (STEP) plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Aviation (continued)	Sign Letter of Authorization for Incidental Pilots supporting Interagency Fire.	X[1]			1 - Director and the Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Project Aviation Safety Plans (Crewed and Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS)).	X[1,2]	X[2]	*[2]	1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management 2 - Aviation programs not unified under the WFS will retain their current delegated authorities and approval levels.
	Sign Aviation Security Risk Assessments and Plans.	X[1,2]			1- Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management2 - Aviation programs not unified under the WFS will retain their current delegated authorities and approval levels.
	Sign Aviation Plans.	X[1,2]	*[2]	*[2]	Plans are approved by USWFS officials at the level of coverage or a higher level, e.g., a Geographic Area Plan will be approved by the GA FC/GA DFC or approved at the national level. 1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management 2 - Aviation programs not unified under the WFS will retain their current delegated authorities and approval levels.
	Approve Senior Executive Service (SES) official travel (non-mission) or carriage of non-federal personnel using government owned, leased, contracted or cooperator aircraft.	*[1]			1 - Director only
	Approve DOI employee official travel (non-mission) using government owned, leased, contracted or cooperator aircraft.	X	*		
	Approve the carriage of non-aircrew members on mission flights.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Approve exception to seat fare requirements.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Aviation (continued)	Sign Short-haul plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Rappel Plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Hoist Plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Aerial Capture, Eradication and Tagging of Animals (ACETA) Plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Cooperator Letters (Crewed and UAS).	X[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Approve Aviation Life Support Equipment Waiver.	X[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
Fuels and Post-Fire	Sign prescribed fire plans. ‡	X[1]	*[1]	*[1]	1 - Both the USWFS and Bureaus approve prescribed fire plans.
	Sign Ignition Authorization.	X	X	*	A National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualified burn boss will sign the Go/No-Go Checklist.
	Sign submitted post-fire plans from Bureaus that are utilizing USWFS funds.	X	X		
	Approve prescribed fire implementation on DOI lands, including contracted or non-fuels management prescribed fire projects, at National or Geographic Preparedness Level (PL) 4 or 5.	X	*[1]		1 - GA FC/GA DFC approves at National or Geographic PL 4 or 5.
Response and Suppression	Provide wildfire protection for all BIA, BLM, NPS and FWS lands.	X	X	X	
	Order suppression resources and expend funds for wildfire management. ‡	X[1]	X[1]	X[1]	1 - May only be reassigned to a qualified Incident Commander (IC) or to a fire operational duty officer (DO). If this authority is reassigned to an IC and a Leader's Intent is also being provided to that IC, the same USWFS Official will sign both documents. Note: Bureaus may also sign the Leader's Intent.

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Response and Suppression (continued)	Approve wildfire decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS). ‡	X[1]	*[1]	*[1]	1 - Both the USWFS and Bureaus approve wildfire decisions in WFDSS.
	Certify/Approve fire reports.	X	X	*	
	Make decisions as part of a Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group as they affect DOI lands to establish fire priorities, allocate and re-allocate fire suppression resources.	X[1]	X[2]	X[3]	1 - Member of National MAC Group 2 - Member of Geographic Area MAC Group 3 - Member of Local MAC Group
Training and Qualifications	Certify wildland fire Position Task Books (PTBs) of all DOI employees, including USWFS and Bureau personnel. Certify Incident Qualification Cards for all employees in the DOI, including the Bureaus and the USWFS, who have BOTH wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications. Certify all-hazard PTBs for USWFS employees.	X	*[1,2]	*[1,2]	1 - The GA FC/GA DFC will certify position task books and incident qualifications cards for Unit FCs. The Director/Deputy Director will certify position task books and incident qualifications cards for GA FC. 2 - Exceptions: The GA FC/GA DFC will certify position task books of all DOI employees, including USWFS and Bureau employees, within the GA for wildland fire area command positions and complex command & general staff positions.
	‡ - Due to the unique responsibilities required by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended 43 U.S. C. 1620(e) (ANCSA), the Alaska GA FC/GA DFC may exercise this authority, in coordination with Native Corporations, for wildfires and prescribed fires that involve lands that require protection under ANCSA.				

USWFS Transition Guidance

The following transition guidance is from Policy Memorandum 2026-002, *Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Roles and Responsibilities During Transition*. Below is the concise overview; comprehensive direction can be found in the Policy Library on the USWFS SharePoint site.

The following Transition Guidance specifies current roles and responsibilities related to fire planning and decision-making activities across all U.S. Wildland Fire Service ("USWFS") programs and personnel. It also contains clarifying references to the roles and responsibilities that remain with the Department's land management and other bureaus.

Secretary's Order No. 3448, Establishment of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, unified the Department's disparate wildland fire programs into USWFS and delegated to the Director, USWFS, "all authority necessary…to fulfill the Department's wildland fire mission." It also recognized that "there will be a transition period in which there may be overlapping authorities and responsibilities with respect to wildland fire management," and that "during such period, the Department shall diligently operationalize the unified USWFS, while simultaneously ensuring that there is no negative impact on its missions due to the creation of USWFS."

Priority

Nothing in the Transition Guidance shall be interpreted or utilized in a way that disrupts or impedes the prompt and efficient accomplishment of the USWFS wildland fire mission. Nor shall it be used to detract from efficient and effective coordination between the USWFS and the Department's land management bureaus.

Dissemination and Implementation

The Transition Guidance is hereby in effect and shall be promptly disseminated through leadership channels across all levels of the USWFS. USWFS personnel shall ensure familiarity and compliance with the Transition Guidance, including promptly seeking any necessary clarification with respect to its application to their official duties. The Transition Guidance will be implemented consistently with the General Operating Principles set forth therein.

Coordination

The Transition Guidance is intended to aid the USWFS and the bureaus/offices during the transition period by clarifying the responsibilities and duties of each unit of the Department, with respect to all aspects of wildland fire. It should not serve to replace timely coordination among and between employees of the USWFS or any office/bureau in order to ensure the successful execution of the Department's mission during fire season or any other fire emergencies.

Foundational Policy and Authorities

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Review And Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2001) and *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (2009)	DOI provides this Transition Guidance to ensure clarity in authority and responsibility for Bureaus and the USWFS and for how both the USWFS and Bureaus can comply with Federal Fire Policy while further analysis of program and updates to policy and Department Manuals (DMs) is completed. The USWFS will work in close coordination with Bureaus on policy updates as necessary.	Bureaus will need to amend Bureau policies related to wildland fire management based on the new role the USWFS has in the DOI. Bureaus will coordinate with USWFS on policy updates to ensure alignment across the Department.
Statutory Authority – Authorities given to Bureaus and not just the Secretary of Interior, including Bureau's organic acts.	All authorities necessary were delegated to the Director of the USWFS under SO 3448 in January 2026.	

Administrative

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Procurement – Agency Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC)/System Administrator	USWFS employees will continue to use their legacy bureau charge cards until change procedures are determined and enacted.	Bureaus will continue to serve as the A/OPC and will manage and process all charge cards for their legacy bureau wildland fire employees until charge card procedures are determined and enacted.
Records	All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.	All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. Bureau employees should follow already established Bureau record procedures for wildfire incident records until such time as new departmental direction for wildfire records is provided.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests	USWFS FOIA requests will flow through the Office of the Secretary's FOIA program. The USWFS will have the responsibility to respond to FOIA requests they receive with records from the USWFS.	Each Bureau will have the responsibility to respond to FOIA requests they receive with records from the Bureau. Bureaus may need to coordinate with the USWFS for these requests.
Administratively Determined (AD) Hiring	The USWFS will hire ADs for wildland fire and all-hazard needs.	Bureaus will only hire ADs for all-hazard needs.

Agreements

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements Signature Authority	The USWFS will assume wildfire protection responsibility and suppression reimbursement responsibilities on behalf of the Bureaus for any agreements related to wildfire, and agreements will be reviewed within a year of the date of this Guidance and updated as needed. The USWFS will be the signatory to new agreements.	Bureaus will no longer sign these agreements, agreement extensions or agreement modifications.
Local Agreements tiered to a Statewide Master Agreement Signature Authority (e.g., local operating plans and mutual aid agreements)	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of the Bureaus for any local agreements related to wildland fire. The USWFS will be the signatory to new/revised agreements, as the USWFS will be signatory of Statewide Masters.	Bureaus will no longer sign local agreements related to wildland fire.
Initial Response / Offset / Protection / Interagency Agreements for Wildland Fire Activities	The USWFS will assume responsibility for meeting the terms of these agreements and will continue operating with these agreements. Over the next year, the USWFS will evaluate each agreement to determine if it is still needed. The USWFS has authority to revise and enter into new agreements, including with NGO, state, local or federal entities (e.g., USDA-FS). The USWFS will be the signatory to any updates, revision or new offset/protection agreements if the agreement is funded by the USWFS.	Bureaus will no longer enter into agreements for initial response or off-set protection. Bureaus may enter into new agreements for implementation of post-fire activities when leading post-fire implementation. This will be closely coordinated with the USWFS.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Wildland Fire Program Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)	USWFS will assume responsibility of meeting the terms of these MOUs, potentially excluding some MOUs for post-fire implementation activities. The USWFS will continue operating with these agreements. The USWFS will review fire-related MOUs signed by Bureaus to determine if they are still needed and if so, will identify the appropriate USWFS official with authority to sign each MOU. The USWFS will be the signatory to any new wildland fire program MOUs, potentially excluding some MOUs for implementation of post-fire activities.	Bureaus will no longer enter into MOUs for the wildland fire program, excluding MOUs for implementation of post-fire activities.
Wildfire Land Use Agreements	The USWFS will work with DOI acquisitions for land use agreements for wildfire support.	Bureaus will no longer enter into land use agreements for wildfire support.
Wildfire Cost Share Agreements	The USWFS will review and sign wildfire cost share agreements since they are utilizing suppression funding.	Bureaus will no longer be signatories to wildfire cost share agreements.
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Specific Agreements	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of the Bureaus for meeting the terms of wildland fire management agreements between the BOR and the Bureaus, including protection agreements. The USWFS will continue operating with these agreements. The USWFS and BOR will evaluate these agreements over the next year.	Bureaus will no longer enter into wildland fire management agreements with the BOR.
Tribal 638 Agreements	The USWFS has authority to enter into Tribal 638 agreements, but BIA will continue to maintain these agreements until a later point in the transition.	The BIA will continue to maintain these agreements until the USWFS has the capacity through Self Determination Officers once they are in the USWFS.
Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) Interagency Agreements	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for agreements related to coordination center staffing, supervision, supplies or funding. Agreements should be reviewed within a year of the date of this Guidance and updated as needed. The USWFS will sign new agreements.	Bureaus will no longer be signatories to GACC Interagency Agreements.
Service First Authority (16 USC 8544)	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for agreements under the Service First Authority related to wildland fire. The USWFS will review existing agreements within a year of the date of this Guidance and update as needed. The USWFS may enter into new Service First Agreements for the wildland fire program.	Bureaus may continue to enter into Service First Agreements for non-wildland fire program areas.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Sikes Act Agreements	The USWFS may enter into Sikes Act agreements for the wildland fire program.	Bureaus may continue to enter into Sikes Act Agreements for non-wildland fire program areas.
Financial Assistance Agreements Related to Wildland Fire	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for Financial Assistance Agreements funded by wildland fire. The USWFS will review existing agreements within a year of the date of this Guidance and update as needed. The USWFS will sign new Assistance Agreement when USWFS funding is used for the agreement.	Bureaus may enter into Financial Assistance Agreements using wildland fire program funding after documented coordination with the USWFS.

Aviation

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Aviation Management Plans	The USWFS will continue aviation operations following approved Bureau aviation management plans for all DOI Bureaus conducting aviation operations.	Bureau aviation management plans will remain valid and will be followed until a USWFS aviation management plan can be developed and approved, and direction is given to transition to it.
End-product Contract Work	The USWFS will use current Bureau processes to review end-product contracts until transition to the USWFS is complete. Oversight extends to aviation contracts executed under BIA and tribally operated program funded through PL 93-638.	Bureaus may still conduct end-product contract work that may result in aviation utilization without giving federal entities operation control. Bureaus will coordinate end-product contract work using current processes and points of contact, to include unit, state/region, national aviation personnel as per Bureau and DOI policy.
Law Enforcement Aviation Support	The USWFS will use current Bureau processes for law enforcement aviation support until transition to the USWFS is complete.	Bureau law enforcement will continue following current process and Bureau points of contact for aviation support.
Aviation Reviews	The USWFS will conduct scheduled aviation reviews in 2026, including BIA, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and tribally operated programs under PL 93-638 and Self-Governance compacts, excluding the BLM.	Bureaus and tribally operated programs will participate in scheduled aviation reviews during 2026.
Aviation Fleet (crewed and uncrewed) Management	The USWFS will continue to provide governance, fleeting pilot standards, and manage fleet accounts for all DOI aviation assets, including both crewed and uncrewed aircraft.	Bureaus will ensure aviation personnel adhere to department standards. For aircraft purchases, bureaus will provide sufficient funding and request all aviation fleet purchases through USWFS.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Approval of Senior Executive Service (SES) Travel (Non-Mission) or Carriage of Non-Federal Personnel Using Government Owned, Leased, Contracted, or Cooperator Aircraft	The USWFS will continue coordinating with the Solicitor's Office for approval of SES or non-federal travel requests.	Bureaus will request SES or non-federal travel using government owned, leased, contracted or cooperator aircraft through USWFS Aviation.

Dispatch

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Third-Tier Dispatch Center with DOI Wildland Fire Responsibility	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for any third-tier dispatch center agreements. The USWFS will be the primary DOI representative for Dispatch Center Board of Directors for all center operations to include funding, supervision, and assignment of responsibilities.	Bureaus will ensure non-wildland fire dispatch center programs are represented on the Dispatch Center Board of Directors and will provide applicable funding contributions.

Fuels and Post-Fire

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Fuels Risk Mapping	The USWFS will provide a risk map and recommend priority treatment areas to reduce wildfire risk to aid Bureaus in selecting treatment locations.	Bureaus will engage the expertise of the USWFS fuels specialists and utilize the USWFS risk map to aid in selection of treatment locations.
Fuels Project Development	The USWFS will work closely with bureau staff (BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS and BOR) to develop fuels projects including serving on ID teams.	Bureaus will lead the development of fuels projects on DOI lands. Bureaus will be ultimately responsible for project development.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance	The USWFS may fund NEPA work by resource specialist or Interdisciplinary (ID) Team time for fuels work. Funding would be transferred to cover the approved cost entered into the project in Interior Fuels and Post-Fire Reporting System (IFPRS). USWFS personnel may serve as NEPA ID team members on project teams.	Bureau authorized officers will retain authority to sign decisions supported by NEPA analysis (e.g., Finding of No Significant Impact, Decision Record, and Record of Decision). Bureaus will lead environmental compliance including NEPA analysis requirements, consultation and meeting National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requirements, such as Section 106.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
NEPA Analysis and Decisions Based on the Analysis When a Project is Not on Federal Lands and Either USWFS Funds are Expended on the Project or the USWFS is Responsible for Project Completion (See NEPA and Environmental Compliance topic for when Bureau lands are involved)	The USWFS may conduct environmental analysis following the NEPA requirements when either USWFS funding is spent on non-federal lands for a fuels project or the USWFS is responsible for project completion on non-federal lands. The USWFS may sign decisions supported by these analyses. For example, in AK, when a project is planned on Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) as amended (43 U.S.C 1620) Corporation lands and USWFS funds would be used to accomplish the project, the USWFS would conduct the analysis and sign the decision.	Bureaus will continue to be able to conduct environmental analysis following NEPA requirements and sign decisions based on the analysis, when Bureau funding is spent on non-federal lands.
Fuels Program of Work (POW) Development and Approval	The USWFS will lead the POW development process and will prioritize fuels projects when USWFS funds are utilized. Funding will be allocated by priorities and not by a pre-determined split. The USWFS will negotiate fuels target funded by USWFS with Bureaus. The USWFS will be accountable for fuels action targets that USWFS implements on Bureau lands with USWFS funding.	When USWFS funds are utilized for project implementation, Bureaus will submit projects to the USWFS through an annual POW planning process for funding allocation. Bureaus will fold into a single POW and projects will be prioritized from this single POW for funding. Bureaus will negotiate with the USWFS for fuels target funded by the USWFS.
Fuels Project Implementation	The USWFS will implement fuels projects, working closely with Bureau personnel to ensure meeting intended objectives and avoiding unintended outcomes.	Bureaus will work closely with USWFS personnel during implementation. Bureaus will close lands or roads for day-of work implementation.
Prescribed Fire Implementation Signatures	The USWFS will complete technical reviews of all prescribed fires plans. Both the USWFS and Bureau will sign Prescribed Fire Plans. The USWFS will sign the Ignition Authorization for all prescribed fires. An NWCG qualified burn boss will sign the Go/No-Go Checklist.	Both the USWFS and Bureau will sign Prescribed Fire Plans. Bureaus will no longer sign the Ignition Authorization for prescribed fire. An NWCG qualified burn boss will sign the Go/No-Go Checklist.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Prescribed Fire Implementation without Hazardous Fuels Management Objectives	The USWFS has oversight responsibility for any prescribed fire activity on Bureau lands. The USWFS may implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects for Bureaus. If the USWFS is not available to implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects, the USWFS will still approve prescribed fire implementation by non-USWFS personnel such as qualified Bureau personnel (e.g., Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 (RXB2)) and contractors.	Bureaus may request USWFS implementation assistance to implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects. Bureaus must provide funding for the USWFS to implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects.
Post-Fire Plan and Project Development, Approval and Implementation	The USWFS will maintain the national post-fire roster and organize support as requested. The USWFS will review, prioritize and nationally approve submitted post-fire plans from Bureaus that are utilizing USWFS funds. The USWFS will allocate funds for approved work. The USWFS will support implementation work as needed, requested and available.	Bureaus will submit post-fire plans and recommended projects. Most plans will be developed locally. Plans may include labor funding for project leads or implementation positions that are housed in either Bureaus or the USWFS. Bureaus will approve plans before submitting to USWFS. Bureaus will implement USWFS nationally approved post-fire work, funded by USWFS.
Prescribed Fire at Preparedness Levels 4 or 5	The USWFS will approve prescribed fire implementation on DOI lands, including contracted or non-fuels management prescribed fire projects, at National or Geographic Preparedness Level 4 or 5.	Bureaus will no longer approve prescribed fire implementation on DOI lands at national or geographic Preparedness Levels 4 or 5.
Reporting and Monitoring	The USWFS will complete all fuels accomplishment reporting in IFPRS. The USWFS will be responsible to complete fuels project monitoring requirements. These requirements may be completed directly by USWFS or by funding the Bureau to complete them on the USWFS's behalf. The USWFS will complete Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM) after an interaction between a wildfire and a fuels treatment.	Bureaus will complete all post-fire monitoring and reporting, including IFPRS data entry. Bureaus may complete fuels monitoring on behalf of USWFS. Bureaus will complete additional ecological monitoring as desired.

Preparedness and Planning

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Land/Resource Management Plans (L/RMP)	The USWFS will work closely with Bureaus on L/RMP revisions and amendments to ensure inclusion of wildland fire goals, objectives, and actions. The USWFS will ensure there is DOI policy that all DOI L/RMPs that include burnable acres must have a wildland fire management section.	Bureaus will coordinate with USWFS specialists on LRMP revisions and amendments to ensure inclusion of wildland fire goals, objectives, and actions. Bureaus will maintain L/RMP signature authority.
Wildland Fire Management Plans (FMPs)	The USWFS will coordinate and work closely with the Bureaus on FMP development and maintenance during this transition.	Bureaus will continue with their current process of review, revision, updating and signature of FMPs during this transition. Bureaus will work with the USWFS to coordinate and align FMPs with LRMP during FMP development and maintenance.
Spatial Fire Planning Service Data	The USWFS will update the spatial fire planning service data related to L/RMP and FMP direction.	Bureaus will provide L/RMP spatial and supporting data to the USWFS.
Wildland Fire Preparedness Planning Documents for DOI managed lands	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for any preparedness planning documents signed by the Bureaus. The USWFS will be responsible for reviewing, updating, and approving preparedness planning documents such as: Fire Danger documentation, Preparedness Level Plans, Step-Up/Staffing Plans, Initial Response Plans, Pocket Cards/Seasonal Trend Analysis, Fire Prevention Plan and Mobilization Guides. In this transition period, current standards and formats should continue to be used until new direction is provided.	Bureaus will no longer be responsible for preparedness plans, except for Restriction Plans. Bureaus will continue to have responsibility for Restriction Plans that provide guidelines for when fire prevention orders or emergency area closures due to high fire hazard could be issued.
National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Membership	The USWFS represents DOI on the NWCG Executive Board and on subordinate committees. The USWFS ensures proper NWCG committee representation.	Bureaus will no longer have members on the NWCG Executive Board. Bureaus could provide members for subordinate committees.
NWCG Unit Identifiers (IDs)	Until new NWCG Unit IDs are established for the USWFS and direction is given on when and how to utilize new Unit IDs, personnel, assets, and protecting units will remain associated with their previous Bureau Unit IDs.	Until new NWCG Unit IDs are established for the USWFS and direction is given on when and how to utilize new Unit IDs, NWCG Unit IDs assigned to Bureaus will continue to be used as they were used prior to USWFS unification for personnel, assets, and protecting units.
Coordinating Group Membership	The USWFS will represent DOI on coordinating groups including geographic area coordinating groups and local boards or coordinating groups.	Bureaus will no longer have members on geographic area or local coordinating groups.

Response and Suppression

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Wildfire Suppression on Bureau lands	The USWFS has wildfire protection responsibility for all BIA, BLM, NPS, and FWS lands.	
Alaska Fire Service (AFS)	USWFS will assume DOI responsibilities for providing wildland fire response services and other fire management response activities previously covered by the AFS, including on lands that require protection under the ANCSA, as amended (43 U.S.C 1620). 620 DM 5 will be updated to reflect this. Fire management activities may include items such as but not limited to: signing delegations to incident commanders, approving wildfire decisions, signing wildfire cost share agreement, certifying fire reports, and managing trespass cases. When ANCSA corporation lands are involved, these activities will be in coordination with Native corporations.	The BLM will no longer be responsible to maintain and operate a DOI wildland fire suppression organization in Alaska. Additionally, the BLM is no longer responsible to provide fire response on DOI administered lands in Alaska or on lands that require protection under ANCSA.
Agency Administrators/Bureau Representatives	The USWFS will be the Agency Administrator, making the decisions for wildland fire activities and operations on both wildfires and prescribed fires. This table includes authorities that will be exercised by the USWFS on wildfires and prescribed fires. The USWFS will work closely with Bureau Representatives. The Agency Administrator role is different than an individual having the Agency Administrator (AADM) qualification. See "Agency Administrator (AADM) Qualification" topic under the Training and Qualifications category of the table.	Bureaus will serve as the Bureau Representatives on land and resource management issues for both wildfires and prescribed fires, and will document land and resource management decisions by co-approving wildfire decisions, Prescribed Fire Plans or other documents as noted in the table. This table includes some authority changes for Bureaus. Bureaus will work closely with the USWFS Agency Administrator.
Ordering Suppression Resources	The USWFS will order, brief, and deploy suppression resources.	Bureaus will work closely with the USWFS and coordinate ordering of resource advisor positions for wildfires involving Bureau lands.
Ordering an Incident Management Team (IMT)	The USWFS will order IMTs for wildfires. The reasons for ordering an IMT (e.g., resource and political concerns) will be in the decision documented in WFDSS which is developed and approved by both the USWFS and Bureaus. The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly in-brief IMTs.	The reasons for ordering an IMT (e.g., resource and political concerns) will be in the decision documented in WFDSS, which is developed and approved by both the USWFS and Bureaus. The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly in-brief IMTs.
Resource Advisors	The USWFS will order resource advisors for wildfires as needed or requested by Bureaus and Tribes.	Resource advisors on wildfires will work for Bureaus.
Sign Delegation of Authority to an Incident Commander (IC)	The USWFS will sign the delegation of authority for all wildfires involving Bureau lands to an IC for all complexities.	Bureaus will no longer sign the delegation of authority to an IC.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Sign Leader's Intent to ICs	The USWFS, Bureaus, and Tribes (where applicable) will provide input and sign the Leader's Intent to the IC.	The USWFS, Bureaus, and Tribes (where applicable) will provide input and sign the Leader's Intent to the IC. Input from Bureaus could include items such as but not limited to: responsibility to coordinate with Resource Advisors; expectations for working with resource specialists and permittees to provide access to the fire area to check on livestock; the process to follow to obtain Bureau approval if wildfire/emergency exceptions to prohibition of certain uses in Section 4(c) of The Wilderness Act is needed for fire operations; and the process to follow to request Bureaus issue emergency area closures due to high hazard.
Wildfire Decision Approvals	Both the USWFS and Bureaus will approve wildfire decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).	Both the USWFS and Bureaus will approve wildfire decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).
Cost Threshold Notification of Combined Federal Expenditures for an Incident	The USWFS will not be required to make cost threshold notifications.	Bureaus will no longer be required to make cost threshold notifications within their Bureaus.
Smoke Management	The USWFS will be responsible for monitoring and tracking the impacts from wildland fire smoke. The USWFS will order Air Resource Advisors as determined necessary for wildfires and prescribed fires.	Bureaus will coordinate with the USWFS on community or air quality concerns.
Suppression Repair	The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly be responsible for suppression repair plan development and approval. The USWFS will approve funding suppression repair actions.	The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly be responsible for suppression repair plan development and approval.
Fire Reports	The USWFS will certify fire reports and will provide final certified reports to the appropriate Bureau(s).	Bureaus will no longer certify fire reports.
Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group Membership	The USWFS will represent DOI on National MAC, Geographic Area MAC Groups, and local MAC groups.	Bureaus will no longer have members on MAC groups.
Fire Prevention Orders (i.e., Fire Restrictions)	The USWFS will coordinate with Bureaus and Tribes to provide situational awareness or technical information related to fire prevention orders.	Bureaus will continue to issue fire prevention orders for their lands in close coordination with USWFS and interagency partners.
Emergency Area Closures During High Hazard for Safety	The USWFS will coordinate with Bureaus and Tribes to provide situational awareness or technical information related to emergency area closures.	Bureaus will continue to issue area closures for their lands during high fire hazard in close coordination with USWFS and interagency partners.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Wildfire Trespass	USWFS employees that are qualified as Wildland Fire Investigators (INVFs) will provide investigation services to the Bureaus. The USWFS will manage current wildfire trespass cases in coordination with Bureaus for cost recovery and records requirements.	Bureau employees, including law enforcement, that are qualified as INVFs will continue to provide investigation services to the Bureaus. Bureau authorized officers will determine liability for wildfire trespass with solicitor concurrence. Recovered trespass funds will be deposited into Bureau accounts. If allowable per authority and settlement language, suppression and post-fire recovery costs will be transferred to the USWFS.

Safety

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Operational Medical Support Program (OMSP)	The USWFS will provide oversight and direction for the OMSP within the USWFS.	Bureaus will no longer provide oversight and direction for the OMSP program.
Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO)	The USWFS Director has delegated authority from the DOI DASHO to conduct wildland fire accident investigations.	Bureaus will no longer have authority to conduct wildland fire accident investigations.
Accident Investigations/Reviews	The USWFS will be the deciding official regarding what type of accident investigation is to be used for wildland fire accidents occurring on DOI lands or involving any DOI employee(s) assigned to a wildland fire incident, regardless of land ownership.	Bureaus will continue to be responsible for non-wildland fire accidents occurring on DOI lands or involving DOI employees not assigned to wildland fire incidents.
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Serious Incident or Fatality (SIOF) Plan	The USWFS will follow its own support processes and SIOF plans. The USWFS will work closely with Bureaus on safety-related plans and processes, providing assistance and support during incidents or accidents.	Bureaus will remain responsible for safety-related plans and processes for Bureau resource staff.
Fire Reviews	The USWFS will follow fire reviews requirements outlined in Chapter 18 of the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).	Bureaus will no longer be responsible for fire reviews, although Bureau personnel may be requested to participate during the review process.
Line of Duty Death – Death Gratuity	The USWFS will have the authority to approve payment of up to $10,000 as a death gratuity to the personal representative of a USWFS employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after August 2, 1990. (Public Law 104-208 Section 651).	Bureaus will continue to have the authority to approve payment of up to $10,000 to the personal representative of a Bureau employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after August 2, 1990.

Training and Qualifications

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) Management	The USWFS will manage IQCS for USWFS responders or Tribes (under a DOI 638 and or Cooperative Agreement). The USWFS will manage IQCS Bureau responders with both wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications.	Bureaus will manage IQCS for individuals in their Bureau with only all-hazard qualifications.
Certify Incident Qualifications	The USWFS will complete agency certification for wildland fire position task books (PTB) of both USWFS and Bureau personnel. The USWFS will certify incident qualification cards for individuals in the Bureaus and the USWFS that have BOTH wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications. The USWFS will certify all-hazard PTBs for USWFS employees.	Bureaus will no longer complete agency certification on wildland fire PTBs. Bureaus will certify Incident Qualification Cards for Bureau employees with ONLY all-hazard qualifications. Bureaus will certify all-hazard PTBs for Bureau employees.
Agency Administrator (AADM) Qualification	USWFS personnel will not need the AADM qualification, defined in the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement (2026)*, to exercise wildland fire authorities as understanding wildland fire is inherent in their position.	Bureaus will no longer require the AADM qualification. The USWFS will work with the Bureaus to provide wildland fire training as requested to support filling the Bureau Representative role on wildland fire.
Wildland Fire Medical Evaluations and Work Capacity Testing	The USWFS will serve as the point of contact for both USWFS, Tribal (under a DOI 638 agreement), and Bureau personnel for medical evaluations and work capacity testing.	Bureaus will coordinate with the USWFS to schedule medical evaluations and work capacity testing.
Wildland Fire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Wildland Fire Training Costs	The USWFS may provide PPE for Bureau employees who obtain wildland fire qualifications and participate in response efforts. The USWFS may also provide funding to cover wildland fire training and associated travel costs.	Bureaus may request the USWFS to provide PPE and funding for wildland fire training and associated travel. Additionally, Bureaus may purchase PPE and fund training from Bureau allocations.
Wildland Fire Training Nominations and Delivery	The USWFS will plan and coordinate all wildland fire training for USWFS, Tribal (under a DOI 638 agreement) and Bureau personnel.	Bureaus will submit nominations for personnel desiring to attend wildland fire training. Bureaus may coordinate and deliver wildland fire training (e.g., RT-130, S-112) with USWFS approval, based on need and course delivery requirements.
WFDSS Training	The USWFS will design, schedule and deliver Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) training for all users.	Bureaus will nominate personnel and attend WFDSS training as needed.

USWFS Duty Officer Fire Situation Dashboard

The USWFS Duty Officer Fire Situation Dashboard supports USWFS duty officers (DO) at the unit, zone, geographic, and national level in maintaining awareness and assisting in upward reporting of wildland fire activities on or near DOI lands. The application delivers real-time fire situation information on current wildland fire incidents within and near USWFS units, providing a consistent, national picture. When a fire is reported to a CAD, information will be available to all levels of USWFS within a few minutes, including automatic notifications to

designated personnel. This reduces the reporting necessary when a USWFS unit has a fire. DOs will still need to provide contextual information as well appropriate notifications of evacuations, closures, accidents, and/or injuries.

Operational Duty Officers

Headquarters

The USWFS headquarters office will maintain a National Operational Duty Officer (DO) whose primary role is to share accurate and timely information on wildland and prescribed fire incidents on or impacting DOI lands or personnel with key staff and executives. The DO can be reached at 208-387-5876.

Geographic Area

Each geographic area (GA) will maintain a GA-level operational DO whose primary role is to provide oversight to wildland fire operational activities through intelligence gathering and coordinating needs within the GA and with adjacent GAs.

Unit

Unit fire chiefs are responsible for ensuring DO coverage. DO responsibilities may be performed by any individual with a signed reassignment of authority from the unit fire chief.

The DO may be in a location remote from the unit provided they are familiar with local incident response procedures, agreements, and resources for that unit.

Unit DOs will not fill any Incident Command System (ICS) functions connected to an active incident while serving as DO. If the assigned DO must accept an assignment, a coordinated transition of DO duties will occur prior to mobilization or assignment.

Further direction for duty officer roles and responsibilities will be outline in the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) Duty Officer Standard Operating Procedures.

Fire Program Reviews

The *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (January 2001) states that, "*Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight*." The Chief accomplishes this in part through the fire program review process, which includes various components of a fire program (e.g., preparedness, fuels, fire planning). Fire program reviews assess fire programs for compliance with established fire policies and procedures as outlined in the current *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and other pertinent policy documents. Reviews identify organizational, operational, procedural, personnel, or equipment deficiencies, and recommend specific corrective actions.

Review Schedules

For 2026, USWFS units are required to conduct a local level review using the following updated checklists. Once completed, checklists will be routed to the respective geographic area fire chief.

- Unit Fire Chief
- Vehicles

As required by BIA Policy Memorandum, dated June 17, 2022, annual Tribal wildland fire management program readiness reviews are required for Tribal programs operating wildland fire preparedness and suppression, and aviation programs on behalf of the BIA. Tribal readiness reviews will be conducted in accordance with applicable regulations based on their current PL 93-638 agreements and Self-Governance compacts with the BIA.

Interagency hotshot crews will complete the *Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations*, appendix B and C. Appendix C will be signed by the unit fire chief on the "IHC Agency Administrator" line and the geographic area fire chief on the "Other" line. Once completed they will be routed to the Assistant Director Fire Operations through the geographic area fire chief.

For 2026, USWFS (legacy BIA) and Tribal IHC's will continue to follow the 2025 BIA IHC Program Requirements memorandum guidance.

Wildland fire modules will complete the Wildland Fire Module Annual Mobilization Preparedness/Proficiency Checklist as outlined in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Module Operations*, PMS 430. The annual checklist will be signed by the unit fire chief on the "Reviewing Official" line and the geographic area fire chief below that. Once completed, route the checklist to the Assistant Director Fire Operations through the geographic area fire chief.

Additional program elements, although not required, are highly encouraged to be "spot-checked" to ensure alignment with historic best practices, applicable interagency standards, and all currently issued USWFS guidance and policies.

Agreements with Cooperators

Cooperator Agreements

The USWFS should have a cooperative fire response agreement with any local fire department (i.e., rural, volunteer, and city) and Rangeland Fire Protection Association (RFPA) that responds to wildfire incidents on lands under USWFS protection. These cooperative fire response agreements can be established directly with individual USWFS units or administered through a statewide cooperative agreement where USWFS is a party. When entering into cooperative fire response agreements, the USWFS will ensure the following minimum required elements are included in the agreement.

- Local fire department/RFPA personnel responding to incidents on DOI lands must:
  - Be 18 years of age or older
  - Have and use the required personal protective equipment (PPE) found in chapter 7; and
  - *Local fire department requirement:* Have a basic level of wildland fire training. The NWCG course S-190 and S-130 are recommended, both courses can be modified to fit local needs; or
  - *RFPA requirement:* Have a basic level of wildland fire training, identified as the NWCG course S-190 and S-130, which can be modified to fit local needs. I-100 is not required, but ICS must be thoroughly covered within the applicable sections of S-190 and S-130.
- Preidentified incident communication protocols (e.g., frequencies plans, points of contact, and interoperable radio hardware) will be established and followed.
- ICS will be used to manage all incidents.

Fire Management Position Titles and Fire Department Cooperator Equivalencies

USWFS units that choose to use fire department cooperator nomenclature will utilize the following USWFS position title equivalency standard.

Wildland Fire Management Position Title	Fire Department Cooperator Equivalency
Director/Chief	Chief
Deputy Director Fire Operations or Assistant Director Fire Operations	Deputy Chief
Geographic Area Fire Chief	Assistant Chief
Unit Fire Chief	Division Chief
Fire operations specialist, fuels specialist, assistant center manager, prevention/education specialist	Battalion Chief
Prevention technician, prevention/education specialist	Prevention Officer
Hotshot superintendent, helicopter manager	Superintendent
Engine captain, hotshot foreman, assistant helicopter manager, fuels module leader	Captain
Assistant engine captain	Engineer
Communications technician	Comm.
Mechanic	Repair

Safety and Occupational Health Program

Safety and Occupational Health Program responsibilities are interwoven throughout all program areas, including fire management. Safety of employees lies within every level of the organization and program implementation can have a direct impact on firefighting personnel. To ensure that program requirements are met to support the fire and aviation management program, the following table shall be utilized.

Safety and Health Responsibilities

PERFORMANCE REQUIRED	Health and Safety Program Manager	Safety and Wellness Program Manager	Unit Fire Chief	Employee
1. An annual unit safety plan is developed, approved, and signed.	X	X	X	
2. Individuals have been designated as the safety officer.	X	X	X	
3. Employer provides a workplace free from recognized hazards causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm.	X	X	X	
4. A safety committee or group, which includes fire representation, is organized to monitor safety and health concerns and activities.	X	X	X	
5. Written safety and health programs required by OSHA are in place and being implemented to include fire personnel.	X	X	X	
6. Employees are provided with mandatory safety and health training,	X	X	X	X
7. Fire safety, reporting, and notification programs (e.g., SAFENET, SAFECOM, 6 Minutes for Safety, Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center, safety alerts) are known and being utilized.	X	X	X	X
8. Safety publications are available and utilized by all fire employees (e.g., *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, PMS 461.	X	X	X	X
9. Ensure work capacity test (WCT) is implemented according to the *NWCG Work Capacity Test Administrator's Guide*, PMS 307.		X	X	
10. Safety data sheets (SDS) are present, accessible, and available for all hazardous materials used and stored in the work area and transported.	X	X	X	X
11. Procedures are in place to purchase nonstandard equipment as identified in the risk assessment process and to ensure compliance with consensus standards (e.g., American National Standards Institute [ANSI], National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH]).	X	X	X	X
12. Personal protective equipment is supplied, is serviceable, and being utilized.	X	X	X	X
13. Monitors and inspects operations and work sites for unsafe acts and conditions and promptly takes appropriate preventative and corrective measures.	X	X	X	X
14. Procedures are in place for anonymous reporting of unsafe and unhealthful working conditions.	X	X	X	X
15. Injury data is monitored and reviewed to determine trends affecting the health and welfare of employees.	X	X	X	
16. Ensure facility and work area inspections are conducted to ensure requirements are met (*29 CFR 1960* and *485 DM, chapter 5* requirements).	X	X	X	X

PERFORMANCE REQUIRED	Health and Safety Program Manager	Safety and Wellness Program Manager	Unit Fire Chief	Employee
17. Promptly report and investigate all job-related accidents/incidents/exposure that result in or have the potential to cause fatalities, injuries, illnesses, property, or environmental damage. All such reports are electronically submitted to the Safety Management Information System (SMIS).	X	X	X	X

Emergency Contact Information

All employees are required to review and update their emergency contact information annually, either in Employee Express or in hardcopy format. This information will only be used for emergency purposes and only by those authorized to contact the employee and/or their personal contact(s) and will be maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974. See chapter 18 for injury or accident notification (emergency notification) procedures.

Operational Medical Support

Operational Medical Support Program

The primary objective of the Operational Medical Support Program (OMSP) is to take care of employees while working in remote and potentially hazardous conditions where traditional emergency medical services (EMS) may be significantly delayed or unavailable. The *Operational Medical Support Program Manual* outlines the procedural framework and establishes national standards including provider training and certification standards, patient care protocols, and standardized equipment requirements. Additionally, the OMSP authorizes providers to administer medical support in accordance with the *Operational Medical Support EMR and EMT Protocols* at the level of their individual certification, while performing the duties of their position regardless of location. The National Program Manager and National Medical Director are located at NIFC.

Operational Medical Support Committee

The Operational Medical Support Committee (OMSC) consists of representatives from all geographic areas and programs and provides leadership and direction to the OMSP.

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)/ Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Provider Requirements and Qualifications

Providers must meet the following requirements to be authorized to practice under the OMSP.

- Be a USWFS employee.
- Hold a current incident qualification card.
- Maintain National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) certification at the EMR, EMT, AEMT, or paramedic level.
  - A State-issued license or certification is acceptable for first-time OMSP providers. These individuals must obtain an NREMT certification at their provider level within one year of their initial authorization date to maintain their OMSP Authorization to Practice.
- To initially gain and maintain authorization to practice, providers must complete medical director specified training and a hands-on proficiency evaluation every 13 months.

Employee Advocacy

Fire operations doctrine acknowledges the inherent danger of fire operations and the potential for serious injury or death to firefighters.

The USWFS will follow its own support processes and Serious Incident or Fatality (SIOF) Plan. The USWFS will work closely with Bureaus on safety-related plans and processes, providing assistance and support during incidents or accidents.

Line of Duty Death – Death Gratuity

The USWFS will have the authority to approve payment of up to $10,000 as a death gratuity to the personal representative of a USWFS employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after August 2, 1990. (Public Law 104-208 Section 651).

Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program

The Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program provides comprehensive support for federal and Tribal wildland firefighters across USDA and DOI. Its goal is to better understand and address the physical, mental, and occupational health challenges faced by firefighters. The program focuses on behavioral health, environmental and occupational hazards, and physical health and readiness, offering expanded services, prevention resources, and targeted training to strengthen resilience, reduce risks, and support overall wellbeing. See the Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program website for additional program information and resources.

U.S. Wildland Fire Service Honor Guard

Mission

The honor guard was established to appropriately pay tribute to and honor the memory of wildland firefighters who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty and to provide comfort and support to their families, friends, and colleagues. The honor guard may also represent the wildland fire community at events of national and geographic area significance.

Purpose and Role

- Deliver final honors for fallen firefighters with dignity, professionalism, and respect.
- Represent the wildland fire community and the U.S. Wildland Fire Service at memorials, dedications, and official functions.

Membership

- Members represent the U.S. Wildland Fire Service at the highest level and must have exceptional professionalism, integrity, and teamwork while maintaining core standards and readiness for immediate deployment and promote professionalism by adhering to the values of honor, duty, and integrity in their conduct both during official honor guard functions and while on duty within their home units.
- Members commit to a minimum of two years and may remain an honor guard member until they can no longer fulfill the commitment.
- Honor guard mobilization is generally emergent in nature and members must be continuously prepared to execute time-honored traditional standards at memorial services while integrating with interagency partners, family members, and cooperators.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program

CISM Program Purpose

The USWFS will follow its own support processes and Serious Incident or Fatality (SIOF) Plan. The USWFS will work closely with Bureaus on safety-related plans and processes, providing assistance and support during incidents or accidents.

The CISM program is intended primarily for personnel who work in the fire and aviation program and who have work-related needs arising from critical incidents, but it may assist other employees as needed and requested. Crisis intervention should be based on recognition of need, not strictly on the occurrence of an event.

Appropriate intervention depends on the nature, severity, and duration of the incident; the number, skills, and cohesiveness of those involved; and the severity of their physical and emotional symptoms.

CISM does not replace professional counseling or other available services, such as employee assistance programs (EAP) or health and wellbeing resources. Instead, it supports early intervention and facilitates connection with appropriate resources.

Standard of Care and Certification

The U.S. Wildland Fire Service is committed to crisis intervention practices that adhere to the standard of care established by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). These practices are intended to stabilize personnel following critical incidents and prevent further harm.

A licensed mental health professional (MHP) is required to assist Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) groups. Peer supporters are not trained or qualified to operate independently; doing so constitutes a violation of established boundaries of competence and compromises the integrity of the CISM program.

CISM Qualifications

All personnel participating in a CISM response shall be qualified as either a CISM Team Member (CISM) or a CISM Team Leader (CISL). Position qualifications are adopted from the Department of the Interior (DOI) Incident Positions Qualification Guide (IPQG) and the Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement.

Special consideration shall be given when recommending or approving CISM or CISL qualifications. A recommendation by the employee's unit fire chief or supervisor is required. Approval for CISM or CISL qualifications must be made by the designated National CISM Coordinator after reviewing the recommendation from the geographic area.

CISM Request Process

- *Fire-Related Requests*
  The U.S. Wildland Fire Service does not maintain standing CISM teams or an on-call rotation. An agency administrator or designee requests CISM through the GACC CISM Coordinator. If the GACC does not have a CISM Coordinator, the GACC will notify the National CISM Coordinator.

  CIPS groups are assembled at the time of request and are composed of members whose backgrounds and experience align with those involved in the incident (e.g., hand crews, helitack crews, veterans, dispatchers).

  All fire-related CISM requests must be submitted through the designated CISM request process. Requests are reviewed to ensure a coordinated response based on factors including severity, duration, timing, and number of personnel involved. A CIPS group is then assembled to respond appropriately.

- *Non-Fire-Related Requests*
  CISM is primarily designed for first responders and may not be the most appropriate resource for non-fire-related incidents. Non-fire-related requests must be reviewed and authorized by the designated agency program director or CISM Coordinator on a case-by-case basis and then shared with the U.S. Wildland Fire Service National CISM Coordinator. Requests should follow established procedures for authorization and coordination.

Firefighting Resources

Introduction

Firefighters operate within ICS, which is a component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Within ICS, firefighters are either assigned as single resource overhead (individuals assigned to specific supervisory or functional positions) or as members of an organized unit. The individuals within these units are trained to provide different levels and types of tactical, logistical, and managerial capability.

Firefighter Priority for Use

- Provide wildfire protection for all BIA, BLM, NPS, and FWS lands.
- Initial attack on lands for which the USWFS has suppression responsibility.
- Other fire suppression/management assignments on federally managed lands.
- Other fire suppression/management assignments on other agency lands.
- All-hazards (ESF #4).

Firefighter Mandatory Physical Fitness Standards/Physical Fitness and Conditioning

See the DOI Wildland Fire Medical Standards website for more information.

Employees serving in wildland fire positions that require a fitness rating of arduous as a condition of employment are required to perform physical fitness conditioning for one hour of duty time each workday while in pay status. Special exceptions such as being assigned to an incident, travel status, injuries, details, etc., may be granted. Employees funded by fire preparedness and/or fuels who do not require a fitness rating of arduous as a condition of employment but do maintain a fire qualification with an arduous rating may be authorized one hour of daily duty time for physical fitness conditioning. Participation will be negotiated with the employee's supervisor. Employees serving in positions that require a fitness rating of moderate or light may be authorized up to three hours per week.

Information on the work capacity test (WCT) and DOI Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards is located in chapter 13.

Firefighting Units

- **Hand Crew –** Vehicle-mobile firefighters that specialize in the use of hand tools, chainsaws, portable pumps, and ignition devices for tactical operations. Hand crew types include interagency hotshot crews (IHCs), type 2 initial attack crews, type 2 crews, and fire suppression modules.
- **Engine Crew –** Engine-mobile firefighters that specialize in the use of engines for tactical operations.
- **Helitack –** Helicopter mobile firefighters that specialize in the use of helicopters for tactical and logistical operations.
- **Smokejumpers –** Fixed-wing-aircraft-and-parachute-mobile firefighters that specialize in the use hand tools, chainsaws, and ignition devices for tactical operations.
- **Firefighting Engine and Water Tender**

- **Firefighting Dozer and Dozer Module**
- **Wildland Fire Modules**

Modifications to Number or Type of Planned Resources
USWFS geographic area (GA) fire chiefs must request approval from the Deputy Director, USWFS Fire Operations, prior to establishing any new firefighting resources (planned resources) within their respective GA or converting a current firefighting resource, as described above, into a different resource type. Approved firefighting resource types must be funded through current GA wildland fire allocations. Upon approval from the Deputy Director, new or converted firefighting resources will coordinate with USWFS headquarters and follow agency certification processes.

Hand Crews

Hand Crew Standards (All Crew Types)
- **Language –** Crew boss (CRWB) and firefighter type 1 (FFT1); must be able to read and interpret the language of the crew as well as English
- **Flight weight** – 5,300 pounds (6,625 pounds maximum for 25-person crew)
- **Personal gear –** Sufficient for 14-day assignments
- **Physical fitness –** Arduous; all positions
- **Required equipment and PPE –** Fully equipped as specified in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*

Hand Crew Standards for USWFS Organized Crews by Type[1]

Crew Details	Type 1 IHC	Type 2 Initial Attack	Type 2	Fire Suppression Module
Crew Size	Minimum 18 Maximum 25 Standard 20-22 (See "Crew Standards for National Mobilization")	Minimum 18 Maximum 25 Standard 20-22	Minimum 18 Maximum 20	Minimum 5 Maximum 11
Leadership Qualifications	1 Superintendent 1 Asst. Superintendent 3 Squad leaders 2 Senior FFTs (FFT1) or 1 Superintendent 2 Asst. Superintendent 2 Squad Leaders 2 Senior FFTs (FFT1)	1 CRWB 3 FFT1 and ICT5	1 CRWB 3 FFT1	1 single resource boss (SRB)/ICT5 2 FFT1
Fireline Capability	Initial attack – Can be broken up into squads, fireline construction, complex firing operations (backfire)	Initial attack – Can be broken up into squads, fireline construction	Initial attack – Fireline construction	Operates as a single module with type 5 command capability
Language Requirement	All senior leadership, including squad leaders and higher, must be able to read and interpret the language of the crew as well as English	Same as type 1	Same as type 1	Same as type 1
Crew Experience	80% of the crewmembers must have at least 1 season experience in fire suppression	60% of the crewmembers must have at least 1 season experience in fire suppression	20% of the crewmembers must have at least 1 season experience in fire suppression	Agency only
Full-Time Organized Crew	Yes (work and train as a unit 40 hours per week)	No	No	No
Crew Utilization	National shared resource	Local unit control	Local unit control	Local unit control

Crew Details	Type 1 IHC	Type 2 Initial Attack	Type 2	Fire Suppression Module
Communication	8 programmable handheld radios 1 programmable mobile radio in each truck	4 programmable handheld radios	4 programmable handheld radios	2 programmable handheld radios
Sawyers	4 faller type 2 (FAL2), 50% of crew FAL3	1 FAL2, 2 FAL3	None	2 FAL3
Training	As required by the *Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations* or agency policy prior to assignment	Basic firefighter training or once qualified, 4 hours annual fireline refresher training prior to assignment	Basic firefighter training or once qualified, 4 hours annual fireline refresher training prior to assignment	Basic firefighter training or once qualified, 4 hours annual fireline refresher training prior to assignment
Logistics	Squad-level agency purchasing authority	Crew-level agency purchasing authority recommended	No purchasing authority	Self-sufficient for 48 hours; purchasing authority recommended
Maximum Weight	5,300 lbs. (6,625 lbs. maximum for 25-person crew)	5,300 lbs. (6,625 lbs. maximum for 25-person crew)	5,300 lbs.	N/A
Dispatch Availability	Available nationally	Available nationally	Variable	Variable
Production Factor	1.0	.8	.8	Variable
Transportation	Own transportation	Need transportation	Need transportation	Own transportation
Tools and Equipment	Fully equipped	Not equipped	Not equipped	Variable
Personal Gear	Arrives with crew first aid kit, personal first aid kit, headlamp, 1-quart canteen, web gear, sleeping bag	Same as type 1	Same as type 1	Same as type 1
PPE	All standard designated fireline PPE	Same as type 1	Same as type 1	Same as type 1
Certification	Must be certified annually by the supervising unit chief and geographic area fire chief, or designee, prior to being made available for assignment.	N/A	N/A	N/A

[1]See Crew Standards for National Mobilization table in chapter 13.

Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC)

IHCs will meet all requirements found in the *Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations* (*SIHCO*) and the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* while providing a safe, professional, mobile, and highly skilled hand crew for all phases of fire management and incident operations.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Locations and Names

Geographic Area	Location	Interagency Hotshot Crew Name
Alaska	Fairbanks, AK	Chena
Alaska	Fairbanks, AK	Midnight Sun
California	Bakersfield, CA	Kern Valley
California	El Cajon, CA	Golden Eagles[1]

Geographic Area	Location	Interagency Hotshot Crew Name
California	Kings Canyon, CA	Arrowhead
California	Susanville, CA	Diamond Mountain
Great Basin	Carson City, NV	Silver State
Great Basin	Elko, NV	Ruby Mountain
Great Basin	Pocatello, ID	Snake River
Great Basin	Salt Lake City, UT	Bonneville
Northern Rockies	Browning, MT	Chief Mountain[1]
Northwest	Klamath Falls, OR	Lakeview Veteran
Northwest	Vale, OR	Vale
Northwest	Warm Springs, OR	Warm Springs[1]
Rocky Mountain	Estes Park, CO	Alpine
Rocky Mountain	Craig, CO	Craig
Southern	Jackson, MS	Jackson
Southwest	Fort Defiance, AZ	Navaho
Southwest	San Carlos, AZ	Geronimo[1]
Southwest	Sierra Vista, AZ	Aravaipa Veteran
Southwest	Whiteriver, AZ	Fort Apache
Southwest	Zuni, New Mexico	Zuni

[1]The USWFS provides funding for these IHCs, but they are managed by their host Tribe.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Position Descriptions and Selective Placement Factors
Guidance for utilization of DOI standard position descriptions and selective placement factors when recruiting and filling positions on USWFS IHCs can be found at https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm-fa/SitePages/BLM-0456-Series-Toolbox.aspx. The DOI standard position descriptions (SPDs) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification requirements will be utilized when recruiting and filling positions on IHCs. Human resources specialists should first consult the unit fire chief for questions on NWCG qualifications or the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) position standards.

Annual Interagency Hotshot Crew Mobilization Requirements
Prior to becoming available for mobilization, interagency hotshot crews will complete the *Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations* appendices B and C. The IHC superintendent and supervising unit chief will complete both checklists and send to the GA fire chief for concurrence. Upon concurrence, the GA fire chief will notify the appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) and the Deputy Director, USWFS Fire Operations, of crew status and provide copies of the agency IHC Preparedness Review Checklist and the Annual IHC Mobilization Checklist (SIHCO, appendix C) to each.

- For crews that have already completed SIHCO appendices B and C, or applicable requirements of previous bureau policy, route the completed documentation to the Assistant Director Fire Operations through the geographic area fire chief.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Decertification and Recertification
Changes to crew qualifications and capabilities should be closely examined by the superintendent to ensure that all requirements contained in the *Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations* are met. Any IHC that is unable to meet the minimum requirements will be placed in type 2 initial attack status until the requirements can be met. Exceptions to the requirements must be requested by the GA fire chief and may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Deputy Director, USWFS Fire Operations.

Short-term inability to meet the requirements may not necessarily require recertification but may require completion of the Annual IHC Mobilization Checklist (SIHCO, appendix C) and concurrence from the Deputy Director, USWFS Fire Operations before regaining IHC status. Longer-term or more significant failures to meet the requirements may require the full recertification process as stated in the SIHCO, with oversight from USWFS Headquarters.

Hand Crew (Non-Interagency Hotshot Crew) Position Descriptions and Selective Placement Factors
Guidance for utilization of DOI standard position descriptions and selective placement factors when recruiting and filling positions on USWFS hand crews (non-interagency hotshot crews) can be found at

https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm-fa/SitePages/BLM-0456-Series-Toolbox.aspx. The DOI standard position descriptions (SPDs) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification requirements will be utilized when recruiting and filling positions on hand crews (non-interagency hotshot crews). Human resources specialists should first consult the unit chief for questions on NWCG qualifications or the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) position standards.

Veteran Crews
USWFS veteran crews are comprised primarily of veterans from the United States Armed Forces. Each veteran crew trains and works as a single unit and mobilizes fully equipped with transportation. The diverse make-up of veteran crewmembers provides a high level of professionalism, leadership, and skills that are transferable to the wildland fire environment. *Standards for Veteran Crew Operations* is available at https://www.nifc.gov/about-us/our-partners/blm/blm-crews.

Veteran Crew Locations, Names, and Types

Geographic Area	Location	Veteran Crew Name	Type
California	Placerville, CA	Folsom Lake	Type 2 initial attack
Great Basin	Las Vegas, NV	Vegas Valley	Type 2 initial attack
Northern Rockies	Billings, MT	Billings Veteran	Type 2 initial attack
Northwest	Klamath Falls, OR	Lakeview Veteran	IHC
Northwest	Medford, OR	Medford	Type 2 initial attack
Northwest	Spokane, WA	Spokane	Fire suppression module
Rocky Mountain	Worland, WY	Devil's Canyon	Type 2 initial attack
Southwest	Sierra Vista, AZ	Aravaipa Veteran	IHC

Fire Suppression Modules
Fire suppression modules are comprised of 5-11 firefighters and are used primarily for wildfire suppression, fuels reduction, and other fire management duties. Fire suppression modules can perform self-contained, initial attack suppression operations and can generally provide incident management capability at the type 5 complexity level.

- Fire Suppression Module Mobilization
  - Fire suppression modules will be statused, tracked, and mobilized in the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) system using the resource identifier "Module, Suppression."

Engines

Engines carry two to six firefighters and are used primarily for wildfire suppression, fuels reduction, and other fire management duties. Engine personnel can perform self-contained, initial attack suppression operations and can generally provide single resource incident management capability up to the type 4 complexity level.

Engine Ordering
Units requiring additional engine support will place a request for resources through normal dispatching procedures or agency preposition.

Engine Typing
Engines are typed according to interagency standards as established by NWCG. See chapter 14 for engine typing standards.

Engine Equipment Inventory
For 2026, all USWFS engines will strive to minimally achieve USWFS standard Normal Unit Stocking (NUS). This inventory will be required for 2027, pending any edits made through DFEM processes.

Engine Minimum Staffing Requirements
All engines will meet these minimum staffing requirements on every incident response:

- Minimum staffing for type 5, 6, and 7 engines is two individuals, one of which is engine boss qualified.
- Minimum staffing for type 3 and 4 engines is three individuals, one of which is engine boss qualified.

Engine Training and Qualification Requirements

- For Engine Operator (ENOP), follow your current bureau position qualification requirements found in the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- For Engine Boss (ENGB), follow the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, or current bureau-specific requirements.

Engine Crew Position Descriptions and Selective Placement Factors
Guidance for utilization of DOI standard position descriptions and selective placement factors when recruiting and filling positions on USWFS engine crews can be found at https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm-fa/SitePages/BLM-0456-Series-Toolbox.aspx. The DOI standard position descriptions (SPDs) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification requirements will be utilized when recruiting and filling positions on engine crews. Human resources specialists should first consult unit fire chiefs for questions on NWCG qualifications or the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) position standards.

Engine Driver Requirements
Adhere to bureau-specific and/or State-specific licensing requirements.

WCF class-668 vehicle drivers are required to complete *WCF Class-668 Driver and Maintenance Training* (once). *WCF Class-668 Driver and Maintenance Training* may be conducted at the unit/geographic level utilizing qualified and experienced class-668 operators.

Exclusive-Use Helitack Crews

The USWFS contracts type 1, type 2 or type 3 exclusive-use of vendor-supplied and -supported helicopters in USWFS geographic areas throughout the United States. Helitack crews are assigned to manage each contracted helicopter and perform suppression and support operations to accomplish fire and resource management objectives.

Each contract specifies a mandatory availability period (MAP) that the aircraft will be assigned for the exclusive use of the USWFS. The National Aviation Office provides funding to pay for aircraft availability costs.

The USWFS host unit is responsible for providing a helitack crew meeting the minimum experience and qualification requirements specified in the fire helicopter crew position descriptions and selective placement factors in this chapter. The minimum daily staffing level (seven-day staffing) must meet the level indicated in chapter 2 of the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510. USWFS helicopters operated in Alaska need only be staffed with a qualified helicopter manager.

The host unit is also responsible for providing administrative support; equipment, vehicles, and facilities for helitack crews as specified in the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510, and other associated specialized equipment.

The primary mission for lower 48 exclusive-use helicopter programs is initial attack. While most effective at providing rapid initial attack response, crews are well equipped to respond to extended-attack incidents and critical need missions on large fires.

Exclusive-Use Helitack Locations, Names, and Types

Geographic Area	Location	Exclusive-Use Helicopter Program Name	Type
Alaska	Fairbanks, AK	Type 2 (4 each), Type 3 (3 each) Manager Only	2 (4 each), 3 (3 each)
Alaska	Fairbanks, AK	Fairbanks Helitack	3
Alaska	McKinley Airstrip, AK/Denali National Park/	Denali Helitack	3
Alaska	Talkeetna, AK	Talkeetna Helitack	3
California	Apple Valley, CA	Apple Valley Helitack	2
California	Ash Mountain, CA/Sequoia-Kings National Park	SEKI Helitack	3
California	Crane Flat, CA/Yosemite National Park	Yosemite Helitack	2
Eastern	Red Lake, MN	Red Lake Helitack	3 (shared w/Billings)
Great Basin	Boise, ID	Boise Helitack	1
Great Basin	Elko, NV	Elko Helitack	3 (2 each)
Great Basin	Las Vegas, NV	Las Vegas Helitack	3
Great Basin	Moab, UT	Moab Helitack	3
Great Basin	St. George, UT	Moki Helitack	3
Great Basin	Tooele, UT	Salt Lake Helitack	3
Great Basin	Twin Falls, ID	Twin Falls Helitack	2
Northern Rockies	Billings, MT	Billings Helitack (Big Sky)	3

Geographic Area	Location	Exclusive-Use Helicopter Program Name	Type
Northern Rockies	Billings, MT	Billings Helitack	3 (shared with Red Lake)
Northern Rockies	Crow, MT	Crow Helitack	3
Northern Rockies	Mammoth, WY	Yellowstone Helitack	3
Northern Rockies	Ronan, MT	Mission Valley	3
Northwest	Burns, OR	Burns Helitack	2
Northwest	Enumclaw, WA/Mount Rainer National Park	MOCA Helitack	3
Northwest	Lakeview, OR	Lakeview Helitack	2
Northwest	Vale, OR	Vale Helitack	3
Rocky Mountain	Ft. Lewis, CO/Hesperus, CO	Mesa Verde Helitack	3
Rocky Mountain	Rawlins, WY	Rawlins Helitack	3
Rocky Mountain	Rifle, CO	Rifle Helitack	3
Southern	Crestview, FL	Eglin AFB ((RX – no permanent staffing)	3
Southern	Everglades Air Base, FL	Ocochopee Helitack	3
Southern	Leesburg, FL	Type 3 (Fleet – no permanent staffing)	3 (fleet)
Southern	McBee, SC	Carolina Sandhills (RX – no permanent staffing)	3
Southern	Winnie, TX	Texas Chenier (RX – no permanent staffing)	3
Southwest	Albuquerque, NM	Volcan Peak Helitack	3
Southwest	Ft. Apache, AZ	Fort Apache Helitack	3
Southwest	Tusayan, AZ/Grand Canyon National Park	Grand Canyon Helitack	3
Southwest	Wickenburg, AZ	Weaver Mtn. Helitack	3
Southwest	Window Rock, AZ	Navajo Helitack	3

Fire Helicopter Crew Position Descriptions and Selective Placement Factors
Guidance for utilization of DOI standard position descriptions and selective placement factors when recruiting and filling positions on USWFS exclusive-use helitack crews can be found at https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm-fa/SitePages/BLM-0456-Series-Toolbox.aspx. The DOI standard position descriptions (SPDs) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification requirements will be utilized when recruiting and filling positions on exclusive-use helitack crews. Human resources specialists should first consult unit fire chiefs for questions on NWCG qualifications or the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) position standards.

Smokejumpers

Smokejumpers are used primarily for wildfire suppression, fuels reduction, and other fire management duties. Smokejumpers can perform self-contained, initial attack suppression operations, and commonly provide incident management capability at the type 3 complexity level. Smokejumpers provide personnel to type 1 and type 2 complexity incidents such as complex command and general staff or other miscellaneous single resources. USWFS smokejumper bases are located in Boise, Idaho, and Fairbanks, Alaska.

Smokejumper (SMKJ) Operations
The *Standards for Smokejumper Operations, USWFS Ram-Air Training Manual (RATM), Great Basin Smokejumpers User Guide, Alaska Smokejumper User Guide, Alaska Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization,* and other pertinent agreements and operating plans contain smokejumper operational and administrative procedures.

Smokejumper Mission
Smokejumper aircraft are dispatched with 8-12 smokejumpers and equipment to be self-sufficient for 48 hours. A typical smokejumper mission takes 30 minutes over a fire. A spotter (senior smokejumper in charge of smokejumper missions) serves as the mission coordinator on smokejumper missions. This may include coordinating smokejumper operation with on-scene aircraft over a fire until a qualified air tactical group supervisor (ATGS) arrives.

Smokejumper Coordination and Dispatch
Smokejumpers are a national shared resource and are ordered according to geographic area or national standards for resource mobilization. The operational unit for smokejumpers is "one load" (8-12 smokejumpers). Specific information on the coordination, dispatch, ordering, and use of USWFS smokejumpers can be found in the *Great Basin Smokejumpers User Guide*, and in the *Alaska Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization.* Contact USWFS smokejumpers in Boise at (208) 387-5426 or in Alaska at (907) 356-5540 for these publications.

USWFS Ram-Air Parachute System Management
The USWFS has exclusive authority for all aspects of USWFS ram-air parachute system management and operations. This includes:

- **System Changes and Modifications** – All USWFS ram-air parachute system modifications, research, and development will be documented and approved using the USWFS Smokejumper Modification Document (MODOC) System.
- **Ram-Air Training** – All smokejumpers utilizing the USWFS ram-air parachute system will adhere to the training processes and procedures in the *USWFS Ram-Air Training Manual*.
- **Malfunction Abnormality and Reporting System (MARS)** – MARS is a reporting system utilized to report and document malfunctions and abnormalities associated with smokejumper parachute jumping, parachute equipment, and parachute-related aircraft operations. The MARS database is hosted by the USFS and is used by both the USWFS and USFS to analyze malfunctions and abnormalities, identify trends, and initiate corrective actions. USWFS retains exclusive authority to apply corrective actions to USWFS equipment and procedures.
- **USWFS-Approved Smokejumper Equipment List** – All smokejumpers using the USWFS ram-air parachute system will only utilize equipment listed in the USWFS-approved smokejumper equipment list unless specific approval is authorized through a MODOC.
- **Incidents, Reviews, and Accident Investigations** – USWFS smokejumpers will follow all procedures for accident review and investigation as outlined in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, chapters 2 and 18. The USWFS smokejumpers will report incidents/accidents as appropriate, on the National Technology and Development Program (NTDP) Injury Reporting Form. A USWFS smokejumper subject matter expert will participate in any investigation or review involving the USWFS ram-air parachute system.
- **Adherence to Agency Policies and Manuals** – USWFS will adhere to its own policies, guidelines, manuals, handbooks, and other operational documents as they pertain to smokejumper parachuting operations. The smokejumper base managers will work through established command channels to change USWFS ram-air parachute system policies, guidelines, manuals, handbooks, and other operational documents, and/or to request research and development of new products.

Smokejumper Aircraft
Smokejumpers use aircraft approved by the Interagency Smokejumper Aircraft Screening and Evaluation Subcommittee (SASES). All aviation operations will be performed according to agency policies and procedures. Smokejumper-specific aviation standards are identified in the *USWFS Smokejumper Air Operations Manual*.

Smokejumper Training
To ensure proficiency and safety, smokejumpers complete annual training in aviation, parachuting, fire suppression, administration, and safety. Experienced smokejumpers receive annual refresher training in these areas. First-year smokejumpers undergo a rigorous 4-to-5-week training program.

Candidates are evaluated to determine:

- Level of physical fitness
- Ability to learn and perform smokejumper skills
- Ability to work as a team member
- Attitude
- Ability to think clearly and remain productive in a stressful environment

USWFS Smokejumper Training and Qualification Targets

Position	IQCS Target	Smokejumper Training Target
Department managers	Complex command and general staff	
Spotter	ICT3, DIVS, ATGS, RXB2, SOF3	
Senior smokejumper	Strike team leader (STL), TFLD	Senior rigger, field observer (FOBS)

Position	IQCS Target	Smokejumper Training Target
Smokejumper	ICT4, CRWB, FIRB	Fire effects monitor (FEMO)
Rookie smokejumper	ICT5	

Smokejumper Jump Proficiency Guideline
To ensure proficiency and safety, it is the goal of USWFS smokejumpers to perform a training or operational jump every 14 days. A longer period between jumps can occur due to fire assignments or other duties. Guidelines for managing gaps between jumps beyond 14 days are included in the *USWFS Ram-air Training Manual*. Funding for currency and/or training jumps are included in the home unit's normal preparedness budgets. Units hosting contingents or spike bases will not be charged for any proficiency jump or related activities.

Smokejumper Physical Fitness Standards
The USWFS smokejumper physical fitness standards are mandatory. All USWFS smokejumpers must pass the BLM smokejumper physical fitness standards to perform training or operational jumps. USWFS smokejumpers are encouraged to train and stive for the USWFS High Standard Target requirements of the physical fitness test.

USWFS smokejumper chiefs are authorized to allow refresher training jumps for experienced jumpers if course conditions are unsafe for runs or packs.

USWFS Smokejumper Physical Fitness Standards (Required)	USWFS High Standard Target
(Two options)*: • 1.5-mile run in 10:47 minutes or less, or • 3-mile packing with a 110-pound load within 65 minutes or less	(Two options): • 1.5-mile run in 9:30 minutes or less, or • 3-mile run in 22:30 minutes or less • 3-mile pack with a 110-pound load within 55 minutes or less
30 push-ups	35 push-ups
6 pull-ups	10 pull-ups
Arduous WCT	60 sit-ups Arduous WCT

* Successful completion of both elements is required during smokejumper rookie training.

Retesting
Retesting criteria include:
- Returning smokejumpers are allowed three opportunities to pass the USWFS smokejumper physical fitness standards. Each retest will occur no sooner than 24 hours after failing the previous test and will consist of all elements of the smokejumper physical fitness test.
- Smokejumper candidates have one opportunity to pass the USWFS smokejumper physical fitness standards.
- If an employee sustains an injury (verified by a licensed medical provider) during a test, the test will not count as an attempt. Once an injured employee has been released for full duty, the employee will be given time to prepare for the test (not to exceed 4 weeks).

Wildland Fire Modules

Fire suppression modules and wildland fire modules (WFM) are separate and distinct resources. The USWFS has established separate standards for fire suppression modules. Fire managers and incident commanders should order the appropriate resource to accomplish incident objectives.

Wildland Fire Modules Locations, Names, and Types

Geographic Area	Location	Wildland Fire Module Name	Type
Alaska	Fairbanks & Denali Park, AK	Alaska Range	Training WFM
California	El Portal, CA	Yosemite	2
California	Hawaii Volcano, HI	Kilauea	2
California	Redding, CA	Whiskeytown	1
California	Three Rivers, CA	Kaweah	Training WFM
Northern Rockies	Lewistown, MT	Woodhawk	2
Northern Rockies	Mammoth Hot Springs, WY	Yellowstone	Training WFM

Geographic Area	Location	Wildland Fire Module Name	Type
Northwest	Marblemount, WA	Shuksan	Training WFM
Northwest	Port Angeles, WA	Olympic	2
Northwest	Warm Springs, OR	Warm Springs	2
Rocky Mountain	Grand Junction, CO	Unaweep	1
Rocky Mountain	Estes Park, CO	Rocky Mountain	Training WFM
Rocky Mountain	Suster, SD	Black Hills	1
Southern	Gatlinburg, TN	Great Smoky	1
Southern	Harrison, AR	Buffalo River	1
Southern	Marble Falls, TX	Balcones	2
Southwest	Albuquerque	Rio Puerco	2
Southwest	Jemez Springs, NM	Bandelier	Training WFM
Southwest	Tucson, AZ	Saguaro	2

USWFS Wildland Fire Module Position Descriptions and Selective Placement Factors
Guidance for utilization of DOI standard position descriptions and selective placement factors when recruiting and filling positions on USWFS WFMs can be found at https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm fa/SitePages/BLM-0456-Series-Toolbox.aspx. The DOI standard position descriptions (SPD) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification requirements will be utilized when recruiting and filling positions on USWFS WFMs. Human resources specialists should first consult the unit chief for questions on NWCG qualifications or the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) position standards.

Annual Wildland Fire Module Mobilization Requirements
Completion of the Wildland Fire Module Annual Mobilization Preparedness/Proficiency Checklist (*NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 430) is required annually. The WFM superintendent and supervising unit fire chief will complete all checklists and send to the geographic area (GA) fire chief for concurrence. Upon concurrence, the GA fire chief will notify the Deputy Director, Fire Operations, of crew status and provide copies of the checklists.

- For modules that have already completed *Wildland Fire Module Annual Mobilization Preparedness/Proficiency Review Checklist*, or applicable requirements of previous bureau policy, route the completed documentation to the Assistant Director Fire Operations through the geographic area fire chief.

Following GA fire chief concurrence, the WFM module leader will send a copy of the Wildland Fire Module Annual Mobilization Preparedness/Proficiency Checklist to the NWCG Wildland Fire Module Unit Chair/Vice Chair, local dispatch, and GACC prior to making the module available for national mobilization each season. The annual review will be conducted while the module is fully staffed and has completed all required training needed prior to being operational. This process is designed to evaluate module preparedness and compliance with the standards contained in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Modules*, PMS 430.

Refer to chapter 13 for additional wildland fire module information.

Fire Severity Funding

Severity funding supports increased planning and staffing to address heightened wildfire threats caused by unusual weather or fuel conditions, requiring a stronger initial response and prevention efforts. These funds are drawn from suppression operations budgets and are distinct from preparedness funds.

Geographic area (GA) fire staff review and approve all severity requests using the USWFS Severity Request Form. Headquarters staff ensures compliance via program reviews and random audits. Severity funding cannot make up for gaps between planned and appropriated funds. These funds are drawn from suppression operations budgets and are distinct from preparedness funds.

Severity Request Process
Coordination with predictive services is necessary prior to submitting a severity funding request at any level. Severity requests should be submitted using the USWFS Severity Request Form to provide details on predictive services outlooks, special events, increased risk of human-caused fires, or local resource shortages.

- Summarize interagency coordination activities, including MAC group activation or severity actions by cooperating agencies.

- Utilize the Requested Severity Resources table within the USWFS Severity Request Form to accurately estimate resource requirements.
- Route form for approvals and signatures as instructed on the form.
- Turn on severity indicator on USWFS Duty Officer Fire Situation Dashboard.
- Initiate tracking sheet with start and termination dates.
- Termination: Use of severity funding must be terminated when severity conditions moderate.

For additional information, see chapter 10.

Mobile Fire Equipment

Introduction

The following section represents a general overview of the USWFS Mobile Fire Equipment Policy. Mobile fire equipment can be further described as fleet and fire vehicles under the oversight of the USWFS Division of Fleet and Equipment Management (DFEM).

As the bureaus transition to the USWFS, fleet will be transitioned as well. Until all fleet is under the USWFS, existing bureau policy will remain applicable.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For BLM, reference https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm-fa/fire-operations/SitePages/NFEP-Policy-Resources.aspx. For NPS, reference RM 18, Chapter 13, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fire/upload/RM18-Chapter-13.pdf; NPS SharePoint. For FWS, reference https://www.fws.gov/policy-library/manuals, Part 243 Vehicle Safety, and Parts 320-322 Vehicle Policy and Standards. For BIA, reference BIA National Fleet Wildland Engine Program Operations Guide.*

Tribal-specific information is found in chapter 3, Tribal Information.

Policy and Guidance

Agency policy requires that fire equipment be maintained at a high level of performance and in a condition consistent with the work it is designed to perform. This shall be accomplished through application of a uniform preventative maintenance program, timely repair of damaged or deficient components, and in accordance with agency requirements.

DFEM Mission

The DFEM supports the USWFS with a safe, modern, and mission-ready fleet by overseeing the full lifecycle of all vehicles, including specialized wildland mobile fire equipment. The division designs, develops, and acquires fire equipment that meets operational and fire management needs, working closely with firefighters and industry partners to balance innovation with cost-effective solutions that improve firefighter safety and enhance performance. The DFEM provides training on the safe use and care of equipment, manages the Fire Equipment Maintenance Procedure and Record (FEMPR), and delivers technical support through the Improvement and Deficiency Reporting System (IDR) while guiding firefighters through repair and warranty claims.

Fire Equipment Standardization

Standardization of fire equipment ensures the USWFS can field mission-ready, capable equipment that supports operational needs while minimizing impacts on fire programs. A standardized fleet strengthens safety and consistency by giving firefighters familiar configurations as they move across duty stations, improving both training efficiency and day-to-day operations. The DFEM establishes minimum performance standards for all USWFS-specific mobile fire equipment and secures required approvals to maintain common operational functions across equipment classes. These standards reduce procurement complexity, support bulk-purchase efficiencies, and improve production timelines. Each equipment class includes a defined set of standard items, while optional features may be added when needed, with associated costs funded by the Geographic Area or local unit. Together, these efforts ensure a capable, consistent, and mission-ready fire fleet that supports safe and effective operations.

Vehicle Color and Marking:

Vehicle color and markings will be determined at a later date.

Equipment Identifier:

The equipment identifier is the numerical or alpha-numeric graphic identifier placed on all fire equipment. The equipment identifier is displayed on the front, rear, both sides, and top of the equipment.

Changes or Modifications to Vehicle Graphics

Requests for changes or modifications to vehicle graphics shall be approved in writing by the DFEM Division Chief prior to application.

- Units may request to add additional identifiers or logos to fire equipment to meet local agreements or operating procedures. Requests shall be routed to the DFEM Division Chief, via email.

For blended or Service First units, special consideration is allowed for multi-agency equipment purchased by the USWFS. These units will follow USWFS Equipment Identifier standards and may add a multi-agency logo to one or both sides of the vehicle.

It remains acceptable to purchase and place decals and patches for official government use, consistent with past practices, for the following resources:

- Interagency hotshot crews
- Wildland fire modules
- Standing type 2IA crews
- Helitack programs
- Unit fire programs

Fire Equipment Maintenance and Care Standards

USWFS fire equipment will be maintained to reflect the highest standards in performance, reliability and appearance.

All mechanical systems shall be properly maintained and kept in good repair. Interior/exterior equipment components shall be kept clean, waxed as appropriate and properly secured or locked. Whenever possible mobile fire equipment should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Ensure equipment safety issues and recalls [new link] issued by Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and Equipment Bulletins (EBs) or Equipment Alerts (EAs) are promptly addressed and corrected.
- Repair deficient items as soon as issues are identified.
- Store equipment in sheltered areas away from environmental elements to prevent damage to critical seals, mechanical components, and the high-visibility graphics and finish.
- Ensure repairs and maintenance are performed by manufacturer dealerships or authorized repair facilities.
- Ensure that any/all eligible items are covered under warranty.
- Follow manufacturers owner's manual guidance for the most severe duty cycles.

Keep thorough documentation of all maintenance and repair work.

Adhering to these guidelines supports timely approval of repair requests and ensures equipment remains safe, serviceable, and mission ready.

Annual Safety Inspections, Scheduled Maintenance, and Daily Inspections

Fire personnel are required to complete and document annual safety inspections, regularly scheduled preventative maintenance, and daily (or pre-trip) inspections for all USWFS wildland fire vehicles. Annual safety inspections must be completed by a qualified mechanic and documented on Form 1520-35, 1520-35a or designated local form. Regularly scheduled preventative maintenance, unscheduled maintenance, and repairs for DOI-owned (I-plate) vehicles are recorded in FBMS. Daily inspections must be kept with the vehicle records for the life of that vehicle.

Wildland fire vehicles that are not operationally sound, do not pass required inspections, or have safety deficiencies must not be put into service. In addition, vehicles that suffer from mechanical or safety issues while enroute or on assignment must be taken out of service at the earliest opportunity in which it is safe to do so and must not be put back into service until corrective action can be completed.

Fire Equipment Maintenance Procedure and Record (FEMPR)

The Fire Equipment Maintenance Procedure and Record (FEMPR) is the standardized system used to document daily inspections, preventative maintenance, and all repairs for vehicles used primarily for fire suppression preparedness and operations. The FEMPR shall be periodically archived to maintain a historical record of preventative maintenance and repairs over the duration of the vehicle's service life. This historical data is beneficial in determining trends, maintenance/repair frequency, and total repair costs. Best practices include maintaining categorical electronic archives of all FEMPR daily inspections, completed repairs and recalls, fluid sampling results, and other miscellaneous tasks as identified in the FEMPR. Electronic archives are easily referenced, transferrable with the equipment, and accessible for supporting the vehicle Maintenance Documentation Package required for vehicle repairs.

- FEMPR templates can be found here.
- FEMPR will be maintained for all wildland fire vehicles and will be used to document routine and annual inspections and maintenance.
- Routine inspections will be performed and documented daily or prior to vehicle use.
- Annual inspections should be performed and logged at regularly scheduled intervals, but no less than on an annual basis, or as required by manufacturers' schedules. Annual inspections will be performed by a qualified mechanic.
    - Thorough post-fire inspections are strongly encouraged.
- For engines and water tenders, all annual inspections will include a pump gallons per minute (GPM) test to ensure the pump/plumbing system is operating at or above the manufacturer's minimum rating for the pump.
- The FEMPR shall record the historic maintenance throughout the service life to help determine trends, repair frequency, and repair costs.
- FEMPR review for all fire vehicles will be completed during local and geographic area program reviews to ensure compliance with inspection requirements.

Fire Equipment Repairs
Repairs shall be completed as issues are identified to ensure the equipment remains fully functional and in peak operating condition. Repairs for damages outside of normal wear and tear as well as any occurring from misuse or misconduct are the responsibility of the benefiting activity and will not covered by the Working Capital Fund (WCF).

For damage directly attributable to operations on a wildfire, and with approval from the IC and/or Comps/Claims, the damages may be paid for under the fire's suppression account.

Whenever possible, repairs should be completed through a facility approved by the Final Vehicle Manufacturer or OEM service center for the vehicle chassis.

Tire Inspection and Replacement
All USWFS mobile fire equipment with a current FEMPR shall follow the inspection and replacement standards outlined in the respective vehicle FEMPR.

Improvement and Deficiency Reporting System
The USWFS Improvement and Deficiency Reporting System (IDR) collects deficiency reports, improvement suggestions, and modification proposals for all mobile fire equipment. The reporting system enables the DFEM to build a comprehensive database to document problems, identify trends, and establish priorities for development and modification of new and existing equipment.

Operators will submit timely and detailed improvement reports suggesting how to improve the safety, design, and efficiency of fire equipment, as well as deficiency reports to document irregular or potential problems with fire equipment. These reports are submitted to the DFEM staff, where they receive immediate attention. The DFEM will verify receipt of all reports and follow-up with the submitter to correct the deficiency or work to incorporate the improvement suggestion.

Equipment Modification/Retrofitting Requests
Modification proposals must be submitted through the IDRS or applicable DFEM for consideration and approved by the DFEM prior to implementing changes to USWFS fleet vehicles. Local units are responsible for maintaining documentation of approvals. Unauthorized modifications and retrofits have the potential to negatively impact equipment quality and safety and void manufacturer warranties. In such cases, the financial burden of corrective action will be the responsibility of the home unit.

Equipment Bulletins and Equipment Alerts
The purpose of an Equipment Bulletin (EB) or an Equipment Alert (EA) is to share accurate and timely information regarding potential equipment problems and/or needed repairs. The EB is intended to inform equipment users of recommendations for repairs, potential hazards, or general information related to the overall maintenance, awareness, and safe operation of fire equipment. The EA is time sensitive and addresses potentially serious hazards or risk and a specific action the user must act upon.

Unexpected issues involving wildland fire vehicles which do not fall under other types of wildland fire reviews and investigations and/or other applicable Federal, State, or specific agency requirements must be reported. If an unexpected vehicle issue warrants attention, an EB or EA will be issued.

Acquisition of USWFS Equipment
All USWFS mobile fire equipment must be ordered through the DFEM. Each class of vehicle has an established lifecycle based on miles or hours; vehicle age may be factored into replacement lifecycle if/when vehicles are underutilized. The Working Capital Fund (WCF) acquires funds through fixed ownership rates (FOR) and use rates determined by the replacement cost plus the residual value and class repair costs throughout the equipment lifecycle. At the end of the lifecycle, funds generated are used to replace the equipment. For new vehicle purchases, funds are acquired/secured by the receiving unit and if approved, the new purchase is added to the WCF.

The geographic area fleet manager monitors vehicle usage and replacement cycles and notifies the DFEM when vehicles need to be replaced.

Acquisition of new, replacement, or conversion mobile fire equipment requires justification and approval through established DFEM processes with the completion of the appropriate request and approval forms.

Rural Fire Readiness Program
The Rural Fire Readiness (RFR) equipment transfer program is intended to provide a streamlined process for USWFS to transfer no longer needed firefighting equipment to local cooperators in strategic areas that benefit the USWFS's wildland fire mission. Local cooperators are a critical component in the All Hands, All Lands fire management approach. In many instances, local cooperators are in the right place at the right time when a fire starts, but they do not have the safety and tactical equipment to be successful in their early suppression efforts, and in many cases, preventing them from safely and effectively integrating with State and Federal firefighting resources. The goal of the RFR equipment transfer program is to improve the capability and capacity of our collaborative firefighting efforts with our local partners. The DFEM will work with geographic area staff to ensure fire equipment is correctly transferred. This process includes ensuring the estimated salvage value and title transfer fees are paid to the WCF prior to transferring equipment to cooperators. The USWFS is authorized to undertake the following actions:

- Transfer the title of firefighting equipment which is no longer needed to carry out the functions of the wildland fire management program to one of the following organizations:
  - Local volunteer fire departments.
  - Rangeland Fire Protection Association (RFPA).
  - Cooperators protecting remote communities under cooperative response agreements and who play a substantial role in the suppression of wildland fires on Department of the Interior (DOI) and other federal lands.
- Bypass the GSAXcess process for firefighting equipment and perform direct transfers to RFPAs and similarly eligible local firefighting cooperators as specified in the RFR Equipment Transfer Program Guidelines. Please note the following exception: Working Capital Fund (WCF) equipment must be processed as a negotiated sale coordinated by the controlling WCF office.

Information, instructions, and requirements that must be adhered to can be found here.

Location-Based Services (LBS) Program
All newly acquired operational fire suppression vehicles shall be equipped with LBS equipment and adhere to the requirements of the LBS Program described here and in the LBS Identifier standards. The LBS Program combines current Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies with fire and fire aviation preparedness to provide a situational awareness tool by tracking equipment and providing real-time display of its location. LBS is incorporated into dispatch and other operating procedures and to enhance situational awareness, decision making, and accountability of fire equipment. This program meets the intent of *S.47 - John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, SEC. 1114. (d) Location Systems for Wildland Firefighters*.

When a new terminal is received, replacement equipment arrives, or an error with the terminal has been identified, the installation, transfer, or repair must be completed in no more than 15 days.

Equipment location can be viewed in the Vehicle Tracker Portal (VTP) or Fire Enterprise Geospatial Portal (EGP). VTP access can be requested for an individual or a group account for dispatch centers. The VTP account request form and additional information about the LBS program can be found here.

LBS Identifier
The LBS Identifier will be displayed within the LBS web viewer. The four numerical characters in LBS will match the Equipment Identifier in all cases.

Pre-Existing Fleet
All existing fleet vehicles without LBS may be retrofitted to include LBS devices if the vehicle has the required connections in place. Vehicles without the necessary connections should only be evaluated for retrofitting if the vehicle will remain in service for a length of time sufficient to offset the cost of installation.

Lights-and-Sirens Response

Responding to wildfire incidents normally does not warrant the use of emergency lights and sirens on public roads by calling for or blocking the right-of-way from other traffic to safely and effectively perform the USWFS mission. However, there may be rare or extenuating circumstances when limited use of emergency lights and sirens are appropriate and necessary due to an immediate threat to life. Use of stationary emergency lighting is encouraged and does not require authorization.

Those geographic area and unit organizations that determine a lights-and-sirens response on public roads is necessary to meet mission requirements must develop an operating plan that is signed and approved. The operating plan must ensure the following:

- All vehicles (command, engines, etc.) will be properly marked, equipped, and operated in accordance with State statutes, codes, permits, and USWFS zone/unit requirements.
- Drivers will complete training in the proper use of lights-and-sirens response in accordance with NFPA 1451 Standard for a Fire Service Operations Training Program and 1002 Standard for Fire Apparatus Operator/Driver Professional Qualifications standards, as well as any State requirements.
- Drivers must be minimally qualified as a single resource boss. For engines, a qualified Engine Operator may drive if a qualified single resource boss is also in the front seat of the engine.
- Instructors of lights and sirens training must have successfully completed lights and sirens training as part of a Federal engine academy, an Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC), and a facilitative instructor course.
- Lights and sirens will meet NFPA 1900 and State code requirements.
- Drivers will follow posted speed limits at all times, regardless of response type.
- Drivers will stop at all controlled intersections (sign, light, traffic officer) before proceeding; drivers will stop or reduce speed as circumstances dictate prior to proceeding through any uncontrolled intersections.
- Traffic light changing mechanisms (e.g., Opticons) will only be used under formal written agreement with State and local governments and only when necessary to create safe right-of-way through urban high-traffic areas.
- All pertinent State and local statutes and procedures will be adhered to.
- Use of lights and sirens will be limited to locations and/or jurisdictional boundaries specifically authorized by the local zone/unit/geographic area operating plan.

Domicile Government Vehicles

Geographic and unit fire chiefs approve requests, in writing, to domicile a government vehicle at an employee's residence in connection with official temporary duty travel. This authority may not be reassigned below these levels. This approval is not the same as the Home-to-Work approval for fieldwork activities under 41 CFR 102-5, which requires approval by the Secretary of the Interior.

Wildland Fire Uniform Standards

Uniform standards will be determined at a later date.

NWCG, Training and Standards, and Workforce Development

NWCG, Training and Standards, and Workforce Development Program

NWCG, Training and Standards, and Workforce Development Program is located at NIFC and works for the Division Chief, NWCG, Training and Standards, and Workforce Development. The program develops the wildland firefighting workforce through qualification standards, training standards, and workforce development programs.

National Wildfire Coordinating Group

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial partners. The NWCG establishes national interagency wildland fire operations standards, but the decision to adopt the standards is made independently by the members and communicated through their respective directives systems.

See chapter 8 for NWCG members.

The USWFS provides a representative to the NWCG Executive Board and representatives to various NWCG management committees and subcommittees. These individuals are responsible for representing the USWFS during NWCG decision-making processes and ensuring that proposed NWCG standards are reviewed by pertinent USWFS personnel prior to release by the NWCG.

Hiring and Qualification Requirements

Personnel hired by the USWFS must meet requirements established in the position description. If the position description requires ICS qualifications, only qualifications and minimum requirements specified in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, will be applied as selective factors and/or screen-

out questions. To avoid reducing candidate pools, USWFS-specific requirements that are supplemental to the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, may not be used as selective placement factors/screen-out questions. Supplemental USWFS-specific training or qualification requirements may only be used as selective factors and/or screen-out questions when requested and justified by the selecting official and approved by HR. Impacts to the candidate pool must be addressed in the justification. As with all other USWFS-specific training/experience requirements (e.g., purchase card training) that newly hired employees from other agencies may not have, the supervisor and Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) certifying official are responsible for reconciling that employee's training and IQCS Responder Master Record after the employee has entered on duty. This may be accomplished by providing additional training/experience or by manually awarding competencies as per established IQCS protocol.

Firefighter General Non-Fire Training Requirements

Administratively Determined and Emergency Firefighters

Training Required	Initial Requirement/ Frequency	Delivery Method/ Responsible Party
Defensive Driving (if operating a Government vehicle, or rental/leased vehicle for official purposes)	• Prior to operating motor vehicle for official purposes • Once every three years	• DOI Talent • Unit safety manager
First Aid/ Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR); to include bloodborne pathogens	• Upon initial employment • Every 2 years or per certifying authority • At least two persons per crew (GS or AD) shall be current and certified • Annually for employees at increased risk due to assigned duties	• Instructor-led • Unit safety manager
Fuel Transport Hazardous Materials Training (required for all employees who transport, prepare for transport, load, unload, handle, or are responsible for the safety of hazardous materials that are being transported)	• Upon initial employment and a refresher every 3 years thereafter	• https://www.fs.usda.gov/t-d/fueltran/training/index.htm

Agency Permanent, Career Seasonal, and Temporary Firefighters

Training Required	Initial Requirement/ Frequency	Delivery Method/ Responsible Party
Defensive Driving (if operating a Government vehicle, or rental/leased vehicle for official purposes)	• Prior to operating a motor vehicle for official purposes/Upon initial employment • Once every three years	• DOI Talent or instructor-led • Unit safety manager
First Aid/ Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR); to include bloodborne pathogens	• Upon initial employment • Every 2 years or per certifying authority • Annually for employees at increased risk due to assigned duties	• Instructor-led • Unit safety manager • DOI Talent
HAZMAT - First Responder Awareness Level	• Upon initial employment • Annually • Minimum of one-hour online course initially and annually	• Instructor-led • Unit safety manager • DOI Talent
Hearing Conservation	• Baseline audiogram upon initial employment • Annual audiogram	• Unit safety manager or DOI Talent Hearing Conservation (Self-Paced) https://doitalent.ibc.doi.gov/enrol/index.php?id=20192
Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher (RT-130)[1]	• No minimum hourly requirement • Annually	• IQCS

Training Required	Initial Requirement/ Frequency	Delivery Method/ Responsible Party
Fuel Transport Hazardous Materials Training (required for all employees who transport, prepare for transport, load, unload, handle, or are responsible for the safety of hazardous materials that are being transported)	• Upon initial employment and a refresher every 3 years thereafter	• https://www.fs.usda.gov/t-d/fueltran/training/index.htm

[1]RT-130 is not required for all responder qualifications. See the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, and *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement* for specific requirements.

Driver Training for Regular Drivers of Fire Equipment/Motor Vehicle Operation Policy

- ***DOI –*** *Follow current bureau policy.*

National Fire Operations Fitness Challenge

The National Fire Operations Fitness Challenge (https://www.nifc.gov/about-us/our-partners/blm/training/fitness-challenge) encourages and recognizes achievement in physical fitness by USWFS firefighters. The fitness challenge provides a common system by which USWFS firefighters can measure current fitness, establish fitness goals, and track fitness improvement. The fitness challenge is voluntary, but USWFS firefighters are encouraged to participate.

Interagency Fire Program Management Standards

The USWFS follows the *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide*, January 2000. The guide does the following:

- Establishes minimum qualifications standards for 11 key fire management positions. These standards include 1) basic requirements, 2) specialized experience requirements, 3) NWCG incident management qualifications, and 4) additional required training.
- Provides a "complexity rating for program management" table, which is used to determine overall complexity of the unit-level fire program. This is used because qualification standards for some of the 11 identified positions are tied to fire program complexity.

Fire managers should consult HR officials and apply Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) standards as appropriate.

Structural Fire and Hazardous Materials Response

All fires that are not wildland are considered structural and are subject to the requirements and standards of Directors Order (DO) and Reference Manual (RM) 58. All employees responding to National Park Service structural fires must meet or exceed the qualifications, training, standards and regulations identified in DO and RM #58.

Use of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System

The USWFS follows policy regarding use of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS). Standards for when WFDSS will be used are found in chapter 11.

Fire Records

All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed.

The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.

Incident Business

A consolidated view of fire business practices, supporting policy, and regulation is contained in the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902.

Global Positioning System (GPS) Datum and Coordinate Format Standard

To ensure safe and efficient suppression operations, all USWFS fire resources will use a standard GPS datum and latitude/longitude (coordinate) format when communicating GPS references. The standard datum is WGS84, and the standard coordinate format is Degrees Decimal Minutes (DDM). For other activities (e.g., mapping, planning), activity-specific standards may apply.

Chapter 3
Tribal Information

Tribal Government Existence

Tribal governments within the United States of America are acknowledged initially from the United States Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 which is summed up to "Congress shall have power…to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among several states and with the Indian Tribes." Furthermore, Tribes are recognized through specific Treaties between the United States of America and Indian Tribes or specific Acts of Congress.

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 is a foundational federal law that provides many requirements of the United States of America, specifically through the Secretary of the Interior to provide federal services to Tribal governments. The Federally Recognized Tribe List of 1994 formally establishes three ways in which an Indian Group may become Federally Recognized: By Act of Congress, or by the administrative procedures under 25 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 83, or by decision of the United States Court. Further 25 CFR provides regulatory direction on Indian Affairs which includes wildland fire management.

Currently there are 574 Federally Recognized Tribes in the United States of America. This list is updated annually in the Federal Register. It is also important to understand that federal recognition may fluctuate within the year based on various factors which may impact this recognition. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the oldest Agency of the Department of the Interior (DOI) maintains oversight of Federal recognition of Tribes, and management of federal trust land held on behalf of Tribes and/or individual Indians or reserved status.

Indian Land Status

Tribal governments have the authority to have land ownership or have a version of benefit from land held on their behalf as follows:

- *Tribal Trust Land*: Land owned by the Federal Government in trust for a tribe as whole. Commonly referred to as reservations, rancherias, and pueblos.
- *Allotted Trust Land (Allotments)*: Parcels held in trust by the Federal Government for individual Indians or their heirs, often resulting from the General Allotment Act of 1887; the Alaska Native Allotment Act of 1906; the Alaska Native Townsite Act of 1926; and the John D. Dingell Jr Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. Allotted lands can be complicated with fractionation which includes interest by a Tribal government.
- *Restricted Fee Land*: Land owned by a Tribe or individual Indians, but subject to federal restrictions against sale or conveyance (alienation) without BIA approval.
- *Fee Land (Fee Simple)*: Land owned outright by a Tribe or individual Indian within a reservation; although privately owned, it may still be subject to tribal jurisdiction and specific federal regulations.

Indian land management and responsibility can be a very complex environment and requires close coordination with the BIA. Specific to wildland fire management, the Federal Government has the responsibility and authority to provide protection and resource improvement of any Federal lands as described above and in some instances fee lands depending on various regulations. Given the complexities and mixtures of various types of lands, wildland fire management activities require clear understanding of ownership, and beneficiary interests so the U. S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) can ensure appropriate program management.

Various acts specific to Alaska Natives which include those listed under Allotted Trust Land and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) have established Federal trust lands and various types of fee lands on behalf of Alaska corporations, Tribes, and Alaska Natives. Alaska Natives have diverse statuses whereas they may be a Federally Recognized Tribe, Alaska Tribal Corporation, and/or individual people. Close coordination with the BIA and other governmental entities is critical for jurisdiction and authority determination.

Wildland Fire Management Processes and Formal Agreements

Federal trust lands defined as Tribal Trust or Allotted Trust Lands are the responsibility of the USWFS to provide protection and improvements. This can be carried out in the following manner:

- *Direct Services*: The USWFS provides federal government personnel, facilities, equipment, operations, etc., as a federal organization to carry out the wildland fire management mission. In accordance with the Department Manual Part 620, Chapter 5, the Bureau of Land Management is required to maintain and operate a DOI wildland fire suppression organization, now under the USWFS to provide safe, cost-effective wildland fire response statewide in Alaska for DOI. This includes wildland fire response consistent with approved land, natural and cultural resource management plans on DOI administered land and on lands that require protection under ANSCA.

- *Indian Self Determination and Indian Self-Governance*: In accordance with the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, Tribes can request to manage and operate programs on behalf of the DOI. Note, this does not allow for reimbursement of services such as suppression and all-hazard response.
- *Cooperative Agreement*: In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Tribes can request to manage and operate programs on behalf of the United States Federal Government. Also, this mechanism provides the ability to reimburse Tribes for their services in suppression and all-hazard response. Note, a cooperative agreement is required to provide any type of reimbursement to a Tribal government.

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, as amended (Public Law 93-638)
Title I and V provide the opportunity for Tribal governments to manage and operate part or whole Federal programs on behalf of the DOI and Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

- Title I authorizes self-determination contracts in which no matter how funded are deemed construction or non-construction contracts. Title I requires more Federal involvement in determining scopes of work, detailed operating budgets, reporting, and coordination between the DOI and the Tribal government. Scopes of work and detailed operating budgets should be very detailed and meet the requirements of the law and its associated regulations.
- Title V authorizes self-governance agreements in which are administered through the Indian Affairs, Office of Self Governance. Title V requires less Federal involvement, and therefore the requirements for involvement are to only require one annual financial report.
- The law and regulations require the following delegated positions:
    - *Approving Official*: Agency administrator who has the authority to authorize an agreement/contract with a Tribe within their jurisdiction.
    - *Awarding Official*: Warranted official who has the authority to negotiate, award, and execute an agreement/contract with a Tribe within their jurisdiction.
    - *Awarding Official Technical Representative (AOTR)*: Formally delegated official who has the delegated authority of the awarding official to negotiate, approve, monitor, and communicate on all matters of an agreement/contract to be awarded or in current status. This position is required to pass AOTR training and have a formal delegation from an awarding official for specific agreements/contracts.
    - *Subordinate Awarding Official Technical Representative (SAOTR)*: Formally delegated official who has the authority to assist the AOTR on all matters of an agreement/contract to be awarded or in current status.
- In accordance with the law, only those positions listed above are authorized to do any business or functions with a Tribal government who holds a current or to be negotiated agreement/contract. Coordination and communication are specific to the program as defined in the agreement/contract. Lastly, the delegation of authority for AOTR and SAOTR are specific to agreement/contracts and is to be formally listed in their delegation of authority.
- Program management must adhere to Public Law 93-638 and its associated regulations.

Cooperative agreements in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 provides a mechanism for the United States Government to conduct cooperative business with Tribal governments. The cooperative agreement can be used for Tribal governments to manage and operate part or whole Federal programs on behalf of the United States Government and/or reimbursement for services such as but not limited to suppression and all-hazard response.

- A cooperative agreement under this authority can be executed stand alone or can be parallel to an agreement/contract under Public Law 93-638. If a Tribe is operating a fire program on behalf of the USWFS to provide fire protection such as fire preparedness, fire aviation, etc., a cooperative agreement is required for the response action (suppression and all-hazard response) whereas it cannot be conducted under an agreement/contract under Public Law 93-638.
- A cooperative agreement should have formally designated management officials from the USWFS who has the authority to negotiate, approve, monitor, and communicate all matters of an agreement to be awarded or in current status.

Agreement/contract management under Public Law 93-638 or 2 CFR Part 200 must be implemented, operated, and managed in accordance with their laws, regulations, and policies. It is imperative to understand that both have major differences between one another as it pertains to but not limited to operational decision making, oversight, liability, and authority.

All agreement/contracts under the authorities identified here are for domestic United States use only, and do not allow for international coordination or mobilization which is consistent with all agreements entered into between various cooperators with the DOI and other Federal departments or bureaus. This also applies to international coordination efforts in which afford international border protection. Therefore, personnel, resources, and any

equipment operated under these agreements do not have the authority to participate in any international coordination.

With the continued development of the USWFS, the BIA will retain all agreements/contracts currently in place with Tribal governments for wildland fire management. This is expected to be in place until the end of calendar year 2027. Close coordination among the Geographic Area Associate Chief, Tribal operations positions and the BIA approving officials, awarding officials, AOTR's, SAOTRs, and grants/contracting officers. It is required that the appropriate delegation of authorities are established among the USWFS personnel who will be responsible for work with specific Tribal governments.

Tribal Fire Management Administration

These policies are intended to be used by the USWFS and Tribal governments when negotiating and entering agreements/contracts as defined above.

Guiding Principles

- Tribal wildland fire management programs may only be held to standards, rules, policies, etc., as defined in their formal agreements/contracts.
- Tribal wildland fire management programs vary in design:
  - Funded and initiated to carry out a wildland fire management program on behalf of the United States Government.
  - As a cooperator to provide cooperative assistance to the United States Government, as it pertains here.
- The USWFS is committed to working with Tribal governments to ensure adequate and appropriate support to afford a wildland fire management program that provides resource protection and improvement to Indian lands and others as negotiated between the USWFS and the Tribal government.
- Because not all Tribal land is under jurisdiction of a Tribal government, it is imperative that appropriate negotiations, planning, and organizational design is used to determine protection to all lands. This may include ensuring agreements among beneficiaries and continual coordination and communication.

Inherently Federal Activities

- Commit and obligate federal funds and authorize the initiation of a federal FireCode.
- Negotiate and determine cost-share agreements.
- Determination on decision documents in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).
- Review reimbursement package requests for all approved costs incurred for incident management activities. Reimbursement package requests will be processed in accordance with executed agreements.
- Determination on resource order requests issued through the national dispatch system.
- Delegation of authority for wildland fire management activities, including but not limited to: incident management teams (IMT), incident commanders (IC), procurement support, prevention teams, incident business advisors (INBA), fire investigation teams, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) teams, and dispatch/coordination center manager(s).
- Determination on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents. Actions are typically considered emergency actions if they must immediately be taken to protect public health and safety or important resources. The responsible agency administrator may take actions to control the immediate impacts of the emergency, consider the probable environmental consequences and mitigate the foreseeable adverse environmental effects to the extent practical (43 CFR § 46.150(a)). These actions can be completed without preparing any NEPA analysis, however, the determination of the emergency and the actions taken must be documented in writing (43 CFR § 46.150(b)). Subsequent actions that are not immediately needed to protect public health and safety or important resources must undergo normal NEPA procedures (Indian Affairs National Environmental Policy Act Guidebook 59 IAM 3-H).
- Determination on post wildland fire activity (ES/BAER) plans.
- Administer Department of the Interior medical standards policy.
- Determination on certification and issuance of incident qualification card that are issued through the USWFS.
- Oversight for wildland fire reporting to ensure accuracy and completion of fire reports.
- Oversight of fuels management program reporting.
- Carry out the duties and obligations of the agency administrator.
- Conduct reviews of all escaped prescribed fires that convert to wildland fires.
- Conduct reviews and investigations of all accidents and safety incidents related to projects and activities of the wildland fire management program.

- Hire, fire, and pay Federal Emergency Firefighters (EFF) under the current USDA Forest Service and Department of the Interior Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers. The federal AD hiring authority cannot be delegated to the Tribe.
- Furnish the Tribe with technical assistance, as necessary or requested, to accomplish the objectives of incident management activities and as applicable in accordance with executed agreements/contracts.
- Negotiate and determine tribally furnished equipment for cooperators in performance of the execution of the wildland fire management program.
- Negotiate and determine the loan and use of Federally owned equipment to the Tribes to carry out the wildland fire management programs.
- Determination on Tribal employees as motor vehicle operators annually according to the current 25 IAM Chapter 4 Motor Vehicle Safety Program (Refer to Appendix 2 of the Agreement).
- Coordinate with the Tribe to approve extended attack incidents and determine resource needs to meet operational objectives.
- Carry out all duties of the cognizant federal awarding agency, as mandated in 2 CFR § 200.
- Accept the transfer of all records, financial and non-financial, pertaining to suppression operations on Federal trust land pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.335 no later than three years after the closeout. Records will be retained according to the Indian Affairs Records Management policy.
- Review and issue an approval decision for management plans such as wildland fire management plans, land management plans, wildland fire prevention plans, aviation management plans, fuels management treatment plans, burned area rehabilitation plans, prescribed fire plans.
- Determination on advance payment requests for activities carried out under agreements.
- Negotiate and determine an annual operating plan (AOP), scope of work (SOW), and detailed budget plan for activities in accordance with the laws and regulations for agreements/contracts.
- Determination on burn/fire permits on Federal trust lands.
- Determination on project proposals and supplemental funding requests.
- Determination on post project monitoring and data collection plans.
- Accept the transfer of all records, financial and non-financial, pertaining to all-hazard management activities pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.335 no later than three years after the closeout. Records will be retained according to the Indian Affairs Records Management policy.
- Notify the OIG of any fraud, waste, or abuse.

Program Operational Standards

- Tribal wildland fire management programs that are funded to operate a Federal Wildland Fire Program on behalf of the USWFS should be planned and executed to meet or exceed the standards identified for a USWFS wildland fire program.
- Tribal wildland fire management programs that are funded to operate a Federal Wildland Fire Program on behalf of the USWFS do so under agreements/contracts with the BIA; and therefore, must comply with policies established in the Indian Affairs Manual (Part 90 is specific to Wildland Fire Management). Also, these programs must adhere to any policy established through policy memorandums that apply to wildland fire management, and their associated agreements/contracts.
- For Tribal personnel, it is encouraged that Tribes adopt the standardized Federal position descriptions and corresponding pay scale used by the USWFS, however, flexibility may exist to use other Tribal position descriptions and pay scales if they are representative of the duties and pay of a wildland fire management program.
- Tribal fire program managers that manage a program that is funded and operated on behalf of the USWFS should meet or exceed the position standards and requirements to be a fire program manager as identified in the associated position descriptions and Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) standards.

Fire Program Reviews

- As required by BIA Policy Memorandum, dated June 17, 2022, annual Tribal wildland fire management program readiness reviews are required for Tribal programs operating wildland fire preparedness and suppression, and aviation programs on behalf of the BIA. Tribal readiness reviews will be conducted in accordance with applicable regulations based on their current PL 93-638 agreements and Self-Governance compacts with the BIA.
- For 2026, legacy BIA (USWFS) and Tribal IHC's will continue to follow the 2025 BIA IHC Program Requirements memorandum guidance.

Tribal All Hazard Response

Tribal Disaster Assistance

On January 29, 2013, the President signed the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013, which amended the Stafford Act. The Act included a provision to provide Federally recognized Indian Tribal governments the option to request a Presidential emergency or major disaster declaration independent of a State. Tribal governments may still choose to seek assistance under a State declaration request.

BIA Office of Emergency Management

BIA Office of Emergency Management Part 92 IAM outlines BIA Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) purpose, scope, policy, authorities, responsibilities, definitions, standards and requirements, reports and forms, and training requirements. The OEM is an office within the Office of the Director, BIA (DBIA) and serves Indian Affairs by promoting self-sufficiency among Tribes in managing emergency preparedness and response activities. The OEM supports the BIA and Tribes with coordinating response, recovery, and hazard mitigation activities when requested. OEM also supports the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other Federal agencies with prompt cooperation, coordination, resources, and capabilities for emergency incidents that impact Tribal communities, lands, and resources, and the nation. As the 92 IAM 2 outlines OEM is responsible for maintaining bureau wide situational awareness of incident response operations and developing a common operating picture for Indian Affairs senior leaders. This applies to all incidents and events that impact Indian Affairs personnel, lands, facilities, infrastructure, or resources; Tribal lands or insular areas; or incidents and events for which assistance is provided to other units of government under federal laws, executive orders, interagency plans, or other agreements that requires coordination and communication of emergency situations to Indian Affairs senior leaders and to the DOI, OEM, Interior Operations Center (IOC).

Tribal Support for Emergency Support Function (ESF)

Tribal government programs, personnel, resources, etc., may participate as a Cooperator to Emergency Support Function Responses in accordance with resource orders. The USWFS Geographic Area Associate Chief, Tribal Operations positions must work closely with their respective Tribal governments to ensure agreements authorize all-hazard response and have an approved/negotiated reimbursement procedure established whereas Tribal costs may vary from those that are authorized in mission assignments and DOI sub-taskings. This must be done prior to the acceptance of a resource order and mission.

Remote Automatic Weather Stations (RAWS)

Fire Weather/RAWS

The fire weather program is managed and coordinated by the USWFS. This program provides funding and technical support for the maintenance and emergency repairs of station sensors to ensure the accuracy of station data for all USWFS-BIA stations that are a critical component of the RAWS Network (see chapter 10) for fire weather and fire danger rating purposes. All stations will adhere to the *NWCG Standards for Fire Weather Stations*, PMS 426-3. Stations are serviced through the Remote Sensing/Fire Weather Support Unit (RSFWSU) aka RAWS Depot located at NIFC. All permanent stations are on a Modified Service (annual RAWS technician visit) and portable/quick deploy stations are on the Portable Return Service; descriptions can be found on the RSFWSU Services tab on NIFC RAWS Homepage.

All technical questions about RAWS can be directed to the RAWS Help Desk: 208-387-5475, rawshelp@blm.gov.

USWFS-BIA and Tribal Portable Fire Weather Stations

All BIA and Tribal portable/quick deploy stations will meet the Fire RAWS Standards and Guidelines in the *NWCG Standards for Fire Weather Stations*, PMS 426-3. To facilitate annual maintenance requirements, all stations have been put on a Portable Return Service with the RAWS Depot and must be sent there on a yearly basis in the following manner:

- Go to WXx-Weather (weather.nifc.gov), select Read Only (No Login Required), then select Shipping Label Request on the left side panel to fill out the form and then select Create Label for a prepaid shipping label.
- The entire portable RAWS must be shipped to the RAWS Depot in order to provide adequate service, this includes: the cabinet, tripod, GOES and VHF antennas, all weather sensors with associated cables, radio (if equipped with an RVT) and vinyl cases with foam inserts. If the original cardboard shipping boxes from the vendor or boxes from the Depot are available, PLEASE SHIP VINYL CASES INSIDE THE CARDBOARD BOXES FOR ADDED PROTECTION. Upon receipt, the RAWS Depot will refurbish and recalibrate to 426-3 standards and return within 90 days or notify receiving unit if unable to do so.
- Service exceptions - Units are responsible for components that are damaged beyond normal repair. Maintenance actions will be suspended until replacement components are received.

Activation of portable fire weather stations is accomplished by contacting the RAWS Help Desk (208-387-5475, rawshelp@blm.gov) but will not be processed if the station is noncompliant with annual maintenance. Portables are only intended for temporary use and should be deactivated when not in use. They will not be set up permanently and if that need exists then contact the USWFS-BIA National RAWS Coordinator (RAWS Contacts) to discuss a permanent solution.

RAWS Management in WXx Weather (WXx)
A station inventory, metadata and observations of USWFS-BIA RAWS for any Region or Unit can be found by using the Station Search in WXx Weather. No login is required; select the icon under Details for any station to access the Observations button and other information.

- Each station must have a POC listed in WXx that can be responsive to emails/phone calls from the RAWS Depot about annual maintenance, an alternate POC is recommended.
- POCs can be updated by contacting the RAWS Help Desk or the USWFS-BIA National RAWS Coordinator.
- If a POC needs to request Maintenance edit access, then the eRequest form can be found on the left side panel under Request Edit Access. This access is only necessary if you are responsible for ordering sensors for repair/troubleshooting purposes, viewing Station Event reports, or updating metadata within WXx.

Safety and Risk Management

Safety and Health Responsibilities
Facility and work area inspections are conducted to ensure requirements are met per *29 CFR 1960* and *485 DM, chapter 5* for Tribal facilities used by USWFS personnel and/or Tribal personnel carrying operating a federal wildland fire program on behalf of the USWFS. These inspections and mitigations will be coordinated with BIA regional safety and facility personnel through legacy process.

Liability as it pertains to Loss or Injury
Activities under an agreement/contract within Public Law 93-638

- Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA) does not extend to Tribal governments, and therefore FECA does not apply to any programs or activities under an agreement/contract.
- Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) does extend to Tribal governments, and therefore FTCA does apply to any programs and activities under an agreement/contract. However, FTCA does not apply to on-the-job injuries which are covered by workmen's compensation. BIA self-determination and self-governance requires Tribes to carry and provide workmen's compensation for Tribal employees, and therefore FTCA does not apply.
- Any other loss not specific to on-the-job injuries can be submitted as a tort claim, following the FTCA process.
- Current executed agreements/contracts may have language that provides some level or process for handling of loss or injury by the Federal Government. If so, those will be required to be honored whereas they are contractually agreed upon. Any agreement/contract can be modified at any time, as agreed upon by the Tribe, to adjust any language to ensure no conflict exists with information listed above. However, no new agreements/contracts will be entered into that conflicts with what is listed above.
- Any activities performed outside the scope of the agreement/contract are considered independent action and therefore have no applicability to the USWFS for liability; however additional concern may exist if Federal equipment, supplies, facilities etc., are involved.

Activities under a Cooperative Agreement within 2 CFR Part 200

- Pursuant to 25 USC 3115(b), Indian Tribes and their employees who perform cooperative work under the supervision of the DOI as mutually agreed in the agreement shall be deemed federal employees for the purposes of FECA and FTCA.
- Yet, except when FECA and FTCA apply to cooperative work performed under an agreement under 25 USC 3115(b), the Tribe agrees to indemnify, save, and hold harmless the United States against all fines, claims, damages, losses, judgements, and expenses arising out of, or from, any act or omission of the Tribe or Tribal personnel or member, participants, agents, or representatives arising out of or in any way connected to activities authorized pursuant to the agreement. This obligation shall survive the termination of the agreement.
- In summary, the legal language above does not provide insurance nor liability to the Tribe; and FECA and FTCA do not apply. This does not preclude the Tribe from submitting a tort claim following the FTCA process.
- Current executed agreements may have language that provides some level or process for handling of loss or injury by the Federal Government. If so, those will be required to be honored whereas they are contractually agreed upon. However, no new agreements will be entered into that conflicts with what is listed above.
- Any activities performed outside the scope of the agreement are considered independent action and therefore have no applicability to the USWFS for liability; however, additional concern may exist if Federal equipment, supplies, facilities etc., are involved.

Mental Health and Wellbeing
Tribal fire management programs are welcomed and encouraged to utilize USWFS mental health and wellbeing policies, procedures and resources, when appropriate, in conjunction with Tribal resources for critical incident response. Please refer to chapter 7 for all programs and procedures.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program
When a critical incident occurs during wildland fire operations that impacts Tribal employees on Tribal lands with mixed responders, requests for CISM support will be considered and coordinated, as appropriate with Tribal fire management leadership or designated representative. Requests can be made through the Wildland Fire Critical Incident Support Request Line, (208) 242- 8430. The process for these requests can be found in chapter 7, Safety and Risk Management.

Tribal fire management programs are welcomed and encouraged to utilize USWFS mental health and wellbeing policies, procedures and resources, when appropriate, in conjunction with Tribal resources for critical incident response.

Firefighter Mandatory Physical Fitness Standards/Physical Fitness and Conditioning
Tribal employees serving in wildland fire positions that require a fitness rating of arduous as a condition of employment are highly encouraged to complete physical fitness conditioning for one hour of duty time each workday while in pay status. Special exceptions such as being assigned to an incident, travel status, injuries, details, etc., may be granted.

Information on the Work Capacity Test and the DOI MSP is located in chapter 13.

Tribal Managed Medical Standards
- Tribal fire programs that chose to manage medical standards assume full responsibility for ensuring total compliance with all applicable DOI medical standards by developing and operating their own internal medical standards process/program.
- Responsibilities include personnel funding, documentation, training, and annual certification for all tribal fire personnel.
- The program may utilize DOI components or be entirely designed by the tribe, provided it meets or exceeds DOI requirements.
- Final approval must be obtained from the BIA Regional Office.
- Programs are subject to annual review and certification to ensure continued compliance. Tribal programs and respective BIA office must have a procedure established to verify compliance with DOI Medical Standards for issuance of Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) qualifications from the BIA.

Medical Examination Process for Light and Moderate Fitness Levels
Individuals who opt out of the DOI MSP at the arduous level having received a "not-qualified-for-arduous-duty" status during a periodic or baseline examination may be required to report for a specific medical evaluation to determine fit-for-duty status.

Motor Vehicle Operator
Tribal Fire programs and personnel will continue to adhere to BIA motor vehicle policy and process as outlined in IAM 25 Chapter 4. Through formal agreement with BIA Tribes and Tribal fire programs are still bound to BIA by contract and agreement requiring adherence to BIA legacy policy on property, fleet, and motor vehicle operation.

Training and Standards, and Workforce Development

NWCG Fire Qualification Requirements associated with the issuance of an Incident Qualification Card (Red Card) through the USWFS
Tribal governments may operate wildland fire management programs on behalf of the USWFS under a formal agreement/contract with the BIA and/or USWFS. For these programs, the Tribe is required to meet all qualification standards identified through the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). It is highly encouraged that Tribal responders maintain minimum required qualifications for their positions in a wildland fire management program yet continue training and experience to obtain higher level qualifications that serve initial attack, extended attack, large fire, and all-hazard incident needs.

Qualifications and associated incident qualification cards issued by the USWFS are only valid in performance of defined activities under formal agreements/contracts with the BIA and/or USWFS. Use of qualifications or incident qualification cards outside of formal agreements/contracts or approved activities (by the USWFS) is prohibited and are considered invalid.

Training Required	Initial Requirement/ Frequency	Delivery Method/ Responsible Party
BL-300, *Fire Vehicle Driver Orientation* RT-301, *Fire Vehicle Driver Refresher Training*	• BL-300 - Once • RT-301 Refresher - Annually	• BIA Fire Vehicle Driving Training
Motor Vehicle /Equipment/Heavy Equipment Safety and Operations	• As directed in the Indian Affairs Motor Vehicle Safety Program Handbook, 25 IAM 4-H (Release #24-42, Issued 4/24/24)	• Reference Indian Affairs Motor Vehicle Safety Program Handbook; 25 IAM 4-H (Release #24-42, Issued 4/24/24)
Sawyers Only First Aid/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	• Every 2 years or per certifying authority	• Recognized, approved provider

Fire Vehicle Driver Orientation, BL-300, and the *Fire Vehicle Driver Refresher Training*, RT-301, are mandatory for all administratively determined (AD) and Tribal personnel performing wildland fire and prescribed fire operations. Training instruction for BL-300 and RT-301 can be found at BIA Fire Vehicle Driving Training.

Fire Qualifications through other Qualification Systems

Tribal governments may operate wildland fire management or all-risk fire departments that are not associated with the operation of a wildland fire management program on behalf of the USWFS. These departments may provide services such as but not limited to: structure/non-wildland fire, wildland fire, emergency medical services, hazmat, search and rescue, all-hazard, etc., to their own communities, surrounding communities, and assistance to cooperators nationally. These services may be carried out using qualifications through other means such as, but not limited to State, National Association of State Foresters, FEMA, etc.

For wildland fire response, and all-hazard response (nationally declared disaster through a formal mission assignment and associated sub-tasking to the DOI), the USWFS will honor and accept these qualifications if the Tribal government has a formal agreement with the BIA and/or USWFS. Tribal governments must ensure that they adhere to the standards and requirements of the organizations in which they obtain their qualifications through.

Incident Business

Federal Wildland Fires

Tribal Wildland Fire Programs Operated on Behalf of the USWFS

- Tribal wildland fire programs are funded and established to provide wildland fire response to protect DOI lands and provide interagency assistance. Therefore, these programs should have protocol established to determine coordination and response as a primary responder on the jurisdiction in which they operate.
- All incident responses will be in accordance with an approved agreement, and in accordance with a dispatch/response plan that is approved by the USWFS.
- All incident responses will be committed and documented in a dispatch system such as but not limited to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) or Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC). Those system records may be required for billing purposes.
- The Federal issued FireCode will be documented and utilized on all billing documents for Tribal program reimbursement.
- Tribal program reimbursement will be based on their formal agreement and standards identified in Tribal policy. It is critical to understand that Tribal standards and policies define a Tribal government's costs associated with incident response, which may not mirror Federal policy and process. The management official of the agreement must have a thorough understanding of the Tribe's standards and policies, and how it applies to the formal agreement and incident business.

Tribal Fire/All Risk Program in a Cooperative Agreement with the BIA/USWFS as a Cooperator

- All incident responses will be in accordance with an approved agreement, and as authorized by the USWFS and BIA. These programs do not have response authority or jurisdiction whereas they do not operate a wildland fire program on behalf of the USWFS, rather they are a cooperator to the USWFS.
- All incident responses will be at the request of the USWFS. The request can be carried out in various ways such as but not limited to a direct request in accordance with a dispatch/response plan that is agreed upon by the USWFS, etc.

- All incident responses will be committed and documented in a dispatch system such as but not limited to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) or Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC). Those system records may be required for billing purposes.
- Tribal program reimbursement will be based on their formal agreement and standards identified in Tribal policy. It is critical to understand that Tribal standards and policies define a Tribal government's costs associated with incident response, which may not mirror Federal policy and process. The management official of the agreement must have a thorough understanding of the Tribe's standards and policies, and how it applies to the formal agreement and incident business.

Non-Federal Wildland Fires

Tribal Wildland Fire Programs Operated on Behalf of the USWFS

- All incident responses will be in accordance with an approved agreement and in accordance with a dispatch/response plan that is approved by the USWFS.
- All incident responses will be committed and documented in a dispatch system such as but not limited to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) or Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC). Those system records may be required for billing purposes.
- A Federal FireCode is required to be issued by the appropriate dispatch/coordination center for Federal assistance to non-Federal incidents. The Federal issued FireCode will be documented and utilized on all billing documents for Tribal program reimbursement.
- Tribal program reimbursement will be based on their formal agreement and standards identified in Tribal policy. It is critical to understand that Tribal standards and policies define a Tribal government's costs associated with incident response, which may not mirror Federal policy and process. The management official of the agreement must have a thorough understanding of the Tribe's standards and policies, and how it applies to the formal agreement and incident business.

Tribal Fire/All Risk Programs in a Cooperative Agreement with the BIA/USWFS as a Cooperator

- Response to non-Federal incidents are not approved for reimbursement unless it is authorized under currently executed agreement with the BIA. However, no new agreements may be executed that provide reimbursement.
- If incident responses are authorized under a currently executed Agreement with the BIA, all incident responses will be committed and documented in a dispatch system such as but not limited to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) or Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC). Those system records may be required for billing purposes.
- If incident responses are authorized under a currently executed agreement with the BIA, a Federal FireCode is required to be issued by the appropriate dispatch/coordination center for federal assistance to non-federal incidents. The Federal issued FireCode will be documented and utilized on all billing documents for Tribal program reimbursement.
- Tribal program reimbursement will be based on their formal agreement and standards identified in Tribal Policy. It is critical to understand that Tribal standards and policies define a Tribal government's costs associated with incident response, which may not mirror Federal policy and process. The management official of the agreement must have a thorough understanding of the Tribe's standards and policies, and how it applies to the formal agreement and incident business.
- If no currently executed agreement exists with the BIA, any programs that wish to aid as a cooperator shall enter an agreement through State Office of Emergency Services or directly with the non-Federal entity.

Prescribed Fire Assistance to other entities off their respective Unit

- Under the Cross Boundary Prescribed Fire Program, which is primarily funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Tribe-to-Tribe resource requests are authorized, and Tribes may receive front-loaded funding to facilitate their participation. In all other cases, program reimbursements are administered in accordance with the established guidelines applicable to all legacy bureaus.
- Tribally funded fuels programs will follow legacy DOI lapse policies when assigned to suppression incidents.
- Tribal fuels programs will track individual employee positions and provide those to geographic areas and national officials.
- In common with legacy BIA fuels positions that are not filled, tribes will only receive funds for filled nationally approved fuels positions.
- Reserve Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) will continue to follow the legacy BIA process and procedures regarding applying, funding and reporting.

Wildland Fire Management Funding

Tribally operated wildland fire management programs, and their associated agreements/contracts will be maintained by the BIA. Therefore, the following funds will need to be transferred from the USWFS to the BIA or the Indian Affairs, Office of Self Governance:

- Preparedness
- Fuels Management
- Suppression

Funds transferred to the BIA or the Indian Affairs, Office of Self Governance, are done according to planned funding amounts for Fiscal Year 2026, which may include base salary, fringe, other operating costs, indirect costs, and contract support costs. Funding transfers may occur at various intervals based on funding appropriations, executed plans, suppression response, all-hazard response, and other considerations. Please note that suppression is only transferred to the BIA and not the Indian Affairs, Office of Self Governance, whereas only the BIA holds the agreements for response reimbursement.

Indirect cost funding is required in accordance with regulations associated with Public Law 93-638, and amounts determined in accordance with Tribe's current Indirect Cost Agreement which determines how indirect cost is budgeted and how it is utilized. Contract support costs are required in accordance with BIA policy, whereas current agreements and contracts remain with the BIA. These contract support costs may be calculated with indirect costs. Close coordination with AOTR's and management officials are required to determine these required costs which are outside of direct cost funding.

U.S. Wildland Fire Service SharePoint and Website

The U.S. Wildland Fire Service SharePoint is only accessible to Department of the Interior employees. Tribal wildland fire employees who are unable to access the SharePoint site should contact wildlandfire@ios.doi.gov to request access.

The U.S. Wildland Fire Service website is accessible to the public and contains a wide variety of information specific to the fire service.

Chapter 4
Department of the Interior Bureau Representative Information

Doug Burgum, Secretary of the Interior, 2026 Wildland Fire Management Direction

Executive Order 14308, "Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response," directs the secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to consolidate their wildland fire programs to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

In support of that directive, Secretarial Order 3448, issued January 12, 2026, established the United States Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) within the Office of the Secretary. The USWFS will oversee all aspects of the Department's wildland fire operations and activities.

The USWFS will maintain close coordination with leadership and staff across the land management bureaus on all fire-related land management issues. Preparedness and response activities must remain fully aligned with local resource management plans and priorities.

Wildland fire leadership at the national, geographic area and local levels will ensure that personnel, resources and equipment are ready to meet operational needs across all DOI-managed landscapes.

The USWFS will also collaborate seamlessly with Federal, State, Tribal and local government partners to maximize effectiveness and ensure timely wildfire response. Today's fire environment demands unity among responders and the communities they serve.

Given the Department of the Interior's responsibilities to safeguard communities, landscapes, habitat and critical infrastructure, we will enter this season with the presumption of a full suppression strategy applied to every wildfire under DOI management.

- Suppression actions must be prompt, decisive and based on values at risk—balanced with firefighter safety and a clear assessment of probability of success. Until conditions permit, all unplanned ignitions will receive a suppression response, using direct or indirect strategies as conditions dictate.
- While indirect approaches may occasionally be warranted, direct suppression should remain the default. DOI firefighters are empowered to assess and mitigate risk while responding to wildfires and have the full support of Department leadership in carrying out this mission.
- Prescribed burns play an important role, WHEN CONDITIONS PERMIT.

When Geographic Areas or the nation reach Preparedness Level 3 or higher, prescribed fire may not be used without express approval from the Geographic Area Fire Chief or their designee. If a Geographic Area escalates into PL3, prescribed fires already underway will be extinguished unless explicit authorization is granted to continue.

- With the establishment of the USWFS, authority to direct the Department's wildfire response—coordinated with land managers and intergovernmental partners—has been delegated to fire leadership.
- Even with a unified Wildland Fire Service, the Department will continue to rely on contributions from employees across bureaus during peak fire season.
- Fire and land management staff are directed to identify and build supplemental fire workforce capacity now, before operational demand intensifies.
- Support from non-USWFS employees remains essential to sustaining strong wildfire response and coordination with Federal, Tribal, State, and local partners. Every DOI employee can play a meaningful role in supporting wildland fire operations.

Fire response, however, is only one component of safeguarding the nation from catastrophic wildfires. The USWFS must make full use of available authorities and resources to reduce fuel loads and hazardous vegetation before fires start.

Unification under the USWFS creates opportunities for greater efficiency in addressing fuels accumulation and focusing effort as the most hazardous landscapes. A shared risk-based approach will guide vegetation management across Interior-managed lands and strengthen collaboration with Federal, State, Tribal and local partners.

Because wildfire doesn't know or care about who is the landowner or manager, mitigation efforts must be coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries including our bureaus, agencies and with State, local and private landowners.

The USWFS will continue to employ aggressive, practical, science-based vegetation management tools. Achieving meaningful hazardous fuels reduction requires integrated work between fire leaders and land managers. Active land and vegetation management reduces wildfire intensity and impacts. The Department expects efficient use of appropriate tools, including:

- mowing and grazing;
- cutting, masticating, thinning, piling, yarding, and selling timber and salvage;
- establishing and maintaining linear fuel breaks and access roads;
- biological and chemical fuel treatments;
- prescribed burning (WHEN CONDITIONS PERMIT);
- selling vegetation products such as firewood, biomass, timber, and fence posts; and
- managing invasive species, including the seeding of native, non-invasive, or non-native species

This direction can be found on the USWFS SharePoint site. Wildland Fire Management Direction from Secretary Burgum | April 8, 2026

Definitions

Agency Administrator: A USWFS geographic area fire chief or unit fire chief exercising assigned authority for wildland fire management decisions, including wildfires and prescribed fires. The Agency Administrator (AADM) qualification is not required for a USWFS agency administrator.

Bureau Representative (or DOI Bureau Representative): An individual designated by a DOI Bureau to represent its interests and retained authorities in wildland fire management, consistent with USWFS Transition Guidance, and applicable Bureau direction.

USWFS Authorities/Actions

The following guidance is from Policy Memorandum 2026-006, *Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Authorities During Transition*. Below is the full memorandum attachment. Additional transition guidance can be found in the Policy Library on the USWFS SharePoint site.

Purpose
This United States Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) policy provides clear and efficient standards and procedures for assigning authorities, facilitates management control over exercising authority, and ensures authority is exercised at the lowest practical level.

Responsibility
The Director and the Deputy Directors are responsible for ensuring that the ability to exercise authority is assigned to the most appropriate organizational level.

All USWFS Officials are responsible for:
- Ensuring that authorities are exercised within legally stated limits.
- Assigning and reassigning the ability to exercise authorities to the appropriate level of the organization and ensuring full documentation in writing of the assignment/reassignment.

Derivation of Authority
Secretary's Order No. 3448, *Establishment of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service*, created the USWFS on January 12, 2026, and delegated to the Director, USWFS, "all authority necessary…to fulfill the Department's wildland fire mission," including any current or future statutory wildland fire authorities applicable to any DOI Bureau or Office.

200 DM 2.3 requires that "[r]edelgations of authority within a bureau or office will be issued as part of the bureau or office directives system." Until the USWFS establishes a directives system, the authority delegated to the USWFS Director in Secretary's Order No. 3448 may only be assigned, not formally delegated or re-delegated, by the USWFS Director to other positions within the USWFS to exercise.

For all USWFS positions with assigned authority, the deputy position for that office holds those assigned authorities when the primary is not available (for example, a Geographic Area Deputy Fire Chief shares all authorities held by Geographic Area Fire Chief).

While the USWFS generally assigns authority to the lowest organizational levels consistent with efficient program management, officials at higher organizational levels can exercise authority that has been reassigned to their subordinates unless expressly prohibited by law.

Geographic Area Authority
The Geographic Area (GA) Fire Chiefs are authorized to perform in their respective GA. The GAs are shown on the National Interagency Coordination Center's Geographic Area site at: https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/geographic-areas.

Assignments, Reassignments and Actings

The attached table serves as written notification of assignment/reassignment by the USWFS Director for the ability to exercise specific authorities within the USWFS. Any official to whom authority is assigned in the table below, or to whom authority has been assigned by other appropriate means, may, in writing, reassign or authorize reassignment of such authority, unless reassignment of authority is specifically prohibited or is limited. The written notice must be signed by the official reassigning the authority and sent to the position receiving the authority. Assignments must be limited by either an end date or an end condition (e.g., “until the wildfire is called out or “until superseded or revoked”).

Employees detailed or temporarily promoted to positions covered in this authority policy will assume the responsibilities and ability to exercise authorities assigned to that position and will sign documents as "Acting."

An individual may be designated as an acting official for a specified period of time if the USWFS position with the assigned authority is unavailable. These designations must be in writing and include the specified time period an individual will serve in an acting capacity. Individuals serving in an acting capacity must use judgment in exercising these authorities. This includes considering the relative importance of an issue, whether the issue could or should be deferred, and the known preference of the individual for whom that person is exercising authority.

Actings may be designated either by individual designation (e.g., Mark Pierce will be acting from January 12 – January 15 or Mark Pierce will be acting from July 3 until further notice.) or by a standard acting rotation (e.g., Joe Smith will be acting for January, Mary Johnson will be acting for February, etc.). These designations should also include any necessary limitations on authorities for an individual serving in an acting capacity.

Only one individual may be designated to exercise authority for a specified period of time, unless a unique situation applies.

Unique Situations

Individuals serving in an exercising authority capacity assume all the authorities of that position unless authorities are withheld. If an authority is withheld, a designated exercising authority official for that authority will be assigned to ensure continuity of operations. An example for the USWFS of a unique situation would be if a local unit had multiple wildfire incidents with incident management teams assigned and needed additional support to serve as the USWFS Agency Administrator, who is assigned the ability to exercise wildfire authorities such as signing a cost share agreement, for each incident. The USWFS Unit Chief could provide a reassignment of authority to a USWFS employee to be the acting USWFS Unit Chief for an individual incident, reassigning only the authorities related to wildfire incidents for a USWFS Agency Administrator, but would withhold the other authorities held by a USWFS Unit Chief.

Reassignment of an authority does not preclude that USWFS official from later revoking that authority from the lower level or requiring concurrence to exercise that authority from a higher-level official. An assignment or reassignment of authority may be revoked at any time by providing written notice to the position(s) involved.

Authorities/Actions Table

Authority/Action Column: This column contains specific authorities. All the authorities/actions to which a legal authority is attached are not listed individually but may be summarized in one descriptive statement.

USWFS Officials Columns: These columns indicate the USWFS national, geographic area or unit official authority is assigned to. Authorities may be exercised at the level(s) marked in USWFS Officials Columns. For example, an “X” in the “GA FC/ GA DFC” column indicates that all GA Fire Chiefs and GA Deputy Fire Chiefs hold that authority.

Abbreviations used in columns include:

D/DD - USWFS Director and Deputy Directors
GA FC/GA DFC – USWFS Geographic Area Fire Chief and Geographic Area Deputy Fire Chief
Unit FC – USWFS Unit Fire Chief

Symbols used in the column and their definition:

An "X" indicates that the authority is assigned to all within that category and may be **reassigned to a lower level by the official designated with that authority.**

An asterisk (*) indicates that the authority **may not be reassigned below the designated official,** except as annotated in an accompanying note (if applicable). Limitations may be in accordance with regulations or may be at the discretion of the higher-level authority.

A number (e.g., "[1]") indicates either a specific position receiving authority or an explanatory note for that activity.

While the table contains many authorities within the USWFS, it does not contain every single one, nor can it contain assignments made, revoked, or changed following the issuance of the authority policy. Additionally, there may be situations where an authority may be reassigned in writing by an official that is provided such discretion.

Notes: This column provides additional information and clarity regarding which functional position has a given authority and those authorities that may not be reassigned. For example, if the "D/DD" column is checked for an activity in Aviation, the "Notes" column might provide additional clarity that the authority is with the Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. When "Bureau or Bureaus" is used in the Notes column, it refers to the four land management Bureaus in the Department of Interior (Department or DOI) – (1) Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), (2) Bureau of Land Management (BLM), (3) National Park Service (NPS), and (4) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Administrative	Serve as the Hiring Official for emergency firefighters in accordance with the Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals) for both wildland fire and all-hazard needs.	X[1]	X[1]	X[1]	1 - This may only be reassigned to an AD Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals) subject matter expert (SME) at the respective level (e.g., Unit FC may redelegate to the Unit's AD Pay Plan SME). Multiple SMEs within an administrative unit may receive this reassignment.
	Approve advanced written requests for non-wildfire travel for actual per diem or lodging costs up to 300 percent of the allowable per diem or lodging allowance for the locality.	X	*		When a traveler has a resource order for wildfire or all-hazard incident travel, the USWFS has provided prior approval for actual per diem or lodging costs up to 300 percent of the allowable per diem or lodging allowance for the locality; no separate advanced written approval is required.
	Approve requests, in writing, to domicile a government vehicle at an employee's residence in connection with official temporary duty travel.	X	*	*	This approval is not the same as the Home-to-Work approval for fieldwork activities under 41 CFR 102-5, which requires approval by the Secretary of the Interior.
	Approve Administrative leave.	X	*	*	Administrative leave under 5 U.S.C. 6329a and 5 C.F.R. Part 630, Subpart N, O, and P is discretionary and does not constitute an entitlement. Assigned officials may approve administrative leave under their line of authority on an ad hoc, event-specific, or otherwise time-limited basis. Consistent with regulatory intent, administrative leave is to be used sparingly and is generally limited to brief periods.
Agreements	Sign national level agreements to facilitate mutual assistance for wildland fire management activities such as prevention, training, preparedness, fuels management, suppression, and post-fire activities.	X			

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Agreements (continued)	Sign Statewide Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements	X	*		
	Sign local agreements tiered to a Statewide Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements.	X	*	*	
	Sign fire operating plans committing funds and/or resources in support of national, state and/or local level agreements for mutual assistance.	X	*	*	
	Sign interagency agreements for wildland fire management to include, but not limited to, agreements for: initial response, protection, offset, and dispatch or coordination centers.	X	X	X	Signature on an agreement should be at the level the agreement covers. For example, an agreement at the local level would be signed by the USWFS Unit FC.
	Sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) related to the wildland fire program.	X	X	*	
	Sign financial assistance agreements related to the wildland fire program.	X	X	*	
	Sign agreements and MOUs that are ONLY for aviation operations and aviation management.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign wildfire cost share agreements for multi-jurisdictional wildfires. ‡	X	*	*	
	Sign Tribal 638 agreements.	X[1]			1 - Only Self Determination Officers/Specialists (Awarding Officials for contracts and grants under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), P.L. 93-638). 638 agreements may vary and each agreement should be referenced for what authorities may be assigned to the Tribe and what is retained by the USWFS.
Aviation	Sign Single-Skid, Toe-In and Hover Exit/Entry Procedures (STEP) plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Aviation (continued)	Sign Letter of Authorization for Incidental Pilots supporting Interagency Fire.	X[1]			1 - Director and the Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Project Aviation Safety Plans (Crewed and Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS)).	X[1,2]	X[2]	*[2]	1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management 2 - Aviation programs not unified under the WFS will retain their current delegated authorities and approval levels.
	Sign Aviation Security Risk Assessments and Plans.	X[1,2]			1- Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management2 - Aviation programs not unified under the WFS will retain their current delegated authorities and approval levels.
	Sign Aviation Plans.	X[1,2]	*[2]	*[2]	Plans are approved by USWFS officials at the level of coverage or a higher level, e.g., a Geographic Area Plan will be approved by the GA FC/GA DFC or approved at the national level. 1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management 2 - Aviation programs not unified under the WFS will retain their current delegated authorities and approval levels.
	Approve Senior Executive Service (SES) official travel (non-mission) or carriage of non-federal personnel using government owned, leased, contracted or cooperator aircraft.	*[1]			1 - Director only
	Approve DOI employee official travel (non-mission) using government owned, leased, contracted or cooperator aircraft.	X	*		
	Approve the carriage of non-aircrew members on mission flights.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Approve exception to seat fare requirements.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Aviation (continued)	Sign Short-haul plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Rappel Plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Hoist Plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Aerial Capture, Eradication and Tagging of Animals (ACETA) Plans.	*[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Sign Cooperator Letters (Crewed and UAS).	X[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
	Approve Aviation Life Support Equipment Waiver.	X[1]			1 - Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management
Fuels and Post-Fire	Sign prescribed fire plans. ‡	X[1]	*[1]	*[1]	1 - Both the USWFS and Bureaus approve prescribed fire plans.
	Sign Ignition Authorization.	X	X	*	A National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualified burn boss will sign the Go/No-Go Checklist.
	Sign submitted post-fire plans from Bureaus that are utilizing USWFS funds.	X	X		
	Approve prescribed fire implementation on DOI lands, including contracted or non-fuels management prescribed fire projects, at National or Geographic Preparedness Level (PL) 4 or 5.	X	*[1]		1 - GA FC/GA DFC approves at National or Geographic PL 4 or 5.
Response and Suppression	Provide wildfire protection for all BIA, BLM, NPS and FWS lands.	X	X	X	
	Order suppression resources and expend funds for wildfire management. ‡	X[1]	X[1]	X[1]	1 - May only be reassigned to a qualified Incident Commander (IC) or to a fire operational duty officer (DO). If this authority is reassigned to an IC and a Leader's Intent is also being provided to that IC, the same USWFS Official will sign both documents. Note: Bureaus may also sign the Leader's Intent.

		USWFS Officials			
Topic	**Authority/Action**	**D/DD**	**GA FC / GA DFC**	**Unit FC**	**Notes**
Response and Suppression (continued)	Approve wildfire decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS). ‡	X[1]	*[1]	*[1]	1 - Both the USWFS and Bureaus approve wildfire decisions in WFDSS.
	Certify/Approve fire reports.	X	X	*	
	Make decisions as part of a Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group as they affect DOI lands to establish fire priorities, allocate and re-allocate fire suppression resources.	X[1]	X[2]	X[3]	1 - Member of National MAC Group 2 - Member of Geographic Area MAC Group 3 - Member of Local MAC Group
Training and Qualifications	Certify wildland fire Position Task Books (PTBs) of all DOI employees, including USWFS and Bureau personnel. Certify Incident Qualification Cards for all employees in the DOI, including the Bureaus and the USWFS, who have BOTH wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications. Certify all-hazard PTBs for USWFS employees.	X	*[1,2]	*[1,2]	1 - The GA FC/GA DFC will certify position task books and incident qualifications cards for Unit FCs. The Director/Deputy Director will certify position task books and incident qualifications cards for GA FC. 2 - Exceptions: The GA FC/GA DFC will certify position task books of all DOI employees, including USWFS and Bureau employees, within the GA for wildland fire area command positions and complex command & general staff positions.
	‡ - Due to the unique responsibilities required by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended 43 U.S. C. 1620(e) (ANCSA), the Alaska GA FC/GA DFC may exercise this authority, in coordination with Native Corporations, for wildfires and prescribed fires that involve lands that require protection under ANCSA.				

USWFS Transition Guidance

The following transition guidance is from Policy Memorandum 2026-002, *Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Roles and Responsibilities During Transition*. Below is the concise overview; comprehensive direction can be found in the Policy Library on the USWFS SharePoint site.

The following Transition Guidance specifies current roles and responsibilities related to fire planning and decision-making activities across all U.S. Wildland Fire Service ("USWFS") programs and personnel. It also contains clarifying references to the roles and responsibilities that remain with the Department's land management and other bureaus.

Secretary's Order No. 3448, Establishment of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, unified the Department's disparate wildland fire programs into USWFS and delegated to the Director, USWFS, "all authority necessary…to fulfill the Department's wildland fire mission." It also recognized that "there will be a transition period in which there may be overlapping authorities and responsibilities with respect to wildland fire management," and that "during such period,

the Department shall diligently operationalize the unified USWFS, while simultaneously ensuring that there is no negative impact on its missions due to the creation of USWFS."

Priority

Nothing in the Transition Guidance shall be interpreted or utilized in a way that disrupts or impedes the prompt and efficient accomplishment of the USWFS wildland fire mission. Nor shall it be used to detract from efficient and effective coordination between the USWFS and the Department's land management bureaus.

Dissemination and Implementation

The Transition Guidance is hereby in effect and shall be promptly disseminated through leadership channels across all levels of the USWFS. USWFS personnel shall ensure familiarity and compliance with the Transition Guidance, including promptly seeking any necessary clarification with respect to its application to their official duties. The Transition Guidance will be implemented consistently with the General Operating Principles set forth therein.

Coordination

The Transition Guidance is intended to aid the USWFS and the bureaus/offices during the transition period by clarifying the responsibilities and duties of each unit of the Department, with respect to all aspects of wildland fire. It should not serve to replace timely coordination among and between employees of the USWFS or any office/bureau in order to ensure the successful execution of the Department's mission during fire season or any other fire emergencies.

Foundational Policy and Authorities

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Review And Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2001) and *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (2009)	DOI provides this Transition Guidance to ensure clarity in authority and responsibility for Bureaus and the USWFS and for how both the USWFS and Bureaus can comply with Federal Fire Policy while further analysis of program and updates to policy and Department Manuals (DMs) is completed. The USWFS will work in close coordination with Bureaus on policy updates as necessary.	Bureaus will need to amend Bureau policies related to wildland fire management based on the new role the USWFS has in the DOI. Bureaus will coordinate with USWFS on policy updates to ensure alignment across the Department.
Statutory Authority – Authorities given to Bureaus and not just the Secretary of Interior, including Bureau's organic acts.	All authorities necessary were delegated to the Director of the USWFS under SO 3448 in January 2026.	

Administrative

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Procurement – Agency Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC)/System Administrator	USWFS employees will continue to use their legacy bureau charge cards until change procedures are determined and enacted.	Bureaus will continue to serve as the A/OPC and will manage and process all charge cards for their legacy bureau wildland fire employees until charge card procedures are determined and enacted.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Records	All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.	All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. Bureau employees should follow already established Bureau record procedures for wildfire incident records until such time as new departmental direction for wildfire records is provided.
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests	USWFS FOIA requests will flow through the Office of the Secretary's FOIA program. The USWFS will have the responsibility to respond to FOIA requests they receive with records from the USWFS.	Each Bureau will have the responsibility to respond to FOIA requests they receive with records from the Bureau. Bureaus may need to coordinate with the USWFS for these requests.
Administratively Determined (AD) Hiring	The USWFS will hire ADs for wildland fire and all-hazard needs.	Bureaus will only hire ADs for all-hazard needs.

Agreements

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreements Signature Authority	The USWFS will assume wildfire protection responsibility and suppression reimbursement responsibilities on behalf of the Bureaus for any agreements related to wildfire, and agreements will be reviewed within a year of the date of this Guidance and updated as needed. The USWFS will be the signatory to new agreements.	Bureaus will no longer sign these agreements, agreement extensions or agreement modifications.
Local Agreements tiered to a Statewide Master Agreement Signature Authority (e.g., local operating plans and mutual aid agreements)	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of the Bureaus for any local agreements related to wildland fire. The USWFS will be the signatory to new/revised agreements, as the USWFS will be signatory of Statewide Masters.	Bureaus will no longer sign local agreements related to wildland fire.
Initial Response / Offset / Protection / Interagency Agreements for Wildland Fire Activities	The USWFS will assume responsibility for meeting the terms of these agreements and will continue operating with these agreements. Over the next year, the USWFS will evaluate each agreement to determine if it is still needed. The USWFS has authority to revise and enter into new agreements, including with NGO, state, local or federal entities (e.g., USDA-FS). The USWFS will be the signatory to any updates, revision or new offset/protection agreements if the agreement is funded by the USWFS.	Bureaus will no longer enter into agreements for initial response or off-set protection. Bureaus may enter into new agreements for implementation of post-fire activities when leading post-fire implementation. This will be closely coordinated with the USWFS.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Wildland Fire Program Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)	USWFS will assume responsibility of meeting the terms of these MOUs, potentially excluding some MOUs for post-fire implementation activities. The USWFS will continue operating with these agreements. The USWFS will review fire-related MOUs signed by Bureaus to determine if they are still needed and if so, will identify the appropriate USWFS official with authority to sign each MOU. The USWFS will be the signatory to any new wildland fire program MOUs, potentially excluding some MOUs for implementation of post-fire activities.	Bureaus will no longer enter into MOUs for the wildland fire program, excluding MOUs for implementation of post-fire activities.
Wildfire Land Use Agreements	The USWFS will work with DOI acquisitions for land use agreements for wildfire support.	Bureaus will no longer enter into land use agreements for wildfire support.
Wildfire Cost Share Agreements	The USWFS will review and sign wildfire cost share agreements since they are utilizing suppression funding.	Bureaus will no longer be signatories to wildfire cost share agreements.
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Specific Agreements	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of the Bureaus for meeting the terms of wildland fire management agreements between the BOR and the Bureaus, including protection agreements. The USWFS will continue operating with these agreements. The USWFS and BOR will evaluate these agreements over the next year.	Bureaus will no longer enter into wildland fire management agreements with the BOR.
Tribal 638 Agreements	The USWFS has authority to enter into Tribal 638 agreements, but BIA will continue to maintain these agreements until a later point in the transition.	The BIA will continue to maintain these agreements until the USWFS has the capacity through Self Determination Officers once they are in the USWFS.
Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) Interagency Agreements	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for agreements related to coordination center staffing, supervision, supplies or funding. Agreements should be reviewed within a year of the date of this Guidance and updated as needed. The USWFS will sign new agreements.	Bureaus will no longer be signatories to GACC Interagency Agreements.
Service First Authority (16 USC 8544)	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for agreements under the Service First Authority related to wildland fire. The USWFS will review existing agreements within a year of the date of this Guidance and update as needed. The USWFS may enter into new Service First Agreements for the wildland fire program.	Bureaus may continue to enter into Service First Agreements for non-wildland fire program areas.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Sikes Act Agreements	The USWFS may enter into Sikes Act agreements for the wildland fire program.	Bureaus may continue to enter into Sikes Act Agreements for non-wildland fire program areas.
Financial Assistance Agreements Related to Wildland Fire	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for Financial Assistance Agreements funded by wildland fire. The USWFS will review existing agreements within a year of the date of this Guidance and update as needed. The USWFS will sign new Assistance Agreement when USWFS funding is used for the agreement.	Bureaus may enter into Financial Assistance Agreements using wildland fire program funding after documented coordination with the USWFS.

Aviation

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Aviation Management Plans	The USWFS will continue aviation operations following approved Bureau aviation management plans for all DOI Bureaus conducting aviation operations.	Bureau aviation management plans will remain valid and will be followed until a USWFS aviation management plan can be developed and approved, and direction is given to transition to it.
End-product Contract Work	The USWFS will use current Bureau processes to review end-product contracts until transition to the USWFS is complete. Oversight extends to aviation contracts executed under BIA and tribally operated program funded through PL 93-638.	Bureaus may still conduct end-product contract work that may result in aviation utilization without giving federal entities operation control. Bureaus will coordinate end-product contract work using current processes and points of contact, to include unit, state/region, national aviation personnel as per Bureau and DOI policy.
Law Enforcement Aviation Support	The USWFS will use current Bureau processes for law enforcement aviation support until transition to the USWFS is complete.	Bureau law enforcement will continue following current process and Bureau points of contact for aviation support.
Aviation Reviews	The USWFS will conduct scheduled aviation reviews in 2026, including BIA, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and tribally operated programs under PL 93-638 and Self-Governance compacts, excluding the BLM.	Bureaus and tribally operated programs will participate in scheduled aviation reviews during 2026.
Aviation Fleet (crewed and uncrewed) Management	The USWFS will continue to provide governance, fleeting pilot standards, and manage fleet accounts for all DOI aviation assets, including both crewed and uncrewed aircraft.	Bureaus will ensure aviation personnel adhere to department standards. For aircraft purchases, bureaus will provide sufficient funding and request all aviation fleet purchases through USWFS.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Approval of Senior Executive Service (SES) Travel (Non-Mission) or Carriage of Non-Federal Personnel Using Government Owned, Leased, Contracted, or Cooperator Aircraft	The USWFS will continue coordinating with the Solicitor's Office for approval of SES or non-federal travel requests.	Bureaus will request SES or non-federal travel using government owned, leased, contracted or cooperator aircraft through USWFS Aviation.

Dispatch

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Third-Tier Dispatch Center with DOI Wildland Fire Responsibility	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for any third-tier dispatch center agreements. The USWFS will be the primary DOI representative for Dispatch Center Board of Directors for all center operations to include funding, supervision, and assignment of responsibilities.	Bureaus will ensure non-wildland fire dispatch center programs are represented on the Dispatch Center Board of Directors and will provide applicable funding contributions.

Fuels and Post-Fire

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Fuels Risk Mapping	The USWFS will provide a risk map and recommend priority treatment areas to reduce wildfire risk to aid Bureaus in selecting treatment locations.	Bureaus will engage the expertise of the USWFS fuels specialists and utilize the USWFS risk map to aid in selection of treatment locations.
Fuels Project Development	The USWFS will work closely with bureau staff (BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS and BOR) to develop fuels projects including serving on ID teams.	Bureaus will lead the development of fuels projects on DOI lands. Bureaus will be ultimately responsible for project development.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Environmental Compliance	The USWFS may fund NEPA work by resource specialist or Interdisciplinary (ID) Team time for fuels work. Funding would be transferred to cover the approved cost entered into the project in Interior Fuels and Post-Fire Reporting System (IFPRS). USWFS personnel may serve as NEPA ID team members on project teams.	Bureau authorized officers will retain authority to sign decisions supported by NEPA analysis (e.g., Finding of No Significant Impact, Decision Record, and Record of Decision). Bureaus will lead environmental compliance including NEPA analysis requirements, consultation and meeting National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requirements, such as Section 106.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
NEPA Analysis and Decisions Based on the Analysis When a Project is Not on Federal Lands and Either USWFS Funds are Expended on the Project or the USWFS is Responsible for Project Completion (See NEPA and Environmental Compliance topic for when Bureau lands are involved)	The USWFS may conduct environmental analysis following the NEPA requirements when either USWFS funding is spent on non-federal lands for a fuels project or the USWFS is responsible for project completion on non-federal lands. The USWFS may sign decisions supported by these analyses. For example, in AK, when a project is planned on Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) as amended (43 U.S.C 1620) Corporation lands and USWFS funds would be used to accomplish the project, the USWFS would conduct the analysis and sign the decision.	Bureaus will continue to be able to conduct environmental analysis following NEPA requirements and sign decisions based on the analysis, when Bureau funding is spent on non-federal lands.
Fuels Program of Work (POW) Development and Approval	The USWFS will lead the POW development process and will prioritize fuels projects when USWFS funds are utilized. Funding will be allocated by priorities and not by a pre-determined split. The USWFS will negotiate fuels target funded by USWFS with Bureaus. The USWFS will be accountable for fuels action targets that USWFS implements on Bureau lands with USWFS funding.	When USWFS funds are utilized for project implementation, Bureaus will submit projects to the USWFS through an annual POW planning process for funding allocation. Bureaus will fold into a single POW and projects will be prioritized from this single POW for funding. Bureaus will negotiate with the USWFS for fuels target funded by the USWFS.
Fuels Project Implementation	The USWFS will implement fuels projects, working closely with Bureau personnel to ensure meeting intended objectives and avoiding unintended outcomes.	Bureaus will work closely with USWFS personnel during implementation. Bureaus will close lands or roads for day-of work implementation.
Prescribed Fire Implementation Signatures	The USWFS will complete technical reviews of all prescribed fires plans. Both the USWFS and Bureau will sign Prescribed Fire Plans. The USWFS will sign the Ignition Authorization for all prescribed fires. An NWCG qualified burn boss will sign the Go/No-Go Checklist.	Both the USWFS and Bureau will sign Prescribed Fire Plans. Bureaus will no longer sign the Ignition Authorization for prescribed fire. An NWCG qualified burn boss will sign the Go/No-Go Checklist.
Prescribed Fire Implementation without Hazardous Fuels Management Objectives	The USWFS has oversight responsibility for any prescribed fire activity on Bureau lands. The USWFS may implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects for Bureaus. If the USWFS is not available to implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects, the USWFS will still approve prescribed fire implementation by non-USWFS personnel such as qualified Bureau personnel (e.g., Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 (RXB2)) and contractors.	Bureaus may request USWFS implementation assistance to implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects. Bureaus must provide funding for the USWFS to implement non-hazardous fuels management prescribed fire projects.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Post-Fire Plan and Project Development, Approval and Implementation	The USWFS will maintain the national post-fire roster and organize support as requested. The USWFS will review, prioritize and nationally approve submitted post-fire plans from Bureaus that are utilizing USWFS funds. The USWFS will allocate funds for approved work. The USWFS will support implementation work as needed, requested and available.	Bureaus will submit post-fire plans and recommended projects. Most plans will be developed locally. Plans may include labor funding for project leads or implementation positions that are housed in either Bureaus or the USWFS. Bureaus will approve plans before submitting to USWFS. Bureaus will implement USWFS nationally approved post-fire work, funded by USWFS.
Prescribed Fire at Preparedness Levels 4 or 5	The USWFS will approve prescribed fire implementation on DOI lands, including contracted or non-fuels management prescribed fire projects, at National or Geographic Preparedness Level 4 or 5.	Bureaus will no longer approve prescribed fire implementation on DOI lands at national or geographic Preparedness Levels 4 or 5.
Reporting and Monitoring	The USWFS will complete all fuels accomplishment reporting in IFPRS. The USWFS will be responsible to complete fuels project monitoring requirements. These requirements may be completed directly by USWFS or by funding the Bureau to complete them on the USWFS's behalf. The USWFS will complete Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM) after an interaction between a wildfire and a fuels treatment.	Bureaus will complete all post-fire monitoring and reporting, including IFPRS data entry. Bureaus may complete fuels monitoring on behalf of USWFS. Bureaus will complete additional ecological monitoring as desired.

Preparedness and Planning

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Land/Resource Management Plans (L/RMP)	The USWFS will work closely with Bureaus on L/RMP revisions and amendments to ensure inclusion of wildland fire goals, objectives, and actions. The USWFS will ensure there is DOI policy that all DOI L/RMPs that include burnable acres must have a wildland fire management section.	Bureaus will coordinate with USWFS specialists on LRMP revisions and amendments to ensure inclusion of wildland fire goals, objectives, and actions. Bureaus will maintain L/RMP signature authority.
Wildland Fire Management Plans (FMPs)	The USWFS will coordinate and work closely with the Bureaus on FMP development and maintenance during this transition.	Bureaus will continue with their current process of review, revision, updating and signature of FMPs during this transition. Bureaus will work with the USWFS to coordinate and align FMPs with LRMP during FMP development and maintenance.
Spatial Fire Planning Service Data	The USWFS will update the spatial fire planning service data related to L/RMP and FMP direction.	Bureaus will provide L/RMP spatial and supporting data to the USWFS.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Wildland Fire Preparedness Planning Documents for DOI managed lands	The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for any preparedness planning documents signed by the Bureaus. The USWFS will be responsible for reviewing, updating, and approving preparedness planning documents such as: Fire Danger documentation, Preparedness Level Plans, Step-Up/Staffing Plans, Initial Response Plans, Pocket Cards/Seasonal Trend Analysis, Fire Prevention Plan and Mobilization Guides. In this transition period, current standards and formats should continue to be used until new direction is provided.	Bureaus will no longer be responsible for preparedness plans, except for Restriction Plans. Bureaus will continue to have responsibility for Restriction Plans that provide guidelines for when fire prevention orders or emergency area closures due to high fire hazard could be issued.
National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Membership	The USWFS represents DOI on the NWCG Executive Board and on subordinate committees. The USWFS ensures proper NWCG committee representation.	Bureaus will no longer have members on the NWCG Executive Board. Bureaus could provide members for subordinate committees.
NWCG Unit Identifiers (IDs)	Until new NWCG Unit IDs are established for the USWFS and direction is given on when and how to utilize new Unit IDs, personnel, assets, and protecting units will remain associated with their previous Bureau Unit IDs.	Until new NWCG Unit IDs are established for the USWFS and direction is given on when and how to utilize new Unit IDs, NWCG Unit IDs assigned to Bureaus will continue to be used as they were used prior to USWFS unification for personnel, assets, and protecting units.
Coordinating Group Membership	The USWFS will represent DOI on coordinating groups including geographic area coordinating groups and local boards or coordinating groups.	Bureaus will no longer have members on geographic area or local coordinating groups.

Response and Suppression

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Wildfire Suppression on Bureau lands	The USWFS has wildfire protection responsibility for all BIA, BLM, NPS, and FWS lands.	

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Alaska Fire Service (AFS)	USWFS will assume DOI responsibilities for providing wildland fire response services and other fire management response activities previously covered by the AFS, including on lands that require protection under the ANCSA, as amended (43 U.S.C 1620). 620 DM 5 will be updated to reflect this. Fire management activities may include items such as but not limited to: signing delegations to incident commanders, approving wildfire decisions, signing wildfire cost share agreement, certifying fire reports, and managing trespass cases. When ANCSA corporation lands are involved, these activities will be in coordination with Native corporations.	The BLM will no longer be responsible to maintain and operate a DOI wildland fire suppression organization in Alaska. Additionally, the BLM is no longer responsible to provide fire response on DOI administered lands in Alaska or on lands that require protection under ANCSA.
Agency Administrators/Bureau Representatives	The USWFS will be the Agency Administrator, making the decisions for wildland fire activities and operations on both wildfires and prescribed fires. This table includes authorities that will be exercised by the USWFS on wildfires and prescribed fires. The USWFS will work closely with Bureau Representatives. The Agency Administrator role is different than an individual having the Agency Administrator (AADM) qualification. See "Agency Administrator (AADM) Qualification" topic under the Training and Qualifications category of the table.	Bureaus will serve as the Bureau Representatives on land and resource management issues for both wildfires and prescribed fires, and will document land and resource management decisions by co-approving wildfire decisions, Prescribed Fire Plans or other documents as noted in the table. This table includes some authority changes for Bureaus. Bureaus will work closely with the USWFS Agency Administrator.
Ordering Suppression Resources	The USWFS will order, brief, and deploy suppression resources.	Bureaus will work closely with the USWFS and coordinate ordering of resource advisor positions for wildfires involving Bureau lands.
Ordering an Incident Management Team (IMT)	The USWFS will order IMTs for wildfires. The reasons for ordering an IMT (e.g., resource and political concerns) will be in the decision documented in WFDSS which is developed and approved by both the USWFS and Bureaus. The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly in-brief IMTs.	The reasons for ordering an IMT (e.g., resource and political concerns) will be in the decision documented in WFDSS, which is developed and approved by both the USWFS and Bureaus. The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly in-brief IMTs.
Resource Advisors	The USWFS will order resource advisors for wildfires as needed or requested by Bureaus and Tribes.	Resource advisors on wildfires will work for Bureaus.
Sign Delegation of Authority to an Incident Commander (IC)	The USWFS will sign the delegation of authority for all wildfires involving Bureau lands to an IC for all complexities.	Bureaus will no longer sign the delegation of authority to an IC.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Sign Leader's Intent to ICs	The USWFS, Bureaus, and Tribes (where applicable) will provide input and sign the Leader's Intent to the IC.	The USWFS, Bureaus, and Tribes (where applicable) will provide input and sign the Leader's Intent to the IC. Input from Bureaus could include items such as but not limited to: responsibility to coordinate with Resource Advisors; expectations for working with resource specialists and permittees to provide access to the fire area to check on livestock; the process to follow to obtain Bureau approval if wildfire/emergency exceptions to prohibition of certain uses in Section 4(c) of The Wilderness Act is needed for fire operations; and the process to follow to request Bureaus issue emergency area closures due to high hazard.
Wildfire Decision Approvals	Both the USWFS and Bureaus will approve wildfire decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).	Both the USWFS and Bureaus will approve wildfire decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).
Cost Threshold Notification of Combined Federal Expenditures for an Incident	The USWFS will not be required to make cost threshold notifications.	Bureaus will no longer be required to make cost threshold notifications within their Bureaus.
Smoke Management	The USWFS will be responsible for monitoring and tracking the impacts from wildland fire smoke. The USWFS will order Air Resource Advisors as determined necessary for wildfires and prescribed fires.	Bureaus will coordinate with the USWFS on community or air quality concerns.
Suppression Repair	The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly be responsible for suppression repair plan development and approval. The USWFS will approve funding suppression repair actions.	The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly be responsible for suppression repair plan development and approval.
Fire Reports	The USWFS will certify fire reports and will provide final certified reports to the appropriate Bureau(s).	Bureaus will no longer certify fire reports.
Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group Membership	The USWFS will represent DOI on National MAC, Geographic Area MAC Groups, and local MAC groups.	Bureaus will no longer have members on MAC groups.
Fire Prevention Orders (i.e., Fire Restrictions)	The USWFS will coordinate with Bureaus and Tribes to provide situational awareness or technical information related to fire prevention orders.	Bureaus will continue to issue fire prevention orders for their lands in close coordination with USWFS and interagency partners.
Emergency Area Closures During High Hazard for Safety	The USWFS will coordinate with Bureaus and Tribes to provide situational awareness or technical information related to emergency area closures.	Bureaus will continue to issue area closures for their lands during high fire hazard in close coordination with USWFS and interagency partners.

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Wildfire Trespass	USWFS employees that are qualified as Wildland Fire Investigators (INVFs) will provide investigation services to the Bureaus. The USWFS will manage current wildfire trespass cases in coordination with Bureaus for cost recovery and records requirements.	Bureau employees, including law enforcement, that are qualified as INVFs will continue to provide investigation services to the Bureaus. Bureau authorized officers will determine liability for wildfire trespass with solicitor concurrence. Recovered trespass funds will be deposited into Bureau accounts. If allowable per authority and settlement language, suppression and post-fire recovery costs will be transferred to the USWFS.

Safety

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Operational Medical Support Program (OMSP)	The USWFS will provide oversight and direction for the OMSP within the USWFS.	Bureaus will no longer provide oversight and direction for the OMSP program.
Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO)	The USWFS Director has delegated authority from the DOI DASHO to conduct wildland fire accident investigations.	Bureaus will no longer have authority to conduct wildland fire accident investigations.
Accident Investigations/Reviews	The USWFS will be the deciding official regarding what type of accident investigation is to be used for wildland fire accidents occurring on DOI lands or involving any DOI employee(s) assigned to a wildland fire incident, regardless of land ownership.	Bureaus will continue to be responsible for non-wildland fire accidents occurring on DOI lands or involving DOI employees not assigned to wildland fire incidents.
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Serious Incident or Fatality (SIOF) Plan	The USWFS will follow its own support processes and SIOF plans. The USWFS will work closely with Bureaus on safety-related plans and processes, providing assistance and support during incidents or accidents.	Bureaus will remain responsible for safety-related plans and processes for Bureau resource staff.
Fire Reviews	The USWFS will follow fire reviews requirements outlined in Chapter 18 of the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).	Bureaus will no longer be responsible for fire reviews, although Bureau personnel may be requested to participate during the review process.
Line of Duty Death – Death Gratuity	The USWFS will have the authority to approve payment of up to $10,000 as a death gratuity to the personal representative of a USWFS employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after August 2, 1990. (Public Law 104-208 Section 651).	Bureaus will continue to have the authority to approve payment of up to $10,000 to the personal representative of a Bureau employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after August 2, 1990.

Training and Qualifications

Topic	USWFS Authority/Responsibility	Bureau Authority/Responsibility
Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) Management	The USWFS will manage IQCS for USWFS responders or Tribes (under a DOI 638 and or Cooperative Agreement). The USWFS will manage IQCS Bureau responders with both wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications.	Bureaus will manage IQCS for individuals in their Bureau with only all-hazard qualifications.
Certify Incident Qualifications	The USWFS will complete agency certification for wildland fire position task books (PTB) of both USWFS and Bureau personnel. The USWFS will certify incident qualification cards for individuals in the Bureaus and the USWFS that have BOTH wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications. The USWFS will certify all-hazard PTBs for USWFS employees.	Bureaus will no longer complete agency certification on wildland fire PTBs. Bureaus will certify Incident Qualification Cards for Bureau employees with ONLY all-hazard qualifications. Bureaus will certify all-hazard PTBs for Bureau employees.
Agency Administrator (AADM) Qualification	USWFS personnel will not need the AADM qualification, defined in the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement (2026)*, to exercise wildland fire authorities as understanding wildland fire is inherent in their position.	Bureaus will no longer require the AADM qualification. The USWFS will work with the Bureaus to provide wildland fire training as requested to support filling the Bureau Representative role on wildland fire.
Wildland Fire Medical Evaluations and Work Capacity Testing	The USWFS will serve as the point of contact for both USWFS, Tribal (under a DOI 638 agreement), and Bureau personnel for medical evaluations and work capacity testing.	Bureaus will coordinate with the USWFS to schedule medical evaluations and work capacity testing.
Wildland Fire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Wildland Fire Training Costs	The USWFS may provide PPE for Bureau employees who obtain wildland fire qualifications and participate in response efforts. The USWFS may also provide funding to cover wildland fire training and associated travel costs.	Bureaus may request the USWFS to provide PPE and funding for wildland fire training and associated travel. Additionally, Bureaus may purchase PPE and fund training from Bureau allocations.
Wildland Fire Training Nominations and Delivery	The USWFS will plan and coordinate all wildland fire training for USWFS, Tribal (under a DOI 638 agreement) and Bureau personnel.	Bureaus will submit nominations for personnel desiring to attend wildland fire training. Bureaus may coordinate and deliver wildland fire training (e.g., RT-130, S-112) with USWFS approval, based on need and course delivery requirements.
WFDSS Training	The USWFS will design, schedule and deliver Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) training for all users.	Bureaus will nominate personnel and attend WFDSS training as needed.

Fire Management in Wilderness

Actions taken in wilderness will be conducted to protect life and safety, to meet natural and cultural resource objectives, and to minimize negative impacts of the fire management actions and the fires themselves. In evaluating fire management actions, the preservation of wilderness character will be considered before, and given significantly more weight than economic efficiency and convenience. Unless human life or private property is immediately threatened, only those actions that preserve wilderness character and/or have localized, short-term adverse impacts

to wilderness character will be acceptable. Any delegation of authority or Leader's Intent to IMTs will convey appropriate emphasis on the preservation of wilderness character and resources and will ensure interaction with resource advisor(s) with expertise in wilderness stewardship.

- ***DOI Administered Lands –***
  - ***BLM –*** *Reference BLM Manual 6340—Management of BLM Wilderness (2012), Section 1.6.C.7 states that to the greatest extent possible, the Bureau will manage all wildfires in wilderness: 1) using Minimum Impact Strategies Tactics (MIST) wherever possible; 2) if feasible, without equipment that would ordinarily be prohibited under Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act; and 3) by assigning a resource advisor with expertise in wilderness stewardship. To assist in documenting any decision involving uses generally prohibited by the Wilderness Act (e.g., heavy equipment, chainsaws, and the landing of aircraft, among other examples), the BLM normally uses a tool known as the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG). Under the Wilderness Act, however, control of fire is an exception to the prohibited uses, so the MRDG is not necessary at the time of response to an emergency. Nevertheless, the minimum requirements concept should be incorporated into emergency planning so that the minimum necessary methods and tools can be used to resolve emergencies while preserving wilderness character to the greatest extent practicable. Responses involving prohibited uses will be approved by the state director, though approval can be delegated through the BLM MS-1203 – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY to the district or field office manager if he/she has been through the National or Regional Wilderness Stewardship Training offered by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center. In emergency situations, the decision on authorization of normally prohibited uses should always err on the side of protecting human life.*
  - ***NPS –*** *All wilderness fire management actions proposing the use of any of the Wilderness Act Section 4(c) prohibitions, a minimum requirements analysis (MRA) will be completed. To ensure adequate consideration of wilderness resources, a programmatic MRA must be completed as part of the development of a park's FMP and companion environmental compliance document.*
  - ***FWS –*** *All wilderness fire management actions proposing the use of any of the Wilderness Act 4(c) prohibitions, a minimum requirements analysis will be completed.*
  - ***BIA –*** *All wilderness fire management actions refer to L/RMPs. For BLM, NPS and FWS, Section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 allows all agencies to control fire, in wilderness areas, subject to such conditions as the Secretary deems desirable.*

Employee Advocacy

Fire operations doctrine acknowledges the inherent danger of fire operations and the potential for serious injury or death to firefighters.

Bureaus will remain responsible for safety-related plans and processes for Bureau resource staff.

Line of Duty Death – Death Gratuity
Bureaus will continue to have the authority to approve payment of up to $10,000 as a death gratuity to the personal representative of a Bureau employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty on or after August 2, 1990.

Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program

The Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program provides comprehensive support for federal and Tribal wildland firefighters across USDA and DOI. Its goal is to better understand and address the physical, mental, and occupational health challenges faced by firefighters. The program focuses on behavioral health, environmental and occupational hazards, and physical health and readiness, offering expanded services, prevention resources, and targeted training to strengthen resilience, reduce risks, and support overall wellbeing. See the Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program website for additional program information and resources.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program

Bureau representative(s) or designee may request CISM for critical incidents related to fire and aviation activities occurring within their jurisdiction. The bureau representative(s) or designee should work with their local fire management program and follow processes for requests outlined in chapter 2.

Chapter 5
USDA Forest Service Program Organization and Responsibilities

Introduction

This document is intended to be a program reference guide that documents the standards for operational procedures and practices for the USDA Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management Program. The standards provided in this document are based on current agency and interagency wildland fire management policy and are intended to provide fire and aviation program guidance and to ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective fire and aviation operations. This document will be reviewed and updated annually.

Vision and Objectives for Fire Management

The vision of the Forest Service's Fire and Aviation Management Program is to safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a nation, live with wildland fire. The following objectives support this vision:

- Risk management and risk reduction – Assure management of risk to people, communities, and natural and cultural resources is the fundamental principle used to make informed decisions in all fire management programs. Minimize the risk to people, communities, and natural and cultural resources by assessing the potential benefits of actions, severity of concerns, and probabilities of occurrences to reduce risk.
- Ecological – Meet the Forest Service mission through the use of fire management programs to protect people and communities, conserve natural and cultural resources, and maintain and restore ecological health.
- Collaboration – Implement the wildland fire management program through collaboration and partnerships.
- Learning – Learn from science and ours and our partners' experiences to improve fire management programs.
- Empowerment – Employees are expected and empowered to be creative and decisive, to exercise initiative, and accept responsibility and use their training, experience, and judgement to implement the agency's mission.

Foundational Doctrine

The vision of the Forest Service's Fire and Aviation Management Program is to use a doctrinal approach based on leadership, operations, and risk management. To support this vision, Forest Service policy is to:

- Take all response actions to ensure the safety of firefighters, other personnel, and the public regardless of cost or resource loss; no resource or facility is worth the loss of human life.
- The intent of wildfire response is to protect human life, property, and achieve protection and natural resource management objectives established in L/RMPs.
- Leadership principles are the foundational doctrine (*Leading in the Wildland Fire Service*, PMS 494-2), on which fire and aviation management operations will be based.

A doctrinal approach goes beyond strict compliance with procedural rules and promotes risk-based application of wildland fire management principles to improve decision making and firefighter safety. Foundational doctrine has been codified in Forest Service *Manual 5100* direction and will guide fundamental wildland fire management policy, practices, behaviors, and customs to be mutually understood at every level of command.

Under this doctrinal approach:

- Employees are expected and empowered to be creative and decisive, to exercise initiative and accept responsibility, and to use their training, experience, and judgment in decision-making to carry out their leader's intent.
- Employees are expected and empowered to make reasonable and prudent decisions to accomplish the agency mission while minimizing unnecessary risk.

Mission

- The Forest Service is prepared and organized to support national and international emergencies with trained personnel and other assets when requested.
- Agency employees respond when they come across situations where human life is immediately at risk or there is a clear emergency, and they are capable of assisting without undue risk to themselves or others.
- Support for local fire emergencies takes priority over accomplishment of local resource targets. Support of non-local fire emergencies will be at the discretion of the local line officer, as bounded by agency agreements and geographic area or national direction.
- A cooperative relationship between the Forest Service and other agencies is essential. The Forest Service is committed to honor its part of the joint responsibility to develop and maintain effective working relationships with its intergovernmental cooperators.

Wildland Fire Response Principles

- Response to wildland fire is based on the ecological, social, and legal consequences of fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences to firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to fire.
- Response to wildfire in the wilderness focuses on the natural ecological role of fire and activities are conducted in a manner compatible with overall wilderness management objectives (see FSM 2320).
- Success is achieving reasonable objectives with the least firefighter risk necessary while enhancing stakeholder support for our management efforts.

Leadership and Accountability

- All levels of leadership must communicate a clear vision of agency goals and management principles, ensuring they are shared and understood by all levels of the organization.
- All levels of leadership must express clear intent concerning roles and responsibilities to ensure wildfire response assignments are appropriate, risk-based, and effective.
- Leaders regularly monitor operations for safety, efficiency, and effectiveness, and take action when there is recognition of exceptional or problematic employee performance.
- Leaders and supervisors of Forest Service wildland firefighting resources will manage the health and wellbeing of employees by providing opportunities for time off, training, career development and work/life balance as needed and discussed with employees.

The Operational Environment

Risk Management

The wildfire response environment is complex and possesses inherent hazards. Even with reasonable risk mitigations, responses can result in harm to firefighters.

The Forest Service is committed to the aggressive management of risk.

- Apply a risk management process to minimize unnecessary risk in wildfire response while maximizing the opportunities to achieve management objectives.
- Maintaining state-of-the-art decision support systems based on the best available science is essential for making sound decisions on how to manage all wildland fire to achieve land and resource management plan (L/RMP) objectives, including public and agency personnel safety.
- The *Forest Service Guide to Risk Management* and other helpful risk management resources can be found on the USDA Forest Service Risk Management website (https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/safety).

Operations

Every wildfire response operation is directed toward clearly defined, decisive, and obtainable objectives.

USFS Use of Formalized Strategic Planning on Wildland Fires

- A formalized strategic planning process should be utilized during all Forest Service fires that have a complex incident management team (CIMT) assigned. Strategic planning ensures a common understanding by the agency administrator(s) (AA) and members of the CIMT about the values at risk, the strategic actions to be implemented to protect those values, the risk to responders associated with those strategic actions, and the anticipated probability of success of operations, ensuring a planned and appropriate response. Strategic direction should align with land and resource management plans, fire management plans, and associated amendments as detailed in the WFDSS decision.
- Forest Service AAs are expected to participate in the strategic planning process when National Forest System lands are impacted by wildfire, either as the jurisdictional or protecting agency. The Incident Strategic Alignment Process (ISAP) should be utilized to ensure alignment between incident management teams and agency administrators. ISAP planning should include relevant cooperators, when possible, where the priorities for incident response includes their values at risk.

Wildfire Response

- When it is time to engage a wildfire, do so in a manner that is appropriate, risk-based, and effective.
- Command and control will be decentralized to cope with the unpredictable nature of wildfire. To achieve leader's intent and accomplish operational objectives, subordinate commanders must make decisions on their own initiative and coordinate their efforts to maintain unity of effort.
- Judgement in combination with principles and rules will guide wildfire response practices and actions.
- Rapid deployment and appropriate concentration of wildfire response resources at the decisive time and place are essential to successful wildfire response actions.
- Maintaining a high capability to ensure effective initial attack is essential to public and firefighter safety, accomplishment of management objectives, and cost containment.

- The interdependence of wildland fire jurisdictions requires the collaborative, proactive engagement of cooperators, partners, and the public in response activities.

Risk Management Protocol

Forest Service risk management protocol begins with working with partners and stakeholders to identify values affected (positively and negatively) by fire and then forming clear and reasonable objectives around these values. The highest value is human life, and thus the primary objective will always be protection of human life. Other objectives will be weighed against the amount of risk responders and the public must accept in order to accomplish the objectives as well as the likelihood of success. The Forest Service is committed to using a three-phased risk management protocol:

I. Preseason

Preseason preparedness work is critical to success when the fire starts.

- Build decision maker and key stakeholder capacity to manage the uncertainties and inherent risks of fires.
  - Increase understanding of risk management with key stakeholders and partner agencies.
  - Build agency administrator capacity to perform as risk managers.
- Determine what values-related spatial data is missing in Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS), if any, and develop a plan for incorporating it into the unit's fire planning map layers to ensure its availability to support future decisions.
- Assess risk at a landscape level, looking at National Forest System (NFS) lands and those adjoining lands that may be impacted by a fire leaving NFS land.
  - Develop a common understanding of values to be protected by answering four questions: 1) What is important? 2) Why is it important? 3) Who is it important to? and 4) How important is it?
  - Complete a risk analysis with key stakeholders and partner agencies to predetermine the optimal response strategies for protecting values at risk. Engage key stakeholders and partner agencies in tabletop exercises or other venues to ensure alignment.
  - Initiate dialogue with line officers and stakeholders aimed at understanding, acceptance, and support for alternative risk-based decisions. This is especially important where there is an expectation that a fire will become a long-term event because of an opportunity to use fire to achieve land management objectives, and/or the need to adjust the level of engagement based on risks to responders, lack of available resources, and the level of risk toward values to be protected.

II. During Incident Phase

During incident phase focuses on a seven-step risk management process:

1. Complete a Risk Complexity Assessment.
   - Develop an assessment of what is at risk (from preseason work, WFDSS values inventories, analytical tools and products, and/or input from key stakeholders), and the associated probabilities and potential consequences.
2. Complete a risk analysis.
   - Consider alternatives (objectives, strategies, and tactics) against desired outcomes, risks to human life (responders and the public), probability of success and values to be protected.
3. Complete two-way risk communications.
   - Engage community leaders, local government officials, partners, and other key stakeholders of the incident to share the risk picture and enlist input.
4. Conduct risk-sharing dialogue.
   - Engage appropriate senior line officers and political appointees (as necessary) regarding the potential decision aimed at obtaining understanding, acceptance, and support for the alternatives and likely decision.
5. Make the risk-informed decision.
6. Document the risk through assessment, analysis, communication, sharing and decision in WFDSS.
7. Continue monitoring and adjusting as necessary or as conditions change.

III. Post-Incident Phase

As a learning organization, we should always strive to improve how we conduct our business. We should endeavor to learn from each incident and apply those lessons.

- Complete an incident after action review.
  - Engage key stakeholders of the incident to be involved.
  - Review what worked, what did not work, and suggestions for improvement.
  - If a WFDSS decision was necessary, evaluate decision quality and workflow and determine steps necessary to improve.
- Conduct a peer review after action process.

    - Engage others who have had similar incidents to learn strategies for improvement.
- Implement plans for improvement.
    - Make use of lessons learned in real time, if possible.

The following risk assessment and risk decision questions are designed to inform fire management decisions by stimulating thinking and prompting dialogue, analyzing and assessing risk, recognizing shared risks, and communicating those risks within the agency and with partners and stakeholders.

- Risk Assessment
    1. What are the critical values at risk?
    2. What is the chance the critical values will be impacted; if so, what are the consequences?
    3. What are the opportunities to manage fire to meet land management objectives?
    4. What are the possible low-probability/high-consequence events?
    5. Who are the stakeholders that should be consulted prior to making a decision?
- Risk Decision
    1. What alternatives (objectives, strategies, and tactics) are being considered?
    2. What is the relative exposure of responders (exposure in terms of numbers of responders needed, amount of commitment (time/days) needed to accomplish the objectives, and the amount and types of risks these responders will be asked to accept if the alternative is chosen) for the alternatives being considered?
    3. What is the relative probability of success associated with the alternatives being considered?
    4. What alternative provides for the best balance between the desired outcome and risk to responders?
    5. What are the critical thresholds that will trigger reconsideration of the proposed alternative and how will they be monitored?

Specific Line Officer Responsibilities for Fire and Aviation at the Field Level

The Forest Service has developed core fire management competencies for line officers with oversight responsibilities over fire management programs.

- Knowledge of fire program management, including ability to integrate fire and fuels management across all program areas and functions;
- Ability to implement fire management strategies and integrate natural resource concerns into collaborative community protection and ecosystem restoration strategies;
- Knowledge to oversee a fire management program, including budget, preparedness, prevention, suppression, and hazardous fuels reduction;
- Ability to serve as an agency administrator exercising authority to initiate prescribed fire and other hazardous fuel reduction activities;
- Ability to serve as an agency administrator during an incident on an assigned unit; and
- Ability to provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diversified firefighting workforce that exists in a “life first” and “readiness” environment.

Responsibilities

- Line officers are responsible for all aspects of fire management.
- Integrate fire and fuels management across all functional areas.
- Implement fire management strategies and integrate natural resource concerns into collaborative community protection and ecosystem restoration strategies on the unit.
- Manage a budget that includes fire preparedness, prevention, suppression, and hazardous fuels in an annual program of work for the unit.
- Perform duties of agency administrator and maintain those qualifications.
- Provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diverse workforce in a "safety first" environment.
- Support and participate in wildfire prevention.
- Ensure operational fire management responsibilities remain separated from agency administrator responsibilities in order to avoid collateral duty conflicts.

These responsibilities are based on current policy and provide program guidance to ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective fire and aviation operations.

Preparedness

Preparedness is a continuous process that includes all fire management activities conducted in advance of wildfire ignitions to ensure an appropriate, risk-informed, and effective wildfire response to meet national and agency goals.

- Take all necessary and prudent actions to ensure firefighter and public safety.
- Ensure sufficient qualified fire and non-fire personnel are available to support fire operations at a level commensurate with the local and national fire situation.

- Ensure accurate position descriptions are developed and reflect the complexity of the unit. Individual development plans (IDP) promote and enhance fire management officer (FMO) currency and development.
- Provide a written delegation of authority to FMOs that provides an adequate level of operational authority at the unit level. Include multi-agency coordinating (MAC) group authority, as appropriate.
- Ensure the plans contained in the Fire Management Reference System (FMRS) are based on resource objectives found in the land and resource management plan (L/RMP).
- Ensure budget requests and allocations reflect preparedness requirements from the program of work and support objectives from the L/RMP.
- Develop preparedness standards that are in compliance with agency fire policies.
- Management teams meet once a year to review fire and aviation policies, roles, responsibilities, and delegations of authority. Specifically address oversight and management controls, critical safety issues, and high-risk situations, such as transfers of incident command, periods of multiple fire activity, and Red Flag Warnings.
- Ensure fire and aviation preparedness reviews are conducted each year and include the key components of the Nationwide Aerial Application of Fire Retardant on National Forest System Lands Record of Decision.
- Meet annually with cooperators and review interagency agreements to ensure their continued effectiveness and efficiency.
- Coordinate annually with the Fish and Wildlife Service (at both the Field Office and Headquarters staff levels) to ensure that retardant avoidance areas on National Forest System Lands are mapped using the most up-to-date species information, such as any new detections and any other relevant data.

Wildfire Response

- Ensure use of fire funds is in compliance with agency policies.
- The WFDSS will be used to develop, approve, and publish decisions on all fires. As appropriate, use analytical tools and products to inform and support decision-making. See chapter 11 for the fire criteria that require a published decision.
- Personally attend reviews on type 1 and type 2 complexity fires. Ensure agency representatives are assigned and delegated authority when appropriate.
- Provide incident management objectives, written delegations of authority, leader's intent, and a complete agency administrator briefing to incident management teams (IMT).
- Ensure briefings include information regarding aerial application of fire retardant and avoidance areas as described in the current Implementation Guide. Include the reporting requirements in the briefing if an intrusion of fire chemical occurs. Provide resource advisors if the use of aerially applied fire retardant is expected and the unit has mapped avoidance areas (which include waterways and 300' or larger buffers) and otherwise evaluate the need for resource advisors for all other fires and assign, as appropriate.
- For all unplanned, human-caused fires where responsibility can be determined, ensure actions are initiated to recover cost of suppression activities, land rehabilitation, damages to the resource, and improvements.
- Ensure structure exposure protection principles are followed (FSM 5135).
- Ensure that a sufficient number of after action reviews are conducted for type 3, 4, and 5 complexity wildfires to adequately assess the unit's wildfire response capability, performance, procedures and to enhance learning.
- Ensure smoke impacts to the public and fire personnel are addressed by ensuring that Air Resource Advisors (ARA, technical specialist) are ordered to work as part of IMTs to the maximum extent practicable for wildfires classified as having type 1 complexity. Ensure assignment of ARAs as part of IMTs for type 2 complexity fires (as per Public Law 116-9, the Dingell Act, 2019, when appropriate to address smoke impacts."

Wildfire Response Responsibilities and Oversight

- Agency administrators will ensure that all Forest Service employees and employees of interagency partners working on Forest Service jurisdiction wildfires clearly understand direction.
- Agency administrators must approve and publish decisions in WFDSS in a timely manner and issue delegations of authority to the incident commander (IC) in accordance with FSM 5133.3.
- Analytical tools and/or products both within WFDSS and outside of the application should be used to inform and support strategic decision-making and risk assessment inputs.
- Line officers will assign agency administrators to oversee incidents and approve WFDSS decisions based on qualification level according to incident type.

Incident Complexity Level	USFS AA Qualification Level to Approve WFDSS Decisions and Provide Incident Oversight[1]
Type 1	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 1, WFA1
Type 2	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 2, WFA2
Type 3, 4, 5	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 3, WFA3

[1]Authority may be retained at the regional forester level.

- Critical long duration wildfire oversight roles include ensuring that:
  - Up-to-date published decisions are completed and documented in WFDSS.
  - Hazards are identified and risk assessments are incorporated into published decisions.
  - Coordination with partners and potentially affected parties (including smoke impacts) is conducted; unified command is implemented early when appropriate.
  - Air resource advisors (ARA, technical specialist) are utilized on Incident Complexity Level 1 fires to the maximum extent practicable and consideration of ordering for Incident Complexity Level 2 fires (as per Public Law 116-9, the Dingell Act, 2019).
  - Resource capacity and availability are adequately assessed to meet expectations.
- This oversight role should address concerns of the States, cooperators, and the public, including air quality impacts from multiple wildfires.

Use of Wildfire to Achieve Land Management Objectives During Preparedness Levels 4 and 5

- Wildfire response decisions that include objectives to improve or enhance natural resources must be approved by the Regional Forester at Geographic and/or National Preparedness Levels 4 and 5. Approving officials should consider relative risks vs gains, organizational needs to adequately staff the incident, the duration of those resource commitments, and the extents to which the planned response might add to or relieve the strain on resource availability nationally. Human-caused fires are not eligible for such consideration. Only naturally occurring wildfires in areas where the Land and Resource Management Plan has determined that fire does play a role in managing natural systems are eligible for such consideration.
- The Regional Forester or designee will assume the role of the deciding official for the decision in the WFDSS. This requirement does not apply to long-duration events that are not in pursuit of natural resource objectives such as those instances where it is too dangerous for responders or there are insufficient resources available to mount an effective response, and a long-term control strategy is adopted out of managerial necessity rather than preference.
- To the extent practical, geographic areas and forests should adopt pre-ignition practices and systems for determining relative risks and opportunities including the short-term (this year) and long-term (future years) implications of these decisions in such a way as to facilitate a meaningful yet timely discussion with the Regional Foresters office shortly after candidate fires are detected.

Safety

- Review safety policies, procedures, and concerns with field fire and aviation personnel.
- Ensure timely follow-up actions to program reviews, fire preparedness reviews, fire and aviation safety reviews, and management reviews.
- Monitor the fire situation and provide oversight during periods of critical fire activity and situations of high risk.
- Ensure there is adequate direction in fire management plans to maintain fire danger awareness.
- Take appropriate actions with escalating fire potential.
- Ensure appropriate investigation or lessons learned analyses are conducted for incidents, entrapments, and serious accidents. See FSM 6730.

Fuels

- Plan and implement a hazardous fuels management and prescribed fire program applying principles and policy elements described in FSM 5100 and 5140 (https://www.fs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/Directives/get_dirs/fsm?5100) and guided by the goals described in the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy.
- Complete a fuels treatment effectiveness assessment on all wildfires which start in or burn into a fuel treatment area.
- Enter results of the assessment into the Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring (FTEM) database within 90 days of control of a fire. The FTEM database is located within the Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision Support System (IFTDSS). Links to optional reporting templates and other information related to the FTEM reporting requirement can be found on the FAM website.
- Use the IFTDSS to assist with fuels planning, prescribed burn development, risk analysis, etc.

Prescribed Fire

- Provide program leadership by visiting prescribed fire treatment projects and providing leader's intent to prescribed fire personnel.
- Ensure compliance with national and geographic area office policy and direction for prescribed fire activities and ensure that periodic reviews and inspections of the prescribed fire program are completed.
- Coordinate prescribed fire program activities with regional air quality specialists and Federal, State, Tribal, air pollution control district or county regulatory authorities to ensure compliance with their regulations supported by the Clean Air Act.
- When multiple wildland fire events are occurring within an airshed, or any airshed is impacted by ongoing wildland fire events, fire managers will consider the cumulative impact to air quality. Initiation of new prescribed fire must be in compliance with air quality regulations and standards.
- All prescribed fires should be conducted using basic smoke management practices. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service Technical Note (2011, https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/air).
- Ensure a prescribed fire plan is written and approved for each project prior to implementation in accordance with the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484.
- Review and approve prescribed fire plans and ignitions.
  - Engage in the development of the complexity analysis; review and approve the final complexity rating.
  - Ensure that the prescribed fire plan has been reviewed and recommended by a qualified technical reviewer.
  - Ensure that prescribed fire plans are designed to achieve desired conditions as described in L/RMPs and project-specific NEPA decision documents.
  - Approve prescribed fire plan amendments and determine the need for additional technical review of proposed plan amendments prior to approval.
  - If more than one year has elapsed since a prescribed fire plan was last approved, the plan will be reviewed, updated as necessary, and re-approved before implementation.
  - Authorize ignition of prescribed fire as delegated and adhere to procedures as described in FSM 5140 for geographic area- and/or national-level approvals for initiation of new and continued prescribed fire activities at national preparedness levels 4 and 5 or when forecast National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) adjective ratings are at "extreme" category.
- Use analytical tools, such as IFTDSS (Interagency Fuels Treatment Decision Support System), to assist with treatment options, fire behavior potential, prescribed burning prescriptions, and values at risk to help inform fuels planning efforts and implementation options.
- Report all instances of prescribed fires resulting in a wildfire declaration and/or air quality notice-of-violation as required in FSM 5140.

Agency Administrator Training and Qualifications for Wildland Fire Management

There are six separate and distinct qualifications for agency administrators related to fire management—three for wildfire decision making and three for prescribed fire. The training and experience requirements and certification process for both wildfire and prescribed fire are described below.

Agency Administrator Core Competencies

Core competencies that must be demonstrated by agency administrators exercising decision-making authority for wildfires or prescribed fires include:

- Risk-informed decision-making
- Wildfire response and incident management processes
- WFDSS/IFTDSS and other decision support tools
- Fuels management and prescribed fire processes
- Fire prevention, mitigation, and education processes
- Social, political, economic, and environmental impacts of wildland and prescribed fire management activities
- Collaboration with partners and stakeholders
- Fiscal management

These core competencies form the basis for the agency administrator position task book which is used to document that an individual has indeed demonstrated these competencies while working toward certification. For access to the position task book and additional information on the Forest Service agency administrator fire qualification programs, visit the Agency Administrator Toolbox.

Definitions

Agency administrator (AA): A general term meaning the official with the delegated authority, responsibility, and qualifications for decision-making on incidents or prescribed fires within a particular administrative unit.

Agency representative (AREP): The AREP facilitates coordination, cooperation, and dialogue between the incident management team (IMT) and host agency administrator (AA). The AREP is delegated by the host unit AA or designee and works with the command functional area.

Agency administrator trainee: An AA working on qualification at any given level by performing the role under the supervision and authority of a fully qualified AA.

Incident or Project Complexity	Minimum Qualification Level to Serve as Agency Administrator
Wildfire – Type 1	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 1, WFA1
Wildfire – Type 2	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 2, WFA2
Wildfire – Type 3, 4, 5	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 3, WFA3
Prescribed Fire – High Complexity	Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 1, RXA1
Prescribed Fire – Moderate Complexity	Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 2, RXA2
Prescribed Fire – Low Complexity	Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 3, RXA3

Line officer: A Forest Service official who serves in a direct line of command from the chief and has been delegated authority to make and execute decisions for their administrative unit(s). Examples are the deputy chiefs, director of law enforcement and investigations, regional foresters, station directors, forest supervisors, deputy forest supervisors, district rangers, and deputy district rangers. Line officers have authority to issue direction within delegated levels.

Agency Administrator Wildfire Qualification Program

The following principles will guide qualification of AAs in wildfire management:

- Regional foresters are accountable for certification of AA qualifications by a review process established by regional forester, such as geographic area line officer team;
- AA evaluation includes standards for training, background and experience, demonstrated ability, and utilizing the position task book, which will result in a qualitative evaluation of readiness by the regional forester;
- When the incident complexity level of a wildfire exceeds an AA's qualification, a qualified AA will be assigned;
- Care should be taken when assigning acting AAs to ensure operational fire management responsibilities remain separated from AA responsibilities in order to avoid collateral-duty conflicts. Consider delegating authority in writing to ensure expectations and responsibilities are clearly delineated;
- Agency administrator competencies (aka, qualification level) supersedes position (e.g., a district ranger qualified as a WFA1 may be the AA for an Incident Complexity Level 1 incident);
- Assistance with decision documentation and analysis can be requested through the Wildland Fire Management Research, Development and Application – National Fire Decision Support Center (NFDSC); and
- The shadow program, to be administered by each geographic area, is an integral part of the AA qualification program for new AAs. However, the shadow program is not part the performance-based approach as it is designed to expose new AAs to the AA position and processes. A shadow assignment does not offer an opportunity to perform the duties as an AA trainee therefore shadow assignments shall not be considered an assignment documented in the PTB.

AAs will be evaluated in three basic areas:

- Training;
- Experience; and
- Demonstrated understanding of concepts and principles as outlined in the position task book.

This qualification program is a multi-level process where AAs demonstrate competence in one of three levels of managing wildfires: WFA3, WFA2, and WFA1.

Guidelines

In consideration of the appropriate level (WFA3, WFA2, and WFA1) to assign an AA, the regional forester should consider the following guideline:

- Regional foresters are responsible to assign agency administrators to oversee incidents, approve WFDSS decisions, and approve burn plans based on qualification-level according to project kind and type.
    - Every incident must have a qualified agency administrator assigned at the appropriate level.

- Agency administrators will not serve concurrently as a trainee agency administrator or have additional incident related responsibilities.

Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 3 (WFA3)

The WFA3 manages type 3, 4, or 5 wildfire(s) or similar complexity incident(s). WFA3 must meet the following in order to be qualified:

- **Required training and experience:** Refer to the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- **Other background, experience, and training that supports:**
  - Applicable experience in prescribed fire, wildfire, all-hazards, or other incident oversight may also be considered in addition to other guidelines.
  - Management oversight of a moderate-high complexity fire program as defined by Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) standards.
- **Demonstrated ability:** Successful evaluation by a qualified WFA3 (including feedback from IC or area commanders [AC]) and Geographic Area Line Officer Team and subsequent certification by the Regional Forester that the candidate has demonstrated understanding and application of the responsibilities of a WFA3 trainee. **Completion and certification of PTB as a Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 3 (WFA3) is required.**

Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 2 (WFA2)

The WFA2 could manage type 2 or lower complexity fires or similar incidents.

- **Required training and experience:** Refer to the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- **Other background, experience, and training that supports:**
  - Applicable experience in prescribed fire, wildfire, all-hazards, or other incident oversight may also be considered in addition to other guidelines.
  - Management oversight of a moderate-high complexity fire program as defined by IFPM standards.
- **Demonstrated ability:** Successful evaluation by a qualified WFA2 (including feedback from ICs or ACs) that the candidate has demonstrated understanding and application of the responsibilities of an WFA2. **Completion and certification of PTB as a Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 2 (WFA2) is required.**

Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 1 (WFA1)

The WFA1 could manage one or more type 1 wildfire or similar complexity incidents.

- **Required training and experience:** Refer to the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- **Other background, experience, and training that supports:**
  - Applicable experience in prescribed fire, wildfire, all-hazards, or other incident oversight may also be considered in addition to other guidelines.
  - Management oversight of a moderate to high-complexity fire program as defined by IFPM standards.
- **Demonstrated ability:** Successful evaluation by a qualified WFA1 (including feedback from ICs or ACs) and Geographic Area Line Officer Team and subsequent certification by the Regional Forester that the candidate has demonstrated understanding and application of the responsibilities of an WFA1 on large complex fires. **Completion and certification of PTB as a Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 1 (WFA1) is required.**

Evaluation Process

- Every trainee will receive an evaluation from a qualified AA using the AA position task book identified in the Line Officer/Agency Administrator Desk Reference for Fire Program Management.
- Individuals involved in a shadow assignment should receive creditable experience through documentation.
- The purpose of the position task book is to provide consistency for the qualified AA evaluator (trainer) to evaluate trainees and document their demonstrated abilities to achieve the core competencies, which will be used as a component to achieve next-level qualification.
- Every trainee will complete a position task book for evaluation from an AA.

Currency

The requirement to perform satisfactorily in a specified position within the last five years in order to maintain qualification for the position.

Certifying Official

The certifying official for all Agency Administrator qualifications will be at the regional forester or deputy regional foresters who have fire within their deputy area (FSM 1236.12) level and shall not be delegated to Forest Supervisors or geographic area fire directors.

Incident Qualification Expiration Dates

Certification of incident qualifications for responders that possess qualifications requiring work capacity tests (WCT) and *Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher*, RT-130, are valid through the earliest expiration date

(either fitness, refresher(s), or annual certification) listed on the card. Certification of incident qualifications that do not require WCT or RT-130 for issuance are valid for 12 months from the date the qualification is certified by a certifying official.

Agency Administrator Prescribed Fire Qualification

The following principles will guide qualification of AAs for prescribed fire:

- Regional foresters are accountable for annual certification of AA qualifications to approve and authorize prescribed fire.
- AA evaluation includes standards for training, background and experience, and demonstrated ability, which will result in a qualitative evaluation of readiness by the regional forester.
- When the complexity level of a prescribed fire exceeds an AA's qualification, an appropriately qualified AA will be assigned and must approve the complexity analysis and the burn plan along with the AA trainee.
- The authorization to ignite a prescribed fire must be approved by an appropriately qualified AA; however, the line officer with authority over their assigned unit will also retain authority to prohibit the ignition based on their judgement regardless of their qualification level.
- Care should be taken when assigning acting AAs to ensure operational fire management responsibilities remain separate from agency administrator responsibilities in order to avoid collateral-duty conflicts.
- The shadow program, to be administered by each geographic area, is an integral part of the AA qualification program.

AAs will be evaluated in three basic areas:

- Training;
- Experience; and
- Demonstrated understanding of concepts and principles.

This qualification program is a multi-level process where AAs demonstrate competence in one of three levels of prescribed fire qualifications: RXA3, RXA2, RXA1.

Guidelines

In consideration of the appropriate qualification level (low, moderate, or high) to certify qualifications of an AA, the regional forester should consider the following guidelines:

Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 3 (RXA3)

The RXA3 can review, approve, authorize, and provide oversight for the management of low-complexity prescribed fires. The RXA3 trainee must meet the following in order to be qualified as an RXA3:

- **Required training and experience:** Refer to the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- **Other background, experience, and training that supports:**
  - Applicable experience in prescribed fire, wildfire, all-hazards, or other incident or project oversight may also be considered in addition to other guidelines.
  - Management oversight of a low-complexity fire program.
- **Demonstrated ability:** Successful evaluation by a qualified RXA3 (including feedback from FMO/fire staff/director) that the candidate has demonstrated understanding and application of the responsibilities of an RXA3 on smaller, low-complexity prescribed fires with a basic understanding of the elements of the core competencies. **Completion and certification of PTB as a Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 3 (RXA3) is required.**

Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 2 (RXA2)

The RXA2 can review, approve, authorize, and provide oversight for the management of moderate-complexity prescribed fires.

- **Required training and experience:** Refer to the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- **Other background, experience, and training that supports:**
  - Applicable experience in wildfire, all-hazards, or other incident oversight may also be considered in lieu of other guidelines.
  - Management oversight of a moderately-complex prescribed fire program, providing for a workforce with appropriate training and equipment, NEPA compliance and project planning, social/political considerations, smoke management, public information, etc.
- **Demonstrated ability:** Successful evaluation by a qualified RXA2 (including feedback from FMO/fire staff/director) that the candidate has demonstrated understanding and application of the responsibilities of an RXA2 on moderate-complexity prescribed fires with an understanding of the core competencies and other elements that may be relevant. **Completion and certification of PTB as a Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 2 (RXA2) is required.**

Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 1 (RXA1)

The RXA1 can review, approve, authorize, and provide oversight for the management of high-complexity prescribed fires.

- **Required training and experience:** Refer to the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- **Other background, experience, and training that supports:**
  - Applicable experience in prescribed fire, wildfire, all-hazards, or other incident oversight may also be considered in lieu of other guidelines.
  - Management oversight of a moderate- to high-complexity prescribed fire program, providing for a workforce with appropriate training and equipment, NEPA compliance and project planning, social/political considerations, smoke management, public information, etc.
- **Demonstrated ability:** Successful evaluation by a qualified RXA1 (including feedback from FMO/fire staff/director) that the candidate has demonstrated understanding and application of the responsibilities of an RXA1 on large complex fires in the core competencies, and other elements that may be relevant. **Completion and certification of PTB as a Prescribed Fire Agency Administrator Type 1 (RXA1) is required.**

Evaluation Process

- Every trainee will receive an evaluation from a qualified AA using the AA position task book.

Training opportunities to achieve and maintain core competencies:

- Upper levels of fire leadership and fire management courses;
- Function as the agency administrator during sand table exercises and training simulations;
- Participate in prescribed fire and fire management training, such as RX-410 and RX-510;
- Act as a member or leader for a team assigned to review a declared wildfire or violation of air quality standards;
- Attendance/participation in Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Refresher training, RT-300;
- Participate in prescribed fires and/or attend prescribed fire training; and
- Participate in other leadership and/or decision-making training.

Currency

The requirement to perform satisfactorily in a specified position within the last five years in order to maintain qualification for the position.

Certifying Officials

The certifying official for all agency administrator qualifications will be at the regional forester or deputy regional foresters who have fire within their deputy area (FSM 1236.12) level and shall not be delegated to forest supervisors or geographic area fire directors.

Specific Fire Management Staff Responsibilities for Fire Operations at the Field Level

Preparedness

- Use sound risk management practices as the foundation for all aspects of fire and aviation management.
- Ensure that only trained and qualified personnel are assigned to fire and aviation duties.
- Develop, implement, evaluate, and document fire and aviation training program to meet current and anticipated needs.
- Establish an effective process to gather, evaluate, and communicate information to managers, supervisors, and employees. Ensure clear, concise communications are maintained at all levels.
- Ensure fire and aviation management staffs understand their roles, responsibilities, authority, and accountability.
- Develop and maintain effective communication with the public and cooperators.
- Regardless of funding level, provide a safe, effective, and efficient fire management program.
- Organize, train, equip, and direct a qualified workforce. An individual development plan (IDP) must be provided for incumbents who do not meet new standards. Establish qualification review process.
- Take appropriate action when performance is exceptional or deficient.
- Ensure fire and aviation policies are understood, followed, and coordinated with other agencies as appropriate.
- Ensure that adequate resources are available to implement fire management operations.
- Provide fire personnel with adequate guidance, training, and decision-making authority to ensure timely decisions.
- Develop and maintain agreements, operating plans, and contracts on an interagency basis to increase effectiveness and efficiencies.
- Develop, maintain, and annually evaluate both the FMRS and spatial fire planning shapes and language in the Spatial Fire Planning Service to ensure accuracy and validity.

- Ensure budget requests and allocations reflect preparedness requirements from the program of work and support objectives from the L/RMP.
- Develop and maintain current operational plans (e.g., dispatch, preattack, prevention).
- Ensure that reports and records are properly completed and maintained.
- Ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability in planning and expenditures.
- Assess, identify, and implement program actions that effectively reduce unwanted wildland fire ignitions and mitigate risks to life, property, and resources.
- Work with cooperators to identify processes and procedures for providing fire-adapted communities within the wildland urban interface.

Wildfire Response

- Provide for and personally participate in periodic site visits to individual incidents and projects.
- Utilize the Risk Complexity Assessment to ensure the proper level of management is assigned to all incidents.
- Ensure incoming personnel and crews are briefed prior to fire and aviation assignments.
- Coordinate the development of published decisions within WFDSS with local unit staff specialists for all fires that escape initial attack.
- Ensure effective transfer of command of incident management occurs and safety is considered in all functional areas.
- Monitor fire activity to anticipate and recognize when complexity levels exceed program capabilities. Increase managerial and operational resources to meet needs.
- Complete cost recovery actions when unplanned human-caused fires occur.
- Ensure structure exposure protection principles are followed.
- Ensure all intrusions of wildland fire chemicals are reported and appropriate consultation conducted as needed (see chapter 12).
- Ensure all assessments of impacts to threatened and endangered species or cultural resources are conducted by trained and qualified resource personnel.

Safety

- Ensure completion of a job hazard analysis (JHA) or risk assessment (RA) for fire and fire aviation activities and implement applicable risk mitigation measures.
- Ensure work/rest and length-of-assignment guidelines are followed during all fire and aviation activities. Deviations are approved and documented.
- Initiate, conduct, and/or participate in fire-management-related reviews and investigations.
- Monitor fire season severity predictions, fire behavior, and fire activity levels. Take appropriate actions to ensure safe, efficient, and effective operations.

Prescribed Fire

- Ensure a written, approved burn plan exists for each prescribed fire project.
- Prepare and implement all prescribed fire plans in accordance with the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484.
- Ensure that the prescribed fire burn boss assigned to each project is qualified at the appropriate level as determined by project complexity (see the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484).
- Responsibility for prescribed fires in patrol/mop-up status may be assigned to the unit duty officer (see below) until declared "out." The duty officer (DO) may assign either a burn boss or IC at a level commensurate with expected activities to coordinate onsite actions (e.g., ICT5 for one engine to patrol). In the event that elements of the burn plan other than patrol/mop-up (e.g., holding or contingency) become necessary, then an appropriately qualified burn boss will be assigned to continue implementation of the approved burn plan.
- Review and update all prescribed fire plans as necessary to comply with policy or procedures and submit to agency administrator for review and approval.
- Submit amendments to prescribed fire plans to the agency administrator for approval.
- If more than one year has elapsed since approval, a prescribed fire plan will be reviewed to ensure assumptions are still valid and conditions have not changed, updated as necessary, and resubmitted to the agency administrator for approval.

Fire and Aviation Management Duty Officer

Each forest or grassland fire management officer or assistant fire management officer will perform the duties of a Fire and Aviation (FAM) duty officer (DO) for their unit, or will provide a delegated DO, during any periods of predicted or actual incident activity. Individuals performing as DO must have the approval of the unit's agency

administrator and meet the minimum NWCG qualifications as identified in the *Forest Service Fire and Aviation Qualifications Guide* (FSFAQG), chapter 4.

The required duties for all DOs are:

- Serve as the unit's primary contact with dispatch for both on and off-unit assignments.
- Monitor unit incident activity for compliance with Forest Service risk management practices.
- Coordinate and set priorities for unit suppression actions and resource allocation.
- Keep agency administrators, suppression resources, and information officers informed of the current and expected situation.
- Plan for and implement actions required for future needs.
- Document key decisions and actions.

DOs will perform the above duties in addition to any unit specific duties assigned by the unit's agency administrators or fire managers through a delegation of authority or unit operating plan.

In the event that the DO is required to accept an incident assignment, the outgoing DO must transition with another qualified and approved DO.

Use of district/zone DOs is intended to manage span of control. When assigned to the DO role, DOs will not concurrently perform any Incident Command System (ICS) command or operational functions directly connected to an incident.

DO staffing levels may vary based on locally determined metrics, such as fire danger, local area planning level, predicted incident activity, prescribed fire implementation, and/or span of control.

Fire Management Position Requirements

The *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide* and *Forest Service Fire Program Management Standard* (*FS-FPM*) will be used in conjunction with specific agency requirements when filling vacant fire program positions and as an aid in developing individual development plans (IDPs) for employees.

Structure Exposure Protection Principles

Mission and Role

A significant role of the Forest Service is to manage natural resources on public land; management of wildfire is a primary mission in that role. Wildland firefighter training, tools, and personal protective equipment are based on the wildland environment. This does not prevent using wildland tactics in the wildland urban interface (WUI) when risks are mitigated. Wildland firefighter training for the WUI, however, is centered on the concepts of preventing wildfire from reaching areas of structures and/or reducing the intensity of fire that does reach structures. Fire suppression actions on structures that are outside Federal jurisdiction, outside the scope of wildland firefighting training, or beyond the capability of wildland firefighting resources are not appropriate roles for the Forest Service.

Forest Service leadership will express clear and concise leader's intent to ensure structure protection assignments are managed safely, effectively, and efficiently. Leaders are expected to operate under existing policies and doctrine under normal conditions. Where conflicts occur, employees will be expected to weigh the risk versus gain and operate within the intent of agency policy and doctrine.

Strategic Principles

- The Forest Service actively supports creation of Firewise and fire-adapted communities and structures that can survive wildfire without intervention. We support the concept that property owners have primary responsibility for reducing wildfire risks to their lands and assets.
- The Forest Service will actively work toward applying Firewise concepts to all Forest-Service-owned structures, facilities, and permitted use to serve as a model to publics and communities.
- The Forest Service will apply strategy and tactics to keep wildfires from reaching structures, as prudent to do so, considering risk to firefighters and publics, fire behavior, values at risk including natural resources, availability of firefighting resources, and jurisdictional authorities.
- The use of wildland tactics in the WUI, when risks are mitigated, will be based on the objectives of preventing wildfire from reaching areas of structures and/or reducing the intensity of fire that does reach structures.
- Structure protection will be limited to the use of standard wildfire response tactics, including the use of standard equipment, fire control lines, and the extinguishment of spot fires near or on the structure when safe and practical.
- The Forest Service will be proactive in developing agreements with interagency partners to clarify its structure protection policy.

- The Forest Service structure protection role is based on the assumption that other departments and agencies will fulfill their primary roles and responsibilities. The Forest Service will not usurp individual, local, or State responsibility for structure protection.
- Prior to task implementation, a specific structure protection role briefing will be accomplished.

Tactical Applications

Structure Protection Definition

Actions taken in advance of a fire reaching structures or other improvements are intended to safely prevent the fire from damaging or destroying these values at risk. For the Forest Service, structure protection involves the use of standard wildland fire suppression tactics and control methods, including the use of standard equipment, fire control lines, and the extinguishing of spot fires near or on the structure when safe and practical.

USFS Role

As documented in a Forest Service doctrinal principle, "Agency employees respond when they come across situations where human life is immediately at risk or there is a clear emergency, and they are capable of assisting without undue risk to themselves or others." This principle serves as a foundational basis for the roles employees play in structure protection.

Pursuant to this "structure protection" policy provided above, Forest Service personnel may engage support from other cooperators in structure protection activities when 1) requested by local government under terms of an approved cooperative agreement or 2) when operating within a unified command. The agency is permitted, without agreement, to render emergency assistance to a local government in suppressing wildland fires, and in preserving life and property from the threat of fire, when properly trained and equipped agency resources are the closest to the need, and there is adequate leadership to do so safely. The agency will not routinely provide primary emergency response (medical aids, fire suppression, HAZMAT, etc., as identified on "run cards" or preplanned dispatch scenarios) nor will the agency supplant the local government responsibility to do so.

The contents of a cooperative agreement will clearly define the responsibilities of partners. Regarding structural fire protection, typical Forest Service responsibilities in the case of mutual aid, initial attack, extended attack, or large fire support include:

- To provide initial attack through extended-attack actions consistent with application of wildland fire strategy and tactics.
- To supply water in support of Tribal, State, or local agencies having jurisdictional responsibility for the fire. This would include the use of water tenders, portable pumps, hose, tanks, and supporting draft sites.
- To assist or supply foam or chemical suppressant capability with engines or aerial application.
- To assist local authorities in the event of evacuations.
- To assist local authorities by assessing (triaging) structures for defensibility from wildfire.
- To coordinate with local authorities on actions taken by private structure protection companies.

As such, there should not be an expectation that the Forest Service will:

- "Wrap" or set up and administer sprinklers around privately owned structures.
- Remove fuels immediately surrounding a structure, such as brush, landscaping, or firewood.

As addressed above, the Forest Service will apply strategy and tactics to keep wildfires from reaching structures, as prudent to do so, considering risk management for firefighters and publics, fire behavior, values at risk including natural resources, availability of firefighting resources, and jurisdictional authorities.

The Forest Service shall not:

- Take direct suppression actions on structures other than those that tactically reduce the threat of fire spread to them.
- Enter structures or work on roofs of structures for the purpose of direct suppression actions.

In consideration of Forest-Service-owned or leased structures outside of structure fire protection areas these same policies apply. The use of Firewise principles and aggressive fire prevention measures will be employed for Forest Service structures at every opportunity.

If a Forest Service structure is determined to be at risk, "wrapping" or other indirect protection methods for the structure can be authorized by the agency administrator. Documentation of these decisions needs to be placed in the fire documentation package and the unit files. Any employee engaged in "wrapping" or other indirect methods of protection operations will be thoroughly briefed and trained in correct safety and personal protection equipment procedures, especially if the use of ladders or climbing on the structure is necessary. In any case, the Forest Service holds that no structure is worth the risk of serious injury to an employee in an attempt to protect that structure or facility from fire.

Local Government Role

Local government has the responsibility for emergency response, including structure protection, within their jurisdiction. This responsibility is usually found within the fire agencies' charter and is substantiated by tax dollar revenue (sales and/or property tax).

Cost

Local governments assume the financial responsibility for emergency response activities, including structure protection, within their jurisdictions. Local government will order resources deemed necessary to protect structures within their jurisdiction. Local agencies will not be reimbursed for performing their responsibilities within their jurisdiction.

Tactical Operating Principles

When engaging in structure protection activities, as defined above, Forest Service personnel will apply the following principles:

- The first priority for all risk decisions is human survival, both of firefighters and the public.
- Incident containment strategies specifically address and integrate protection of defendable improved property and wildland values.
- Direct protection of improved property is undertaken when it is safe to do so, when there are sufficient time and appropriate resources available, and when the action directly contributes to achieving overall incident objectives.
- Firefighter decision to accept direction to engage in structure protection actions is based on the determination that the property is defendable and the risk to firefighters can be safely mitigated under the current or potential fire conditions.
- A decision to delay or withdraw from structure protection operations is the appropriate course of action when made in consideration of firefighter safety, current or potential fire behavior, or defensibility of the structure or groups of structures.
- Firefighters at all levels are responsible to make risk decisions appropriate to their individual knowledge, experience, training, and situational awareness.
- Every firefighter is responsible to be aware of the factors that affect their judgment and the decision-making process, including a realistic perception of their own knowledge, skills, and abilities; the presence of life threat or structures; fire behavior; availability of resources; social/political pressures; mission focus; and personal distractions, such as home, work, health, and fatigue.
- An individual's ability to assimilate all available factors affecting situational awareness is limited in a dynamic wildland urban interface fire environment. Every firefighter is responsible to understand and recognize these limitations, and to apply experience, training, and personal judgment to observe, orient, decide, and act in preparation for the "worst case."
- Every firefighter is responsible for participating in the flow of information with supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Clear and concise communication is essential to overcome limitations in situational awareness.

Chapter 6
Reserved

This chapter is reserved.

Chapter 7
Safety and Risk Management

Introduction

The primary means by which we prevent accidents in wildland fire operations is through aggressive risk management. Our safety philosophy acknowledges that while the ideal level of risk may be zero, a hazard-free work environment is not a reasonable or achievable goal in fire operations. Through organized, comprehensive, and systematic risk management, we will determine the acceptable level of risk that allows us to provide for safety yet still achieve fire operations objectives. Risk management is intended to minimize the number of injuries or fatalities experienced by wildland firefighters.

Policy

Firefighter and public safety is our first priority. All fire management plans and activities must reflect this commitment. The commitment to and accountability for safety is a joint responsibility of all firefighters, managers, and administrators. Every supervisor, employee, and volunteer is responsible for following safe work practices and procedures, as well as identifying and reporting unsafe conditions.

Agency-specific safety policy documents:

- ***DOI*** *– DOI 485 DM 1, DOI Occupational Safety and Health Program – Field Manual*
- ***FS –*** *FSM 5100; FSH-6709.11 Health and Safety Code Handbook*

For additional safety guidance, refer to:

- *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, NFES 1077)
  - ***FS –*** *USDA Forest Service Risk Management website.*

Guiding Principles

The primary means by which we implement command decisions and maintain unity of action is through the use of common principles of operations. These principles guide our fundamental wildland fire management practices, behaviors, and customs, and are mutually understood at every level of command. They include Risk Management, Standard Firefighting Orders and Watch Out Situations, LCES and the Downhill Line Construction Checklist. These principles are fundamental to how we perform fire operations and are intended to improve decision making and firefighter safety. They are not absolute rules. They require judgment in application.

Goal

The goal of the fire safety program is to provide direction and guidance for safe and effective management in all activities. Safety is the responsibility of everyone assigned to wildland fire and must be practiced at all operational levels from the Director/Chief, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, and Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, geographic area fire chief/director, and unit manager to employees in the field. Agency administrators need to stress that firefighter and public safety always takes precedence over property and resource loss. Coordination between the fire management staff and unit safety officer(s) is essential in achieving this objective.

Employee Safety and Health Program Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for ensuring safe and healthful work practices.

- Comply with applicable work rules, practices, and procedures.
- Use safety devices, PPE, clothing, and other means provided or directed by policy at all times.
- Report unsafe and unhealthful working conditions to management.
- Report job-related accidents/incidents to the supervisor that results in, or has the potential to harm, people, property, or the environment.
- Report personal conditions that could adversely affect the ability to perform in a safe and healthful manner on the job.
- Complete the Employee Orientation Checklist.

Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program

The Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program provides comprehensive support for federal and Tribal wildland firefighters across USDA and DOI. Its goal is to better understand and address the physical, mental, and occupational health challenges faced by firefighters. The program focuses on behavioral health, environmental and occupational hazards, and physical health and readiness, offering expanded services, prevention resources, and targeted training to strengthen resilience, reduce risks, and support overall wellbeing. See the Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program website for additional program information and resources.

Definitions

Safety: A measure of the degree of freedom from risk or conditions that can cause death, physical harm, or equipment or property damage.

Hazard: A condition or situation that exists within the working environment capable of causing physical harm, injury, or damage.

Risk: The likelihood or possibility of hazardous consequences in terms of severity or probability.

Risk Management: The process whereby management decisions are made and actions taken concerning control of hazards and acceptance of remaining risk.

Risk Management Process

Fire operations risk management is outlined in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461. The five-step process provides firefighters and fire managers a simple, universal, and consistent way to practice risk management by:

- Establishing situation awareness by identifying hazards.
- Assessing hazard potential.
- Developing hazard controls and making risk management decisions.
- Implementing hazard controls.
- Supervising implementation and evaluating effectiveness.

Job Hazard Analysis/Risk Assessment

A completed job hazard analysis (JHA)/risk assessment (RA) is required for:

- "High-risk" work activities, projects, or tasks where unintended outcomes could result in serious injuries, illnesses, fatalities, or significant property damage.
- Jobs that may require the employee to use non-standard personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Changes in equipment, work environment, conditions, policies, or materials.

Supervisors and appropriate line managers must ensure that established JHAs/RAs are reviewed and signed prior to any non-routine task or at the beginning of the fire season.

- ***DOI –*** *Use bureau forms for RA/JHA. Use the following locations and links: BLM Risk Management website, NPS safety site, and 240 FW 1, Exhibit 1, Job Hazard Assessment (https://www.fws.gov/policy/e1240fw1.html).*
- ***FS –*** *JHAs must include a description of the emergency medical procedures, identification of key individuals, and actions that will be taken to ensure prompt and effective medical care and evacuation. See FSH-6709.11, section 21.1, for more information. The FS Operational Risk Management Guide, process, and forms for conducting an RA can be found on the Risk Management website.*

Work/Rest

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.
    - ***DOI –*** *All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.*

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

Assignment Definition
An assignment is defined as the time period (days) between the first full operational period at the first incident or reporting location on the original resource order and commencement of return travel to the home unit.

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
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 according to the home agency's policies. For off-site/remote assignments, days off must occur on the calendar days immediately following last operational shift worked. Regulations may preclude authorizing this for non-National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and State/local employees.

If the next day(s) upon return from an incident is/are a regular workday(s), a paid day(s) off will be authorized. 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.

- ***DOI –*** *After completion of a 14-day assignment and return travel, the mandatory days off will be charged to administrative leave (code 06R, Wildland FF R&R Leave) if they fall on a regularly scheduled workday.*

Home unit delegated officials may authorize additional supplementary day(s) off beyond the mandatory requirements to further mitigate fatigue. If approved, home unit program funds must be used. Refer to OPM's final regulations regarding the administrative leave law in 5 U.S.C. 6329a and 5 CFR part 630, subpart N. Administrative leave should be granted on an ad hoc, event-specific, or otherwise time-limited basis.

- ***FS –*** *Authority to authorize day(s) off with compensation supplementary to mandatory days after an assignment lies with employee's home unit line officer or designee to further mitigate fatigue. Home unit program funds will be used for any additional day(s) authorized after an assignment. While on an assignment lasting longer than 14 days, the host unit agency administrator may authorize supplementary to mandatory days off requirements, which will be charged to incident funds.*

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

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:

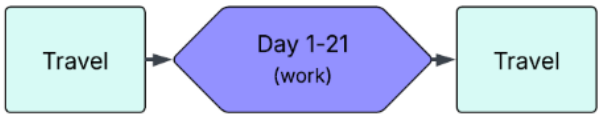
- Life and property are imminently threatened.
- Suppression objectives are close to being met.

- 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.).

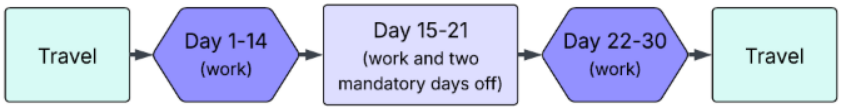
Upon completion of the standard 14-day assignment, an extension of up to an additional 14 days may be allowed (for a total of up to 30 days, inclusive of mandatory days off, and exclusive of travel).

Regardless of extension duration, two mandatory days off will be provided prior to the twenty-second day of the assignment. When a mandatory day off falls on an employee's normal day off, there will be no pay compensation.

21-day Scenario



30-day Scenario



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 concurrence from the resource. The section chief and resource will obtain and document the home unit supervisor's concurrence and submit to the IC for approval.

If a convened Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (GMAC) directs, the IC approves only after GMAC 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.

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 1 day off in any 21-day period. Home unit is defined as the duty station. Supervisors must manage work schedules for initial attack, dispatch, and incident support personnel during extended incident situations.

- ***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.*

Driving Standard

Employees driving motor vehicles are responsible for the proper care, operation, maintenance, and protection of the vehicle, as well as obeying all Federal and State laws.

The use of Government-owned, -rented, or -leased motor vehicles is for official business only. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

General Driving Policy

- Employees must have a valid State driver's license in their possession for the appropriate vehicle class before operating the vehicle. Operating a Government-owned or -rental vehicle without a valid State driver's license is prohibited.
- All drivers whose job duties require the use of a motor vehicle will receive initial defensive driver training prior to operating a vehicle and refresher driver training every three years thereafter.
  - ***DOI –*** *DOI defensive driver training is in DOI Talent (OS/OSH-DefensiveDriving).*

- All traffic violations or parking tickets will be the operator's responsibility.
- All driving requiring a commercial driver's license (CDL) will be performed in accordance with applicable Department of Transportation regulations.
- Drivers and all passengers are required to use seat belts at all times when the motor vehicle is in motion.
- ***DOI –*** *Use previous bureau driver form and process. If the bureau does not have form, follow previous bureau process. The BLM Form 1112-11and FWS Form 3-2267 are accepted forms to use.*
- ***DOI –*** *Employees, volunteers, contractors, and cooperators are prohibited from using any mobile voice/data communication or electronic data retrieval device while operating a vehicle for official government business except where permitted by State law and in hands-free mode. The safest way to use a cell phone or other electronic device while driving is to pull over and stop the vehicle or use a passenger to manage communications. Government purchased two-way radios are exempt from this requirement. The use of any of these devices during an emergency situation (immediate threat to life) is limited to the extent necessary to convey vital information.*
- ***FS –*** *Policy requires all operators of Government-owned, or -leased vehicles to have a Forest Service issued Operator's Identification Card (OF-346) indicating the type of vehicles or equipment the holder is authorized and qualified to operate.*
- ***FS –*** *Drivers shall not engage in cellular phone or mobile radio communications while the vehicle is in motion unless actively engaged in an emergency such as wildland firefighting. During non-emergency situations, the driver shall identify a safe location to stop the vehicle and then engage in cellular phone or mobile radio communications. These restrictions apply whether or not hands-free technology is available.*

Employees operating a motor vehicle that meets any of the following criteria must possess a valid CDL with all applicable endorsements:

- Has a gross combination weight rating or gross combination weight of 26,001 pounds or more, whichever is greater, inclusive of a towed unit(s) with a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds, whichever is greater; or
- Has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of 26,001 pounds or more, whichever is greater; or
- Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or
- Is of any size and is used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Hazardous materials means any material that has been designated as hazardous under 49 U.S.C. 5103 and is required to be placarded under subpart F of 49 CFR part 172 or any quantity of a material listed as a select agent or toxin in 42 CFR part 73.
- ***DOI*** *– Employees under the age of 21 that possess a CDL may operate commercial motor vehicles (CMV) across State lines for interstate commerce purposes under the following conditions:*
  - *Drivers with a CDL may operate a CMV in accordance with the issuing authority (i.e., the State) that issued the CDL and must comply with the issuing authority's CMV operational requirements and any special requirements and endorsements applicable to the CMV license classification of the CDL holder; and*
  - *Supervisors must annually establish and document that those drivers have a valid driver's license (i.e., that the license has not been suspended, revoked, canceled, or that he/she has not been otherwise disqualified from holding a license – 485 DM 16.3D (1)), have the ability to operate the vehicle(s) safely in the operational environment assigned (485 DM 16.3B (2)), and review and validate the employee's driving record (485 DM 16.3D (4)).*

Driving Limitations

This policy addresses driving by personnel actively engaged in wildland fire or all-hazards activities, including driving while in support, mobilization, and demobilization to an assigned incident; or during initial attack fire response (includes time required to control the fire and travel to a rest location).

- 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 (behind the wheel) more than 10 hours 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.
  - 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.

Mobilization and Demobilization
To manage fatigue, every effort should be made to avoid off-unit mobilization (excluding initial attack response) and demobilization travel between 2200 hours and 0500 hours.

Fire Vehicle Operation Standards
Operators of all vehicles must abide by State traffic regulations and agency policy and must operate within the limits specified by the vehicle manufacturer such as tire maximum speed ratings and gross vehicle weight ratings.

Management Controls to Mitigate Risks to Responders

Management controls, engineering controls, equipment guards, and administrative procedures are the first line of defense against exposing an employee to a hazard. Personal protective equipment will be used to protect employees against hazards that exist after all management controls are exhausted.

Personnel Decontamination
To reduce dermal exposure to carcinogenic ash, soot and smoke particulates, personnel are encouraged to shower and wash or change into clean PPE as often as practicable following exposure. Dermal wipes are effective when showers are unavailable. Incidents will recognize decontamination as an operational activity necessary to support firefighter health, safety, and readiness. Incident management teams and hosting units will make every reasonable effort to provide time, space, and resources to facilitate personnel decontamination during operational periods and upon return to incident facilities. Decontamination procedures will be incorporated into operational planning, communicated during briefings, and supported through logistics, safety, and operations functions to ensure consistent implementation.

Wildland Fire Field Attire

Polyester, polypropylene, and nylon materials are not to be worn, because most synthetic fibers melt when exposed to flame or extreme radiant heat. Personnel should wear only undergarments made of 100 percent or the highest possible content of natural fibers, aramid, or other flame-resistant materials.

Personal Protective Equipment

All personnel are required to use personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for their duties and/or as identified in JHAs/RAs. Employees must be trained to use safety equipment effectively.

Flame-resistant clothing should be cleaned or replaced whenever soiled, especially when soiled with petroleum products. Flame-resistant clothing will be replaced when the fabric is so worn as to reduce the protection capability of the garment or is so faded as to significantly reduce the desired visibility qualities.

Any modification to PPE that reduces its protection capability, such as iron-on logos, and stagging of pants, is an unacceptable practice and will not be allowed.

Required Fireline PPE
- Wildland fire boots
- Fire shelter M-2002, Forest Service specification 5100-606
- Helmet with chinstrap; must be certified to NFPA 1977. NFPA certification is found on the product label.
- Goggles/safety glasses (as identified by JHAs/RAs)
- Ear plugs/hearing protection
- Long-sleeved, flame-resistant shirt (yellow recommended); must be certified to NFPA 1977.
  - ***FS –*** *Shirt used by USFS personnel must meet Forest Service Specification 5100-91 or comply with NFPA 1977. Forest Service specifications and NFPA certification are found on the product label.*
- Flame-resistant trousers; must be certified to NFPA 1977. NFPA certification is found on the product label.
  - ***FS –*** *Trousers used by USFS personnel must meet Forest Service Specification 5100-92 or comply with NFPA 1977. Forest Service specifications and NFPA certification are found on the product label.*
- Leather or leather/flame-resistant combination gloves. Flame-resistant flight gloves or NFPA-1977-compliant driving gloves can be used by heavy equipment operators, drivers, and fireline supervisors when not using fireline hand tools. NFPA certification is found on the product label.
  - ***FS –*** *Gloves used by USFS personnel must meet Forest Service Specification 6170-5 or comply with NFPA 1977. Forest Service specifications and NFPA certification is found on the product label. Additional PPE as identified by local conditions, Safety Data Sheet (SDS), or JHA/RA.*

Wildland Fire Boot Standard
Personnel assigned to wildland fires must wear a minimum of 8-inch-high, lace-type, exterior-leather work boots with melt-resistant, lug soles. The 8-inch height requirement is measured from the bottom of the boot heel to the top of the boot. Alaska is exempt from the lug sole requirement.

All boots that meet the wildland fire boot standard as described above are required for firefighting and fireline visits, considered non-specialized PPE, and will be purchased by the employee (including AD/EFF) prior to employment.

The agencies have authorized payment of a boot stipend. See agency specific guidance for implementation.

Fire Shelters
Fire shelter M-2002, Forest Service specification 5100-606 is required for all wildland firefighters. For more information, refer to the NWCG Fire Shelter and Personal Protective Equipment Subcommittee webpage.

Training in inspection and deployment of fire shelters will be provided prior to issuance. Fire shelters do not have a shelf life; serviceability depends on the shelter's condition. Firefighters will inspect (*NWCG Standards for M-2002 Fire Shelters*, PMS 411) their shelter at the beginning of each fire season and periodically throughout the year to ensure serviceability.

Firefighters and fire managers must immediately identify, replace, and destroy any pre-2006 fire shelters, identified by white or pink insert labels.

Training shelters will be deployed at the required *Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher*, RT-130. No live fire exercises for the purpose of fire shelter deployment training will be conducted.

Fire shelters will be carried in a readily accessible manner by all line personnel. The deployment of shelters will not be used as a tactical tool. Supervisors and firefighters must never rely on fire shelters instead of using well-defined escape routes and safety zones. When deployed on a fire, fire shelters will be left in place if it is safe to do so and not be removed pending approval of authorized investigators. Firefighters must report the shelter deployment incident to their supervisor as soon as possible.

Head Protection
All personal in the fire area will wear helmets at all times. Helmets must be equipped with a chinstrap which must be fastened while riding in, or in the vicinity of, helicopters. Acceptable helmets for fireline use must meet NFPA 1977.

Helmets consist of the shell and the suspension, which work together as a system. Both components require frequent inspection and maintenance (https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/fire-shelter-and-personal-protective-equipment-subcommittee).

Eye and Face Protection
The following positions require the wearing of eye protection (meets ANSI Z87.1 standards):
- Nozzle operator
- Chainsaw operator/faller
  - Eye protection will be worn during all chainsaw operations including cleaning and fueling (meeting ANSI Z87.1). Steel mesh safety goggles are allowed during falling, bucking, and brushing operations. Face shields are only required where face protection has been identified in a Job Hazard Analysis/Risk Assessment (JHA/RA). Face shields must meet *ANSI Z87.1*.
- Helibase and ramp personnel
- Wildland fire chemical mixing personnel
- Other positions identified within JHAs/RAs

Full-face protection in the form of a face shield in compliance with *ANSI Z87.1* shall be worn when working in any position where face protection has been identified as required in the job-specific JHA/RA (batch mixing for Terra-Torch®, power sharpener operators, etc.).

Hearing Protection
Personnel exposed to noise levels in excess of 85 dB must wear agency-provided hearing protection. Personnel include, but are not limited to:
- Chainsaw operators/fallers
- Pump operators
- Helibase and aircraft ramp personnel
- Wildland fire chemical mixing personnel

Other duties may require hearing protection as identified in a specific JHA/RA.

The *Code of Federal Regulations* (29 CFR 1910.95) requires employers to administer a continuing, effective hearing conservation program. Consult with local safety and health personnel for specifics regarding unit hearing conservation programs.

Neck Protection
Face and neck shrouds are not required PPE. The use of shrouds is not required and should be as a result of onsite risk analysis. If used, face and neck shrouds shall meet the requirements of FS Specification 5100-601 or *NFPA 1977.*

Shrouds should be positioned in a manner that allows for immediate use. For additional information see Tech Tip *Improved Face and Neck Shroud for Wildland Firefighters, 2004* (0451-2323-MTDC).

Leg Protection
All chainsaw operators will wear leg protection that meets the National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 1977: *Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Wildland Fire Fighting and Urban Interface Fire Fighting*. Swampers should wear leg protection when the need is demonstrated by a risk analysis considering the proximity to the sawyer, slope, fuel type, etc. All other chainsaw leg protection must be removed from service. Chainsaw leg protection shall be maintained according to manufacturer instructions.

Respiratory Protection
Respiratory protection should only be implemented once engineering and administrative controls are exhausted. The need for respiratory protection during wildland fire operations must be determined by each agency. The requirements for respirator use are found in *29 CFR Part 1910.134*.

Only NIOSH-approved respirators shall be used.

Managers and supervisors will not knowingly place wildland firefighters in positions where exposure to toxic gases or chemicals that cannot be mitigated and would require the use of self-contained breathing apparatus.

Managers will not sign cooperative fire protection agreements that would commit wildland firefighters to situations where exposure to toxic gases or chemicals would require the use of self-contained breathing apparatus.

- ***FS –*** *FSM 5130, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus: Wildland firefighters may use only SCBA which are compliant with NFPA 1981, Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for Emergency Services. SCBA may only be used when contaminants from vehicle, dump, structure, or other non-wildland fuel fire cannot be avoided while meeting wildland fire suppression objectives (29 CFR 1910.134, Respiratory Protection). If such an apparatus is not available, avoid exposure to smoke from these sources. The acquisition, training, proper use, employee health surveillance programs, inspection, storage, and maintenance of respiratory protection equipment must comply with applicable NFPA standards and 29 CFR 1910.134 and be justified by a JHA or RA. Where the acquisition and use of an SCBA is approved, it may be carried only on a fire engine; and its use must be consistent with FSM 5130.*

Specialized or Non-Standard Personal Protective Equipment
Specialized PPE not routinely supplied by the agency (e.g., prescription safety glasses; static-resistant clothing; cold-weather, flame-resistant outerwear, etc.) required to perform a task safely must be procured in accordance with agency direction.

Items must meet agency and industry standards for the intended use where available. Cold-weather, flame-resistant outerwear shall be in compliance with NFPA 2112 and worn over flame-resistant clothing meeting NFPA 1977. All cold-weather undergarments should be composed of 100 percent—or the highest possible content of—natural fibers (cotton, wool, or silk) or other flame-resistant material, such as aramid.

High-Visibility Safety Apparel
In order to meet *23 CFR 634*, high-visibility apparel should be worn whenever a firefighter is working on or in the public roadway right-of-way.

Employees must wear high-visibility safety apparel that meets ANSI/ISEA 107, class 2 or 3, or ANSI/ISEA 207.

Exceptions
The high-visibility safety apparel should not be worn if:

- There is a reasonable chance that the employee may be exposed to flames, high heat, or hazardous materials.
- The high-visibility garment hinders an employee's ability to do their job because it prevents necessary motion or because it limits access to necessary equipment, such as radios or fire shelters.

Additional information is available in the National Technology and Development Program (NTDP) report, *High-Visibility Garments and Worker Safety on Roadways* (1251-2818P-MTDC).

Fireline Safety

Incident Briefings

Fire managers must ensure that safety briefings are occurring throughout the fire organization, and that safety factors are addressed through the IC or their designee and communicated to all incident personnel at operational briefings. The identification and location of escape routes and safety zones must be stressed. A briefing checklist can be found in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461.

LCES – A System for Operational Safety

LCES will be used in all operational briefings and tactical operations as per the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, PMS 461.

- L – Lookout(s)
- C – Communication(s)
- E – Escape Route(s)
- S – Safety Zone(s)

Right to Refuse Risk

Every individual has the right to turn down unsafe assignments. When an individual feels an assignment is unsafe, they also have the obligation to identify, to the degree possible, safety alternatives for completing that assignment. The *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, contains a process for properly refusing risk.

Aerial Drop Safety Considerations

- Maintain prompt communications with aerial resources. Prioritize air-to-ground as appropriate.
- Establish a designated monitor for air-to-ground communications. Specific drops may not be accomplished unless communications are maintained, and clearance is assured. Keep informed of the aerial firefighting objectives, tempo, and aircraft type.
- Anticipate when line clearance may be requested. Tempo can change very quickly as aerial resources become available. Anticipate the clearance requirement based on the volume of delivery.
- Evaluate the environment for gravity hazards (tree limbs, rocks, logs, and dispensed retardant/water). Broken trees and tree limbs, rolling rocks, and logs all move with gravity. If clearance is downhill of the drop, heightened awareness is warranted.
- If clearance is impractical, where fuels and/or terrain obstruct lateral clearance, notify aerial supervisor or the initial attack resource immediately.
- If escape is not possible, lie face-down with head toward incoming aircraft with hardhat in place. Hold hand tool away from your body, and if possible, grasp something firm to prevent being carried or rolled about by the dropped liquid.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide

Smoke is one of the potential risks faced by wildland firefighters. Identify and document site-specific hazards and mitigations to reduce firefighter exposure to smoke and potential carbon monoxide in the JHA/RA. Evaluate and balance all risks associated with the operational objectives.

From an incident management perspective, smoke impacts need to be analyzed and an RA completed using the Incident Action Plan (IAP) Safety Analysis (ICS-215A) worksheet. For additional information, reference NWCG Memorandum EB-M-12-006, *Monitoring and Mitigating Exposure to Carbon Monoxide and Particulates at Incident Base Camps*. Consider ordering air resource advisors (ARA, technical specialist) when smoke impacts are of concern in the ICS-215A. Ordering ARAs to the maximum extent practicable as identified by the 2019 Dingell Act on all type 1 complexity fires; consider assigning ARAs on type 2 complexity fires.

Location of Fire Camps and Plans to Remain in Place

Fire camps should be located in areas that will service the incident for the long term without having to relocate. Due to such factors as extreme fire behavior, fire camp locations might be compromised. ICs are to be especially vigilant to quickly identify situations that may put their fire camp(s) or any other adjacent fire camps in jeopardy. As such, planning for evacuation and/or remain in place actions should be considered. Evacuation plans at a minimum shall include:

- Documented risk assessment
- Trigger points
- Egress routes
- Transportation for all personnel
- Accountability for all personnel

- Individuals not meeting qualifications in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, are considered escorted visitors.
  - ***FS –*** *At a minimum, plans shall also include:*
    - *ICP protection strategy referenced in the IAP.*
    - *Livability considerations, including air quality index guidelines, functionality of location and facilities, and safety factors for post-burn conditions.*

Standard Safety Flagging

The following flagging is recommended for wildland fire activities:

- Escape routes – hot-pink flagging marked "Escape Route" (NFES 0566). Crews with colorblind members may wish to carry and utilize fluorescent chartreuse flagging (NFES 2396).
- Hazards – yellow with black diagonal stripes, 1-inch wide (NFES 0267).

If the above recommendations are not utilized on an incident, the incident will need to identify the selected color and make it known to all firefighters.

Emergency Medical Planning and Services

To provide for quick and effective response, all units (including dispatch centers) will develop and implement plans that specify emergency procedures, actions, and roles/responsibilities to ensure injured personnel are provided prompt and effective medical care and evacuation.

Incident Medical Emergency Management Planning

In 2010, NWCG approved the standardized incident emergency protocol developed by the Dutch Creek Serious Accident Task Team and issued direction that these emergency medical procedures be adopted by all IMTs during daily operations.

- Although some of the procedures are specific to larger type 1 and type 2 complexity incidents when key unit leader positions are filled, these same procedures and protocols can be adapted for local unit use when managing type 5, 4, and 3 complexity incidents, as well as during normal field operations. Local unit emergency medical plans must take into account all types and management levels of incidents.
- All IMTs will use the standard Medical Incident Report (MIR) in their medical plan and communication protocols. The MIR is found in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, under Emergency Medical Care Guidelines (red pages) and within the Medical Plan (ICS-206-WF).

To achieve successful medical response, agency administrators will ensure that their units have completed the following items prior to each field season:

- A medical emergency plan that identifies medical evacuation options, local/county/State/Federal resource capabilities, capacities, ordering procedures, cooperative agreements, role of dispatch centers, and key contacts or liaisons.
- Standardized incident and communication center protocols identified in the Medical Incident Report in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461.
- For incidents that require the preparation of an IAP, ICS-206-WF, will be used.

Air Ambulance Coordination

Unit- and geographic area-level fire program managers should ensure that procedures, processes, and/or agreements for use of local and regional air ambulance services are stated in writing and effectively coordinated between the fire programs, the dispatch/logistics centers, and the service providers. These procedures, processes, and/or agreements should address contact frequencies, coordinate format requirements, and identify capabilities/limitations of the air ambulance (e.g., night flying, unimproved helispots, and weather restrictions).

Incident Emergency Medical Services

Incident medical services will vary with incident type, location, size, complexity, terrain, as well as distance to clinics, hospitals and pharmacies, etc. On-incident medical support should address these factors and cover basic care on incident in addition to evacuation means to higher care levels as needed. On-incident care may be provided by a variety of agency credentialled medical personnel, cooperators or contractors. Each medical care provider shall be in compliance with the medical treatment protocols, medical oversight and direction of their respective medical directors.

Burn Treatment Guidelines

The following standards will be used when any firefighter sustains burn injuries, regardless of agency jurisdiction.

All significant burns should be treated as a medical emergency and after on-site medical response, the patient should be transferred to a higher level of care. In most cases, this will be the nearest emergency department (e.g., hospital

emergency room) receive an initial evaluation. After initial medical stabilization and evaluation are completed, the agency administrator or designee and/or firefighter representative (e.g., crew boss, medical unit leader, compensations for injury specialist, etc.) should discuss and coordinate with the attending physician to ensure that the injured firefighter understands the plan of care.

The spectrum of burn care treatment is complex and can include only wound care and local follow up, to consultation by phone or with videos to a burn center, or even immediate transfer to a burn center.

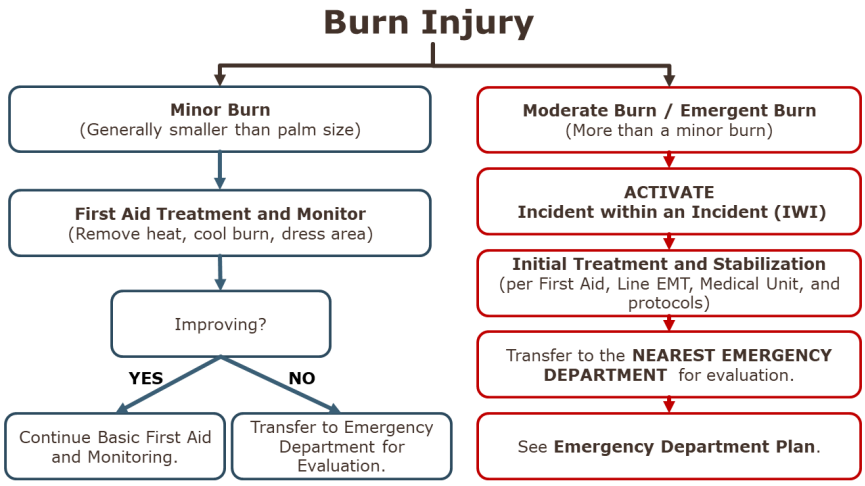
Burn centers are specialized hospitals that provide surgical and other interventions to burn patients. The American Burn Association (https://ameriburn.org/resources/) has created certain transfer criteria that are to be used by referring physicians.

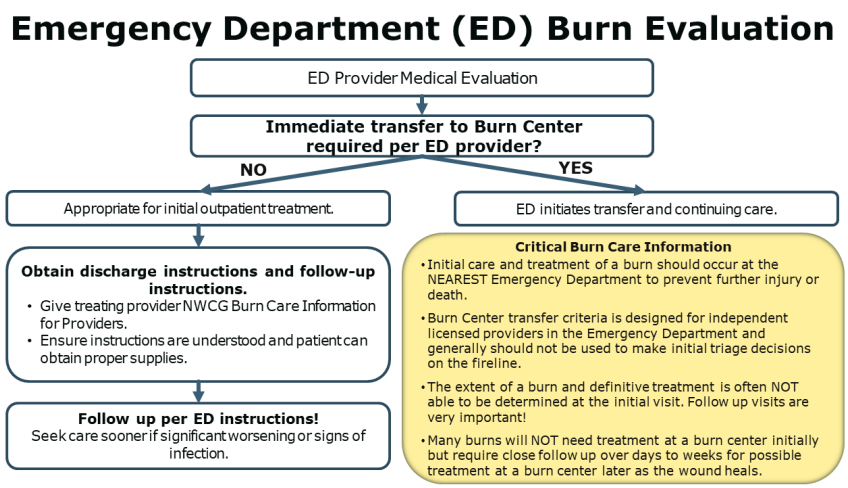
Agency administrators and the patient should understand that burns develop over days and the full extent or exact definitive treatment that will eventually be required may not be able to be determined on the initial emergency department visit. If a patient is discharged from the emergency department, the patient needs to understand when to follow up to have the burn reevaluated.

This referral or follow-up care recommendation is very important for Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) and should be specified in the discharge documentation. Furthermore, this documentation must be signed by a **physician** (https://www.dol.gov/owcp/dfec/regs/compliance/DFECfolio/FECA-PT3/#30100). Workers' compensation benefits may be denied in the event the employee seeks follow-up without a referral from the attending physician after already being seen by a medical provider. A report prepared by a physicians' assistant or nurse practitioner must be countersigned by a **physician** to be accepted as medical evidence.

The agency administrator or designee for the incident will coordinate with the employee's home unit to identify a workers' compensation liaison to assist the injured employee with workers' compensation claims and procedures.

The flowsheet below and emergency department information for attendings can be used as well. See the Emergency Medical Committee website for additional information.





Burn Injury Care Guidelines

Thank you for taking care of our wildland firefighters! The information below is provided to help clinicians provide the best care possible for this unique work force.

Demographics for Wildland Firefighters

- Wildland firefighters are a diverse group, but generally are under 35 years of age.
- They LOVE their job and want to return from an injury as soon as possible.
- They tend to be very stoic individuals that are accustomed to physical labor.
- They are away from home most of the fire season and are often stationed in another State.

Occupational Hazards which could result in Impaired Burn Wound Healing and Potential Infection

- Dirty, dusty, smoky work environment.
- Lack of a clean environment to change dressings.
- Living in a tent and large communal camp settings.
- Extreme heat and sometimes cold environments.
- Lifting and carrying heavy loads (up to 85 lbs.) long distances.
- Working in remote and isolated sites.
- Extensive walking and hiking with significant exertional stress.
- Long hours with limited and disrupted sleep.
- Hunger and irregular meals, dehydration.
- Extreme stress in rapid pull-out emergency situations whether fire, falling rocks, or falling trees.

Important Information for Emergency Department Providers

- Most wildland firefighters do not have a primary care provider (PCP) at home and are working remote from where they live.
- A referral paper trail is important for our-workmen's compensation claims. If they are discharged, please include where and approximately when to follow up. Most EMR discharge instructions will suffice so long as it includes the service (e.g., wound care, surgery, burn center). A specific physician name is not needed but please do not put "PRN." Without this referral, significant delays can occur.
- If local follow-up for a minor injury is needed, please provide specific instructions as transport and/or alternative living conditions may need to be arranged by the fire personnel.
- If the injured firefighter is not told specifically that they cannot return to the fireline, they will do so. Please List any specific instructions you feel are indicated (e.g., daily dressing changes, do not use right hand until seen at wound care, etc.). Please Do not just state "light duty."
- Wildland firefighters may be accompanied by an agency representative to help them with transport/instructions and act as a liaison with the fire, home unit, and family for the patient.
- The fire may have a medical unit that can help with some minor care. These units consist of EMTs in a remote area who only have access to basic over-the-counter medications.
    - ***DOI –*** *Initial burn treatment and follow-up care may be affected by the availability of specialized medical services, the potential need for ongoing care, and the incident's location relative to the employee's home unit. The USWFS Medical Director is available to assist with coordination of care, including guidance on follow-up treatment and burn center referrals. If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding*

follow-up injury care or need to engage the Medical Director, please contact the USWFS National Duty Officer at 208-387-5876.

- ***FS –*** *For emergency medical direction, contact the FS on-call physician at 703-605-5302.*

Explosives, Munitions, and Unexploded Ordnance

When encountering explosives, munitions, unexploded ordnance (UXO), or suspected UXO, never pick up, handle, uncover, or touch suspected explosives or military munitions. Retreat and secure the area from entry. Immediately notify the local dispatch office and gather as much information as possible from a safe distance. Never compromise safety to collect information.

- Location of the explosive/munitions using a map, GPS coordinates, or landmarks (use of a GPS receiver is acceptable because it is a receive-only device).
- Picture of the explosive if it can be obtained from a safe distance.
- Name and contact information of person discovering the explosive/munitions.
- Condition of the explosive/munitions (e.g., buried, partially exposed, fully exposed, deteriorated, or punctured).
- Number and type of visible explosive/munitions (e.g., blasting caps, dynamite, bomb, grenade, etc.).
- Estimated size (e.g., length and diameter) of explosive/munitions.
- Distinctive features (e.g., shape, color, markings) of explosive/munitions.
- Nearby structures, if any (so inhabitants can be contacted and evacuated if necessary).
- Public access (i.e., open or closed to motor vehicles) to the vicinity.

Notifications

Local dispatch centers are responsible for notifying:

- Agency law enforcement;
- Unit safety officer;
- Agency administrator/bureau representative; and
- Local law enforcement.

Discovery of Explosives, Munitions, Unexploded Ordnance Associated with Former Defense Sites

The military retains liability and responsibility for munitions removal and for remedial actions on all lands transferred (or transferring) from the military to the land management agencies and is responsible for explosives safety at former defense sites. The military must be notified for all UXO on these lands.

Local law enforcement is responsible for contacting the appropriate military authority. If the responsible military unit is unknown, then local law enforcement should contact the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), 52nd Ordnance Group (EOD), at its 24-hour emergency response number, (931) 431-3824.

For additional UXO safety information, see the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461.

Industrial and Naturally Occurring Hazardous Materials Exposure

Firefighters can potentially be exposed to hazards in the wildland fire environment. Encountered hazards can be both human and environmentally borne.

This section provides information and mitigations for most encountered industrial and naturally occurring potential exposures. Recognizing there may be unique/area specific hazardous exposures (e.g., fungus causing valley fever, erionite, coal seams), the following standards apply to all hazards:

- Identifying unit-specific environmental hazards;
- Develop JHAs/Ras for those hazards;
- Develop and provide specific training and SOPs;
- Provide briefings/training for those who may be exposed;
- If exposure is suspected, immediately disengage, and leave the area; and
- Seek immediate medical attention if exposure symptoms occur.

Hazardous Materials Response

Hazardous materials response or control is not a functional responsibility of wildland fire suppression resources. These incidents have tremendous potential to cause significant health and life safety issues. In order to protect the health and safety of agency personnel, no employee shall be directed or dispatched (including self-dispatching) to an incident involving hazardous materials unless they are provided with the required PPE and the appropriate certification level. Agency personnel on incidents involving hazardous material will limit their actions to those emergency services necessary for the immediate protection of themselves and the public and the prompt notification

of appropriate public safety agencies. All wildland firefighters who are likely to witness or discover hazardous substances are required to complete their agency's First Responder Awareness (Level I) program.

Dump and Spill Sites

Employees that discover any unauthorized waste dump or spill site that contains indicators of potential hazardous substances (e.g., containers of unknown substances, pools of unidentifiable liquids, piles of unknown solid materials, unusual odors, or any materials out of place or not associated with an authorized activity) should take the following precautions:

- Follow the procedures in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461;
- Treat each site as if it contains harmful materials;
- Do not handle, move, or open any container, breathe vapors, or make contact with the material;
- Move a safe distance upwind from the site;
- Contact appropriate personnel. Generally, this is the hazardous materials coordinator for the local office; and
- Firefighters need to immediately report hydrogen sulfide (H_2S) or potential exposure and seek immediate medical care.

The following general safety rules shall be observed when working with chemicals:

- Read and understand the SDSs.
- Keep the work area clean and orderly.
- Use the necessary safety equipment.
- Label every container with the identity of its contents and appropriate hazard warnings.
- Store incompatible chemicals in separate areas.
- Substitute less toxic materials whenever possible.
- Limit the volume of volatile or flammable material to the minimum needed for short operation periods.
- Provide means of containing the material if equipment or containers should break or spill their contents.

Wildland Fires Within or Near Oil/Gas Operations

For units with oil and gas operations within their jurisdiction, the following are the minimum standard operating procedures to help ensure the health and safety of wildland firefighters:

- Firefighters shall receive annual oil and gas hazard recognition and mitigation training;
- Local unit shall complete a JHA/RA for wildland fire activities in oil and gas areas and provide a copy with a briefing to all local and incoming resources;
- Establish response protocols and proper decontamination procedures to minimize exposure to additional employees, equipment, and facilities. Protocols will include notification procedures to respective oil and gas company(s);
- Ensure oil and gas resource advisors are consulted;
- Ensure that at least one member of each squad or engine crew is knowledgeable in the use and data interpretation of the hydrogen sulfide gas monitor. Training on the device will include at a minimum:
  - Equipment charging and maintenance of sensors;
  - Startup, zeroing, calibration, and bump testing procedures as recommended by the manufacturer; and
  - How the monitor elicits a warning alarm (visual, auditory, vibration).
- Understand peak reading, short-term exposure limits (STEL), and time weighted averages;
  - Understand how to set the monitors alarm threshold.
- The monitor's alarm shall be set at the current American Conference on Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) Threshold Limit Value (10 PPM 2008) and STEL (15 PPM 2008);
- If hydrogen sulfide gas is encountered, immediately disengage and leave area; and
- Do not establish incident base camps or staging areas in or near oil and gas operations.

The following websites provide additional information and training resources:

- Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center (https://lessons.wildfire.gov/search-irdb)
- National Fire Protection Association
- Oil *and Gas Field Safety Guidelines for Incident Management Teams* briefing template ("Additional Resources" at https://www.nifc.gov/programs/safety).

Wildland Fires Within or Near Radioactive Locations

Abandoned uranium mines and other potential radioactive sites exist in many areas of public lands. When these areas are identified, local management should provide information and direction on operations to be used. General knowledge and understanding of potential radiation exposure is necessary for wildland fire program management to make valid risk management decisions in these areas.

Wildland Fires Within or Near Coal Seams

Coal is naturally occurring black or brownish rock usually located in rock strata in layers or veins, coal beds, or coal seams (smoldering exposed/underground coal deposit). Exposed coal seams are abundant through southeast and central Montana, western North Dakota, South Dakota, and Alaska.

Risks

Coal seam fires pose a serious problem that can be a hazard to firefighter's health and safety. Coal seam fires can emit highly toxic gases, including carbon monoxide (colorless, odorless, and tasteless), sulfur dioxide (colorless with an irritating, pungent odor), and other potentially hazardous gases.

Some symptoms of exposure to these gases may include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue, shortness of breath, coughing, and eye irritation. Because of the variances in symptoms and exposure levels, seek medical attention for a complete diagnosis if firefighters have been exposed to toxic gases from coal seam fires and symptoms persist.

Firefighters exposed to coal ash, smoke, or vapor should trade in their PPE for fresh PPE. Individually bag PPE that has been contaminated.

Required Actions/Precautions

Firefighters are typically not equipped or trained for coal seam fires and should not attempt to extinguish such fires with hand tools and engines.

Putting water on coal seam fires is normally useless. Mitigation crews will need to excavate the burning coal seam and mix the hot material with soil and water to cool. The area can be reclaimed by backfilling the seam and re-vegetating the disturbed area.

Signs of a coal seam fire may include a rotten egg smell, smoking white ash, and continuous or non-continuous lines of what appears to be smoldering black rock (coal) where the flame may or may not be visible. Avoid low-lying terrain in known coal seam fire areas especially early morning when air temperatures are cool. Gas tends to sink when air is cool and will accumulate in low-lying areas.

Do not depend on sense of smell to detect coal seam fires. At high concentrations, the sense of smell will be almost immediately overwhelmed or become numb. At lower levels, the sense of smell will slowly deteriorate as levels build in the blood stream. Do not stand downwind of coal smoke under any conditions especially during suppression operations.

Report the location of all coal seam fires to the IC or supervisor. ICs should notify agency representatives of locations of coal seam fires. Agencies should have resource advisors notify incoming incident command teams and firefighting resources of known locations of exposed coal seams, coal mines, or abandoned coal mines adjacent to ongoing incidents and the risks and precautions to take when working around coal seam fires.

Hazardous Water Sources

Many water sources used during wildland fire operations may appear harmless, but contain hazardous materials (e.g., hydraulic fracturing fluid, cyanide, sewage, corrosives). These hazardous water sources may pose threats to personnel health and firefighting equipment. Indicators that a water source may be hazardous include proximity to active or inactive mining operations, gas/oil wells, water treatment facilities, or other industrial operations. In many cases, these hazardous water sources may not be fenced, and no warning signs may be present.

Fire personnel should evaluate water sources to ensure they do not contain potentially hazardous materials. If unsure of the contents of a water source, personnel should not utilize the water source until its contents can be verified. Dispatch centers, resource advisors, or on-scene personnel can assist with verification of safe water sources. Information about known hazardous water sources should be included in operational briefings.

Hydrogen Cyanide Exposure

Synthetic materials (plastics, nylon, Styrofoam®, and polyurethane) routinely dumped on the wildland can produce hydrogen cyanide (HCN) when burned. HCN exposure can disrupt the body's ability to use oxygen and can cause asphyxia and/or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Symptoms of HCN poisoning include bitter almond odor on breath, burning taste in mouth, stiffness of lower jaw, feeling of numbness or constriction in throat, weakness, and headache.

Follow hazardous materials protocols contained in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, to mitigate exposure to HCN. Immediately refer all personnel potentially exposed to HCN to a health care facility capable of toxicology testing and treatment.

Safety for Personnel Visiting Fires

A wide variety of personnel (agency administrators, other agency personnel, dignitaries, members of the news media, etc.) may visit incidents. The following standards apply to all visitors.

Visits to Incident Base Camps or Non-Fireline Field Locations
Recommended field attire includes:

- Lace-up, closed toe shoes/boots with traction soles and ankle support
- Trousers
- Long-sleeved shirt
- Field uniform (agency personnel)

Fireline Logistical Support
Personnel performing fireline logistical support duties (e.g., bus drivers, supply delivery/retrieval, incident drivers, non-tactical water delivery, etc.) must meet the following requirements:

- Successfully complete fire shelter training.
- Wear the required fireline PPE.
- Receive an incident briefing.
- Ensure adequate communications are established.
- Provide proof of a current WCT, as the position requires.
- Other requirements as established by the IC.

Minimum Requirements for Visits to the Fireline/Prescribed Fire Burns
Visits (e.g., media visits or political/administrative tours) to hazardous areas of the fire or areas that pose a fire behavior threat will be managed by meeting the requirements below:

- Visits to the fireline must have the approval of the IC/burn boss.
- Visitors must maintain communications with the division supervisor or appropriate fireline supervisor of the area to be visited.
- Visitors must wear the required fireline PPE.
- Required field attire includes undergarments made of 100 percent or the highest possible content of natural fibers or flame-resistant materials.
- Required equipment/supplies include:
  - Hand tool
  - Water canteen

Visitors to the fireline/prescribed fire burns may be "non-escorted" or "escorted" depending on the following requirements:

Non-escorted Visits
Unescorted visitors to the fireline must have:

- An incident qualification with a minimum physical fitness level of "light"
- Adequate communications and radio training
- Completed the following training:
  - *Introduction to Fire Behavior* (S-190)
  - *Firefighter Training* (S-130)
  - *Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher* (RT-130), including fire shelter training

Deviation from these requirements must be approved by the IC or burn boss.

Escorted Visits
All visitors lacking the requirements of a non-escorted visit must be escorted while on the fireline.

- Visitors must receive training in the proper use of fireline PPE.
- Escorts will determine hand tool and water requirements.
- Visitors must be able to walk in mountainous terrain and be in good physical condition with no known limiting conditions.
- Escorts must be minimally qualified as single resource boss.

Deviation from these requirements must be approved by the IC or burn boss.

Helicopter Observation Flights
Visitors who take helicopter flights to observe fires must receive approval from the IC, a passenger briefing, and meet the following requirements:

- Required PPE:
  - Flight helmet
  - Leather boots
  - Flame-resistant clothing
  - Flight gloves (type GS/FRP-2) constructed of a soft leather palm and stretchable Nomex® fabric for the back are preferred. These gloves have a long cuff extending several inches above the wrist providing total coverage when the flight suit sleeve is properly worn. Gloves should fit snugly to provide maximum finger dexterity for the wearer. All-leather gloves (without synthetic liners) are acceptable if they provide the wearer with wrist coverage and finger dexterity. Gloves that meet the flame-resistant Nomex® and leather design (conforms to Military Specification MIL-DTL-81188C) are available that are compatible with modern touchscreen devices. These are preferred when touchscreen devices are mission essential.

Occasional passengers/visitors have no training requirement; however, a qualified flight manager must supervise loading and unloading of passengers.

Fixed-Wing Observation Flights
No PPE is required for visitors and agency personnel who take fixed-wing flights to observe fires. However, a passenger briefing is required, and the flight level must not drop below 500 feet AGL.

6 Minutes for Safety Training

Daily 6 Minutes for Safety training should be conducted to focus on high-risk, low-frequency activities that fire personnel may encounter during a fire season. A daily national 6 Minutes for Safety briefing or within the National Incident Management Situation Report.

SAFENET

SAFENET is a form, process, and method for reporting and resolving safety concerns encountered in any aspect (e.g., preparedness, training) of wildland fire, prescribed fire, or all-hazards incident management. The information provided on the form provides important, safety-related data to the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) for determining long-term trends and problem areas.

The objectives of the form and process are:
- To provide immediate reporting and correction of unsafe situations or close calls in wildland fire.
- To provide a means of sharing safety information throughout the fire community.
- To provide long-term data that will assist in identifying trends.

Individuals who observe or who are involved in an unsafe situation shall initiate corrective actions if possible, and then report the occurrence using SAFENET. Originators are encouraged, but not required, to put their name on the report.

Prompt replies to the originator (if name provided), timely action to correct the problem, and discussion of filed SAFENETs at local-level meetings encourage program participation and active reporting.

SAFENET submission does not replace accident reporting or any other valid agency reporting method; however, SAFENETs are an efficient way to report a safety concern and involves front line firefighters in the daily job of being safe and keeping others safe by documenting and helping to resolve safety issues.

SAFENETs may be filed:
- Electronically
- Verbally by telephone at 1-888-670-3938
- By the SAFENET Field Card (available at https://safenet.nifc.gov)

The SAFENET Field Card can be used by wildland fire personnel to immediately identify and report unsafe situations or close calls that should receive immediate resolution/mitigation. If the situation cannot be resolved at the local/incident level, the reporting individual is encouraged to follow the formal SAFENET submission process stated above.

Alert System

The Alert System is intended as another mechanism to provide safety-related information to the field. The expectation is that the messages will be forwarded throughout the wildland fire community in a relatively short period of time. There are three types of safety alert:

- Safety Warning – A time-sensitive alert to the wildland fire community addressing wildland fire safety hazards that pose an imminent threat, or have potential to pose a threat, to life or property. Red hash-marked bordered stationary will be associated with this type of alert.
- Advisory – A time-sensitive alert from an NWCG committee to the wildland fire community regarding procedural changes, equipment information and/or use updates, potential safety hazards, etc. Yellow hash-marked bordered stationary will be associated with this type of alert.
- Bulletin – A general alert from an NWCG committee to the wildland fire community regarding the release of subject-specific information such as technical information, equipment updates, accident reports, etc. Depending on the origin and/or the subject content, a green hash-marked bordered stationary may be associated with this type of alert.

A database of all alerts can be found on the NWCG website (https://www.nwcg.gov/alerts).

Accident/Injury/Exposure Reporting

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) mandates that all accidents and injuries be reported in a timely manner. Accident and injury reporting is important for the following reasons:

- To protect and compensate employees for on-the-job incidents.
- To assist supervisors and safety managers in taking corrective actions and establish safer work procedures.
- To determine if administrative controls or PPE are needed to prevent a future incident of the same or similar type.
- To provide a means for trend analysis.

Agency Reporting Requirements

Employees are required to immediately report every job-related accident to their supervisor. Managers and supervisors shall ensure that an appropriate level of investigation is conducted for each accident and record all personal injuries and property damage. Coordinate with your human resources office or administrative personnel to complete appropriate Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP) forms. Reporting is the responsibility of the injured employee's home unit regardless of where the accident or injury occurred.

- ***DOI –*** *Employees will report accidents using the Safety Management Information System (SMIS). Supervisors shall complete the SMIS report within six working days after the accident/injury.*
- ***FS –*** *Employees will use the eSafety system through the Forest Service Dashboard (https://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/hrm/workers-compensation/index.php#esafety).*

OSHA Reporting Requirements

For accidents/injuries meeting the "serious accident criteria (found in chapter 18), OSHA must be notified within 8 hours.

For other work-related accidents/injuries requiring in-patient hospitalizations, amputations, or loss of an eye, OSHA must be notified within 24 hours. In-patient hospitalization is defined as formal admission to the in-patient service of a hospital or clinic for care or treatment (does not include admission for observation or diagnostic testing only).

Supervisors will coordinate with the unit safety manager where the accident/injury occurred to ensure notifications are made to the appropriate OSHA regional office (https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/2014).

Documenting Exposure

Employees who are exposed to potentially hazardous conditions (e.g., smoke, noise, vibration) and have not experienced symptoms, illness, or injury may document the exposure as follows.

- ***DOI –*** *Log event in the SMIS Exposure Module.*
- ***FS –*** *Submit an eSafety Precautionary or First Aid claim.*

Critical Incident Management

The *NWCG Agency Administrator's Guide to Critical Incident Management*, PMS 926, is designed to assist agency administrators and bureau representatives or designees with the chronological steps in managing a critical incident through a series of checklists outlining functional area oversight and responsibilities.

The guide is not intended to replace local emergency plans or other specific guidance that may be available but should be used in conjunction with existing agency policy, line-of-duty-death (LODD)/loss-of-human-life (LOHL) handbooks, or other critical incident guidance. Local units should complete the guide or equivalent, and review and update at least annually.

Critical Incident Stress Management

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a comprehensive, integrated, systematic, and multicomponent crisis intervention program that was developed to manage traumatic experiences. CISM is a package of tactics that are designed to mitigate the impact of a traumatic event, facilitate normal recovery processes, restore adaptive function, and identify people who would benefit from additional support services. CISM intervention services can be applied to wildland fire, law enforcement, or other emergency responses. CISM interventions should never be used for grief counseling, mediation, or a replacement for mental health care professionals.

The agency administrator is responsible for identifying an event as a critical incident.

Critical Incident Peer Support

Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) is an intervention tactic designed for colleagues or people of "mutual respect" to help each other through difficult situations. CIPS is the foundation of the interagency wildland fire CISM program since peers understand the unique traumas, fears, job-related stresses, and offer instant trust, respect, credibility, and empathy. Camaraderie among peers has credibility that academic training cannot create.

Critical Incident Peer Support Groups

CIPS groups are assembled at the time of request and can be ordered through the dispatch/coordination system (https://gacc.nifc.gov/cism/peers.html).

Chapter 8
Interagency Coordination and Cooperation

Introduction

Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners. The same capabilities used in wildland fire management will also be used, when appropriate and authorized, on non-fire incidents in the United States, and on both wildland fires and non-fire incidents internationally.

National Wildland Fire Management Structure

Federal Fire Executive Council (FFEC)

The Federal Fire Executive Council (FFEC) provides a common, integrated, and coordinated Federal agency approach to wildland fire policy, leadership, budget, and program oversight. The FFEC ensures that wildland fire management policies, programs, activities, and budgets are coordinated and consistent among and between the member agencies. FFEC sets policy and program direction for Federal wildland fire program implementation and resolves inconsistencies among and between Federal wildland fire programs. FFEC ensures policy and program coordination and integration with non-fire management programs and activities as well as non-Federal partners and cooperators.

The FFEC is accountable and has the authority to:

- Establish strategic Federal fire program budget direction and priorities.
- Ensure coordinated Federal policy development.
- Develop Federal business requirements and priorities.

The FFEC is responsible and has the authority to:

- Provide coordinated Federal interagency executive level wildland fire policy leadership, direction, and program oversight.
- Provide wildland fire policy and program direction to the Fire Management Board (FMB).
- Provide strategic policy and program integration with resource management, aviation, and other related program areas.
- Coordinate and communicate with other non-Federal entities.
- Set strategic budget direction and recommendations.
- Establish strategic direction and requirements for wildland fire information and technology, wildland fire administrative/business support, scientific and research support, and other program areas.
- Approve wildland fire policy, as appropriate.
- Resolve policy and program management inconsistencies and differences.
- Oversee compliance with policy, budget, and program direction.
- Charter the FMB.
- Charter the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) along with the Intertribal Timber Council, and the National Association of State Foresters.

The FFEC is composed of the USWFS Director (DOI) and USFS Deputy Chief, Fire and Aviation Management (USDA).

Fire Management Board

The Fire Management Board (FMB) provides a mechanism for coordinated and integrated Federal wildland fire program management and implementation. The FMB, taking strategic policy and program direction from the FFEC, directs, coordinates, and oversees the development and implementation of Federal wildland fire policy and programs to provide consistent and cost-effective program management.

The FMB is accountable and has the authority to:

- Coordinate Federal program management and oversight.

The FMB is responsible for and has the authority to:

- Provide common, integrated implementation strategies, approaches, programs, and oversight for implementing Federal wildland fire policies.
- Provide Federal wildland fire program strategy, policy, budget, and program recommendations to the FFEC.
- Provide recommendations on science and research requirements and priorities necessary to support wildland fire program management activities.

- Identify requirements and recommend priorities for standards necessary to ensure interoperability of intergovernmental wildland fire activities and operations.
- Consult with our non-Federal partners.
- Develop recommendations for interagency wildland fire administrative/business support needs.

The FMB is composed of the DOI/USWFS Deputy Director – Fire Readiness and Training; USFS Deputy Director, Fire and Aviation Management; and US Fire Administration (USDHS-FEMA).

National Wildfire Coordinating Group
The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) is made up of the USFS; USWFS; Intertribal Timber Council; U.S. Fire Administration (USFA); State forestry agencies through the National Association of State Foresters (NASF); International Association of Fire Chiefs; and Department of War. Associate members include NOAA, NASA, IMTA. The NWCG mission is to provide national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners. Its goal is to provide more effective execution of each agency's fire management program. The group provides a formalized system to agree upon standards of training, equipment, qualifications, and other operational functions.

Multi-Agency Management and Coordination

National Multi-agency Coordinating Group
National multi-agency coordination is overseen by the National Multi-agency Coordinating Group (NMAC), which consists of one representative each from the USWFS, FS, NASF, and the USFA, who have been delegated authority by their respective agency directors to manage wildland fire operations on a national scale when fire management resource shortages are probable. The delegated authorities include:

- Provide oversight of general business practices between NMAC and geographic area multi-agency coordination groups (GMAC).
- Establish priorities among geographic areas.
- Activate and maintain a ready reserve of national resources for assignment directly by NMAC as needed.
- Implement decisions of the NMAC.

The NMAC Operating Plan, NMAC correspondence, and other resources and references are at https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/administrative/nmac/index.html.

Geographic Area Multi-Agency Coordinating Groups
Geographic area multi-agency coordination is overseen by geographic area administrators or fire managers from agencies that have jurisdictional or support responsibilities, or that may be significantly impacted by resource commitments. GMAC responsibilities include:

- Establish priorities for the geographic area.
- Acquire, allocate, and reallocate resources.
- Provide NMAC with National Ready Reserve (NRR) resources as required.
- Issue coordinated and collective situation status reports.

NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management

All Federal agencies have adopted the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, as the official guide to provide execution of each agency's incident business management program. Unit offices, geographic areas, or NWCG may issue supplements as long as policy or conceptual data is not changed.

Since consistent application of interagency policies and guidelines is essential, procedures in the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, will be followed. Agency manuals provide a bridge between manual sections and the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, so that continuity of agency manual systems is maintained and all additions, changes, and supplements are filed in a uniform manner.

- ***DOI –*** *The Department of the Interior Incident Response Business Handbook to the NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management, PMS 902, establishes business management guidelines for the DOI's all-hazards incidents.*

Agreement Standards
Agreements will be comprised of two components: the actual agreement and an operations plan. The agreement will outline the authority and general responsibilities of each party, and the operations plan will define the specific operating procedures.

Any agreement which obligates Federal funds or commits anything of value must be signed by the appropriate warranted contracting officer, certified agreement specialist, and/or delegated signatory official (USFS). Specifications for funding responsibilities should include billing procedures and schedules for payment.

Any agreement that extends beyond a fiscal year must be made subject to the availability of funds. Any transfer of Federal property must be in accordance with Federal property management regulations.

All agreements must undergo periodic joint review; and, as appropriate, revision. Assistance in preparing agreements can be obtained from local or geographic area and/or procurement staff.

All appropriate agreements and operating plans will be provided to the servicing dispatch center. The authority to enter into interagency agreements is extensive.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance and Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Authorities During Transition. For BLM, reference BLM Manual 9200, Departmental Manual 620 DM, the Reciprocal Fire Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. 1856, and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review. For NPS, reference chapter 2, Federal Assistance and Interagency Agreements Guideline (DO-20), and the Departmental Manual 620 (DM-620). NPS-RM-18, Interagency Agreements, Release Number 1, 02/22/99. For FWS, reference Service Manual, Departmental Manual 620 DM, and Reciprocal Fire Protection Act, 42U.S.C. 1856.*
- ***FS –*** *FSM 1580 and 5106.2, and FSH 1509.11.*

Types of Agreements

Interagency Agreements

Interagency Agreements are used when one Federal agency is in a position to provide materials, supplies, equipment, work, or service of any kind that another Federal agency needs to accomplish its mission.

Regional/State Cooperative Agreements

Regional and State cooperative agreements shall be developed for mutual assistance. These agreements are essential to the fire management program. Concerns for areawide scope should be addressed through these agreements.

Local Cooperative Agreements

Local units are responsible for developing agreements with local agencies and fire departments to meet mutual needs for suppression and/or prescribed fire services.

Emergency Assistance

Approved reimbursable agreements are the appropriate and recommended way to provide emergency assistance. If no agreements are established, refer to your agency administrator to determine the authorities delegated to your agency to provide emergency assistance.

Contracts

Contracts may be used where they are the most cost-effective means of providing for protection commensurate with established standards. A contract, however, does not absolve an agency administrator of the responsibility for managing a fire program.

Contracts should be developed and administered in accordance with Federal acquisition regulations. In particular, a contract should specify conditions for abandonment of a fire in order to respond to a new call elsewhere.

National Agreements for Wildland Fire Management

National Memorandum of Understanding for Wildland Fire Management

The objectives of the *National Agreement for Fire Management Between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) of the United States Department of Agriculture* are:

- To provide a basis for cooperation among the agencies on all aspects of wildland fire management and as authorized in non-fire emergencies.
- To facilitate the exchange of personnel, equipment (including aircraft), supplies, services, and funds among the agencies.

DOI, USDA, and DOD Interagency Agreement

The purpose of the *Interagency Agreement for the Provision of Temporary Support During Wildland Firefighting Operations among the United States Department of the Interior, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Department of Defense* is:

- To establish the general guidelines, terms, and conditions under which the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) will request, and Department of Defense (DOD) will provide, temporary support to NIFC in wildfire emergencies occurring within all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. territories and possessions, including fires on State and private lands. This agreement provides the basis for reimbursement of DOD under the Economy Act.

These and other agreements pertinent to interagency wildland fire management can be found at https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm.

Elements of an Agreement

The following elements should be addressed in each agreement:

- The authorities appropriate for each party to enter in an agreement. Specifically, 42 USC 1856 "incurred cost."
- The roles and responsibilities of each agency signing the agreement.
- An element addressing the cooperative roles of each participant in prevention, presuppression, suppression, fuels, and prescribed fire management operations.
- All mutually approved operations that require reimbursement will be identified and agreed to by an agreement which is required if participating parties have a cost-share. The mechanism and timing of the funding exchanges will be identified and agreed upon.
- Appropriation limitations – Parties to this agreement are not obligated to make expenditures of funds or reimbursements of expenditures under terms of this agreement unless the Congress of the United States of America appropriates such funds for that purpose by the Counties of _____, by the Cities of _____, and/or the Governing Board of Fire Commissioners of_____.
- Liabilities/waivers – Each party waives all claims against every other party for compensation for any loss, damage, personal injury, or death occurring as a consequence of the performance of this agreement unless gross negligence on any part of any party is determined.
- Termination procedure – The agreement shall identify the duration of the agreement and cancellation procedures.
- A signature page identifying the names of the responsible officials shall be included in the agreement.
    - ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For BLM, refer to chapter 2, Agreements with Cooperators. For NPS, refer to DO-20 for detailed instructions and format for developing agreements. For BIA, refer to Notification of Required Use of Cooperative Agreement Template in response to Office of Inspector General's Independent Report on the "Bureau of Indian Affairs Wildland Fire Suppression" (Memorandum dated September 06, 2013) and Clarification of Authorities on Implementation of the Wildland Fire Cooperative Agreement Template (Memorandum dated May 28, 2014).*
    - ***FS –*** *FSM 1580; FSH 1509.11, Chapter 30; FSH 1509.11 Chapter 90; FSH 6509.11g, Chapter 50.*

Operating Plans

Operating plans (OP) are a subsidiary document to an agreement and shall be reviewed, updated, and approved prior to the fire season. The plan may be amended after a major incident as part of a joint debriefing and review. The plan shall contain detailed, specific procedures which will provide for safe, efficient, and effective operations.

General Elements of an Operating Plan

The following items should be addressed in the OP:

- **Mutual Aid**
  The OP should address that there may be times when cooperators are involved in emergency operations and unable to provide mutual aid. In this case, other cooperators may be contacted for assistance.
- **Command Structure**
  The Incident Command System (ICS) will be used to manage all fires under Federal jurisdiction. Unified command should be used, as appropriate, whenever multiple jurisdictions are involved, unless one or more parties request a single agency incident commander (IC). If there is a question about jurisdiction, fire managers should mutually decide and agree on the command structure as soon as they arrive on the fire; agency administrators should confirm this decision as soon as possible. Once this decision has been made, the incident organization in use should be relayed to all units on the incident as well as dispatch centers. In all cases, the identity of the IC must be made known to all fireline and support personnel.

- **Communications**
  In mutual aid situations, a common designated radio frequency identified in the OP should be used for incident communications. All incident resources should utilize and monitor this frequency for incident information, tactical use, and changes in weather conditions or other emergency situations. In some cases, because of equipment availability/capabilities, departments/agencies may have to use their own frequencies for tactical operations, allowing the "common" frequency to be the link between departments. All department/agencies must change to a single frequency or establish a common communications link as soon as feasible. Clear text should be used. Avoid personal identifiers such as names. The "Communications" paragraph in the OP shall meet Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirements for documenting shared use of radio frequencies.
- **Distance/Boundaries**
  Responding and requesting parties should identify any mileage limitations from mutual boundaries where "mutual aid" is reimbursable or non-reimbursable. Also, for some fire departments, the mileage issue may not be one of initial attack "mutual aid" or "reimbursable assistance," but of mutual assistance. In this situation, you may have the option to make it part of this agreement or identify it as a situation where the request would be made to the agency having jurisdiction, which would then dispatch the fire department.
- **Time/Duration**
  Responding and requesting parties should identify time limitations (usually 24 hours) for resources in a non-reimbursable status and reimbursable rates when the resources are in a reimbursable status.
- **Qualifications/Minimum Requirements**
  NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, outlines the minimum requirements for training, experience, physical fitness level, and currency standards for wildland fire positions, which all participating agencies have agreed to meet for national mobilization.
  - During initial action, all agencies (Federal, State, local and Tribal) accept each other's standards. Once jurisdiction is clearly established, then the standards of the agency(s) with jurisdiction prevail.
  - Prior to the fire season, Federal agencies should meet with their State, local, and Tribal partners and communicate the qualification/certification standards that will apply to the use of local, non-Federal firefighters during initial action on fires on lands under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency.
  - The Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG) should determine the application of *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, qualification/certification standards for mobilization within the geographic area.
  - On a fire where a non-Federal agency is also an agency with legal jurisdiction, the standards of that agency apply.
  - The OP should address qualification and certification standards applicable to the involved parties.
- **Reimbursement**
  Reimbursement will be based on actual expenditures. If suppression tactics cross jurisdictional boundaries, refer to the cost share agreement (must be an agreement between participating parties) for reimbursement methods. Vehicles and equipment operated under the Federal excess property system will only be reimbursed for maintenance and operating costs.
- **Cooperation**
  The OP will be used to identify how the cooperators will share expertise, training, and information on items such as prevention, investigation, communication plans, safety, training, ICS, and the integration of resources.
- **Agency Reviews and Investigations**
  OPs should describe processes for conducting agency specific reviews and investigations as well as describe processes for accident notifications to the appropriate fire managers, line officers, and dispatch/coordination centers.
- **Dispatch Centers**
  Dispatch centers will ensure all resources know the name of the assigned IC and announce all changes in incident command. Geographic area standards for resource mobilization, zone mobilization guides, and local mobilization guides should include this procedure as they are revised for each fire season.

Fiscal Responsibility Elements of an Operating Plan
OPs should address the following:

- The level of communication required with neighboring jurisdictions regarding the management of all wildland fires.
- The level of communication required with neighboring jurisdictions regarding suppression resource availability and allocation, especially for wildland fires with objectives that include benefit.

- Identify how to involve all parties in developing the strategy and tactics to be used in preventing wildland fire from crossing the jurisdictional boundary, and how all parties will be involved in developing mitigations which would be used if a wildland fire does cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Jurisdictions, which may include State and private lands, should identify the conditions under which wildland fire may be managed to achieve benefit, and the information or criteria that will be used to make that determination (e.g., critical habitat, hazardous fuels, and land management planning documents).
- Jurisdictions will identify conditions under which cost efficiency may dictate where suppression strategies and tactical actions (e.g., it may be more cost effective to put the containment line along an open grassland than along a mid-slope in timber) are taken. Points to consider include loss and benefit to land, resource, social and political values, and existing legal statutes.
- The cost-sharing methodologies that will be utilized should wildfire spread to a neighboring jurisdiction in a location where fire is not wanted.
- The cost-share methodologies that will be used should a jurisdiction accept or receive a wildland fire and manage it to create benefit.
- Any distinctions in what cost-share methodology will be used if the reason the fire spreads to another jurisdiction is attributed to a strategic decision, versus environmental conditions (weather, fuels, and fire behavior), or tactical considerations (firefighter safety, resource availability) that preclude stopping the fire at jurisdictional boundaries. Examples of cost-sharing methodologies may include but are not limited to the following:
    - When a wildland fire that is being managed for benefit spreads to a neighboring jurisdiction because of strategic decisions, and in a location where fire is not wanted, the managing jurisdiction shall be responsible for wildfire suppression costs.
    - In those situations where weather, fuels, or fire behavior of the wildland fire precludes stopping at jurisdiction boundaries cost-share methodologies may include but are not limited to:
        a) Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – fire suppression efforts are primarily on jurisdictional responsibility lands.
        b) Each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – services rendered approximate the percentage of jurisdictional responsibility, but not necessarily performed on those lands.
        c) Cost share by percentage of ownership.
        d) Cost is apportioned by geographic division. Examples of geographic divisions are divisions A and B (using a map as an attachment); privately owned property with structures; or specific locations, such as campgrounds.
        e) Reconciliation of daily estimates (for larger, multi-day incidents) – this method relies upon daily, agreed-to, cost estimates, using incident action plans or other means to determine multi-agency contributions. Reimbursements can be made upon actuals.

The percentage for how to apply actuals can be based on estimates, but actuals must be used when final settlement is completed.

All-Hazards Coordination and Cooperation

All-hazards is defined by NWCG as an incident, natural or manmade, that warrants action to protect life, property, environment, and public health or safety, and to minimize disruptions of government, social, or economic activities. Wildland fire is one type of all-hazards incident. All-hazards incidents are managed using a standardized national incident management system and response framework.

Stafford Act Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288, as amended) establishes the programs and processes for the Federal Government to provide disaster and emergency assistance to States, local governments, Tribal nations, individuals, and qualified private non-profit organizations. The provisions of the Stafford Act cover all hazards, including natural disasters and terrorist events. In response to, or in anticipation of, a major disaster or emergency as defined by the act, the President "may direct any Federal agency, with or without reimbursement, to utilize its authorities and the resources granted to it under Federal law (including personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, managerial, technical, and advisory services) in support of State and local assistance efforts."

Homeland Security Act

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 *(Public Law 107-296)* established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with the mandate and legal authority to protect the American people from the continuing threat of terrorism. In the act, Congress also assigned DHS as the primary focal point regarding natural and manmade crises and emergency planning.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5
Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), *Management of Domestic Incidents, February 28, 2003*, is intended to enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive national incident management system. HSPD-5 designates the Secretary of Homeland Security as the Principal Federal Official (PFO) for domestic incident management and empowers the Secretary to coordinate Federal resources used in response to or recovery from terrorist attacks, major disasters, or other emergencies in specific cases.

National Response Framework
Federal disaster relief and emergency assistance are coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) using the National Response Framework (NRF). The NRF, using the National Incident Management System (NIMS), establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of domestic incidents. The NRF provides the structure and mechanisms for the coordination of Federal support to State, local, and Tribal incident managers; and for exercising direct Federal authorities and responsibilities.

National Incident Management System
HSPD-5 directed that the DHS Secretary develop and administer a National Incident Management System to provide a consistent, nationwide approach for Federal, State, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. To provide for interoperability and compatibility among Federal, State, and local capabilities, NIMS will include a core set of concepts, principles, terminology, and technologies covering ICS; multi-agency coordination systems; unified command; training; identification and management of resources (including systems for classifying types of resources); qualifications and certification; and the collection, tracking, and reporting of incident information and incident resources.

Emergency Support Function Annexes
Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes are the components of the NRF that detail the mission, policies, structures, and responsibilities of Federal agencies. They are utilized for coordinating resource and programmatic support to the States, Tribes, and other Federal agencies or other jurisdictions and entities during incidents of national significance. Each ESF Annex identifies the ESF coordinator and the primary and support agencies pertinent to the ESF. USDA-FS and USFA are the co-coordinators of ESF #4 – Firefighting. USDA-FS coordinates at the national and regional levels with FEMA, State agencies, and cooperating agencies on all issues related to response activities. USFA coordinates with appropriate State agencies and local fire departments to expand structural firefighting resource capacity in the existing national firefighting mobilization system and provides information on protection of emergency services sector critical infrastructure.

The ESF primary agency serves as a Federal executive agent under the federal coordinating officer to accomplish the ESF mission. The ESF support agencies, when requested by the designated ESF primary agency, are responsible for conducting operations using their own authorities, subject-matter experts, capabilities, or resources. USDA-FS is the primary agency for ESF #4 – Firefighting.

- ***FS –*** *Reference FSM 1594*

Other NRF USDA-FS and DOI responsibilities are:

ESF Support Annex	USDA-FS Role	DOI Role
#01 Transportation	Support	Support
#02 Communications	Support	Support
#03 Public Works and Engineering	Support	Support
#04 Firefighting	Coordinator and Primary	Support
#05 Emergency Management	Support	Support
#06 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services	Support	Support
#07 Logistics Management and Resources Support	Support	Support
#08 Public Health and Medical Services	Support	Support
#09 Search and Rescue	Support	Primary
#10 Oil and Hazardous Materials Response	Support	Support
#11 Agriculture and Natural Resources	Primary	Support

ESF Support Annex	USDA-FS Role	DOI Role
#12 Energy		Support
#13 Public Safety and Security	Support	Support
#14 Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure	Support	
#15 External Affairs	Support	Support

National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan
The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP, 40 CFR 300) provides the organizational structure and procedures for preparing for and responding to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants. The NCP is required by section 105 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. 9605, as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA), P.L. 99–499, and by section 311(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. 1321(d), as amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA), P.L. 101–380. The NCP identifies the national response organization that may be activated in response actions to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants in accordance with the authorities of CERCLA and the CWA. The NCP specifies responsibilities among the Federal, State, and local governments and describes resources that are available for response and provides procedures for involving State governments in the initiation, development, selection, and implementation of response actions, pursuant to CERCLA. The NCP works in conjunction with the NRF through Emergency Support Function 10 – Oil and Hazardous Material Response.

Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act
The *Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act of 2006* (Public Law 109-295) amended the Homeland Security Act. This law established the FEMA Administrator as responsible for managing the Federal response to emergencies and disasters, and for reporting directly to the President. The Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal Federal official but has no direct authority for response or coordination. This law also amends the Stafford Act to allow FEMA, in the absence of a specific request or Presidential declaration, to direct other Federal agencies to provide resources and support where necessary to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate severe damage.

Presidential Policy Directive-8
Presidential Policy Directive-8 (PPD-8), *National Preparedness, March 30, 2011,* is intended to strengthen all-of-nation preparedness. PPD-8 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a national preparedness goal and a national preparedness system in coordination and consultation with other Federal departments and agencies, State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, private and non-profit sectors, and the public. The national preparedness system is comprised of:

- National planning frameworks for the prevention, protection, mitigation, response to, and recovery from national threats. These frameworks are similar and complementary to the NRF.
- Corresponding Federal interagency operational plans.
- Guidance for the national interoperability of personnel and equipment.
- Guidance for business, community, family, and individual preparedness.

All-Hazards Coordination and Cooperation
In an actual or potential incident of national significance that is not encompassed by the Stafford Act, the President may instruct a Federal department or agency, subject to any statutory limitations on the department or agency, to utilize the authorities and resources granted to it by Congress. In accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, Federal departments and agencies are expected to provide their full and prompt support, cooperation, available resources, consistent with their own responsibilities for protecting national security. Personnel assigned to all-hazards incidents may only perform duties within agency policy, training, and capability.

NWCG Role in Support, Coordination, and All-Hazards Response by Wildland Fire Agencies
NWCG has established guidelines to define NWCG's role in the preparedness for, coordination of, and support to all-hazards incidents.

General All-Hazards Guidelines for NWCG

- NIMS is the foundation of all response. NWCG principles, procedures, and publications will comply with and support NIMS. NWCG expects that all local, State, and Federal response agencies and organizations will comply with NIMS.
- NWCG uses the NIMS definition of "all-hazards" (includes wildland fire): Describing an incident, natural or manmade, that warrants action to protect life, property, environment, and public health or safety, and to minimize disruptions of government, social, or economic activities.

- NWCG recognizes FEMA's role in overseeing the development, implementation, and maintenance of NIMS, which includes ICS and its components (forms, core competencies, training, qualifications, standards, etc.).
- NWCG accepts the components of NIMS and will develop an endorsement process and additional qualifications requirements for positions having specific wildland fire application.
- NWCG recognizes and supports the use of position-specific qualifications from other NIMS-compliant disciplines (law enforcement, structure fire, hazmat, etc.).
- NWCG supports the ongoing development and maintenance of wildland fire systems to be adaptable for all-hazards response.
- NWCG expects that all wildland fire personnel engaged in all-hazards response, whether at the national, regional, or local level, will base actions on both NWCG and agency policies, standards, doctrine, and procedures.
- NWCG member agencies ensure all personnel responding to all-hazards incidents are properly trained, equipped, and qualified for their assigned position.
- NWCG encourages all wildland fire agencies and personnel to receive appropriate preparedness training, focusing on general knowledge of all-hazards response, disaster characteristics, and the effects from these events on citizens and responders.
- NWCG encourages all wildland fire agencies and personnel to consider appropriate risk mitigation measures (e.g., vaccinations, personal protective equipment [PPE], etc.) prior to responding to all-hazards incidents.
- NWCG coordinates with member agencies to ensure accountability of wildland fire personnel during all-hazards response.

USFS All-Hazards Guiding Principles and Doctrine

The Forest Service has developed doctrine, known as the *Foundational Doctrine for All-Hazard Response*, outlining the guiding principles, roles, and responsibilities of the agency during all-hazards response. Forest Service responders and leadership are expected to follow this doctrine, established to help ensure the safest response conditions possible.

The following principles encompass the guidelines, roles, and responsibilities established in this doctrine:

- The intent of Forest Service all-hazards response and support is to protect human life, property, and at-risk lands and resources while imminent threats exist.
- Personnel should be prepared and organized to support all-hazards responses by providing trained personnel to utilize their inherent skills, capabilities, and assets, without requiring significant advanced training and preparation. Support to cooperators requiring wildland resources will be consistent with employee core skills, capabilities, and training.
- As incidents move from the response phase to the recovery phase, there should be a shift to demobilizing agency resources.
- Within all-hazards response environments, agency personnel may encounter situations in which there is an imminent threat to life and property outside of their agency's jurisdiction. These environments include scenarios ranging from being first on scene at a vehicle accident to committing agency resources to protect a local community. Leaders are therefore expected to use their judgment and respond appropriately.
- Wildland resources deployed to all-hazards responses will understand the dynamic and complex environment and utilize their leadership, training, and skills to adapt, innovate, and bring order to chaos.
- Leaders are expected to operate within the incident organizational structure encountered on all-hazards responses. When such structure is absent, leaders will utilize NIMS principles to assure safe and effective utilization of agency resources.
- Leaders are expected to operate under existing policies and doctrine under normal conditions. On all-hazards responses, fire and aviation business and safety standards may have to be adapted to the situation to successfully accomplish the mission. When conflicts occur, employees will use their judgment, weigh the risk versus gain, and operate within the intent of agency policy and doctrine.
- All-hazards response will be focused on missions that we perform consistently and successfully. Workforce assignments will be directed toward the core skills developed through our existing training and curriculum.
- Agency employees will be trained to operate safely and successfully in the all-hazards environment. Preparedness training will focus on gaining general knowledge of all-hazards response, disaster characteristics, as well as the effects from these events on citizens and responders.
- Specific operational skills will be facilitated through NIMS, working with the responsible agencies who supply the technical specialists who, in turn, provide the specific skill sets. The Forest Service will not train or equip to meet every hazard.
- Wildland employees are expected to perform all-hazards support as directed within their qualifications and physical capabilities. All employees have the right to a safe assignment. The employee may suspend his or her

work whenever any environmental condition—or combination of condition—become so extreme than an immediate danger is posed to employee health and safety that cannot be readily mitigated by the use of appropriate, approved protective equipment or technology.
- Acceptable risk is risk mitigated to a level that provides for reasonable assurances that the all-hazards task can be accomplished without serious injury to life or damage to property.
- All-hazards, incident-specific briefing and training will be accomplished prior to task implementation. This preparation will usually occur prior to mobilization where incident description, mission requirements, and known hazards are addressed. Key protective equipment and associated needs for these all-hazards tasks that wildland employees do not routinely encounter or perform will be identified. This will be done—and be in place—prior to task implementation.
- Agency employees will be provided with appropriate vaccinations, credentials, and PPE to operate in the all-hazards environment to which they are assigned.
- Additional information can be found in the Forest Service *Foundational Doctrine for All-Hazard Response* at https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/ibp/all-hazard.

Incident Management Teams – All-Hazards and Other Non-Wildland

Different entities have developed incident management teams (IMT) based on ICS core competencies under NIMS. Federal agencies with IMTs include the U.S. Coast Guard, the EPA, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), DOI's NPA and FWS, and others. In addition, many States and metropolitan areas have developed all-hazards IMTs (AHIMT). AHIMT consists of personnel from various disciplines (fire, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous materials, law enforcement, public works, public health, and others) trained to perform the functions of the command and general staff at the type 3 level. AHIMTs are often sponsored or administered by a State or local emergency management agency and may be type 1, type 2 or type 3 level (based on the FEMA National Qualification System or other recognized qualification system). All-hazards IMTs have been used to support wildland fire operations in different ways, including: 1) managing a fire incident with the support of key wildland fire positions supporting command and general staff; 2) independently supporting activities under direction of a wildland fire IMT (e.g., coordinating evacuation/re-entry of a jurisdictional area); and 3) supporting a Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) or other entity (e.g., managing a mobilization center).

Many different entities that sponsor an AHIMT or other non-wildland fire IMT have requested that their personnel be allowed to "shadow" (sometimes referred to as "field training" or "field mentoring") wildland fire IMT positions during incidents. The primary purpose of shadowing is to gain insight to complex incident management. All shadowing events should be coordinated with the receiving GACCs and the IC at an incident.
- ***DOI –*** refer to *https://www.doi.gov/emergency/plans-and-policies*.

International Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation

U.S. – Mexico Cross Border Cooperation on Wildland Fires

In April 2015, the DOI and USDA signed a wildfire protection agreement with Mexico. The agreement has two purposes:
- To enable wildfire protection resources originating in the territory of one country to cross the United States-Mexico border in order to suppress wildfires on the other side of the border within the zone of mutual assistance (10 miles/16 kilometers) in appropriate circumstances.
- To give authority for Mexican and U.S. fire management organizations to cooperate on other fire management activities outside the zone of mutual assistance.

National operational guidelines for this agreement are located at https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm. These guidelines cover issues at the national level and also provide a template for those issues that need to be addressed in local operating plans. The local operating plans identify how the agreement will be implemented by the GACCs (and zone coordination centers) that have dispatching responsibility on the border. The local operating plans will provide the standard operational procedures for wildfire suppression resources that could potentially cross the U.S. border into Mexico.

U.S. – Canada Arrangement for the Exchange of Wildland Fire Management Resources

Information about United States – Canada cross border support is located at https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm. An arrangement signed in June 2023 allows the two countries to exchange resources for training and other preparedness activities, research, and post-fire activities in addition to fire suppression. This new arrangement is used in lieu of an agreement in the form of an Exchange of Notes signed in 1982 which allowed for the exchange of resources for fire suppression only.

U.S. – Australia and U.S. – New Zealand Arrangement for the Exchange of Wildland Fire Management Resources

Information about United States – Australia and United States – New Zealand support is located at https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm. This link provides a copy of the arrangements signed between the U.S. and the states of Australia, and between the U.S. and the country of New Zealand for support during severe fire seasons. It also contains the annual operating plans (AOPs) that provides more detail on the procedures, responsibilities, and requirements used during activation.

International Disaster and Humanitarian Response Technical Assistance

Through the Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP), federal wildland firefighters may be requested to provide technical assistance to support the Department of State's (DoS) Bureau of Disaster and Humanitarian Response (DHR) in its role as lead federal coordinator for international disaster response. Under an interagency agreement with DoS/DHR, DASP provides incident management technical expertise to support U.S. Government (USG) leadership in all-hazards international disaster and humanitarian response in the form of ICS-based incident management trainings, wildfire and response operations support, and response readiness systems. This includes supporting and serving on USG Disaster Assistance Response Teams which are ICS-based operational teams that provide on-the-ground operational capability at the site of an international disaster.

Activations under this mechanism serve high level USG priorities, promote USFS global leadership in emergency response, provide professional development opportunities for federal wildland firefighters, and support the domestic fire mission through technical exchanges and skill enhancement. All funding, training, and support for federal wildland firefighter assignments are provided by DASP. For additional information, contact pdl_wo_ip_dasp@usda.gov.

Chapter 9
Fire Management Planning

Purpose

The purpose of fire management planning is to provide for firefighter and public safety, and outline fire management strategies and tactics that, when implemented, protect values, and meet resource goals and objectives of the land and resource management plan (L/RMP). Planning strategically allows for responses to fire commensurate with risk and movement towards desired conditions.

Fire planning products include a concise summary of information organized by fire management unit (FMU) or by other geospatially explicit representations of the landscape. These products should be updated as new information becomes available, as conditions on the ground necessitate updates, or when changes are made to the L/RMP.

Products may address response to wildfire, hazardous fuels and vegetation management, burned area emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, prevention, community interactions and collaborative partnerships roles, and monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Fire management planning efforts should address the vision and goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (2014, Addendum Update 2023) (Cohesive Strategy).

The Cohesive Strategy vision is "To safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and collectively, learn to live with wildland fire."

The Cohesive Strategy goals are:
- Resilient Landscapes
- Fire-adapted communities
- Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response

Federal Interagency Policy

"Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans (L/RMP) and activities on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries" (*Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy*, January 2001).

Fire management plans should be developed collaboratively between Federal agencies and Tribal, local, and State agencies to accomplish resource and protection objectives.

Every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved fire management plan (FMP). FMPs are strategic plans that define a program to manage wildland fires based on the area's approved land management plan. When practical, fire management plans should contain mutually developed objectives for managing fires that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

FMPs must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and values at risk; address the location and conditions under which resource and protection objectives can be met; consider public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations. FMPs should be based upon the best available science.

Agency Planning Guidance

Department of the Interior

FMPs must be consistent with the Department of the Interior (DOI) Interagency Fire Management Plan Framework and subsequent bureau direction. FMP content may be represented in spatial, text-based and/or digital formats.

- The DOI framework is available at https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/interagency-fire-planning-committee.
  - ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For BLM, the* ***FMP Template*** *is available at https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/blm-fa/business-practices/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B371C2FC6-46E9-4C2F-9DB5-DAB76CF52B12%7D&file=FA-PIM-2024-001_a1.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true.*

    For NPS, the ***FMP Template*** *and information is available at https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/interagency-fire-planning-committee.*

*For FWS, the **FMP Template** and information is available at https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/fws-FF09R00000/SitePages/Fire-Planning.aspx.*

U.S. Forest Service
Forest Service (FS) FMPs are a combination of enhanced spatial planning contained in the Spatial Fire Planning Service that feeds into the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) and the Fire Management Reference System (FMRS)—a collection of plans required for fire program management, such as aviation, operations, dispatch, and fire danger operating plan products. Fire management planning will be a continuing effort to ensure that guidance represented spatially in WFDSS via the Spatial Fire Planning Service and the FMRS are consistent with L/RMP direction, reflecting available fire response options to move from current to desired conditions.

A *Fire Management Planning Guide* (https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fs-wo-nfpsa) describes spatial fire planning and the FMRS. As allowed in L/RMPs, fire response strategies should be consistent with the cohesive strategy and developed in collaboration with adjoining land managers.

Other Resources
For information on utilizing the Spatial Fire Planning Service that WFDSS reads from, see the Spatial Fire Planning Service Guide located on the WFDSS homepage.

Concepts and Definitions

For further clarification of concepts and definitions that follow, refer to terminology updates resulting from release of the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009);* FMB Memorandum 19-004*, Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy Terminology* and the *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy,* February 13, 2009.

Land and Resource Management Plan
The L/RMP is a document prepared with public participation and approved by the agency administrator that provides guidance and direction for land and resource management activities for an administrative area. The L/RMP may identify fire's role in a particular area and for a specific benefit or may contain general statements regarding the role of fire across the land management unit. Guidance contained in the L/RMP provides the basis for the development of strategic fire management objectives and the fire management program in the designated area.

Fire Management Plan
A fire management plan (FMP) identifies and integrates all wildland fire management and related activities within the context of approved land/resource management plans. The FMP defines a program to manage wildland fires (wildfires and prescribed fires). The plan is supplemented by operational plans, including but not limited to preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire burn plans, and prevention plans. FMPs ensure that wildland fire management goals and components are coordinated.

- **Spatial Fire Management Plan** – A spatial fire management plan (SFMP) is a strategic plan that contains text based and spatially represented information that guides a full range of fire management activities and is supported by a L/RMP.
- **Spatial Fire Management Plan Mapsheet –** A spatial FMP mapsheet is a collection of one or more tables, graphics, maps, or other information on a single page or poster.
- **Spatial Fire Management Plan Map Set –** A spatial FMP map set is a compilation of all the mapsheets that make up a SFMP.

Compliance
Compliance generally includes the full range of considerations and procedures defined by each agency to comply with laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the Archeological Resources Protection Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, Wilderness Act, Executive Orders.

Connection to Other Plans

FMPs (DOI) and/or spatial fire planning in WFDSS (FS) capture fire related direction and decisions from L/RMPs. If fire management direction and decisions were not adequately integrated into the existing L/RMP, additional NEPA may be necessary.

Air Quality and Smoke Management

Clean air is a primary natural resource value in all Federal units. Fire management activities which result in the discharge of air pollutants (e.g., particulates, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants from fires) are subject to, and must comply with, all applicable Federal, State, interstate, and local air pollution control requirements, as specified by Section 118 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7418). These requirements are the same substantive,

procedural, and administrative requirements that apply to a private person or other non-governmental entity. The protection of these resources must be given full consideration in fire management planning and operations.

Coordination with a State or State air regulatory office is required during the development of LMRPs and FMPs in order to determine procedures for compliance with State air quality regulations. Each agency should consult with their fire management unit for the proper procedures for obtaining coordination with the State or States in which the unit is located, or when notified by the State that an air pollution violation has occurred.

The *National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Smoke Management Guide for Prescribed Fire*, PMS 420-3, is the primary technical reference and should be referenced when developing and implementing wildland fire management plans.

The 2019 Dingell Act requires type 1 complexity fires to assign air resource advisors (ARA, technical specialist) to the maximum extent practicable and consideration of assigning ARAs for type 2 complexity fires (43 USC 17486b-1(f)). This will provide smoke projections and provide capability for coordination with State, Tribal and local air regulatory and public health agencies.

Air Quality Definitions

National Ambient Air Quality Standards

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are uniform air quality goals established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA designated two types of national air quality standards, primary which provides public health protection and secondary which provides public welfare protection.

Criteria Pollutants

The EPA has designated and established primary and secondary NAAQS for six common air pollutants: sulfur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen oxides (NOX), carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), ground-level ozone (O3), and lead (Pb).

State Implementation Plan

Section 110 of the Clean Air Act requires each State to adopt and submit to the EPA a State implementation plan (SIP) that provides for the implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of NAAQS in each Air Quality Control Region.

Federal Implementation Plan

A federal implementation plan (FIP) is used by the EPA to ensure air quality is maintained and enforced in accordance with established NAAQS. This plan is used when a State's SIP is found unacceptable.

Attainment Area

An attainment area is a geographic area that meets the primary NAAQS established by the EPA.

Note: An area may meet the established NAAQS for one criteria pollutant but have unacceptable levels for another. An area could be in attainment for one criteria pollutant and simultaneously in nonattainment for another.

Nonattainment Area

A nonattainment area is a geographic area that does not meet the primary NAAQS limits established by the EPA to protect public health and the environment.

Note: The EPA establishes time limits for nonattainment areas to achieve specified air quality goals and may further designate nonattainment areas as extreme, severe, serious, moderate, or marginal.

Maintenance Area

A maintenance area is a geographic area previously designated nonattainment and subsequently redesignated to attainment, for a probationary period, due to achieving the NAAQS.

Chapter 10
Preparedness

Preparedness Overview

Fire preparedness is the state of being ready to respond to wildfires based on identified objectives and is the result of activities that are planned and implemented prior to fire ignitions. Preparedness is a continuous process which requires units to predict the level of fire activity, identify values that need to be protected and then implement the plan. Units start this process by identifying what are the necessary firefighting capabilities for the area and then implementing programs that are needed to meet those capabilities. Preparedness plans assist with documenting the firefighting capabilities, training and equipment needed as well as the prepositioning and deployment of firefighters and equipment. Plans help identify and correct deficiencies and improve operations and need to be reviewed based on agency standards.

Preparedness activities should focus on developing interagency response capabilities that will result in safe, effective, and efficient fire operations aligned with risk-based fire management decisions. Preparedness activities will be consistent with direction in the approved land and resource management plans (L/RMP) and fire management plans.

Preparedness Planning

Preparedness planning should be used to inform decisions and actions to ensure a unit is proactive in appropriately preparing to react to burning conditions in the fire environment and potential new or emerging wildfire incidents.

Preparedness planning is done locally to meet the needs of local operations. Preparedness planning is not the same everywhere and planning may cover a local unit or an interagency dispatch zone. Requirements and methods differ among agencies and can also include GACC-level or geographic area-level processes. It is important to inquire locally about how preparedness planning is approached. Regardless of the process used, it needs to meet the requirements of all agencies covered by the preparedness planning effort. Preparedness planning should be supported by fire weather, fire activity, and fire danger analysis incorporated in authoritative agency or interagency planning documents.

Preparedness planning documents may include but are not limited to:

- Operating plans (as specified by agency/agreement requirements)
- Preparedness level plans
- Initial response/preplanned dispatch plans (required in chapter 19)
- Agency-specific daily readiness procedures (i.e., Step-up/Staffing Plan, severity funding criteria, etc.)
- Agency-specific fire prevention/mitigation plans
- Agency-specific permit/restriction guidelines or plans

Agreements are critical to interagency preparedness planning. Refer to chapter 8 for guidance on the use of agreements and operating plans or the Master Cooperative Fire Agreement template (https://www.nwcg.gov/executive-board/partners-and-agreements) for including States and non-federal partners.

Remote Automatic Weather Station (RAWS) Network

The Remote Automatic Weather Station (RAWS) network consists of several thousand weather-monitoring stations distributed throughout the country which are owned by federal and State organizations. The purpose of the RAWS network is to support point and gridded applications of fire weather for fire program analysis, fire danger rating, fire behavior prediction, fire weather forecasting, and smoke management. RAWS are typically placed in or near areas susceptible to wildland fire activity, including remote locations in complex terrain, and have specific standards which govern their siting, sensor complementation, maintenance, data quality, etc. Stations are expected to comply with the *NWCG Standards for Fire Weather Stations,* PMS 426-3. RAWS are collectively managed by the organizations that own them, with a RAWS Coordinator (RAWS Interagency Contacts) typically being identified at the highest organizational level (i.e., national for federal agencies, State for State, etc.). RAWS coordination extends to geographic area and/or local levels for some organizations. WXx Weather (https://weather.nifc.gov/) is the portal for most RAWS network coordination and management activities, viewing observations, and station metadata.

Management of RAWS

WXx Weather (WXx) is the system of record for RAWS assets. WXx includes the capability to monitor and document maintenance activities and standards compliance, ensure data quality, and manage station metadata. Among the metadata are station location, sensor complementation information, and the RAWS coordinators and other points of contact (POCs) for each organization and station. Coordinators and POCs should receive the WXx Weather Station Event Report that is automatically generated every Monday and is emailed by WXx Weather to the

address listed in the RAWS station record "Event Email Address" field. This report is distributed weekly for each station defined in WXx Weather that logs at least one event in the past week. While some events may be informational such as a change to the station metadata, there are other events that flag errors or problems with a station and may require some type of response from the POC. A Station Event Report Guide is available on the WXx Weather tab (https://raws.nifc.gov/wildland-fire-management-information-wxx-weather) along with the Edit Access eRequest and other information about metadata management.

Portable RAWS
The RAWS Help Desk will only activate portable RAWS for data processing through WXx Weather if the requested activation date is within 1 year and 45 days of the last annual maintenance date.

Noncompliance Report
A weekly report from WXx Weather identifies RAWS that are noncompliant in terms of the annual maintenance being more than 1 year and 45 days past their last documented annual maintenance date *NWCG Standards for Fire Weather Stations*, PMS 426-3. The report is distributed via email and available at https://raws.nifc.gov/standards-guidelines, and stations appear on the report if annual maintenance has not been performed or has not been properly documented in WXx Weather. Although some noncompliant stations may continue transmitting meteorological data, they do not meet required fire weather maintenance standards, and their data should not be relied upon for critical fire-fighting decisions. Additionally, the WXx Weather interface provides visual indicators in the Annual Maintenance column, displaying yellow for stations approaching noncompliance and red for stations that are noncompliant.

Noncompliant stations are broadly categorized as follows:
- *Inoperative station.* This station is noncompliant but poses no danger of providing inaccurate weather data because it is not transmitting data.
- *Operating station that has exceeded the required maintenance cycle.* These stations are identified in the weekly "Noncompliance Report" described above.
- *Operating station that transmits noticeable inaccurate data due to faulty sensors or components.* These stations are most easily identified by local users who are familiar with environmental trends and conditions and can recognize data that seems abnormal or clearly unrepresentative of current conditions. This usually indicates faulty sensors or components.

When noncompliance is identified or suspected, contact the RAWS Help Desk at 208-387-5475 or rawshelp@blm.gov to identify the station, troubleshoot issues, coordinate shipment of parts, schedule repairs, or arrange technician site visits.

Fire Danger Rating

Fire Danger is a relative index of how easy it is to ignite vegetation and how difficult a fire may be to control, based on fire behavior principles and driven mainly by weather and climatology. Fire Danger Rating is a metric used to communicate fire danger. Federal land management agencies may use two operational Fire Danger Rating Systems to assess fire danger: NFDRS or CFFDRS (see below).

Fire Danger Rating Systems
At every scale, assessment of fire environment conditions using fire danger rating is a key consideration for the prediction of fire activity, preparedness planning and resultant fire management activities. Fire danger assessments affect many stakeholders, including federal and State agencies, local governments, industry, private entities, and the public. For this reason, it is vital to use an authoritative operational interagency fire danger rating system and manage weather station data responsibly. This will ensure accurate assessments and consistent application of fire danger rating.

Sources of authoritative and operational fire danger rating metrics:
- **National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS)** within the Fire Environment Mapping System (FEMS)
- **Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System (CFFDRS)** within the Alaska Fire & Fuels website (https://akff.mesowest.org/) and the Great Lakes Fire & Fuels website (https://glff.mesowest.org/)

Fire Danger Analysis

A Fire Danger Analysis, ideally developed for interagency field-level operations (e.g., within a third-tier dispatch center's jurisdiction), is a key part of local fire management planning. It documents the analysis process and decision points for future fire and weather situations using local conditions, historical weather and fire occurrence, and decision-support tools such as NFDRS, CFFDRS, drought indices, fuel moisture data, seasonal forecasts, and fire risk analyses.

The Fire Danger Analysis process integrates science, historical data, established methods, and local knowledge to guide interagency managers in safe, efficient, and effective fire response. Every unit with a fire program should be covered by a Fire Danger Analysis and participate in its development. Fire Danger Analyses should be reviewed annually and updated as needed to meet preparedness requirements. The development and review process should include personnel with expertise in NFDRS/CFFDRS.

Fire Danger Analysis Requirements

- ***DOI –*** *For BLM, offices must use one of the following for a fire danger analysis: Fire Weather and Fire Occurrence Analysis Document (FWOAD), Fire Danger Analysis Document (FDAD), or Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP). Offices may make minor changes in headings if necessary, to conform to interagency needs and may add sections/attachments to the templates if desired. Offices are required to complete a quality control review using the BLM Review Checklists for Fire Danger Documentation every other year and fully update at least every five years. Templates, review checklists, and originating policy documentation can be found in the Fire Danger folder on the FA600 SharePoint Site.*

  For NPS, refer to NPS Reference Manual 18 (RM-18), chapter 5 Preparedness for requirements.

  For FWS, a fire danger analysis is required for each unit that has a fire program. This requirement may be met either by participation in an interagency FDOP that covers the unit or by the inclusion of relevant fire danger documentation in the unit's fire management plan and associated annual reviews. In either case, the documentation should reflect the complexity of the unit's fire program.
- ***FS –*** *Each National Forest System unit will be covered by a Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP) which will document the establishment and management of the local unit fire weather station network and describe how fire danger ratings are applied in local unit preparedness plans to guide fire management decisions.*

Communication of Fire Danger

Fire danger will be conveyed to the public using the standard five Adjective Fire Danger Rating classes: Low, Moderate, High, Very High, and Extreme.

Fire danger rating analysis to determine Adjective Rating Classes within a multi-jurisdictional area should be collaboratively developed among federal agencies and State, county, and local governments with responsibilities for wildfire protection and communication of fire danger to the public. Adjective Rating Classes should adhere to the NWCG Data Standard for the National Fire Danger Adjective Class Rating Code which can be found on the Fire Environment Mapping System (FEMS) Portal.

Procedures for communicating fire danger rating outputs or decision/action levels to other audiences will be documented and implemented through appropriate fire management planning documents or operating plans. Tools utilized to communicate fire danger information, such as trend analysis charts or Fire Danger PocketCards should also be specified. Current observed and forecasted fire danger outputs should be available and communicated to local fire personnel to aid in situational awareness.

Fire Danger Analysis Products for Firefighter Safety

Fire Danger PocketCards and seasonal trend analyses products provide, through a graphical interpretation of historic fire danger, a means for firefighters to understand the fire potential on any day for a given local area.

These products can apply to areas of uniform fire danger rating, known as Fire Danger Rating Areas (FDRAs), which should be developed through a fire danger analysis process. If FDRAs are not defined, individual weather stations or other areas with similar fire danger can be used to develop either PocketCards or Seasonal Trend Analysis (STA).

These products can also be an ideal tool for local seasonal tracking of fire season severity with the addition of daily indices.

Seasonal Trend Analysis

A Seasonal Trend Analysis (STA) is a product developed at either the local or geographic area level that helps describe the current fire danger conditions relative to conditions in the past. The STA is a time series chart that plots a common fire environment element such as an output from a fire danger rating system (e.g., NFDRS or CFFDRS) or some other locally significant value such as sampled live fuel moisture. Charts should include both historic and current values and are used to monitor and communicate fire danger by comparing current and recent fire danger trends to historical values. Showing the current trend in comparison to historical averages and extremes helps firefighters maintain situational awareness and informs wildland fire management decisions to ensure adequate readiness.

During peak seasonal periods when the STA is used to monitor and communicate fire danger, the current year overlay on an STA chart must be updated frequently. Daily updates are recommended, but charts should be updated every two weeks at a minimum. At the field-level, where multiple STAs are often needed to represent areas having different fire environments, the local unit or interagency dispatch center typically develops the STA(s). At the PSA-scale, STAs are developed by the GACC Predictive Services staff. Any local seasonal trends of indices/components or fuel moisture values should be communicated to the GACC Predictive Services unit to augment their assessments. Trends should be monitored throughout the fire season and communication should be on-going, particularly when significant changes in key indicators occur.

PocketCards

PocketCards must adhere to the NWCG standards for updating and posting, found in the Wildland Fire Application Information Portal, https://www.wildfire.gov/application/pocket-cards.

Compliance with the standard, including quality, currency, and application of the PocketCards, is the responsibility of the local fire management unit.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance.*

  For BLM, seasonal trend analysis (updated and posted at least every two weeks) is the only requirement for communication of fire danger. Seasonal trend analyses will be prepared at the Predictive Service Area (PSA) scale or smaller. PSA scale analyses are typically developed and posted online by the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) while smaller scales are typically developed by the local unit. Hard copies should be made available in areas with limited internet connectivity. Unit fire chiefs should ensure incoming and local resources are briefed on the seasonal trend analysis for their area. Originating policy documentation and examples of seasonal trend analysis can be found in the Fire Danger folder on the FA600 SharePoint site.

  For BIA, units supplement agency fire management plans with NWCG-compliant PocketCards or equivalent fire danger assessment tools. The Fire Danger Pocket Card and equivalent tools provide a format for interpreting and communicating key index values provided by the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) or the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System (CFFDRS). The objective is to lead to greater awareness of environmental and vegetation burning conditions, and subsequently increased firefighter safety, by providing a description of seasonal changes in fire danger in a local area. It is useful to both local and out-of-area firefighters.
- ***FS –*** *Obtain geographic area certification for PocketCards. Distribute PocketCards to each fireline supervisor on type 3, 4, and 5 complexity wildfires. Units have the option to do more frequent updates if they choose to do so.*

Daily Readiness Planning

Agency-specific decision/action levels determined from a fire danger rating analysis and combined with other management considerations may be used to guide daily internal fire operational preparedness decisions, actions, or procedures at the local level such as:

- Daily preparedness staffing for initial response resources, such as implementing seven-day coverage or extended work schedules;
- Fire prevention actions, including permits/restrictions, media messages, signage, and patrols;
- Prepositioning or augmenting suppression resources;
- Cooperator discussion and/or involvement;
- Safety considerations: safety messages, safety officer;
- Increased initial attack dispatch staffing;
- Increased detection activities; and/or
- Prescribed fire implementation restrictions.

Step-Up/Staffing Plans

Step-up/staffing plans are designed to direct incremental preparedness actions at the local level in response to changing fire danger. Each plan should address the unit's staffing level/staffing class and the corresponding actions to consider for changes in fire danger conditions. The step-up/staffing plan describes preidentified escalating responses at fire business or climatological thresholds analyzed by a fire danger analysis. A step-up/staffing plan should also include recurring supplemental preparedness actions designed to enhance the unit's fire management capability during short periods (e.g., Fourth of July or other preidentified events) where staffing normally needs to be increased to meet initial attack, prevention, or detection needs.

The staffing level should be used to guide daily internal fire operational decisions at the local level. The staffing level specifies appropriate daily staffing for initial response resources, such as when to implement seven-day coverage and adjusted work schedules, and the number of personnel committed to initial attack resources (in contrast to the Initial Response/Preplanned Dispatch Plan – described below – that specifies the number of resources dispatched to an incident). The use of fire business thresholds to determine staffing levels is encouraged.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For NPS, refer to NPS RM-18, Chapter 5 Preparedness for requirements.*
- ***FS –*** *The step-up/staffing plan should be based on analysis completed as part of the unit's FDOP and the analysis rationale, if not the entire plan, should be included as part of an FDOP.*

Initial Response/Preplanned Dispatch Plans

Local-level, initial response/preplanned dispatch plans, which may include run cards, specify the fire management response (i.e., number and type of suppression assets to dispatch) within a defined geographic area to an unplanned ignition, based on fire weather, fuel conditions, fire management objectives, and resource availability.

Unit fire chiefs/fire management officers will ensure initial response/preplanned dispatch plans are in place, utilized, and provide for initial response commensurate with guidance provided in the FMP and/or L/RMP. Initial response/preplanned dispatch plans will reflect agreements and operating plans and will be reviewed annually prior to fire season. These plans may be modified as needed during fire season to reflect the availability of national, prepositioned, and/or severity resources.

Fire Prevention/Mitigation Plans

Unit-level fire prevention/mitigation plans may be required and completed by conducting a wildland fire prevention/mitigation assessment. The purpose of the plan is to develop a strategy that will identify actions to reduce unwanted human-caused ignitions, thereby reducing wildland fire damages and losses, unnecessary risks to firefighters, and suppression costs. Prevention and mitigation activities should be increased to remain effective as human activity increases and/or as fire danger moves from low to extreme, as defined by a fire danger analysis.

The prevention/mitigation plan may outline how the Adjective Fire Danger Ratings are communicated to the public and applied, in terms of responsible personnel and assigned activities. Prevention activities are intended to reduce the occurrence of unwanted human-caused fires and include but are not limited to:

- Education (signage, school programs, radio and news releases, recreation contacts, local business contacts, exhibits);
- Engineering (public utility company, government agency/cooperator coordination);
- Enforcement/industrial program monitoring (patrol, permitting, inspections, including firewood cutting, logging, mining, power line maintenance, and area closures); and
- Administration (patrol, communication, signage, and other plans and planning activities).
    - ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For BLM, refer to BLM MS-9212 – Fire Prevention. For NPS, refer to NPS RM-18 Chapter 6 Prevention and Mitigation. For FWS, prevention assessment determines the requirement for a prevention plan. Refer to Fire Management Handbook, chapter 10. For BIA, refer to 90IAM 5-H, BIA Wildfire Prevention Program Handbook.*
    - ***FS –*** *Refer to FSM 5110.*

National Fire Prevention Education Teams

National fire prevention and education teams (NFPETs) provide unit and agency managers with skilled and mobile personnel who have the ability to supplement or enhance ongoing local wildfire prevention and education activities where hazard or risk is, or is expected to be, elevated above normal.

NFPETs are highly effective in their ability to reduce unwanted human-caused wildland ignitions and are equipped to rapidly complete onsite prevention assessments and plans, initiate implementation of such plans, and begin immediate prevention and education activities.

A basic team is composed of three personnel with these minimum qualifications:

- 1 Fire Prevention Education Team Leader (PETL);
- 1 Fire Prevention Education Team Member (PETM); and
- 1 Public Information Officer Type 3 (PIO3)

Actual team configuration may include additional support positions, as determined jointly by the team leader and the ordering unit, on a case-by-case basis, based on the team's anticipated tasking. The use of trainees is encouraged.

NFPETs can assist the local unit in preventing unwanted human-caused wildfires in several ways, including:
- Complete fire risk assessments;
- Determine the severity of the situation;
- Facilitating community awareness and education in fire prevention, including prescribed burning;
- Coordinating announcement of interagency restrictions and closures;
- Coordinating fire prevention efforts with the public, special target groups, State and local agencies, and elected officials;
- Promoting public and personal responsibility regarding fire prevention in the wildland urban interface; and
- Assisting IMTs in accomplishing their objectives in working with the public to develop fire protection plans.

To order an NFPET, place the order with the GACCs. See the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* for additional information on ordering and using NFPETs.

Preparedness Level Plans

Preparedness level plans are required at the national and geographic area levels. These plans use the five preparedness levels (1 – 5) to provide management direction based on identified levels of burning conditions (fire danger), fire activity, resource commitment/availability, such as incident management teams (IMT) assigned, and other considerations. Preparedness level plans may be developed by a geographic area office for agency-specific use.

Supplemental preparedness actions to consider include but are not limited to the following items:
- Management briefings, direction, and considerations;
- Support functions – consideration given to expanded dispatch activation and other support needs (e.g., procurement, supply, ground support, and communications, etc.);
- Support staff availability outside of fire organization;
- Fire danger/behavior assessments;
- Fire information – internal and external;
- Multi-agency coordination group/area command activation; and
- Prescribed fire direction and considerations.

Refer to the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* and Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) standards for resource mobilization for more information on preparedness level plans.

Predictive Service Areas

Predictive Service Areas (PSA) are sub-geographic areas of similar climate, fuels and topography defined by GACC meteorologists generally for forecasting purposes. The PSAs are also used to display current and forecasted conditions at the national and geographic area level, such as maps showing 7-Day Significant Fire Potential and statistics graphs of select indices and fuel moistures. While PSAs are defined using similar criteria as fire danger rating areas (FDRA), the PSA-based products are intended for longer range prediction purposes and strategic planning at the sub-geographic scale, and FDRA-based products are intended to guide daily operational decisions at the unit level.

National Predictive Services Fire Potential Outlooks and Advisories

National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook

The National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook (Outlook) is prepared and distributed by NICC Predictive Services on the first day of each month. The Outlook is a composite of outlooks prepared by the individual Geographic Area Predictive Services units and national discussions prepared by NICC Predictive Services. The report provides fire managers at all levels with the information needed to make long-range decisions concerning resource staffing and allocation. The Outlook identifies areas where significant wildland fire activity is expected to be above or below normal levels.

The Outlook covers a four-month period. Maps for each period display areas of below normal, normal, and above normal significant wildland fire potential. A brief synopsis of the current and predicted national and GACC situation is included in the report. Specific guidance on issuance and requirements for the Outlook can be found in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

National 7-Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook
The National 7-Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook (7-Day) is a composite of outlooks produced by each of the geographic area predictive services units. The 7-Day provides a week-long projection of fuel moisture, weather, and fire potential. The 7-Day depicts a nationwide view of the significant fire potential for the next seven days with links to the individual geographic area 7-Day outlooks. The system is database-driven and is updated periodically as each geographic area predictive services unit posts its outlook. Each geographic area predictive services unit will determine whether to routinely produce a morning or afternoon product. Issuance times for each area's outlook can be found in the geographic area standards for resource mobilization and/or in its National Weather Service/Predictive Services Operating Plan. Guidance on issuance and requirements for the 7-Day can be found in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory
Fuels and fire behavior advisory alerts are issued as needed to address an exceptional or extreme circumstance that could threaten firefighter or public safety. Conditions that could be reasonably expected normally do not warrant an advisory. Advisories will focus on fuel conditions and fire behavior that have long-term impacts, not atmospheric conditions that can be found in other predictive services products. Advisories will highlight and give specific examples of conditions that are currently ongoing and have been experienced in the field. Advisories should be tailored so that firefighters at all experience levels can recognize the situation and act accordingly. Advisories should be coordinated with neighboring administrative units to ensure that all areas with similar conditions are being addressed. All advisories that extend beyond a single local administrative unit or that will be posted on the national advisory map must be coordinated with the NICC and GACC predictive service units. Each advisory must include a map of the affected area. Only one advisory may be active at any time over any area. If multiple advisory conditions are present incorporate them into one advisory. Advisories will remain in effect for 14 days from issuance. If the advisory conditions continue beyond the 14 days a new advisory will need to be issued to update conditions and circumstances with more timely information. At the request of the issuer, advisories may be lifted before the 14 days has passed. For the Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory template and protocols, see https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive-services/fuels-fire-danger.

National Intelligence Products

See the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 60.

Fire Severity Funding

Fire severity funding is the authorized use of suppression operations funds (normally used exclusively for suppression operations and distinct from preparedness funds) for extraordinary preparedness activities that are required due to:

- FMP, FDOP, or operating plan criteria that indicate the need for additional preparedness/suppression resources. The plan(s) should identify thresholds for severity needs.
- Anticipated fire activity will exceed the capabilities of local resources.
- Fire seasons that either start earlier or last longer than identified in an FDOP.
- An abnormal increase in fire potential or danger not planned for in existing preparedness plans.

Agency established decision points or thresholds will be used to determine severity funding needs.

The objective of fire severity funding is to appropriately manage risk and adjust planned actions and staffing in excess of the budgeted program to improve initial response capabilities and wildfire prevention activities when extraordinary weather and fire conditions may result in the occurrence, or substantial threat of occurrence, of wildfires with significant damage potential.

Fire severity funding is not intended to:

- Raise preparedness funding levels to cover differences that may exist between funds actually appropriated and those identified in the fire planning process.
    - ***FS –*** *Mitigation of threats to Threatened and Endangered Species habitat, wildland/urban interface, or other values identified in L/RMPs should be considered through base preparedness funding and not severity.*

Typical Uses
Fire severity funds are typically used to:

- Increase prevention activities;
- Temporarily increase firefighting staffing;
- Pay for standby;
- Preposition initial attack suppression forces;

- Provide additional aerial reconnaissance; and
- Provide for standby aircraft availability.

Authorization
Authorization to use severity funding is provided in writing based on a written request with supporting documentation. Authorization is on a line-item basis and comes with a severity cost code. Agencies will follow their administrative procedures for issuing severity cost codes. Authorization is provided for a maximum of 30 days per request; however, regardless of the length of the authorization, use of severity funding must be terminated when abnormal conditions no longer exist. If the fire severity situation extends beyond the 30-day authorization, the unit/geographic area/agencies/Tribes must prepare a new severity request.

Geographic Area-Level Fire Severity Funding
Each fiscal year the national office will provide each geographic area with funding and a severity cost code for geographic area short-term severity needs (e.g., wind events, cold dry front passage, lightning events, and unexpected events such as off-road rallies, cultural events) that are expected to last less than one week. Expenditure of these funds is authorized by geographic area fire chiefs/directors at the written request of the agency administrator. Geographic area fire chiefs/directors are responsible and accountable for ensuring that these funds are used only to meet severity funding objectives and that amounts are not exceeded. The national office will notify the geographic area fire chief/director, geographic area budget officer, and the unit fire chief/FMO when the severity cost code is provided.

- ***DOI –*** *See chapter 2.*
- ***FS –*** *Severity funding direction is found in FSM 5130 and current fiscal year program direction.*

National-Level Fire Severity Funding
Director/Chief U.S. Wildland Fire Service and Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service or their designees/delegates are authorized to allocate fire severity funding under specific conditions stated or referenced in this chapter. Expenditure of these funds is authorized by the appropriate approving official at the written request of the geographic area fire chief/director. Approved severity funding will be used only for the preparedness activities and timeframes specifically outlined in the authorization, and only for the objectives stated above.

- ***DOI –*** *See chapter 2.*
- ***FS –*** *Geographic area offices approve all severity requests.*

Appropriate Fire Severity Funding Charges and Activities
Severity-funded personnel and resources will not use a severity cost code while assigned to wildfires. The wildfire FireCode number will be used.

Labor
Appropriate labor charges include:

- Regular pay for non-fire personnel;
- Regular pay for seasonal/temporary fire personnel outside their normal fire-funded activation period; and
- Overtime pay for all fire and non-fire personnel.

Severity-funded personnel and resources must be available for immediate initial attack regardless of the daily task assignment.

Vehicles and Equipment
Appropriate vehicle and equipment charges include:

- GSA lease rate and mileage;
- Hourly rate or mileage for agency-owned vehicles; and
- Commercial rentals and contracts.

Aviation
Appropriate aviation charges include:

- Contract extensions;
- The daily minimum cost for call-when-needed (CWN) aircraft;
- Preposition flight time; and
- Support expenses necessary for severity funded aircraft (facility rentals, utilities, telephones, etc.).

Travel and Per Diem
Severity-funded personnel in travel status are fully subsisted by the Government in accordance with their agency regulations. Costs covered include:

- Lodging;

- Government-provided meals (in lieu of per diem);
- Airfare (including returning to their home base);
- Privately owned vehicle mileage (with prior approval); and
- Other miscellaneous travel and per diem expenses associated with the assignment.

Prevention Activities
Appropriate prevention activities include:
- Funding prevention teams (Prevention teams will be mobilized as referenced in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 20).
- Implementing local prevention campaigns, to include community risk assessments, mitigation planning, enforcement, outreach, and education
- Augmenting patrols

Note: Non-fire funded prevention team members should charge base 8 hours and overtime to the severity cost code for the length of the prevention activities assignment. Fire-funded personnel should charge overtime only to the severity cost code for the length of the prevention activities assignment.

Inappropriate Fire Severity Funding Charges
The following charges should not be charged to fire severity:
- Shortages between funds actually appropriated (including rescissions) and those identified in the fire planning process
- Administrative surcharges, indirect costs, fringe benefits
- Equipment purchases
- Purchase, maintenance, repair, or upgrade of vehicles
- Purchase of radios
- Purchase of telephones
- Purchase of pumps, saws, and similar suppression equipment
- Aircraft availability during contract period
- Cache supplies that are normally available in fire caches

Interagency Severity Requests
Agencies working cooperatively in the same geographic area must work together to generate and submit joint requests, to minimize duplication of required resources, to reduce interagency costs, and to utilize severity-funded resources in an interagency manner. However, each agency should request funds only for its fair-share contributions or offsets for pooled, interagency resources/activities. The joint request should be routed simultaneously through each agency's approval system, and the respective approving official will issue an authorization that specifies allocations by agency.

Requesting Fire Severity Funding
Each agency has established severity funding request protocols. The completed and signed request is submitted from the geographic area fire chief/director to the appropriate approving official as per the sequence of action outlined below. Authorizations will be returned in writing.

USFS Sequence of Action and Responsible Parties for Severity Funding Requests

Action	Responsible Party
In collaboration with interagency partners, as appropriate, identify and develop severity funding request.	Unit FMO
Review, modify, and approve (or reject) request. Forward to geographic area office.	Unit agency administrator
Review, modify, and recommend for approval/rejection unit request. Add geographic area needs and consolidate. Forward to geographic area director for approval within 48 hours.	Geographic area director
Review, modify, and approve/reject request. Forward to the Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, or designee, within 48 hours. Notify the fire budget staff.	Geographic area director
Review, modify, and approve/reject the request within 48 hours. Issue written authorization with a severity cost code.	Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, or designee
Establish severity cost code in the appropriate finance system within 24 hours.	Applicable national finance system
Notify unit office(s) and geographic area budget lead upon receipt of authorization.	Geographic area FMO

Action	Responsible Party
Utilize severity cost code. Ensure that project expenditures are only used for authorized purposes. Continually assess needs and submit new requests/extensions as required.	Unit FMO
Maintain severity files, including requests, authorizations, and summary of expenditures and activities.	Unit/geographic area/ national offices

- ***FS –*** *Severity codes are preestablished at the beginning of the fiscal year. Requests are approved at the geographic area office with a copy to the national office for those exceeding $250,000 or including national shared resources.*

Labor Cost Coding for Fire Severity Funded Personnel

Fire preparedness personnel outside their normal activation period, employees whose regular salary is not fire funded, and administratively determined (AD) employees hired under an approved severity request should charge regular time and approved non-fire overtime to the severity suppression operations subactivity and the requesting office's severity cost code.

Fire preparedness personnel should charge their regular planned salary (base hours) to their budgeted subactivity using their home unit's location code. Follow individual agency coding guidance when responding to another agency's severity request.

Regular hours worked in suppression operations will require the use of the appropriate fire subactivity with the appropriate FireCode number. Overtime in fire suppression operations will be charged to the suppression operations subactivity with the appropriate FireCode number.

Employees from non-Federal agencies should charge their time in accordance with the approved severity request and the appropriate local and statewide agreements. An interagency agreement for reimbursement must be established. The Interagency Agreement for Fire Management can be used as a template.

- ***FS*** *– Firefighters under a severity order will continue to charge base salary to a B-code and overtime to the severity S-code, even if it is outside their funded tour. If called out to an incident, these resources will be under the same rules of charging base salary to a B-code and overtime to the P-code. Geographic areas must manage funding of tours within allocations provided. Firefighters working on an incident beyond their planned and funded tour will continue to charge their Base-8 hours to a B-code (Wildland Fire Preparedness Program [WFPR]). Geographic areas must contact WO FAM if they believe they might exceed their allocations. All firefighters charge their Base-8 hours to preparedness job codes—either WFPR or a B-code—unless they are working on other non-fire project work outside of fire season. These situations are accounted for in the allocations by basing the allocations on the last three years of salary expenditures.*

Documentation

The unit, geographic area, and national office will document and file accurate records of severity funding activity. This will include complete severity funding requests, written authorizations, and expenditure records.

Severity Funding Reviews

Geographic areas and national offices should ensure appropriate usage of severity funding and expenditures. This may be done as part of the normal agency fire program review cycle.

Qualification for Professional Liability Insurance Reimbursement

Public Law 110-161 provides for reimbursement for up to one half of the cost incurred for professional liability insurance (including any administrative processing cost charged by the insurance company) for temporary fire line managers, management officials, and law enforcement officers.

To qualify for reimbursement, "temporary fire line managers" must meet one of the following three criteria:

- Provide temporary supervision or management of personnel engaged in wildland fire activities;
- Provide analysis or information that affects a supervisor's or manager's decision about a wildland fire;
- Direct the deployment of equipment for a wildland fire, such as a base camp manager, an equipment manager, a helicopter coordinator, or an initial attack dispatcher.
    - ***DOI –*** *See Personnel Bulletin No. 08-07, March 20, 2008.*
    - ***FS –*** *Refer to https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fs-cfo-bfp/MiscPay/SitePages/Home.aspx.*

Chapter 11
Incident Management and Response

National Response Framework

The National Response Framework (NRF) presents the guiding principles that enable all response partners to prepare for and provide a unified national response to disasters and emergencies—from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe.

The NRF establishes a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident response.

Definitions

Agency Administrator (USWFS): A USWFS geographic area fire chief or unit fire chief exercising assigned authority for wildland fire management decisions, including wildfires and prescribed fires. The Agency Administrator (AADM) qualification is not required for a USWFS agency administrator.

Bureau Representative (or DOI Bureau Representative): An individual designated by a DOI Bureau to represent its interests and retained authorities in wildland fire management, consistent with USWFS Transition Guidance, and applicable Bureau direction.

Agency Administrator (FS): A general term meaning the official with the delegated authority, responsibility, and qualifications for decision-making on incidents or prescribed fires within a particular administrative unit.

National Incident Management System

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) follows the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS provides a universal set of structures, procedures, and standards for agencies to respond to all types of emergencies. NIMS will be used to complete tasks assigned to the interagency wildland fire community under the NRF.

Incident Management and Coordination Components of the National Incident Management System
Effective incident management requires:

- Command organizations to manage onsite incident operations.
- Coordination and support organizations to provide direction and supply resources to the onsite organization.

Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) is the onsite management system used in NIMS. The ICS is a standardized emergency management system specifically designed to provide for an integrated organizational structure that reflects the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, communications, and procedures operating within a common organizational structure to manage incidents. ICS will be used by the agencies to manage wildland fire operations and all-hazards incidents.

Wildfire Complexity Level

Wildfires are typed by complexity, from type 5 (least complex) to type 1 (most complex). The ICS organizational structure develops in a modular fashion based on the complexity of the incident. Complexity level is determined by completing Part E of the *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment* (RCA), PMS 236.

Wildfire Risk and Complexity Assessment
NWCG has adopted the RCA form as a replacement for the Incident Complexity Analysis form and the Organizational Needs Assessment form. The RCA assists personnel with evaluating the situation, objectives, risks, and management considerations of an incident and recommends the appropriate organization necessary to manage the incident, which is documented in Part C.

The RCA also includes common indicators of incident complexity to assist firefighters and managers with determining incident management organizational needs. These common indicators are found in Part E of the RCA.

The RCA Part B can be used to populate the “Relative Risk Assessment, “Part C “Organization Assessment,” Part D ”Functional Complexity,” and Part E “Incident Complexity Level” portions of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).

Command Organizations

Incident Command

All wildfires, regardless of complexity level, will have an incident commander (IC). The IC is a single individual responsible to the agency administrator(s) for all incident activities. ICs are qualified according to the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, and any additional agency requirements. The IC may assign personnel to any combination of ICS functional area duties in order to operate safely and effectively. ICS functional area duties should be assigned to the most qualified or competent individuals available.

ICs are responsible for:

- Obtaining a delegation of authority and/or expectations to manage the incident from the agency administrator. For type 3, 4, or 5 incident complexity levels, delegations/expectations may be written or oral.
  - ***DOI –*** *The USWFS will sign the delegation of authority for all wildfires involving Bureau lands to an IC for all complexities.*
- Ensuring that safety receives priority consideration in all incident activities, and that the safety and welfare of all incident personnel and the public is maintained. Ensure standardized incident and communication center protocols identified in the "Medical Incident Report" (MIR) section of the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, are utilized. The MIR is found in the Medical Plan (ICS-206-WF);
- Assessing the incident situation, both immediate and potential;
- Maintaining command and control of the incident management organization;
- Ensuring transfer of command is communicated to host unit dispatch and to all incident personnel;
- Assisting with WFDSS documentation and support in close coordination with the local office(s), if requested by the delegating agency administrator(s);
- Developing incident objectives, strategies, and tactics, consistent with the delegation of authority and latest published decision(s) in WFDSS;
- Developing the organizational structure necessary to manage the incident;
- Approving and implementing the incident action plan (IAP), as needed;
- Ordering, deploying, and releasing resources;
- Ensuring incident financial accountability and expenditures meet agency policy and standards; and
- Ensuring incident documentation is complete.

For purposes of initial attack, the first IC on scene qualified at any level will assume the duties of initial attack IC. The initial attack IC will assume the duties and have responsibility for all suppression efforts on the incident up to his/her level of qualification until relieved by an IC qualified at a level commensurate with incident complexity.

As an incident escalates and de-escalates, a continuing reassessment of complexity should be completed to validate the current command organization or identify the need for a different level of incident management.

An IC is expected to establish the appropriate organizational structure for each incident and manage the incident based on his/her qualifications, incident complexity, and span of control. If the incident complexity exceeds the qualifications of the current IC, the IC must continue to manage the incident within his/her capability and span of control until replaced.

Onsite Command Organizations

Command organizations responsible for incident management include:

- Type 5 incident command
- Type 4 incident command
- Type 3 incident command
- Complex Incident Management Team (CIMT)
- National Incident Management Organization (NIMO)
- Area command
- Unified command

Incident Characteristics

Type 5 Incident Characteristics

- Ad hoc organization managed by a type 5 IC.
- Primarily local resources used.
- ICS command and general staff positions are not activated.
- Resources vary from two to six firefighters.

- Incident is generally contained within the first burning period and often within a few hours after resources arrive on scene.
- Additional firefighting resources or logistical support are not usually required.
- May require a published decision in WFDSS.

Type 4 Incident Characteristics
- Ad hoc organization managed by a type 4 IC.
- Primarily local resources used.
- ICS command and general staff positions are not activated.
- Resources vary from a single resource to multiple resource task forces or strike teams.
- Incident is usually limited to one operational period. However, incidents may extend into multiple operational periods.
- Written IAP is not required. A documented operational briefing will be completed for all incoming resources. Refer to the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, for a briefing checklist.
- May require a published decision in WFDSS or other decision support document.

Type 3 Incident Characteristics
- Ad hoc or preestablished type 3 organization managed by a type 3 IC.
- The IC develops the organizational structure necessary to manage the incident. Some or all of ICS functional areas are activated, usually at the division/group supervisor and/or unit leader level.
- The incident complexity analysis process is formalized and certified daily with the agency administrator(s). The IC is responsible for continually reassessing the complexity level of the incident. When the assessment of complexity indicates a higher complexity level, the IC must ensure that suppression operations remain within the scope and capability of the existing organization and that span of control is consistent with established ICS standards.
- Local and non-local resources used.
- Resources vary from several resources to several task forces/strike teams.
- May be divided into divisions.
- May require staging areas and incident base.
- May involve low-complexity aviation operations.
- May involve multiple operational periods prior to control, which may require a written IAP.
- Documented operational briefings will occur for all incoming resources and before each operational period. Refer to the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, for a briefing checklist.
- May require a published decision in WFDSS.
- May require a written delegation of authority.

Type 3 Incident Command

ICT3s will not serve concurrently as a single resource boss or have any non-incident-related responsibilities.

NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, qualifications as operations section chief type 3 (OPS3), planning section chief type 3 (PSC3), logistics section chief type 3 (LSC3), and finance section chief type 3 (FSC3) are required for national mobilization.

Reference the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 20, for type 3 IMT standards when mobilizing across geographic area boundaries. A local unit may assign ad hoc type 3 organizations appropriately configured to the incident.

The following position standards can be used for local incidents:

Type 3 Functional Responsibility	Minimum Qualification Standards for Local Incidents
Safety	Safety officer type 3 (SOF3)
Division	Single resource boss – Operational qualification must be commensurate with resources assigned (i.e., more than one resource assigned requires a higher level of qualification).
Information	Local entities can establish level of skill to perform function.

Type 1 and Type 2 Incident Complexity Indicators
- Refer to Part E of the *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236.

Incident Management Teams

Area Command

Area command is an ICS organization established to:

- Oversee the management of large or multiple incidents to which several IMTs have been assigned. Area command may become unified area command when incidents are multi-jurisdictional; or
- Provide strategic support and coordination services to decision makers such as geographic area multi-agency coordination (MAC) groups, sub-geographic area MAC groups (GMAC), agency administrators, Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC), emergency operations centers, agency operations centers, or FEMA joint field offices.

The primary determining factor for establishing area command is the span of control of the agency administrator.

Area command may be ordered when needed and composed of the positions necessary to achieve the desired objectives. Area command qualifications are found in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1.

Area command functions typically include:

- Establishing overall strategy, objectives, and priorities for the incident(s) under its command;
- Allocating critical resources according to agency priorities (e.g., aircraft, IHCs, incident support needs such as medical services, communication and internet operability equipment);
- Ensuring that incidents are properly managed;
- Coordinating mobilization, team transitions, and demobilization;
- Supervising, managing, and evaluating IMTs under its command; and
- Minimizing duplication of effort and effectiveness by combining multiple agency efforts under a single area or geographic theater plan.

See appendix I for the Area Command (AC) Complexity Assessment template.

Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMTs)

Complex incident management teams are jointly managed by the GACG/GACCs and the NMAC through the NICC. CIMTs may be mobilized to type 1 and type 2 complexity incidents and are scalable in size and capability to meet the needs of the incident. Specific information regarding CIMT configuration, availability rotation, and management can be found in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

National Incident Management Organization

National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) teams are managed by the Forest Service Fire and Aviation's Washington Office and are ordered through the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC). The mission of NIMO is to promote continuous improvement by introducing innovative concepts, approaches, and technologies while providing adaptive and agile incident management.

NIMOs consist of command and general staff positions qualified at the complex level. If needed, NIMO can expand to meet various incident complexity levels.

Types of NIMO assignments include:

- National or geographic area support to provide strategic planning assistance.
- Work with less qualified or experienced command and general staff on incidents for successional planning.
- Serve as mentors, trainers, and evaluators on all types of incident complexity levels or designated projects.
- Manage multiple type 3 ignitions within an area (e.g., GACC, forest, zone).
- Support and mentor agency administrators with complex fire situations.
- International assignments.
- All-hazards incidents.
- Mission-specific assignments – NIMO will continue to assist Forest Service units and other agencies with special missions (e.g., prescribed fire operations, multi-agency coordinating (MAC) group(s), or geographic area support during higher planning/activity levels).

Non-Federal Type 1 and Type 2 Incident Management Teams

Some type 1 and type 2 IMTs are managed by non-Federal agencies (e.g., State or local governments) and availability of these teams is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Unified Command

Unified command is an application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions. Under unified command, agencies work together through their

designated ICs at a single incident command post to establish common objectives and issue a single IAP. Unified command may be established at any level of incident management or area command. Under unified command, all agencies with jurisdictional responsibility at the incident contribute to the process of:

- Determining overall strategies;
- Selecting alternatives;
- Ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities is accomplished; and
- Maximizing use of all assigned resources.

Advantages of unified command are:

- A single set of objectives is developed for the entire incident;
- A collective approach is used to develop strategies to achieve incident objectives;
- Information flow and coordination is improved between all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident;
- All involved agencies have an understanding of joint priorities and restrictions; and
- No agency's legal authorities will be compromised or neglected.

All-Hazards and Other Non-Wildland Fire

Many different entities have developed IMTs based on ICS core competencies under NIMS. See chapter 8 for more information.

Coordination and Support Organizations

Organizations that provide coordination and support to onsite command organizations include:

- Initial attack dispatch
- Expanded dispatch
- Procurement support/payment teams
- NICC and GACCs (refer to chapter 8)
- Local, geographic area, and national multi-agency coordinating (MAC) groups

Refer to chapter 19 for initial attack and expanded dispatch information.

In 2026, the buying team (BUYT) model will be transitioned to the Expanded Procurement Support Organization (EPSO). Under EPSO, procurement support is provided through the coordinated USFS At Incident Management Support (AIMS) and Department of the Interior's Remote Incident Support (IRIS) surge structures. Support is configured to meet the incident's needs and may include micro-purchase support, warranted contracting support, or both. Support may be provided remotely or on-site depending on resource availability. All fires will be supported under this aligned interagency model across DOI, USFS, and State coordination. Additional information is available at NMAC Correspondence M2026-03, *2026 Joint FS/DOI Procurement Surge Model*.

Multi-Agency Coordination

Multi-agency coordination (MAC) groups are part of NIMS and are an expansion of the off-site coordination and support system. MAC groups are activated by the agency administrator(s) when the character and intensity of the emergency situation significantly impacts or involves other agencies. A MAC group may be activated to provide support when only one agency has incident(s). The MAC group is made up of agency representatives who are delegated/assigned authority by their respective agency administrators to make agency decisions and to commit agency resources and funds. The MAC group relieves the incident support organization (dispatch, expanded dispatch) of the responsibility for making key decisions regarding prioritization of objectives and allocation of critical resources. The MAC group makes coordinated agency administrator-level decisions on issues that affect multiple agencies. The MAC group is supported by situation, resource status, and intelligence units who collect and assemble data through normal coordination channels.

MAC group direction is carried out through dispatch and coordination center organizations. When expanded dispatch is activated, the MAC group direction is carried out through the expanded dispatch organization. The MAC group organization does not operate directly with IMTs or with area command teams, which are responsible for onsite management of the incident.

MAC groups may be activated at the local, geographic, or national level. National-level and geographic-area-level MAC groups should be activated in accordance with the preparedness levels criteria established in national and geographic area standards for resource mobilization.

The MAC group coordinator facilitates organizing and accomplishing the mission, goals, and direction of the MAC group. The MAC group coordinator:

- Provides expertise on the functions of the MAC group and on the proper relationships with dispatch centers and incident managers

- Fills and supervises necessary unit and support positions as needed, in accordance with coordination complexity
- Arranges for and manages facilities and equipment necessary to carry out the MAC group functions
- Facilitates the MAC group decision process
- Implements decisions made by the MAC group

Activation of a MAC group improves interagency coordination and provides for allocation and timely commitment of multi-agency emergency resources. Participation by multiple agencies in the MAC effort will improve:

- Overall situation status information;
- Incident priority determination;
- Resource acquisition and allocation;
- State and Federal disaster coordination;
- Political interfaces;
- Consistency and quality of information provided to the media and involved agencies; and
- Anticipation of future conditions and resource needs.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System

The Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is a web-based decision support system that provides a single dynamic documentation system for use beginning at the time of discovery and concluding when the fire is declared out. WFDSS is the decision support documentation platform for all Federal wildfires. WFDSS allows agency administrator(s)/bureau representative(s) to describe and assess the fire situation, review completed fire behavior analysis products, develop strategic assessments, develop strategic courses of action, evaluate relative risk, complete an organization assessment and determine incident complexity level, document the rationale, and publish a decision.

- ***DOI –*** *Both the USWFS and Bureaus will approve wildfire decisions in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS). Leader's Intent document content related to strategic direction should be included in the Decision Rationale within WFDSS.*

Units are encouraged to engage in preseason planning that familiarizes staff with fire-related guidance and direction from land/resource management plans (L/RMP) and/or fire management plans (FMPs), facilitates cooperation among resource areas and with neighboring units, and establishes protection priorities proactively ahead of fire season. Annual WFDSS refreshers, preferably with agency administrator/bureau representative attendance, are encouraged but are only one component of a unit's overall preseason planning strategy.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. The USWFS will design, schedule and deliver WFDSS training for all users. Bureaus will nominate personnel and attend WFDSS training as needed.*

For detailed information on the tools and capabilities in WFDSS, how managers may use the tools, and suggested WFDSS refresher training items, refer to appendix J and https://wfdss.firenet.gov/help/Content/Home.htm.

The Integrated Reporting of Wildfire Information (IRWIN) data exchange system automatically populates some fields on the WFDSS information tab (e.g., incident name, point of origin) for those using a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) or the Interagency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules (InFORM) system. Once a record is created in CAD, FireCode, Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) system, ICS-209, or InFORM, those fires will automatically be available for units in WFDSS.

In order to publish a decision consistent with the L/RMP, applicable fire-related protection and resource management objectives and requirements from L/RMP and/or FMPs must be incorporated preseason into the Spatial Fire Planning Service.

- ***DOI –*** *The USWFS will update the spatial fire planning service data related to L/RMP and FMP direction. Bureaus will provide L/RMP spatial and supporting data to the USWFS.*

A published decision documents:

- Strategic direction from L/RMP and/or FMPs;
- Relative Risk, Organization Assessment, Functional Complexity, and Incident Complexity Level (parts B-E of the *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236);
- Estimated costs for the duration of the incident;
- All affected jurisdictions and agencies that participated in the decision process and concurred with the strategies selected;
- Agency administrator(s)/bureau representative(s) have reviewed and approved the decision; and

- The framework for the actions to be performed under the delegation of authority which authorizes an IC to operate on a specific unit(s). See "Managing the Incident" for delegation and leader's intent.

The level of documentation in a decision should be commensurate with incident complexity, cost, and/or potential duration and spread. As incident complexity changes, additional analysis may be necessary to inform decision making.

Initial Decision

All fires will have a published decision within WFDSS when they:

- Escape initial attack; or
- Exceed initial response; or
- Include objectives with both protection and resource benefit elements consistent with land management planning documents.

Agency-specific direction established in memorandums or other policy documents may further define WFDSS documentation requirements.

Additional considerations for determining whether a decision may be needed include:

- The fire affects or is likely to affect more than one agency or more than one administrative unit within a single agency (for example more than one national forest);
- The fire is burning into or expected to burn into the wildland urban interface;
- Significant safety or other concerns such as air quality are present or anticipated; and
- The relative risk assessment indicates the need for additional evaluation and development of best management practices for achieving land and resource objectives.

New Decision

A new decision is required when:

- The periodic assessment indicates the strategic courses of action are no longer valid; or
- The fire moves beyond the planning area; or
- The incident exceeds an established agency threshold (cost or complexity) for approval authority; or
- The risk and complexity assessment indicates that the incident exceeds existing management capability; or
- Costs are expected to exceed the estimated final costs in the current decision.

Additional information about WFDSS can be found in appendix J. User support information, training materials, and other resources can be found at https://wfdss.firenet.gov/help/Content/Home.htm.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System Decision Approval and Publication

All agencies having jurisdiction within a WFDSS planning area must be provided with the opportunity to participate as soon as possible in the decision-making process. In situations where one agency provides fire protection under agreement or contract to a jurisdictional agency, both jurisdictional and protecting agencies should be involved in the process.

Every wildfire decision will have developed protection objectives which also provide for safety of firefighter and the public and minimize the loss of and damage to property, and cultural and natural resources.

Units considering developing a decision for a group of fires, merged fires, or a complex should reference Best Management Practices for Incident Complexes for considerations until functionality is updated within the system.

The cost estimate shown in the WFDSS "Cost" tab will represent estimated final cost for the incident and should be developed based on historic fire costs, estimation spreadsheets, or other sources. If to-date incident expenditures exceed WFDSS estimated fire costs, the final cost estimate must be updated and validated through a periodic assessment/new decision.

Decisions in WFDSS are approved and published by the appropriate agency administrator(s)/bureau representative(s) for the agency(s) participating in the decision. Forest Service agency administrator authority is defined below but may be subject to re-delegation or reservation of authority.

Incident Complexity Level	FS Agency Administrator Qualification Level[1]
Type 1	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 1 (WFA1)
Type 2	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 2 (WFA2)
Type 3, 4, 5	Wildfire Agency Administrator Type 3 (WFA3)

[1]*Authority may be retained at the regional forester level.*

As approvers of WFDSS decisions, agency administrators and bureau representatives will ensure that periodic assessments are completed every 1-14 days until the fire is declared out.

The Periodic Assessment "Number of Days Between Required Assessments" dropdown contains a "Strategy Has Been Met" option.

- Choosing the "Strategy Has Been Met" option effectively pauses the periodic assessment 1-14 day requirement in WFDSS.
- If "Strategy Has Been Met" is used, a sound justification and specific date to review the decision must be established and documented in the Rationale/Decision Update Triggers in WFDSS.
- Choosing "Strategy Has Been Met" must be coordinated among all approvers.
- If conditions change, regular periodic assessments between 1-14 days must be resumed, and a new decision must be published.

If internet connections or servers are unavailable, WFDSS documentation will be completed using the "temporary WFDSS paper form" and entered into the web-based application as soon as it becomes available. The paper form can be found on the WFDSS homepage at https://wfdss.firenet.gov/help/Content/00-General/WFDSSNG-Offline-Decision-Form.htm.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System Decision Support

The Wildland Fire Management Research Development and Application (WFM RD&A) group provides the national infrastructure for wildland fire decision making and WFDSS support. Field users should contact their WFDSS geographic area editor for assistance prior to contacting WFM RD&A staff. Information for requesting assistance from WFM RD&A can be found on the WFDSS homepage.

Managing the Incident

Agency administrators are responsible for safety oversight and may request additional safety oversight as needed.

Situations that may require additional safety oversight:

- A fire escapes initial attack or when extended attack is probable;
- There is complex or critical fire behavior;
- There is a complex air operation;
- The fire is in an urban intermix/interface; and
- Other extraordinary circumstances.

The agency administrator establishes specific performance objectives for the IC. Agency administrator(s) delegate the authority to the IC to take specific actions to meet those objectives. Agency administrator responsibilities to an IMT include:

- ***DOI –*** *The USWFS, Bureaus, and Tribes (where applicable) will provide input and sign the Leader's Intent to the IC. Input from Bureaus could include items such as but not limited to: responsibility to coordinate with Resource Advisors; expectations for working with resource specialists and permittees to provide access to the fire area to check on livestock; the process to follow to obtain Bureau approval if wildfire/emergency exceptions to prohibition of certain uses in Section 4(c) of The Wilderness Act is needed for fire operations; and the process to follow to request Bureaus issue emergency area closures due to high hazard.*

Conduct an initial briefing to the IMT (*appendix D*).

- ***DOI –*** *The USWFS and Bureaus will jointly in-brief IMTs.*

Provide an approved, published WFDSS decision.

- ***FS –*** *Ensure that significant decisions related to strategy and costs are included in WFDSS.*

Complete an *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236, to accompany the WFDSS published decision.

- ***FS –*** *Complete an NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment, PMS 236, for type 1, 2, and 3 complexity incidents within WFDSS.*

Coordinate with neighboring agencies on multi-jurisdiction fires to issue a joint delegation of authority and develop a single published decision in WFDSS for the management of unplanned ignitions.

Issue a written delegation of authority to the IC (appendix E) and to other appropriate officials, agency administrator representative, resource advisor, and incident business advisor. The delegation should:

- State specific and measurable objectives, priorities, expectations, agency administrator's intent, constraints, and other required direction;
- Establish the specific time for transfer of command;

- Assign clear responsibilities for initial attack;
- Define your role in the management of the incident;
- Describe procedures for conducting action reviews with the IC;
- Define public information responsibilities;
- Address accident investigation procedures and notification requirements for fire managers, line officer(s), and dispatch/coordination centers;
- Assign a local government liaison to the IMT (if necessary);
- Assign a local fire management liaison to the IMT (if necessary);
- Assign an incident business advisor (INBA) to provide incident business management oversight commensurate with complexity; and
- Direct the IMT to address rehabilitation of areas affected by suppression activities.
    - ***DOI –*** *The USWFS will sign the delegation of authority for all wildfires involving Bureau lands to an IC for all complexities.*

Coordinate mobilization with the IC.

- Negotiate filling of mobilization order with the IC;
- Establish time and location of agency administrator briefing;
- Consider approving support staff additional to the IMT as requested by the IC; and
- *Consider authorizing transportation needs as requested by the IC.*

Provide pertinent support materials and documents (L/RMP, FMP, GIS data, local unit SOPs, maps, service and supply plan, etc.) to the IMT.

In situations where one agency provides fire protection under agreement to the jurisdictional agency, both jurisdictional and protecting agencies will be involved in the development of the delegation of authorities to the IMTs and the published decision in WFDSS.

Agency Administrator/Bureau Representative Responsibilities

The agency administrator/bureau representative (the on-scene representative for the agency administrator/bureau representative) is responsible for representing the political, social, and economic issues of the agency administrator/bureau representative to the IC. This is accomplished by participating in the agency administrator briefing, in the IMT planning and strategy meetings, and in the operational briefings.

Responsibilities include representing the agency administrator/bureau representative to the IMT regarding:

- Compliance with the delegation of authority and the published decision in WFDSS
- Public concerns (air quality, road or trail closures, smoke management, threats)
- Public safety (evacuations, access/use restrictions, temporary closures)
- Public information (fire size, resources assigned, threats, concerns, appeals for assistance)
- Socioeconomic, political, or Tribal concerns
- Land and property ownership concerns
- Interagency and intergovernmental issues
- Wildland urban interface impacts
- Media contacts

Resource Advisor Responsibilities

Members of the resource advising group (Archaeologist (ARCH), Resource Advisor, Coordinator (REAC), Resource Advisor (READ), and Resource Advisor, Fireline (REAF)) are responsible for anticipating the impacts of fire operations on natural and cultural resources and for communicating protection requirements to those managing the incident. Advisors should ensure IMT compliance with the law, regulation, and policy for the protection of these resources. The resource advising group should provide information, analysis, and advice on these areas:

- Rehabilitation requirements and standards;
- Hazardous materials;
- Water sources and ownership;
- Critical watersheds;
- Protected and sensitive wildlife areas;
- Potential impacts to local wildlife species;
- Noxious weeds/aquatic invasive species;
- Special status species (threatened, endangered, proposed, sensitive);
- Fisheries;
- Poisonous plants, insects, and venomous snakes;

- Mineral resources (oil, gas, mining activities);
- Archaeological sites, historic trails, paleontological sites, and traditional cultural properties;
- Riparian areas including retardant buffers;
- Military issues;
- Utility rights-of-way (power, communication sites);
- Native allotments;
- Grazing allotments;
- Recreational areas; and
- Special management areas (wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, recommended wilderness, inventoried roadless areas, national monuments, national conservation areas, national historic landmarks and structures, areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, wild and scenic rivers, trails).

Depending on the complexity and duration of the incident, members of the resource advising group may be a mix of local and out of area personnel. Although present on the fireline, the members of the resource advising group report to the bureau representative or FS agency administrator. Duties are stated in the *Resource Advisor Guide*, PMS 313.

- ***DOI –*** *The USWFS will order resource advisors for wildfires as needed or requested by Bureaus and Tribes. Resource advisors on wildfires will work for Bureaus.*

Use of Trainees

Use of trainees is encouraged. On wildland fire incidents, trainees may supervise trainees. However, when assigning trainees to positions where critical life-safety decisions are affected, trainees must be directly supervised by a fully qualified individual. For example:

- A division/group supervisor (DIVS) trainee may not work directly for an operations section chief without additional field supervision. The potential for high-hazard work with high-risk outcomes calls for a fully qualified DIVS to be assigned supervision of the DIVS trainee.
- A supply unit leader (SPUL) trainee may supervise a receiving/distribution manager (RCDM) trainee. In this case, supervision may be successfully provided in a lower-hazard environment with appropriate risk mitigation.

Incident Record Creation

Local dispatch centers have the responsibility and authority to create incident records, process requests, coordinate response, and track resources and information under the delegation of the benefiting agency. Business rules regarding creation of incidents within an integrated system are located in chapter 19 under subheading "Initial Attack Dispatching."

- ***DOI –*** *All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.*

Incident Action Plan

When a written IAP is required, suggested components may include objectives, organization, weather forecast, fire behavior forecast, division assignments, air operations summary, safety message, communications plan, and incident map. An incident medical plan is required in all written IAPs.

Incident Status Reporting

The Incident Status Summary (ICS-209), submitted to the GACC, is used to report large wildland fires and any other significant events on lands under Federal protection or Federal ownership. Lands administered by States and other Federal cooperators may also report in this manner.

All wildland fires that meet large fire criteria, regardless of suppression strategy, will submit an ICS-209 by 0200 Mountain Time to report the previous day's activity until the incident is controlled or contained. Refer to GACC standards for resource mobilization guides or agency policy for reporting requirements once containment is achieved.

Incident History and Financial Records

Wildfire incidents on Federal lands managed by the FS and DOI require creation of an incident history file (IHF) to document significant events, actions taken, lessons learned, and other information with long-term value for managing natural resources. IHF contents, instructions, and tools for creating the IHF are found at https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/incident-planning-subcommittee.

Financial records are maintained in an Incident Finance Package following guidance in the *National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, and finance electronic file management guidance.

The host unit will be responsible for retaining the incident documentation package including the IHF and financial records.

- ***DOI –*** *All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.*

Document and Computer Security

Precautions must be taken to secure incident information in its various formats. All forms of information shall be treated as Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) and care must be exercised when handling the data to prevent the inadvertent viewing or unauthorized disclosure of information. CUI paper copies that compromise privacy and security shall be shredded before disposal when no longer needed. All computers used at the incident must be patched and have anti-virus software installed with recently updated definition files. All media used to transfer information into the incident (for example, USB flash drives, portable hard drives and CD/DVDs) must be scanned prior to use. Autorun capabilities must be disabled to prevent the spread of malware. All computers and storage devices shall be physically secured at all times.

Transfer of Command

The following guidelines will assist in the transfer of incident command responsibilities from the local unit to incoming IMT and back to the local unit.

- The local team or organization already in place remains in charge until the local representatives brief their counterparts on the incoming team, a delegation of authority has been signed, and a mutually agreed time for transfer of command has been established.
- The ordering unit will specify times of arrival and transfer of command and discuss these timeframes with both the incoming and outgoing command structures.
- Clear lines of authority must be maintained in order to minimize confusion and maintain operational control.
- Transfers of command should occur at the beginning of an operational period, whenever possible.
- All operational personnel will be notified on incident command frequencies when transfer of command occurs.

Release of Incident Management Teams

The release of an IMT should follow an approved transfer of command process. The agency administrator must approve the date and time of the transfer of command. The transfer of command plan should include the following elements:

- Remaining organizational needs and structure;
- Tasks or work to be accomplished;
- Communication systems and radio frequencies;
- Local safety hazards and considerations;
- IAP, including remaining resources and weather forecast;
- Facilities, equipment, and supply status;
- Arrangement for feeding remaining personnel;
- Financial and payment processes needing follow-up; and
- *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236.

Team Evaluation

At completion of assignment, ICs will receive a written performance evaluation from the agency administrator(s) prior to the team's release from the incident. Certain elements of this evaluation may not be able to be completed at the closeout review. These include accountability and property control, completeness of claims investigation/documentation, and completeness of financial and payment documentation.

The final evaluation incorporating all of the above elements should be sent to the IC and the respective GACC within 60 days. See https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents for the *Interagency Incident Management Team (IMT) Incident Evaluation* form.

The delegation of authority, the published decision in WFDSS, and other documented agency administrator's direction will serve as the primary standards against which the IMT is evaluated.

Unit/Area Closures

Threats to public safety may require temporary closure of a unit/area or a portion of it. When a fire threatens escape from the unit/area, adjacent authorities must be given as much advance notice as possible in order to achieve orderly evacuation.

Incident Emergency Management Planning and Services

Refer to chapter 7 for further guidance.

Fire Management in Wilderness

Actions taken in wilderness will be conducted to protect life and safety, to meet natural and cultural resource objectives, and to minimize negative impacts of the fire management actions and the fires themselves. In evaluating fire management actions, the preservation of wilderness character will be considered before, and given significantly more weight than economic efficiency and convenience. Unless human life or private property is immediately threatened, only those actions that preserve wilderness character and/or have localized, short-term adverse impacts to wilderness character will be acceptable. Any delegation of authority or Leader's Intent to IMTs will convey appropriate emphasis on the preservation of wilderness character and resources and will ensure interaction with resource advisor(s) with expertise in wilderness stewardship.

- ***DOI Administered Lands –***
  - ***BLM –*** *Reference BLM Manual 6340—Management of BLM Wilderness (2012), Section 1.6.C.7 states that to the greatest extent possible, the Bureau will manage all wildfires in wilderness: 1) using Minimum Impact Strategies Tactics (MIST) wherever possible; 2) if feasible, without equipment that would ordinarily be prohibited under Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act; and 3) by assigning a resource advisor with expertise in wilderness stewardship. To assist in documenting any decision involving uses generally prohibited by the Wilderness Act (e.g., heavy equipment, chainsaws, and the landing of aircraft, among other examples), the BLM normally uses a tool known as the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG). Under the Wilderness Act, however, control of fire is an exception to the prohibited uses, so the MRDG is not necessary at the time of response to an emergency. Nevertheless, the minimum requirements concept should be incorporated into emergency planning so that the minimum necessary methods and tools can be used to resolve emergencies while preserving wilderness character to the greatest extent practicable. Responses involving prohibited uses will be approved by the state director, though approval can be delegated through the BLM MS-1203 – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY to the district or field office manager if he/she has been through the National or Regional Wilderness Stewardship Training offered by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center. In emergency situations, the decision on authorization of normally prohibited uses should always err on the side of protecting human life.*
  - ***NPS –*** *All wilderness fire management actions proposing the use of any of the Wilderness Act Section 4(c) prohibitions, a minimum requirements analysis (MRA) will be completed. To ensure adequate consideration of wilderness resources, a programmatic MRA must be completed as part of the development of a park's FMP and companion environmental compliance document.*
  - ***FWS –*** *All wilderness fire management actions proposing the use of any of the Wilderness Act 4(c) prohibitions, a minimum requirements analysis will be completed.*
  - ***BIA –*** *All wilderness fire management actions refer to L/RMPs. For BLM, NPS and FWS, Section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 allows all agencies to control fire, in wilderness areas, subject to such conditions as the Secretary deems desirable.*
- ***FS –*** *For all wilderness fire management actions proposing the use of any Wilderness Act 4(c) prohibitions, a minimum requirements analysis is recommended.*
- ***FS –*** *Section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 allows all agencies to control fire, in wilderness areas, subject to such conditions as the Secretary deems desirable.*

Operational Guidelines for Aquatic Invasive Species

In order to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, fire personnel must recognize how our fire operations can prevent the transport of these species. The NWCG Invasive Species Subcommittee provides up-to-date operational guidelines, best management practices, and equipment cleaning guidance to minimize the spread of aquatic invasive species. Local area or agency guidelines may also be available and useful and local biologists, resource advisors, and fire personnel should consult with each other during the preseason regarding known aquatic invasive species locations to facilitate incident avoidance when possible. To minimize potential transmission of aquatic invasive species, it is recommended that personnel:

- Consult with local biologists, resource advisors, and fire personnel for known aquatic invasive species locations in the area and avoid them when possible.

- Avoid entering (driving through) water bodies or wet areas when possible.
- Avoid transferring water between drainages or between unconnected waters within the same drainage when possible.
- Avoid sucking organic and bottom material into water intakes when drafting from a natural water body.
- Avoid obtaining water from multiple sources during a single operational period when possible.
- Remove all plant parts and mud from external surfaces of gear and equipment after an operational period.
- If gear contacts untreated water, consider decontaminating before moving to new drainages. Applicable gear includes helicopter buckets, snorkel ends, foot valves, and draft hoses. Water delivery equipment and accessories (e.g., fireline hoses, wye valves, nozzles) that do not transfer tank water to waterbodies do not need to be disinfected.
- For decontamination and cleaning protocols, refer to NWCG Invasive Species Subcommittee guidance or local area or agency direction. NWCG protocols emphasize hot water, power washing, or drying over the use of chemicals.
- Carry spare, clean, dry helicopter buckets, draft hoses, and foot valves to switch out with used ones when moving to a new water source. Decontaminate the wet gear while spares are being used.
- Prime engine pumps with water from the drafting source (e.g., streams, lake) rather than using water from the engine tank. This minimizes the leakage of possibly contaminated engine tank water through the foot valve. Ensure foot valves are operating and not leaking. Decontamination of engine or water tender tanks with hot water or chemicals is not recommended.

Operational Guidelines for Invasive Species

Suppression and support vehicles, tools, and machinery should be cleaned at a designated area prior to arriving and leaving the incident. Onsite fire equipment, including the undercarriage, fender wells, tires, radiator, and exterior of the vehicle, should be thoroughly cleaned. Firefighter personnel should clean items such as personal equipment, boots, clothing of weed or other invasive species materials, including visible plant parts, soil, and other materials as identified by the resource advisor(s). The cleaning area should also be clearly marked to identify the area for post-fire control treatments, as needed.

Ensure that seed mixes and mulch used in suppression repair contain no federally or State-designated noxious weeds by using seed mixes and mulches that have been examined by a laboratory or have current weed-free certification from a State seed laboratory or equivalent qualified testing agent.

Responding to Non-Wildland Fire Incidents

Managers will avoid giving the appearance that their wildland fire resources are trained and equipped to perform structure, vehicle, and dump fire suppression, to respond to hazardous materials releases, or to perform emergency medical response for the public.

Wildland Urban Interface

The operational roles of the Federal agencies as partners in the wildland urban interface are wildfire suppression, structure protection (not structural fire suppression), prescribed fire, hazard reduction, cooperative prevention and education, and technical assistance.

Structural fire suppression is the responsibility of Tribal, State, or local governments. Federal agencies may assist with exterior structural fire protection activities under formal fire protection agreements that specify the mutual responsibilities of the partners, including funding (some Federal agencies have full structural protection authority for their facilities on lands they administer and may also enter into formal agreements to assist State and local governments with structural protection).

– *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, January 2001, page 23*

Funding is not provided to prepare for or respond to emergency non-wildland fire response activities such as structure fires, vehicle fires, dump fires, hazardous materials releases, and emergency medical responses. Managers must ensure that FMPs, interagency agreements, and operating plans clearly state agency and cooperator roles and responsibilities for non-wildland fire response activities that agency personnel are exposed to as a result of working in the interagency fire environment. Managers will also ensure that Federal wildland fire resources are not identified on run cards or in dispatch plans for non-wildland fire responses.

Structure, Vehicle, Dumpster, Trash, and Landfill Fires

Wildland firefighters (and equipment) will not take direct suppression action on structure, vehicle, dumpster, trash, or landfill fires. Structure, vehicle, and landfill fire suppression is not a functional responsibility of wildland fire resources. These fires have the potential to emit high levels of toxic gases. This policy will be reflected in suppression response plans.

Wildland firefighters who encounter structure, vehicle, or landfill fires, or who are dispatched to such fires due to significant threat to adjacent agency-protected lands/resources, will not engage in direct suppression action. Structure protection (not suppression) activities will be limited to exterior efforts, and only when such actions can be accomplished safely and in accordance with established wildland fire operations standards.

- ***DOI –*** *For NPS, structural fire (including vehicle, trash and dumpster fires) response, training, medical examination, and physical fitness requirements, and hazardous material response or control guidance, refer to chapter 2 and chapter 13.*
- ***FS –*** *Wildfires other than vegetation (such as dumpster, trash, landfill, or vehicle) as the primary fuel present hazards that are outside of the basic wildland firefighters training and protective equipment. Response actions will be limited to protection of life, property, and resources when they can be safely undertaken with proper risk assessment and mitigation. When agency employees are trained, qualified, and equipped to take action on other than vegetation fires, they may do so with proper risk assessment and mitigation (NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG), PMS 461).*

Public Emergency Medical Response

Public emergency medical response is not a functional responsibility of wildland fire resources and should not be part of a preplanned response that requires these duties. When wildland firefighters encounter emergency medical response situations, their efforts should be limited to immediate care (e.g., first aid, first responder) actions that they are trained and qualified to perform.

- ***DOI –*** *NPS employees who provide emergency medical services will adhere to the requirements contained in Director's Order and Reference Manual #51, Emergency Medical Services.*

Post-Wildfire Activities

Each wildland fire management agency is responsible for taking prompt action to determine the need for, and to prescribe and implement, emergency treatments to minimize threats to life or property or to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources resulting from the effects of a fire on the lands they manage.

Post-wildfire activities references can be found in:

- ***DOI –***
  - *Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response Guidebook – Interpretation of Department of the Interior 620 DM 7*
  - *Interagency Burned Area Rehabilitation Guidebook – Interpretation of Department of the Interior 620 DM 7*
- ***FS –*** *USDA Forest Service Manual 2523, Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)*

Suppression Repair

Planned actions taken to repair the damages to resources, lands, and facilities resulting from wildfire suppression actions and documented in the Suppression Repair Plan. These actions are usually implemented prior to, or immediately after containment of the wildfire by the incident management organization. Repairs under this activity may be completed to return the value to pre-wildfire management activity condition as practical but may not improve the condition beyond what was existing prior to the incident.

Emergency Stabilization

Planned actions to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources, to minimize threats to life or property resulting from the effects of a wildfire, or to repair/replace/construct physical improvements necessary to prevent degradation of land or resources. Emergency stabilization actions must be taken per agency policy.

- ***DOI –*** *Within 1 year plus 21 days after the ignition date of a wildfire and documented in a Burned Area Response Plan or an agency specific plan. The director/chief may approve an extension beyond the 1 year plus 21 days to accommodate circumstances related to climatic conditions or other significant events.*
- ***FS –*** *No later than 1 year after the containment of the fire as documented in the Burned Area Response Funding Request and Authorization.*

Rehabilitation
Efforts taken to repair or improve wildfire-damaged lands unlikely to recover naturally to management-approved conditions or to repair/replace minor assets damaged by wildfire. Rehabilitation actions must be taken per agency policy.

- ***DOI –*** *Within 5 years following 21 days after the ignition date of a wildfire as documented in a separate Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan (BAR) or in combination with Burned Area Emergency Response Plan (BAER).*
- ***FS –*** *No later than 3 years after the containment of the fire as documented in the Burned Area Rehabilitation Funding Request and Authorization.*

Restoration
Continuing the rehabilitation beyond agency rehabilitation timeframes or the repair or replacement of major assets damaged by the wildfire.

Post-Wildfire Activities

	Suppression Repair	Emergency Stabilization	Rehabilitation	Restoration
Objective	Repair suppression damages	Protect life and property	Repair damages	Long-term ecosystem restoration
Damage due to	Suppression activities	Post-wildfire events and fire	Fire	Fire
Urgency	Immediately after containment	1-12 months	1-5 years (DOI) 1-3 years (FS)	5+ years (DOI) 3+ years (FS)
Responsibility	IC/agency administrator	local unit line officer	local unit line officer	local unit line officer
Funding type	Suppression (fire)	Suppression (emergency stabilization)	Rehabilitation or regular program	Regular program

Emergency Stabilization Approval Authorities

Level	DOI USWFS	FS
Local Approval Level	$0 Bureau Local Unit Line Officer See Authorities table in chapter 2	$0 District ranger $0 Forest supervisor
Geographic Approval Level	$0 USWFS Geographic Area Fire Chief	$500,000 Western regional foresters $100,000 Eastern and Alaska Regional Foresters
National Approval Level	$0 Chief, USWFS	>$100,000 or $500,000 Director, Field Services and Innovation Center

Burned Area Emergency Response Teams

Incident BAER teams are a group of fireline-qualified technical specialists (e.g., hydrologists, biologists, soil scientists) that analyze post-fire conditions and develop the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (DOI) or Burned Area Emergency Response (FS) funding requests. These teams will meet the requirements for unescorted personnel found in chapter 7 under "Visitors to the Fireline" when working within the perimeter of an uncontrolled wildfire. The team's size and skills should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the wildfire.

The local unit line officer is responsible for submitting the funding request to the geographic area or state office for review and approval within the timeframes established by each agency. Coordination should occur with the geographic area BAER coordinator during the assessment process. If needed, extensions can be negotiated with those having the appropriate level of approval authority.

- ***DOI –*** *The Department of the Interior maintains a roster of national BAER team personnel to assist field units in planning for complex post-fire emergency stabilization. The national BAER team is scalable in long and short configurations. BAER teams may be ordered as command and general staff or ordered as individual resources.*

- ***DOI –*** *The DOI national BAER team resources should be requested within 21 days from the discovery date of the fire and ordered as per the National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization.*
- ***FS –*** *The local Forest or Grassland Supervisor designates a unit BAER Coordinator and qualified BAER personnel prior to fire season. National and geographic area BAER coordinators maintain a roster of experienced BAER personnel available for assignments. When needed, specific BAER personnel from other units can be requested through the national and geographic area BAER Coordinators. Once team members have been assigned, they should be ordered to the specific BAER incident by name request through dispatch. See FSM 2523 for agency-specific policy and direction for BAER teams.*

Interagency Final Fire Reports and Datasets

The final fire report, also referred to as the individual fire report, serves as the official record for a wildfire occurrence and its related outcomes. While there are other types of fire reports, including the ICS-209 and other situational (e.g. daily) and ad-hoc reports, datasets compiled from individual final fire reports provide the official statistics for every agency and the interagency wildland fire management organization as a whole. These datasets also provide vital information regarding the frequency, location, and size of historical fires, which are used for decision support, budget formulation, occurrence modeling, research, analysis, and other planning applications. For these reasons, final fire reports must be completed promptly and accurately once a wildfire is declared "out" and its outcomes are known. To ensure that the wildfire occurrence and workload is fully represented, every wildfire, regardless of size, should be documented with a final fire report.

InFORM is a suite of applications used by multiple fire management agencies for final fire reporting. By replacing multiple agency-specific fire reporting applications, InFORM strives to fulfill the goal of having "one fire, one report, one authoritative data source." A single corresponding record must exist in the InFORM dataset for any wildfire that originates on or otherwise burns onto federally owned or protected lands. Because the Federal wildland fire management agencies use IRWIN-integrated, computer-aided dispatch (CAD) applications and issue FireCodes for wildfires, most records will be automatically established in InFORM, where they will be available for review, editing, and certifying once the fire is declared "out" and reporting ceases in other applications.

- The Federal wildland fire management agency with jurisdiction at a fire's point of origin is responsible for ensuring that the fire is reported and certified in InFORM; however, this responsibility can be conveyed to another agency via agreement. Certification is a process in InFORM whereby the final fire report is declared complete and suitable for use in official statistics.
  - ***DOI –*** *The USWFS will certify fire reports and will provide final certified reports to the appropriate Bureau(s). DOI Bureaus will no longer certify fire reports. Authority cannot be reassigned below the unit chief.*
  - ***DOI –*** *Final fire reports for wildfires that originate on agency lands, or lands formally protected by these agencies, shall be certified in InFORM. Final fire reports for wildfires that burn on agency lands or lands formally protected by USWFS, shall be certified in InFORM.*
  - ***Other agencies –*** *Several State agencies and certain other Federal agencies, such as those under Department of War, have lands where wildfires occur, but do not use InFORM for fire reporting.*
- For a fire that originates on land that is under the jurisdiction of an agency that does not use InFORM, but subsequently burns onto lands owned or protected by one or more Federal agency that does use InFORM for reporting, any one of these affected Federal agencies shall ensure that the fire is reported and certified in InFORM.

For more information about interagency fire reporting and InFORM, go to the NWCG Fire Reporting Subcommittee webpage.

Incident Business Management

Specific incident business management guidance is contained in the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902. This handbook assists participating agencies of the NWCG to constructively work together to provide effective execution of each agency's incident management program by establishing procedures for:

- Uniform application of regulations on the use of personnel resources, including classification, pay, injury compensation, and travel;
- Acquisition of necessary equipment and supplies from appropriate sources in accordance with applicable procurement regulations;
- Managing and tracking Government property;
- Financial coordination with the protection agency and maintenance of finance, property, procurement, and personnel records and forms;

- Use and coordination of incident business management functions as they relate to sharing of resources among Federal, State, and local agencies, including the military;
- Investigation and reporting of accidents;
- Investigating, documenting, and reporting claims;
- Documenting costs and implementing cost-effective criteria for managing incident resources; and
- Non-fire incidents administrative processes.
    - ***DOI –*** *The Department of the Interior Incident Response Business Handbook to the NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management, PMS 902, establishes business management guidelines for the Department of the Interior's (DOI) all-hazards incidents.*

Cost Management
An incident business advisor (INBA) must be assigned to any wildfire with costs of $5 million or more. If a qualified INBA is not available, the agency administrator or designee will appoint a financial advisor to monitor expenditures.

Incident cost objectives will be included as a performance measure in IMT evaluations.

Fire Reviews – Wildland Fire Management Annual Report and Large Fire Review (FS)
See chapter 18.

Cache Management

Agencies often serve as interagency partners in national support caches and local area support caches and may operate single agency initial attack caches. All caches will maintain established stocking levels, receive and process orders from participating agencies and follow ordering and fire replenishment procedures as outlined by the national and geographic area cache management plans and standards for resource mobilization.

- ***FS –*** *Refer to FSM 5160 for specific requirements.*

Type 1 and 2 National Interagency Support Caches
There are fifteen national interagency support caches (NISC); eleven are managed by the Forest Service, three are managed by the USWFS, and one is managed by the State of Idaho. The fifteen national caches are part of the National Fire Equipment System (NFES). Each of these caches provides incident support in the form of equipment and supplies to units within their respective geographic areas. The NFES cache system may support other emergency, disaster, fire-related or land management activities, provided that such support is permitted by agency policies and does not adversely affect the primary mission. These national caches do not provide supplies and equipment to restock local caches for non-incident requests. Non-emergency (routine) orders should be directed to the source of supply, e.g., Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) or private vendors.

The Great Basin Area Incident Support Cache at NIFC provides publications management support to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). Reference the *NWCG NFES Catalog Part 2: Publications*, PMS 449-2, for more detailed information.

Forest Service National Symbols Program distribution is through the Eastern Area Incident Support Cache (NEK). This material is coordinated by the USDA Forest Service, under advisement of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Committee (CFFP). Materials include Smokey Bear/Junior Forest Ranger prevention items and Woodsy Owl environmental educational materials.

NEK also distributes DOI fire education materials. The website (https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/conservationeducation/about/education-themes/wildland-fire) contains the catalog of materials, information about these programs, and online ordering instructions.

Type 3 Support Caches
These caches directly support more than one agency and generally cover more than one administrative unit. Type 3 support caches will maintain stocking levels to meet the identified needs of the multiple agencies for whom service is provided.

Type 4 Local Caches
Numerous type 4 local caches are maintained by each agency. These caches will establish and maintain stocking levels to meet the initial response needs of the local unit(s).

Inventory Management

System Implementation

Each fire cache, regardless of size, should initiate and maintain a cache inventory management system. Agency management systems provide a check out/return concept that incorporates a debit/crediting for all items leaving the cache. This system is strictly followed in the type 1 and 2 NISCs. Inventory management processes should be implemented for all type 3 support and type 4 local caches.

Accountability

Fire loss/use rate is defined as all property and supplies lost, damaged, or consumed on an incident. Fire/loss use rates are reported as a percentage that is calculated in dollars of items issued compared to items returned. Consumable items are not included in this total. All items stocked in agency fire caches will be categorized for return (loss tolerance/use rate) and accountability purposes.

Trackable Items

Trackable items include items that a cache may track due to dollar value, sensitive property classification, or limited quantities. Available items that are considered trackable are usually engraved or tagged with a cache trackable identification number. These items must be returned to the issuing cache at the end of the incident use, or documentation must be provided to the issuing cache as to why it was not returned. All trackable items are also considered durable. Accountability for trackable items is expected to be 100 percent.

Durable Items

Durable items include cache items considered to have a useful life expectancy greater than one incident. High percentages of return for these items are expected. These items are not specifically cache identified/tagged/engraved. Durable items include water handling accessories, helicopter accessories, tents and camp items such as heaters, lights, lanterns, tables, chairs, hose, tools, backpack pumps, sleeping bags, pads, cots, and personal protective equipment. A 90% level of return is the expected threshold for durable items.

Consumable Items

Consumable items include items normally expected to be consumed during incident use. Consumable items returned in unused condition are credited to the incident. Examples of consumable items are batteries, plastic canteens, cubitainers, forms, MREs, fusees, hot food containers, petroleum products, and medical supplies.

Incident Management and Environmental Sustainability

Every incident should seek opportunities to reduce unnecessary waste and limit impacts associated with management actions. This can be accomplished, for example, by implementing “greening fire” sustainability best management practices (e.g., energy and water conservation, alternative energy, sustainable acquisition, and waste prevention and recycling) as long as such efforts do not compromise operational or safety objectives. To the degree possible, prioritize the procurement of sustainable products and services whenever lifecycle cost-effective.

Incident-to-Incident Transfer of Supplies and Equipment

Transfer of supplies and equipment between incidents is not encouraged, due to the increased possibility of accountability errors. In instances when it is determined to be economically feasible and operationally advantageous, the supply unit leader from the incident that is releasing the items will complete the *Interagency Incident Waybill* (NFES 1472), including:

- NFES number
- Quantity
- Unit of issue
- Description
- Trackable ID number, if item is trackable
- Receiving incident name, incident number, and resource request number

The supply unit leader will send the waybill transfer information to the servicing NISC to maintain proper accountability recording.

Upon request, the servicing NISC can provide the supply unit leader with an Outstanding Items Report or Incident Summary Report to facilitate accurate waybill documentation.

Fire Loss Tolerance Reporting for Type 1 and 2 Complexity Incidents

In order to help managers keep incident-related equipment and supply loss to a minimum, IMTs are required to maintain accountability and tracking of these items. Guidelines and procedures to assist with this accountability are provided in chapter 30 of the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902. To further facilitate these procedures and provide oversight, a fire loss report has been developed that provides detailed

information regarding used and trackable item use. This report has been accepted by NWCG for all wildland fire agencies and will be compiled for all type 1 and type 2 complexity incidents. Investigations may be conducted in those cases where thresholds may have been exceeded.

These reports are compiled by the NISC servicing the incident. Reports will then be forwarded to the responsible local office, with a copy to the geographic area fire chief/FMO. The following steps must be followed to ensure accurate reports:

- At the close of each incident, all property must be returned to the servicing NFES cache;
- If accountable/trackable property has been destroyed or lost, appropriate documentation must be provided to the cache for replacement and updating property records;
- All property purchased with emergency fire funds for an incident must be returned to the NFES cache system;
- All unused consumable and/or durable NFES items must be returned to the servicing NFES cache within 30 days of control of the incident; and
- Agency administrators/FMOs must review the fire loss report and recommend appropriate follow-up action if losses are excessive. Those actions and recommendations should be documented and filed in the final incident records.
    - ***DOI –*** *All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.*

Incident Supply and Equipment Return Procedures

Supplies and equipment ordered with suppression funds will be returned to the ordering unit at the close of the incident and dispersed in one of three ways:

- Items meeting NFES standards will be returned to the NISC for reuse within the fire supply system;
- Items not meeting the prescribed NFES standards will be purchased with program funds by the local unit if the items are needed for program use; or
- Items will be delivered to the unit's excess property program for disposal.

Cache Returns and Restock Procedures

All returns for credit and restock of caches to specific incident charges should be made within 30 days after the close of the incident. If that timeframe cannot be met, returns and restock be made during the same calendar year as items were issued. All returns should be tagged with appropriate incident number, accompanied by an interagency waybill identifying the appropriate incident number, or accompanied by issue documents to ensure proper account credit is given. Any items returned after the calendar year of issue will be returned to multiple-fire charges unless specific incident charge documentation (issues) can be provided with the return.

Incident Replacement of Government Property

Refer to the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, chapter 30, for procedures governing property management relating to incident activities. The agency administrator is responsible for providing agency property management guidelines and/or procedures to incident personnel.

Damage or loss for assigned property is addressed under *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, chapter 30. Specialty or non-cache items originally provided by the home unit through the use of preparedness funds will be replaced by home unit funds if the loss is due to normal wear and tear. If the Government property is damaged on the incident due to a specific event (e.g., wind event damages tent), the incident may, upon receipt of required documentation and proof of damage, authorize replacement using the Incident Replacement Requisition (OF315). Cache items will be replaced at the incident if available. Cache items that are not available at the incident may be authorized for restocking at the home unit via an authorized Incident Replacement Requisition (OF315).

For replacement of NFES items not carried by the NISC responsible for supporting the incident (i.e., Wildland Firefighter's Pants, type II), replacement must be authorized using the Incident Replacement Requisition (OF315) and should be accomplished by ordering the item from DLA.

Chapter 12
Suppression Chemicals and Delivery Systems

Policy for Use of Fire Chemicals

Use only products qualified and approved for intended use. Follow safe handling procedures and use personal protective equipment (PPE) recommended on the product label and safety data sheets (SDS).

A current list of qualified products and approved uses can be found on the Wildland Fire Chemical Systems (WFCS) website. QUALIFIED PRODUCTS

Refer to local jurisdictional policy and guidance related to use of wildland fire chemicals for protection of historic structures.

Products must be blended or mixed at the proper ratio. Quality control and safety requirements dictate that mixing or blending of wildland fire chemicals be accomplished by approved methods.

Types of Fire Chemicals

Long-Term Retardant

Long-term retardants contain fertilizer salts that change the way fuels burn and are effective even after the water has evaporated. Retardants may be applied aerially by very large, large, and single engine (SEAT) airtankers and helicopter bucket. Some retardant products are approved for fixed-tank helicopters; others are formulated specifically for delivery from ground sources. See the Qualified Products List (QPL) for specific uses for each product.

Recommended coverage levels and guidelines for use can be found in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461. Retardant mixing, blending, testing, and sampling requirements can be found at the WFCS website Lot Acceptance and Quality Assurance page. WILDLAND FIRE CHEMICALS SYSTEMS

Fire Suppressant Foam

Fire suppressant foams are combinations of wetting and foaming agents added to water to improve the effectiveness of the water. These foams are no longer effective once the water has evaporated. Foam may be applied by engines and portable pumps. Aerial application of foam is no longer approved on Federal jurisdictional lands. See the QPL for specific uses for each product.

Approved foam concentrate may be used to improve the efficiency of water, except near waterways where accidental spillage or over spray of the chemical could be harmful to the aquatic ecosystem.

Wet Water

Using foam concentrates at a mix ratio of 0.1 percent will produce a wet water solution.

Water Enhancer (Gel)

Water enhancers are approved for use in wildland fire suppression to improve drop characteristics and fuel adhesion. They may be used as approved in aircraft and fire engine applications at qualified mix ratios listed on the Qualified Product List (QPL). QUALIFIED PRODUCTS

Mixing Requirements

- Water enhancers must be mixed within the approved ratio or ratio range listed on the QPL. Mixing outside of this range is prohibited unless approved by the Federal Government.

On-Board Injection Systems

- The use of water enhancers mixed on board aircraft through approved injection systems is authorized on Federal lands.
- On-board mixing of water enhancers is approved for DOI and cooperator contracted aircraft.
  - ***FS –*** *Onboard mixing is not allowed on Forest Service-owned and -contracted aircraft.*
- All on-board mixing operations must comply with the Qualified Product List (QPL) specifications and maintain a mix ratio listed on the QPL to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Ground-Based Mixing

- Water enhancers may also be mixed through proportioners and loaded with ground-based equipment in accordance with QPL requirements.

Safety Information

Personnel Safety

All qualified wildland fire chemicals meet minimum requirements (Forest Service Specifications 5100-304, 5100-306, 5100-307) regarding aquatic and mammalian toxicity (acute oral toxicity, acute dermal toxicity, primary skin irritation, and primary eye irritation). Specifications for long-term retardants, fire suppression foams, and water enhancers can be found on the WFCS website.

Personnel involved in handling, mixing, and applying fire chemicals or solutions shall be trained in proper procedures to protect their health and safety and the environment. Approved fire chemicals can be irritating to the eyes. Personnel must follow the manufacturer's recommendations; including use of PPE, as found on the product label and product SDS. The SDSs for all approved fire chemicals can be found on the Wildland Fire Chemicals and Aerial Delivery Systems website.

Human health risk from accidental drench with fire chemicals can be mitigated by washing with water to remove any residue from exposed skin.

Containers of any fire chemical, including backpack pumps and engine tanks, should be labeled potable or non-potable as appropriate.

Slippery footing is a hazard at storage areas, unloading and mixing sites, and wherever applied. Because all fire chemical concentrates and solutions contribute to slippery conditions, all spills must be cleaned up immediately, preferably with a dry absorbent pad or granules. Firefighters should be aware that fire chemicals can conceal ground hazards. Wildland fire chemicals can penetrate and deteriorate leather boots, resulting in wet feet and potentially ruined leather.

Aerial Application Safety

Personnel and equipment in the flight path of intended aerial drops should move to a location that will decrease the possibility of being hit with a drop.

Personnel near aerial drops should be alert for objects (tree limbs, rocks, etc.) that the drop could dislodge. The *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, provides additional safety information for personnel in drop areas.

During training or briefings, inform all fire personnel of environmental guidelines and requirements for fire chemicals application and avoid contact with waterways.

Avoid dipping from rivers or lakes with a helicopter bucket containing residual fire chemicals without first cleaning/washing down the bucket.

Consider setting up an adjacent reload site and manage the fire chemicals in portable tanks or terminate the use of chemicals for that application.

Interagency Policy for Aerial and Ground Delivery of Wildland Fire Chemicals Near Waterways and Other Avoidance Areas

This policy is an expansion and update for the 2000 and 2009 updated Guidelines for Aerial Delivery of all wildland fire chemicals, including retardant, foam, and water enhancers, which were established and approved by the Forest Service (FS) and the Department of the Interior (DOI). The policy includes additional avoidance areas (both aquatic and terrestrial) for aerial delivery of fire chemicals as designated by individual agencies and includes additional FS reporting requirements.

This policy does not require the helicopter or airtanker pilot-in-command to fly in such a way as to endanger his or her aircraft, other aircraft, or structures or compromise ground personnel safety.

Aerial Delivery Policy	Ground Delivery Policy
• Avoid aerial application of all wildland fire chemicals within 300 feet of waterways. • Additional mapped avoidance areas may be designated by individual agency. • Whenever practical, as determined by the fire incident commander (IC), use water or other less toxic wildland fire chemical suppressants for direct attack or less toxic, approved fire retardants in areas occupied by threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate or sensitive species (TEPCS) or their designated critical habitats.	• Avoid terrestrial application of all wildland fire chemicals within 300 feet of waterways.[1]

[1]Delivery on the ground provides for more precise delivery of fire chemicals to target areas. Thus, delivery is allowed within the aquatic mapped avoidance areas provided chemicals do not reach the waterway. Because there is the potential for TEPCS, their designated critical habitats, or other resources such as cultural or heritage areas to occur in waterway buffers or additional mapped avoidance areas, consult the proper resource advisor(s) prior to application to determine best action or the potential for environmental effects. See reporting section below for requirements.

Waterway Definition
A waterway is any body of water (including lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds) whether or not it contains aquatic life.

Waterway Buffer
A waterway buffer is an area that extends 300 feet on either side of a waterway.

Additional Mapped Avoidance Areas
On FS lands, there may be areas requiring additional protection outside of the 300-foot waterway buffer. These areas may include certain dry intermittent or ephemeral streams, areas designated for resource protection, as well as areas for the protection of TEPCS terrestrial habitats and population areas.

- ***FS –*** *Maps are available Interagency Wildland Fire Chemicals Policy and Guidance websites (https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/chemicals).*

Guidance for Pilots
Pilots will avoid all waterways and additional mapped avoidance areas designated by individual agencies. To meet the 300-foot waterway buffer zone or additional mapped avoidance areas guideline, implement the following:

- All aircraft: When approaching a waterway or other avoidance areas, the pilot shall terminate application of wildland fire chemical approximately 300 feet before reaching the area. When flying over a waterway, the pilot shall not begin application of wildland fire chemical until 300 feet after crossing the far bank or shore. The pilot shall make adjustments for airspeed and ambient conditions such as wind to avoid the application of wildland fire chemicals within the 300-foot buffer zone. Riparian vegetation may be an indicator of waterways and pilots should confirm to the extent possible that no water is present before dropping.
- Prior to fire retardant application, all aerial supervision and/or pilots shall be briefed on the locations of all TEPCS or other avoidance areas in the vicinity.
- If operationally feasible, pilots or the aerial supervision shall make a “dry run” over the intended application area and/or coordinate with ground resources to identify avoidance areas and waterways in the vicinity of the wildland fire.
- Pilots will be provided avoidance area maps and information at all briefings (if not dispatched from one geographic area/unit and delivering to another geographic area).
- All pilots will provide GPS location tracks of aerial retardant drops to the incident management team (IMT) situation unit leader (SITL) and/or geographic information system specialist (GISS). These data will be added to the National Incident Feature Service (*NWCG Standards for Geospatial Operations*, PMS 936) by the IMT GISS and made available to fire personnel.

Exceptions for Aerial Delivery of Long-Term Retardant on USDA Forest Service Lands (2024 Record of Decision)

- Deviations from the policy are allowed in cases where human life or public safety is threatened and retardant use within avoidance areas could be reasonably expected to alleviate that threat.

Exceptions for All Other Agencies and All Other Fire Chemicals

- When alternative line construction tactics are not available due to terrain constraints, congested area, life and property concerns, or lack of ground personnel, it is acceptable to anchor the wildland fire chemical application to the waterway. When anchoring a wildland fire chemical line to a waterway, use the most accurate method of delivery in order to minimize placement of wildland fire chemical in the waterway (e.g., a helicopter rather than a heavy airtanker).
- Deviations from the policy are acceptable when life or property is threatened and the use of wildland fire chemical can be reasonably expected to alleviate the threat.

- When potential damage to natural resources outweighs possible loss of aquatic life, the agency administrator may approve a deviation from these guidelines.
  - ***DOI –*** *Agency administrator will consult with bureau representative(s).*

Reporting Requirements of Aerially Delivered Wildland Fire Chemicals Into Waterways, Waterway Buffer Areas and Mapped Avoidance Areas

During training or briefings, inform field personnel of:
- Environmental guidelines for fire chemical application;
- Requirements for avoiding contact with waterways;
- Additional mapped avoidance areas as designated by individual agency; and
- Their responsibility for upward reporting in the event of application, for whatever reason, into avoidance areas.

If application of wildland fire chemical occurs or anyone believes the application may have been introduced within waterways, waterway buffered areas, or other mapped avoidance areas, the following is required as appropriate:
- Inform supervisor;
- The information will be forwarded to incident management and the agency administrator, usually through the resource advising group;
- The incident or host authorities must immediately contact specialists within the local jurisdiction; and
- Notifications and reporting will be completed as soon as possible.

Procedures have been implemented for the required reporting. All information, including reporting tools and instructions, are posted on the Wildland Fire Chemicals and Aerial Delivery Systems and Interagency Wildland Fire Chemicals Policy and Guidance websites.

The FS has additional reporting requirements for threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate and FS-listed sensitive species for aerially delivered fire retardant only. This requirement resulted from the Forest Service's acceptance of Biological Opinions received from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the *2024 Record of Decision (ROD) for Nationwide Aerial Application of Fire Retardant on National Forest System Lands*. The procedures, reporting tools, and instructions can be found at the same websites listed above.

Endangered Species Act Emergency Consultation

The following provisions are guidance for complying with the emergency section 7 consultation procedures of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for wildland fire chemicals. These provisions do not alter or diminish an action agency's responsibilities under the ESA.

Where threatened and endangered (T&E) species or their habitats are potentially affected by application of wildland fire chemicals, the following additional procedures apply and shall be documented in initial or subsequent fire reports:
- As soon as practicable after application of wildland fire chemical near waterways or other avoidance area as designated by agency, determine whether the application has caused any adverse effects to a T&E species or their habitat. This can be accomplished by the following:
  - Ground application of wildland fire chemical outside a waterway is presumed to avoid adverse effects to aquatic species and no further consultation for aquatic species is necessary;
  - Aerial application of wildland fire chemical outside 300 feet (or in any additional buffer areas beyond 300 feet established on NFS lands for certain species) of a waterway is presumed to avoid adverse effects to aquatic species and no further consultation for aquatic species is necessary;
  - Aerial application of wildland fire chemical within 300 feet (or in any additional NFS lands buffer areas) of a waterway requires that the unit administrator determine whether there have been any adverse effects to T&E species within the waterway. If no adverse effects to aquatic T&E species or their habitats, no additional requirement to consult on aquatic species with FWS or NMFS is required; and/or
  - Application of wildland fire chemical within other avoidance areas as designated by an agency requires the agency administrator(s)/bureau representative(s) to determine whether there have been any adverse effects to T&E species. If there are no adverse effects to species or their habitats, there is no additional requirement to consult with FWS or NMFS.
    - ***FS – Note****: the FS has completed consultation with regulatory agencies (FWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]) for aerial delivery of fire retardant (only) on National Forest System lands; please refer to the Interagency Wildland Fire Chemicals Policy and Guidance website for additional information and reporting, monitoring, and re-initiation of*

consultation requirements. Aerial delivery of retardant on National Forest System lands should not be included in emergency consultations.

If the action agency determines that there were adverse effects on T&E species or their habitats then the action agency must consult with FWS and NMFS, as required by *50 CFR 402.05* (Emergencies). Procedures for emergency consultation are described in the *USFWS Endangered Species Consultation Handbook*, chapter 8 (March 1998). In the case of a long-duration incident, emergency consultation should be initiated as soon as practical during the event. Otherwise, post-event consultation is appropriate. The initiation of the consultation is the responsibility of the agency administrator.

Operational Guidelines for Invasive Species

Refer to chapter 11 for guidance on minimizing potential transmission of invasive species.

Chapter 13
Firefighter Training and Qualifications

Introduction

National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)-sanctioned firefighters are trained and qualified according to the NWCG and other standards, as outlined below.

Standards

Firefighters must meet standards identified in *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1.

Federal agencies have consolidated minimum standards and information for frequently used positions not included in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, in the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.

Certain firefighters must meet standards identified in the *Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide*.

Agency standards for training and qualifications may exceed the minimum standards established by NWCG. Such additional standards will be approved by the Director/Chief, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, or designee, and implemented through the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS). Standards which may exceed the minimum standards established by NWCG are identified in:

- ***DOI –*** *For 2026, BLM should reference the BLM Standards for Fire Training and Workforce Development. For FWS, see the Fire Management Handbook. For BIA, standards can be referenced at 90 IAM. Fire Management Leadership (FML), geographic or national, is required for all BIA agency administrators/line officers, including agency superintendents, agency foresters or natural resource managers, and regional foresters. Regional directors, deputy directors in natural resource program areas, and Tribal natural resource program administrators are also encouraged to attend this course. The national level course offered by NAFRI is the preferred alternative to the geographic course.*
- ***FS –*** *The Forest Service Fire and Aviation Qualifications Guide (FSFAQG).*

Federal agencies will accept each other's incident qualifications/certifications.

Qualification and Certification Process

Each unit with fire management responsibilities will establish an incident qualification card and certification process which may include a qualification and certification committee. In areas cooperating with other Federal, State, or local agencies, an interagency qualification and certification committee should be established and include representatives from each unit.

These qualification and certification committees provide management oversight and review of the wildland and prescribed fire positions under their jurisdiction.

The committee:

- Ensures that qualifications generated by IQCS or other agency systems for employees are valid by reviewing the training and experience of each employee.
- Determines whether each employee possesses the personal characteristics necessary to perform the wildland and prescribed fire positions in a safe and efficient manner.
- Makes recommendations to the appropriate agency administrator or designee who is responsible for final certification signature.
- Develops interagency training needs and sponsors courses that can be offered locally.
- Ensures training nominees meet minimum requirements for attending courses.

Recognition of Prior Learning

The *NWCG Standards for Recognition of Prior Learning*, PMS 309, establishes the use of a formal competency-based qualification process that allows any credentialing authority to recognize and account for competence acquired through life-long learning and experience. RPL is a process that evaluates an individual's formal and non-formal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required competencies to perform effectively in a specific emergency management or responder position. It is widely recognized that a standardized RPL process will reduce redundant training, support efforts to increase speed and time to competency, and support efforts to boost national resource surge capacity.

Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Qualifications

Personnel from non-NWCG agencies meeting *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, prerequisites can participate in and receive certificates for successful completion of NWCG courses. Agency employees can complete the task blocks, evaluation record, and verification/certification sections of a cooperating organization employee's position task book. Agency employees will not initiate or complete the agency certification sections of the position task book for non-agency employees.

Personnel from agencies that do not subscribe to the NWCG qualification standards may be used on agency managed fires. Agency fire managers must ensure these individuals are only assigned to duties commensurate with their competencies, agency qualifications, and equipment capabilities.

Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Use on Prescribed Fire

The *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, establishes the minimum qualifications for personnel involved in prescribed fires on which resources of more than one agency are utilized—unless local agreements specify otherwise.

Incident Qualifications and Certification System

The Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) is the only approved fire qualifications and certification record keeping system. The Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) system is not a record keeping system for qualifications. The Responder Master Record report provided via IQCS meets the agency requirement for maintaining fire qualification records. The system is designed to provide managers at the local, geographic area, and national levels with detailed qualifications, experience, and training information needed to certify employees in wildland fire positions. IQCS is a tool to assist managers in certification decisions; however, it does not replace the manager's responsibility to validate employees meet all requirements for position performance based on their agency standards.

Certifying officials have the option to keep employee qualification records as a hard copy file or an electronic file using the IQCS document upload feature. Both options must include proof of all required training, certified position task books, required license/certification and documentation for administrative actions (system overrides from certifying officials). Hard copy files will also include current copies of the IQCS Responder Master Record and incident qualification card. IQCS account managers will have an assignment of responsibility from the certifying official. An example of the Assignment of Responsibility for IQCS Account Manager can be found on the IQCS website. All records will be stored or destroyed in accordance with agency policies.

- ***DOI –****The USWFS will manage IQCS for USWFS responders or Tribes (under a DOI 638 and or Cooperative Agreement). The USWFS will manage IQCS Bureau responders with both wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications. Bureaus will manage IQCS for individuals in their Bureau with only all-hazard qualifications.*
- ***FS –*** *Forest Service Fire and Aviation Qualifications Guide (FSFAQG).*

Certification of Non-Agency Personnel

Non-agency firefighters will be certified by State or local fire departments, or private training providers approved by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) through their local GACC. Agencies will not assist in the administration or sponsor the work capacity test (WCT) as the certifying agency.

Certification of Incident Qualifications

The agency administrator or designee is responsible for annual certification of all agency and administratively determined (AD) personnel serving on wildfire, prescribed fire, and all-hazards incidents. This responsibility includes monitoring medical status, fitness, training, performance, and ensuring the responder meets all position performance requirements.

- ***DOI –*** *Geographic area fire chiefs/deputy fire chiefs and unit fire chiefs have the authority to certify wildland fire Position Task Books (PTBs) of all DOI employees, including USWFS and Bureau personnel. Certify Incident Qualification Cards for all employees in the DOI, including the Bureaus and the USWFS, who have BOTH wildland fire and all-hazard qualifications. Certify all-hazard PTBs for USWFS employees. See Authorities/Action table in chapter 2 for specific information.*

Training and successful completion of the appropriate WCT must be accomplished and documented. All incident qualifications must be certified for all agency employees using IQCS.

The agency administrator or designee (i.e., IQCS certifying official) will assign responsibility to employees at the national, geographic area, and local levels as IQCS account managers, who ensure all incident experience, incident training, and position task books for employees within the agency are accurately recorded in IQCS. All records must be updated annually or modified as changes occur.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS Recertification Process: If an employee (including an agency-sponsored AD) has lost currency in a position, an IQCS administrative action by an IQCS account manager will be required for the employee to be converted from expired to trainee status. To regain full qualification, the employee must demonstrate the ability to perform in the position as determined by the certifying official. Prior to recertification, the employee must:*
  - *Complete the recertification evaluation.*
  - *Complete one or more evaluation assignments.*
  - *Complete any additional requirements as determined by the certifying official (e.g., additional assignments and/or courses).*
  - ***NOTE:*** *This policy only applies to positions for which a position task book is required.*
- ***DOI***
  - *Area command and complex command and general staff position task books will be certified by the geographic area fire chief or deputy fire chief.*
  - *Unit fire chief position task books and incident qualification cards will be certified by the geographic area fire chief or deputy fire chief.*
  - *Geographic area fire chiefs task books and incident qualification cards will be certified by the Director/ Deputy Director.*
- ***FS –*** *Refer to FSH 5109.17, chapter 10, and the FSFAQG.*

Incident Qualification Certification Expiration Dates

Certification of incident qualifications for responders that possess qualifications requiring work capacity tests (WCT) and *Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher,* RT-130, are valid through the earliest expiration date (either fitness, refresher, or annual certification) listed on the card. Certification of incident qualifications that do not require a WCT or RT-130 for issuance are valid for 13 months from the date the qualification is certified by a certifying official. The WCT, *Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher,* RT-130, and annual certification are considered effective for 13 months from the date completed. If an employee is on an emergency assignment on the date their WCT/refresher/annual certification expires, they will complete their assignment including any extensions. Upon return to their duty station, they must complete the WCT/refresher and qualifications must be recertified prior to accepting any new assignments.

Universal Training Requirements

All personnel filling NWCG-recognized positions on the fireline must have completed:

- S-130, *Firefighter Training* (including the required field exercises);
- S-190, *Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior*;
- L-180, *Human Factors on the Fireline*;
- ICS-100, *Introduction to the ICS*; and
- IS-700, *An Introduction to the NIMS* (current version).

RT-130, Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher (WFSTAR)

Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher (WFSTAR), RT-130, focuses line-going personnel on fireline operations and decision-making issues in order to recognize and mitigate risk, maintain safe and effective practices, and reduce accidents.

Mandatory core components are:

- **Local Topics** – Review and discuss local topics and areas of concern that may impact firefighter safety in the upcoming fire season.
- **Incident Reviews and Lessons Learned** – Review and discuss lessons learned from past local, geographic area, and national incident response.
- **Fire and Aviation Operational Safety** – Review and discuss the risk management principles and tools that support safe and effective incident operations.
- **Human Factors, Communication, and Decision Making –** Review and discuss the complex interaction between human factors, communication, and decision making.
- **Fire Shelters and Entrapment Avoidance –** Review and discuss fire shelter use, deployment site selection, personal protective equipment (PPE), shelter inspections, and historical entrapment scenarios. Practice proper fire shelter deployment techniques in-person.

Core component discussion topics can be found on the *Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher,* RT-130, course webpage.

The minimum refresher training hour requirement for each agency is identified below. Training time may be extended in order to effectively complete this curriculum or to meet local training requirements.

- ***DOI/FS –*** *No minimum hourly requirement; core components must be covered.*

RT-130 is delivered as instructor-led training and is **not** available as self-directed (online) training**.** To receive credit for course completion, students must complete a session of RT-130 with qualified instructors to ensure core components are covered. Delivery options include:

- **Instructor-led training (ILT) –** Delivery will be facilitated by an instructor in a traditional classroom environment.
- **Virtual instructor-led training (VILT) –** Delivery will be facilitated by an instructor in a virtual classroom environment.

Minimum requirements for RT-130 instructors have been established in the *NWCG Standards for Course Delivery*, PMS 901-1.

Firefighters who receive initial fire training are not required to take RT-130 in the same calendar year. Refresher training content is available on the *Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher*, RT-130, website.

Medical Examinations

Agency administrators and supervisors are responsible for the occupational health and safety of their employees performing wildland fire activities and may require employees to take a medical examination at any time.

- ***DOI –*** *An employee may be required to take a medical examination whenever there is a reasonable concern, based on objective evidence, about the employee's continued capacity to meet any of the physical or medical requirements of the position. Such an examination may be ordered for instances of job-related injuries/illnesses and for those that are not job-related. Supervisors should contact their Servicing Human Resource Office (SHRO) and wildland fire safety program manager for assistance with preparing the memorandum for requiring a medical examination. DOI MSP Program Management (https://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/) will review the memorandum before issuance to the employee.*
- ***FS –*** *As with DOI agencies, an employee may be required to take a medical examination whenever there is a reasonable concern, based on objective evidence, about the employee's continued capacity to meet any of the physical or medical requirements of the position. Such an examination may be ordered for instances of job-related injuries/illnesses and for those that are not job-related. Supervisors should contact the Medical Qualifications Program medical officers via the eMedical Help Desk (SM.FS.mqp_emedical@usda.gov) for assistance and guidance regarding how to proceed.*

Established medical qualification programs, as stated in 5 CFR 339, provide consistent medical standards for arduous positions in order to safeguard the health of employees whose work may subject them or others to significant health and safety risks due to occupational or environmental exposure or demand.

Any employee with an active workers' compensation (OWCP) case or other physical or medical limiting factors/restrictions that preclude them from fully performing the activities of an arduous position must disclose this as part of the self-certification or medical examination process.

Information on any medical records is considered confidential and must be kept in the employee's medical file.

Arduous Fitness Level – Department of the Interior Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards Program (DOI MSP)

Per Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Policy Memorandum 2016-014, "All employees (incumbents and applicants) must take an examination meeting Federal Interagency Wildland Fire Medical Standards every three years regardless of employment status and hiring authority, including emergency firefighters (administratively determined – AD/casual hires) and collateral duty firefighters who participate in arduous duty wildland fire activities. An examination taken and successfully cleared in accordance with the DOI MSP direction is required prior to participating in the Arduous Duty Work Capacity Test (WCT/Pack Test), performing arduous duty, wildland fire duties, or any agency sanctioned physical fitness training to prepare for these duties. In the years between the periodic examinations, an employee will self-certify their medical concerns and risk in taking the Work Capacity Test." Refer to the DOI MSP website or agency wildland fire safety program managers for more information.

- ***FS –*** *All positions which require an arduous qualification must participate in a medical clearance process through the Medical Qualifications Program (MQP). This policy does not apply to cooperating agency wildland firefighters or contractors. Personnel must receive a version of the "Medically Qualified" determination from the MQP staff before participating in the arduous WCT or performing the duties of a firefighter. Refer to current agency direction at https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/safety/emedical.*

Additional testing or medical follow-up required to change a DOI MSP determination shall be at the individual's expense unless the agency has granted prior approval.

Employees seeking arduous incident qualification card qualifications who work for programs operating under their own medical standards must either participate in the DOI MSP or may have their examination meeting all DOI MSP requirements reviewed against the Federal Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards.

Examination/Self-Certification Periodicity and Changes in Medical Status
A baseline or periodic examination is required every 36 months from the date of the examination regardless of the qualification date. Qualification certificates are valid for one year from date of exam or self-certification. Employees may take the work capacity test at any point in that year as long as the certificate is current.

If a DOI arduous duty wildland firefighter develops a significant change in medical status between medical exams or self-certifications, the wildland firefighter is required to immediately report this change to his/her supervisor and complete a self-certification. A significant change in medical status is defined as any injury or illness, including an active OWCP claim, which may prevent performance of arduous duty.

- ***FS –*** *Complete 'Change in Medical Status' form at https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/safety/emedical and send as instructed on the form.*

Employees must report significant changes in medical status and cease arduous duty until cleared. Eligibility for compensation or benefit claims may be affected by a failure to report. If a change in medical status for arduous duty firefighters has been reported, the supervisor must ensure the firefighter ceases to perform arduous duty and if necessary, ensure all arduous-duty-related qualifications are prevented from being sent to IROC in IQCS until the employee has been medically cleared to resume arduous duty work.

Wildland firefighters must also immediately inform their supervisor if they have not completed an examination within the previous 36 months and must not resume arduous duty work until completion of a periodic examination and medical qualification.

- ***FS –*** *Refer to current agency direction at https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/safety/emedical.*

Medical Examination Process for Light and Moderate Fitness Levels
The medical screening process for light and moderate work capacity testing (Health Screening Questionnaire [HSQ]) is centralized and automated through the DOI MSP's national contractor. For details on the process visit https://www.doi.gov/wildlandfire/medical-standards.

- ***FS –*** *See the Medical Qualifications Program website (https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/safety/emedical). Additional specialized testing other than the tests listed on the OF-178 will not be covered by the Forest Service.*

If the SHRO or unit fire chief/FMO has a direct concern about an employee's/applicant's capacity to meet the physical or medical requirements of a position, the agency may require the employee/applicant to report for a specific medical evaluation. For more information, contact your SHRO or agency wildland fire safety program manager.

- ***FS –*** *Supervisors should contact the Medical Qualifications Program medical officers via the eMedical Help Desk (SM.FS.mqp_emedical@usda.gov) for assistance and guidance regarding how to proceed.*

Medical Examinations for Department of the Interior Law Enforcement

Agency administrators and supervisors are responsible for the occupational health and safety of their employees performing wildland fire activities and may require employees to take a medical examination at any time.

Established medical qualification programs, as stated in 5 CFR 339, provide consistent medical standards for arduous positions in order to safeguard the health of employees whose work may subject them or others to significant health and safety risks due to occupational or environmental exposure or demand.

Any employee with an active Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) case or other physical or medical limiting factors/restrictions that preclude them from fully performing the activities of an arduous position must disclose this as part of the self-certification or medical examination process.

Information on any medical records is considered confidential and must be kept in the employee's medical file.

Medical Examination Process for Arduous Fitness Level for Law Enforcement
Law enforcement officers seeking or maintaining arduous duty wildland fire qualifications must meet all DOI MSP medical standards and clearance requirements for arduous duty in addition to their law enforcement medical standards, with specific considerations applied in accordance with their assigned DOI bureau.

Additionally, law enforcement officers pursuing arduous duty qualifications must obtain medical clearance specific to wildland fire medical standards. If a determination of "not qualified" is made, the DOI MSP risk mitigation and waiver process will be applied.

- ***BLM/NPS –*** *If a law enforcement officer is also assigned arduous wildland firefighter duties, an additional medical review against the wildland fire medical standards must be requested at the time of her/his law enforcement medical examination. If a determination of "not cleared" is made, the DOI MSP risk mitigation/waiver process will be used.*
- ***FWS –*** *The current LE medical program does not align with DOI MSP standards. Therefore, LE officers seeking arduous duty wildland fire qualifications are required to complete the DOI MSP process to meet the same standards, examination schedule, and self-certification requirements as primary wildland firefighters.*
- ***BIA –*** *Law enforcement personnel must complete the DOI MSP medical clearance process for arduous duty and provide a valid clearance certificate prior to participating in the work capacity test (WCT).*

Medical Examination Process for Light and Moderate Fitness Levels for Law Enforcement

Law enforcement officers participating in light or moderate duty activities remain subject to applicable medical clearance requirements equivalent to those outlined by DOI MSP. The following considerations clarify expectations for LE personnel in these fitness categories.

- ***BLM/NPS –*** *Law enforcement officers must be found medically qualified, or qualified with waiver, and pass the Law Enforcement Physical Efficiency Battery test to have the law enforcement physical fitness standards be equivalent to the "Moderate" and "Light" work category.*
- ***FWS/BIA –*** *Law enforcement personnel must complete the light or moderate health screening process through the DOI MSP contractor and provide clearance certificate to the WCT administrator.*

Medical Examination Process for Arduous Fitness Level for Structure Fire

- ***NPS –*** *Employees assigned to NPS Structure Fire will follow the medical examination process outlined in the DOI MSP process. A respiratory clearance, consistent with NFPA 1582: Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments, will be completed as part of the DOI MSP examination and included in the exam request. Once all required clearances are obtained, employees are medically cleared to perform both arduous duty wildland and structure fire activities.*

Work Capacity Tests

Physical Fitness Levels

The *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, identifies fitness levels for specific positions. There are three fitness levels—arduous, moderate, and light—which require an individual to demonstrate their ability to perform the fitness requirements of the position. Positions in the "no fitness level required" category are normally performed in a controlled environment, such as an incident base.

- **Arduous –** Duties involve field work requiring physical performance with above average endurance and superior conditioning. These duties may include an occasional demand for extraordinarily strenuous activities in emergencies under adverse environmental conditions and over extended periods of time. Requirements include running, walking, climbing, jumping, twisting, bending, and lifting more than 50 pounds; the pace of the work typically is set by the emergency conditions.
- **Moderate –** Duties involve field work requiring complete control of all physical faculties and may include considerable walking over irregular ground, standing for long periods of time, lifting 25 to 50 pounds, climbing, bending, stooping, twisting, and reaching. Occasional demands may be required for moderately strenuous activities in emergencies over long periods of time. Individuals usually set their own work pace.
- **Light –** Duties mainly involve office type work with occasional field activity characterized by light physical exertion requiring basic good health. Activities may include climbing stairs, standing, operating a vehicle, and long hours of work, as well as some bending, stooping, or light lifting. Individuals can usually govern the extent and pace of their physical activity.

Work Capacity Tests

WCT Type	Distance	Weight	Time
Arduous Pack Test	3 miles	45 lb.	45 min
Moderate Field Test	2 miles	25 lb.	30 min
Light Walk Test	1 mile	None	16 min

Work Capacity Test Administration

The work capacity test (WCT) is the official method of assessing wildland firefighter fitness levels. General guidelines can be found in the *NWCG Work Capacity Test Administrator's Guide,* PMS 307.

WCT administrators must confirm medical clearance at the appropriate fitness level through review of a clearance list provided by the unit fire chief/FMO (or designee) or by verifying certificate of WCT clearance at the time of the WCT. There is no need for the WCT administrator to collect or retain copies of the certificate of clearance.

At a minimum, WCTs are administered annually to all employees, including Administratively Determined (AD) and emergency firefighters (EFF) who will be serving in wildland fire positions that require a fitness level. The currency for the WCT is 13 months.

WCT results shall be documented and may capture information covered under the Privacy Act and should be maintained in accordance with agency Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) guidelines. See the *NWCG Work Capacity Test Administrator's Guide,* PMS 307, for a *Sample Work Capacity Test (WCT) Data Sheet.*

Administration of the WCT for non-Federal firefighters is prohibited for liability reasons. Potential emergency firefighters who would be hired under emergency-hire authority by the agency must be in AD pay status or sign an agency-specific volunteer services agreement prior to taking the WCT. Federal employees may participate in a WCT administered by non-Federal partners if approved by the unit fire chief/FMO and all requirements of this chapter are met.

- ***FS –*** *A FS employee may participate in any federal WCT that follows federal guidance within the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations. A FS employee may not take a WCT administered by a non-federal partner.*

A job hazard analysis (JHA) or risk assessment (RA) shall be developed and approved for each field unit prior to administrating the WCT. Administer the test using the JHA/RA as a briefing guide.

The local unit shall prepare a medical response plan, such as an ICS-206 form, to evaluate options for immediate medical care and patient transport, and identify closest emergency medical services. A minimum of a qualified medical first responder/emergency medical responder (EMR) must be on site during WCT administration. Based upon a thorough evaluation of potential medical treatment and evacuation scenarios, a higher level of onsite emergency medical qualifications and equipment may be warranted (e.g., emergency medical technician (EMT) or paramedic).

An automatic external defibrillator (AED) is required onsite during all WCTs.

Personnel taking the WCT will only complete the level of testing (pack, field, walk) required by the highest fitness level identified for a position on their incident qualification card. Employees shall not take the WCT unless they have an incident qualification card qualification that requires it and only at the fitness level required by that position as identified in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, or agency-specific guidance or policy.

Treadmills are not approved for work capacity testing.

WCT results must be entered into IQCS annually to update the fitness level and date that will appear on the incident qualification card. WCT dates entered in IQCS will reflect the date the employee passed the fitness test. The results of the most recent WCT will always supersede the results of any previous WCT, even if previous WCTs were within the currency period.

- ***FS –*** *Failed or not completed WCT attempts are to be entered into the eMedical system by the HSQ coordinator.*

Work Capacity Test – Retesting

Employees who do not pass the WCT will be provided another opportunity to retest but must wait at least 48 hours before retaking the WCT. If an employee sustains an injury (verified by a licensed medical provider) during a test, the test will not count as an attempt. Once an injured employee has been released for full duty, the employee will be given time (not to exceed 4 weeks) to prepare for the test. The numbers of retesting opportunities that will be allowed include:

- Three opportunities total for permanent employees required to pass a test for duties in the fire program.
- One opportunity for temporary employees required to pass a test (a second chance maybe provided at the discretion of fire management).
    - ***FS –*** *Primary and secondary fire personnel are provided three opportunities to pass a WCT. Collateral duty fire personnel may be provided up to three opportunities to pass a WCT at the discretion of fire*

management. Casual hires/AD employees are provided one opportunity to pass a WCT and a second opportunity may be provided at the discretion of fire management.

Physical Fitness and Conditioning

Agency administrators are responsible for ensuring the overall physical fitness of firefighters. Employees serving in wildland fire positions that require a fitness rating of arduous as a condition of employment are authorized one hour of duty time each workday for physical fitness conditioning. Employees serving in positions that require a fitness rating of moderate or light may be authorized up to three hours per week.

Fitness conditioning periods may be identified and structured to include aerobic and muscular exercises. Team sports are not authorized for fitness conditioning.

- ***DOI –*** *NPS non-fire personnel can refer to DO 57B (PM 14-03 Employee Fitness – Interim Policy, and Reference Manual Occupational Health and Fitness).*
- ***FS –*** *Forest Service direction is found in FSH 5109.17 and the FSFAQG. NFFE Partnership Bargaining Unit employees may only be required to successfully complete the WCT once per year.*

Minimum Age Requirements for Hazardous Duty Assignments on Federal Incidents

Persons under 18 years old will not perform hazardous duties during wildland fire management operations on Federal jurisdictions.

Engine Modules

Staffing levels and specific requirements for engine personnel may be found in chapter 14.

Helicopter Modules

Staffing levels and specific requirements for helicopter personnel may be found in chapter 16.

Smokejumpers

Smokejumpers (SMKJ) provide professional and effective fire suppression, fuels reduction, and fire management services to help land managers meet objectives.

Smokejumper Policy

Smokejumper operations are guided by direction in the interagency section of the *Interagency Standards for Smokejumper Operations*.

Each base will comply with smokejumper operations standards. The arduous duties, specialized assignments, and operations in a variety of geographic areas require smokejumpers to have uniform training, agency-approved equipment, communications, organization, and operating procedures.

Smokejumper Communications

All smokejumpers carry programmable radios and are proficient in their use and programming procedures.

Smokejumper Training

To ensure proficiency and safety, smokejumpers complete annual training that covers aspects of aviation, parachuting, fire suppression tactics, administrative procedures, and safety related to the smokejumper mission and fire operations. The training program for first-year smokejumpers is four weeks long. Candidates are evaluated to determine:

- Level of physical fitness;
- Ability to learn and perform smokejumper skills;
- Ability to work as a team member;
- Attitude; and
- Ability to think clearly and remain productive in a stressful environment.

Smokejumper Target Qualifications

Position	IQCS Target	Smokejumper Training Target
Department managers	Complex command and general staff	
Spotter	Incident commander (IC), type 3 (ICT3); division supervisor (DIVS); air tactical group supervisor (ATGS), prescribed fire burn boss, type 2 (RXB2); safety officer type 3 (SOF3)	

Position	IQCS Target	Smokejumper Training Target
Lead smokejumper	Strike team leader (STL), task force leader (TFLD)	Senior rigger, field observer (FOBS)
Smokejumper	IC, type 4 (ICT4); crew boss, single resource (CRWB); firing boss (FIRB)	Firing effects monitor (FEMO)
Rookie smokejumper	IC, type 5 (ICT5); firefighter, type 1 (FFT1)	

Smokejumper Medical Standards
Smokejumper medical standards are the same as the Federal Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards – Arduous Duty Wildland Firefighter.

USFS Smokejumper Physical Fitness Standards
The national minimum standards for smokejumpers are:

- 1.5 mile run in 11:00 minutes or less;
- 45 sit-ups;
- 25 push-ups;
- 7 pull-ups;
- 110 lb. pack-out over 3 miles/level terrain/90 minutes*; and
- Successful completion of the WCT at the arduous level.
  *This element is tested during smokejumper rookie training.
  - ***DOI –*** *Refer to chapter 2 for physical fitness standards.*

Interagency Hotshot Crews

Interagency hotshot crews (IHC) provide an organized, mobile, and skilled hand crew for all phases of wildfire suppression. IHCs are comprised of 18-25 firefighters and are used primarily for wildfire suppression, fuels reduction, and other fire management duties. IHCs are capable of performing self-contained, initial attack suppression operations and commonly provide incident management capability at the type 3 or 4 complexity level.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Policy
IHC standards provide consistent planning, funding, organization, and management of the agency IHCs. The sponsoring unit will ensure compliance with the established standards. The arduous duties, specialized assignments, and operations in a variety of geographic areas required of IHCs dictate that training, equipment, communications, transportation, organization, and operating procedures are consistent for all agency IHCs.

As per agency policy, all IHCs will be managed under the *Standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations* (SIHCO).

- ***DOI –*** *Additional guidance for USWFS IHCs is contained in chapter 2.*

Interagency Hotshot Crew Certification
The process for IHC certification is found in the *SIHCO*.

Annual Interagency Hotshot Crew Premobilization Process
The superintendent of crews holding IHC status the previous season are required to complete the Annual IHC Mobilization Checklist (*SIHCO,* appendix C) and send the completed document to the local Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) prior to making the crew available for assignment each season.

Annual Interagency Hotshot Crew Readiness Review
On an annual basis the superintendent of crews holding IHC status the previous season are required to complete the Annual IHC Preparedness Review (*SIHCO*, appendix B). This process is designed to evaluate crew preparedness and compliance with SIHCO. The annual review will be conducted while the crew is fully staffed and operational. The review is not required prior to a crew being made available for incident assignment at the beginning of their availability period. When a review document is completed, the document is kept on file at the local (host) unit fire management office.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Organization
Individual crew structure will be based on local needs using the following standard positions: superintendent, assistant superintendent, squad leader, skilled firefighter, and crewmember.

- ***DOI –*** *Refer to chapter 2.*
- ***FS –*** *IHCs may staff and mobilize with 25 personnel for incident assignments.*

When traveling by charter aircraft, IHCs should be prepared to take no more than 20 personnel unless they receive approval via normal dispatch channels.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Availability Periods
IHCs will have minimum availability periods as defined in the *SIHCO*. Availability periods may exceed the required minimum availability period. The crew superintendent will inform the local supervisor and the GACC of any changes in the crew's availability.

National Interagency Hotshot Crew Status Reporting System
IHCs will report status through the National IHC Status Reporting System. IHC superintendents will regularly update the system with any change in crew status and/or current utilization when on assignment. The IHC status reporting system is not meant to circumvent normal mobilization processes, including required communications with GACC crew desks and use of IROC, rather to clarify specific information such as change in crew typing (i.e., T2IA back to T1), incident assigned to (e.g., when assigned in IROC to a complex of fires), and to clarify IROC "committed" status (e.g., in travel status versus actively engaged on large fire support).

- IHCs may confirm status via the IHC self-status form located at NIHCSC Daily Status.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Communications
IHCs will provide a minimum of eight programmable multi-channel radios per crew as stated in the *SIHCO*.

Interagency Hotshot Crew Transportation
Crews will be provided adequate transportation. The number of vehicles used to transport a crew should not exceed five. All vehicles must adhere to the certified maximum gross vehicle weight (GVW) limitations.

Other Hand Crews

Policy
All crews must meet minimum crew standards as defined below as well as any additional agency or contractual requirements. Crew typing (*NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Resource Typing*, PMS 200) will be identified at the local level with notification made to the local GACC.

Crew Standards for National Mobilization

Minimum Standards	Type 1	Type 2 with Initial Attack Capability	Type 2	Fire Suppression Module[1]
Fireline Capability	Initial attack: Can be broken up into squads, fireline construction, complex firing operations (backfire)	Initial attack: Can be broken up into squads, fireline construction	Initial attack: Fireline construction	Capable of performing self-contained initial attack suppression operations and incident management capability at the type 5 complexity level
Crew Size	18-25	18-20	18-20	5-17
Leadership Qualifications	Permanent Supervision *Superintendent*: TFLD, ICT4, FIRB *Assistant superintendent:* strike team leader, crew (STCR) or TFLD and CRWB; ICT4 *3 squad leaders:* CRWB and ICT5 *2 senior firefighters:* FFT1	*Crew boss:* CRWB *3 squad leader:* ICT5	*Crew boss:* CRWB *3 squad leader:* FFT1	1 single resource boss (SRB)/ ICT5 2 FFT1; commensurate with span of control
Language Requirement	All senior leadership including squad leaders and higher must be able to read and interpret the language of the crew as well as English.	Same as type 1	Same as type 1	Same as type 1
Experience	80% 1 season	60% 1 season	20% 1 season	Agency only

Minimum Standards	Type 1	Type 2 with Initial Attack Capability	Type 2	Fire Suppression Module[1]
Full Time Organized Crew	Yes (work and train as a unit 40 hours per week)	No	No	No
Communications	8 programmable radios	4 programmable radios	4 programmable radios	2-4 programmable radios
Sawyers	4 agency-certified as intermediate faller (FAL2) and 50% of crew certified as basic faller (FAL3) or better	3 agency-qualified	None	2 FAL3
Training	As required by the *SIHCO* or agency policy prior to assignment	Basic firefighter training and/or annual firefighter safety refresher prior to assignment	Basic firefighter training and/or annual firefighter safety refresher prior to assignment	Basic firefighter training or once qualified, 4 hours annual fireline refresher training prior to assignment
Logistics	Crew-level agency purchasing authority	No purchasing authority	No purchasing authority	Self-sufficient for 48 hours; purchasing authority recommended
Maximum Weight	5,300 lbs. (6,625 lbs. maximum for 25-person crew)	5,300 lbs.	5,300 lbs.	4,505 lbs.
Dispatch Availability	Available nationally	Available nationally	Variable	Variable
Production Factor	1.0	.8	.8	Variable
Transportation	Own transportation	Transportation needed	Transportation needed	Own transportation
Tools and Equipment	Fully equipped	Not equipped	Not equipped	Variable
Personal Gear	Arrives with crew first aid kit, personal first aid kit, headlamp, 1 qt. canteen, web gear, sleeping bag	Same as type 1	Same as type 1	Same as type 1
PPE	All standard designated fireline PPE	All standard designated fireline PPE	All standard designated fireline PPE	All standard designated fireline PPE
Certification	Must be annually certified by the local host unit agency administrator or designee prior to being made available for assignment.	N/A	N/A	N/A

[1]Fire suppression modules will be statused, mobilized, and tracked in IROC using the resource identifier "Module, Suppression."

- ***DOI –*** *See chapter 2 for USWFS standards and certification requirements.*
- ***[1]FS –*** *USFS fire suppression modules are used primarily for wildfire suppression, fuels reduction, and other fire management duties.*

Contract Large Transport Aircraft

When an assignment requires fixed-wing transport on contract large transport aircraft, crew bosses will notify their respective GACC of crew size, who will then notify the Large Transport Coordinator via the NICC. The total weight of a crew shall not exceed 5,300 lbs. for a 20-person crew when transporting via Contract Large Transport Aircraft. An additional 265 lbs. is allowable for each crew member over 20, up to 6,625 lbs. for a 25-person crew. Example: an IHC with 24 crewmembers is allowed 6,360 lbs. (5,300 base weight + [4 ppl. * 265 lbs. = 1,060 lbs.] = 6,360 lbs.).

Wildland Fire Modules

The primary mission of a wildland fire module (WFM) is to provide an innovative, safe, highly mobile, logistically independent, and versatile fire module with a primary commitment to maintain fire's role as a natural ecological process for wildland fire management and incident operations.

WFMs are comprised of 7-12 firefighters. The WFM program facilitates the use of fire and other management techniques involving planned and unplanned wildland fire events. WFMs are highly skilled and versatile fire crews, which provide technical and ecological-based expertise in the areas of long-term planning, ignitions, holding, and suppression, and fire effects monitoring. For more information, please refer to *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Module Operations*, PMS 430.

Wildland Fire Module Policy

All WFM operations will be conducted adhering to the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Module Operations*, PMS 430. Sponsoring units in conjunction with the appropriate GACC will ensure compliance of all WFMs according to the standards set within the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Module Operations*, PMS 430. The arduous duties, specialized assignments, and operations in a variety of geographic areas require WFMs to have uniform training, agency approved equipment, communications, organization, and operating procedures.

Wildland Fire Module Types and Certification

WFMs ready for assignment will be certified as type 1 WFM (WFM1) or type 2 WFM (WFM2). Refer to the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Module Operations*, PMS 430, for additional information.

Wildland Fire Module Availability Periods

WFMs will have minimum availability periods as defined in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Module Operations*, PMS 430. Availability for type 1 WFMs may exceed the minimum period defined. Type 1 WFMs will be available for off unit assignment during the designated 90-day availability period. The module leader will inform the local supervisor and the GACC of any changes to the module's availability.

Wildland Fire Module Organization

Individual module structures vary based on local and agency needs using the following standard positions: module leader/foreman, assistant leader/foreman, lead firefighter, senior firefighter, crewmember.

Minimum Wildland Fire Module Standards for Interagency Mobilization

Note: Other than the qualifications held by the module leader and assistant, all other qualifications are not tied to a particular position.

Minimum Standards	Type 1 WFM	Type 2 WFM
Permanent or Temporary Organization	Permanent established module dedicated to WFM operations either seasonally or full-time	Permanent established module dedicated to WFM operations either seasonally or full-time
Leadership Depth	• Leadership sufficient to break into two groups with appropriate leadership at the CRWB level for independent operations • Ability to maintain module operations along with additional fireline supervision duties at the TFLD level • Ability to assume command of one or more incidents at the Type 4 or 5 complexity level • Ability to independently plan and implement prescribed fire at the RXB2 level	• Leadership sufficient to maintain module operations as a single module at the CRWB level • No expectations for providing additional overhead capacity • Ability to assume command of one or more incidents at the Type 5 complexity level • Ability to assist in the implementation of prescribed fire at the FIRB/CRWB level
Level of Self-Sufficiency	• Ability to form separate logistically self-sufficient groups • Purchase cards (1 or more) • Backcountry equipped	• A single logistically self-sufficient group • Purchase cards (1 or more) • Backcountry equipped
Certification Process	• Rigorous initial certification with simple annual readiness checklist that does not require annual review/inspection by geographic area operations	• Rigorous initial certification with simple annual readiness checklist that does not require annual review/inspection by geographic area operations

Minimum Standards	Type 1 WFM	Type 2 WFM
Annual Training	• Annual Fireline Refresher • Annual critical training • Documentation of critical training submitted with annual readiness review	• Annual Fireline Refresher • Annual critical training • Documentation of critical training submitted with annual readiness review
Physical Fitness Standards	• Arduous duty work capacity test (WCT) • Strives toward WFM fitness goals	• Arduous duty work capacity test (WCT) Strives toward WFM fitness goals
Qualified Personnel Available for Dispatch	7-12 Personnel	7-12 Personnel
Temporary or Permanent Supervisory Staff	Module leader, assistant, and at least two other members (Squad Boss/Senior FF) permanently assigned, seasonal, or full-time	Module leader and assistant both permanently assigned, seasonal, or full-time
Availability Period	Minimum of 90 days annually (including required days off and local assignments or training)	Minimum of 90 days annually (including required days off and local assignments or training)
Assigned Equipment	Vehicles, hand tools, power saws, and communications equipment configured for their needs; to include portable fuel sampling and weighing equipment	Vehicles, hand tools, power saws, and communications equipment configured for their needs
Module Leader Qualifications[1]	TFLD, ICT4, RXB2	CRWB, ICT5, FIRB
Assistant Module Leader Qualifications[1]	CRWB, ICT5, FIRB	FFT1, ICT5

[1]The module leader and assistant module leader or anyone filling in for those positions must meet the NWCG qualifications of the positions.

The following table identifies the minimum qualifications for dispatch. The remaining qualifications described below are not necessarily tied to a particular position within the WFM but should be met collectively by the module.

Required WFM Qualifications	Type 1 WFM	Type 2 WFM
RXB2 – Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2	1	0
TFLD – Task Force Leader	1	**0**
CRWB – Crew Boss	2	1
FIRB – Firing Boss	2	1
ICT4 – Incident Commander Type 4	1	0
ICT5 – Incident Commander Type 5	2	2
FOBS – Field Observer	1	0
FEMO – Fire Effects Monitor	2	1
FFT1 – Advanced Firefighter	4	3
FAL2 – Intermediate Faller	2	2
HELR – Helicopter Long Line/Remote Hookup Specialist[1] **or HECM – Helicopter Crewmember**	1	1

[1]HELR is not recognized by all NWCG member agencies.

- ***DOI –*** *See chapter 2 for additional standards and certification requirements.*

Chainsaw Operators and Fallers

Beyond the NWCG faller qualifications established in *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, agencies have established additional evaluation and certification requirements.

- ***DOI –*** *Use of the NWCG position task books (PTB) is required. The requirements for final evaluators for each position are as follows:*
  - *The individual tasks required for completion of the FAL3 PTB must be evaluated by a qualified FAL2 or FAL1. The final evaluator's verification for a FAL3 trainee must be completed by a qualified FAL2 or FAL1.*
  - *The individual tasks required for completion of the FAL2 PTB must be evaluated by a qualified FAL2 or FAL1. The final evaluator's verification for a FAL2 trainee must be completed by a qualified FAL2 or FAL1.*
  - *The individual tasks required for completion of the FAL1 PTB must be evaluated by a qualified FAL1. The final evaluator's verification for a FAL1 trainee must be completed by a qualified FAL1.*
  - *The Faller Evaluator (FALV) qualification can be used in 2026 and will be archived in 2027.*

- *The final certification of all wildfire faller positions will remain the responsibility of the IQCS certifying official.*
- *All wildland fire saw operation qualifications are maintained through IQCS and displayed on the incident qualification card.*

- ***FS –*** *Use of the NWCG combined PTB for FAL1, FAL2, and FAL3 is not authorized for Forest Service use. Forest Service sawyers will continue to use agency-specific certification processes outlined in Forest Service Manual 2358.*
  - *Sawyers shall not use saws outside the limits of their certification or qualifications except during formal evaluation proceedings or under the immediate supervision of a higher-qualified sawyer.*
  - *All sawyers must comply with FS policy and the FSFAQG requirements for FAL3, FAL2, or FAL1 to operate a chainsaw or crosscut saw on a wildland fire incident. Requirements include:*
    - *Possess a current first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification (FSH 6709.11, sec 52.3).*
    - *Initially complete a nationally recognized sawyer training course (Introduction to Chainsaw Operations, S-112).*
    - *Completion of a field proficiency evaluation with appropriate saw operator skill level noted on their National Sawyer Certification Card.*
  - *The National Sawyer Certification Card is valid for 3 years and is subject to review any time prior to expiration. Minimum requirements for sawyer training and field proficiency reevaluation include:*
    - *Completion of a knowledge refresher (classroom or field) and a field proficiency evaluation equivalent to the initial evaluation.*
    - *Sawyer instructors are required to be recertified by instructing at least one nationally recognized sawyer training curriculum (NRSTC) or refresher NRSTC every three years.*
  - *FS sawyers may function as evaluators for partner agencies using the FAL3 and FAL2 PTB.*
  - *Fallers who are certified or recertify after October 1, 2014, will be required to be certified in progression (i.e., must be FAL3 to be FAL2). However, if the initial evaluation is FAL2, the account manager shall grant the position competency for FAL3. Those certified initially as FAL1 will have position competencies for FAL2 and FAL3 granted.*
  - *FS will accept other agency chainsaw certifications on incidents occurring on FS lands provided they meet NWCG minimum standards.*
  - *FS will accept a transferring employee's faller qualification if it was certified following the NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, standard.*

Chapter 14
Firefighting Equipment

Introduction

The agency wildland fire program equipment resources include engines, dozers, water tenders, and other motorized equipment for fire operations.

Policy

Geographic area employees will comply with established standards for training, equipment, communications, organization, and operating procedures required to effectively perform arduous duties in multi-agency environments and various geographic areas.

Firefighting Engine/Water Tender Common Standards

Driving Standard
Refer to driving standards in chapter 7.

Engine/Tactical Water Tender Water Reserve
Engine/tactical water tender operators will maintain at least 10 percent of the pumpable capacity of the water tank for emergency engine protection and drafting.

Chocks
At least one set of wheel chocks will be carried on each engine/water tender and will be properly utilized whenever the engine is parked or left unattended. This includes engine/water tender operation in a stationary mode without a driver "in place."

Fire Extinguisher
All engines/water tenders will have at least one 5 lb. (minimum), ABC-rated fire extinguisher, either in full view or in a clearly marked compartment.

Nonskid Surfaces
All surfaces will comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1900, *Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances*, requirements.

First Aid Kit
Each engine/water tender shall carry, in a clearly marked compartment, a fully equipped 10-person first aid kit.

Gross Vehicle Weight
Each engine and water tender will always have an annually certified weight slip in the vehicle. Weight slips will show individual axle weights and total GVW. Operators of engines and water tenders must ensure that the maximum certified gross vehicle and axle weight ratings are never exceeded, including gear, personnel, and fuel. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1900 standard of 250 pounds per seat position for each person and their personal gear will be used to calculate the loaded weight.

- ***FS –*** *Refer to FSH 7109.19, chapter 30 for calculation of rough road factor reduction for driving on rough or unsurfaced roads.*

Speed Limits
Posted speed limits will not be exceeded.

Lighting
Headlights and taillights will be illuminated while the vehicle is in motion.

All new orders for fire engine apparatus will include an overhead lighting package in accordance with agency standards. Lighting packages will meet NFPA 1900 standards at the time of manufacture. Engines currently in service may be equipped with overhead lighting packages. A red, white, and amber combination is the accepted color scheme for wildland fire.

Emergency Light Use
Emergency lighting will be used only during onsite wildland fire operations or to mitigate serious safety hazards. Overhead lighting and other emergency lighting must meet State code requirements and will be illuminated whenever the visibility is reduced to less than 300 feet.

- ***DOI –*** *See chapter 2 for specific USWFS guidance.*
- ***FS –*** *See FSM 5120, FSM 5130, and FSH 5109.16 for red lights and sirens policy.*

Fire Equipment Maintenance and Inspections
Apparatus safety and operational inspections will be accomplished either on a post-fire or daily basis. Offices are required to document these inspections. Periodic maintenance (as required by the manufacturer) shall be performed at the intervals recommended and properly documented. All annual inspections will include a pump performance test to ensure the pump/plumbing system is operating at desired specifications (pressure and gallons per minute).

Mobile Attack (Pump and Roll)
Firefighters must be seated and belted within an enclosed cab or walking alongside the apparatus during mobile attack (pump and roll) operations. Riding, standing, or seated on the exterior of the apparatus is prohibited. Utilization of the NFPA 1900 "on-board pump-and-roll fire-fighting position" if equipped, is not permitted.

Firefighting Engines

Operational Procedures
All engines will be equipped, operated, and maintained within guidelines established by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and geographic area/local operating plans. All personnel assigned to agency fire engines will meet all gear weight, cube, and manifest requirements specified in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

Engine Typing
Engine typing (*NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Resource Typing*, PMS 200) and respective standards have been established by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

Engine Type	Structure		Wildland Engines				
Components	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***	***7***
Tank Minimum Capacity (gal)	300	300	500	750	400	150	50
Pump Minimum Flow (GPM)	1000	500	150	50	50	50	10
@ Rated Pressure (PSI)	150	150	250	100	100	100	100
Hose 2½"	1200	1000	-	-	-	-	-
Hose 1½"	500	500	1000	300	300	300	-
Hose 1"	-	-	500	300	300	300	200
Ladders (per NFPA 1901)	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
Master Stream 500 GPM (minimum)	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pump and Roll	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum GVWR (lbs.)	-	-	-	-	26,000	19,500	14,000
Personnel (NWCG minimum)	4	3	3	2	2	2	2

- ***FS –*** *See Forest Service national engine standards. (https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/engines).*

Engine Minimum Staffing Requirements
For type 5, 6, and 7 engines, minimum staffing is two individuals, one of which is engine boss qualified.
- ***FS –*** *Minimum staffing is two individuals, one of which is engine boss and one of which is FAL3 qualified.*

For type 3 and 4 engines, minimum staffing is three individuals, including an engine boss.
- ***FS –*** *Minimum staffing is three individuals, one of which is engine boss and one of which is FAL3 qualified.*

Engine Equipment Inventory
An inventory of supplies and equipment carried on each vehicle is required to maintain accountability and to obtain replacement items lost or damaged on incidents. Refer to agency-specific requirements regarding standard inventory for engines.
- ***DOI –*** *For 2026, all USWFS engines will strive to minimally achieve USWFS standard Normal Unit Stocking (NUS). This inventory will be required for 2027, pending any edits made through DFEM processes.*

Water Tenders

Water Tender Typing

Water tender typing (*NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Resource Typing*, PMS 200) and respective standards have been established by NWCG.

Water Tender Type	Support			Tactical	
Requirements	***S1***	***S2***	***S3***	***T1***	***T2***
Tank Capacity (gal)	4000	2500	1000	2000	1000
Pump Minimum Flow (GPM)	300	200	200	250	250
@Rated Pressure (PSI)	50	50	50	150	150
Maximum Refill Time (mins)	30	20	15	-	-
Pump and Roll	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
Personnel (min)	1	1	1	2	2

Water Tender Qualifications and Staffing Standards

Water Tender (Non-Tactical)

Qualifications

A water tender (non-tactical) must have a CDL (tank endorsement).

- ***DOI –*** *For BLM, refer to the Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement.*

Staffing

A water tender (non-tactical) may be staffed with a crew of one driver/operator when used in a support role as a fire engine refill unit or for dust abatement. These operators do not have to pass the work capacity test (WCT) but are required to take annual refresher training.

- ***DOI –*** *For BLM, a WCF class-669, non-tactical water tender may be staffed with a crew of one driver/operator when it is used in a support role as a fire engine refill unit or for dust abatement. These operators will pass the moderate WCT, take BL-300/RT-301 and annual refresher training, and possess a CDL with tank endorsement and air brake endorsement (if applicable).*

Water Tender (Tactical)

Tactical use is defined as "direct fire suppression missions such as pumping hose lays, live reel use, running attack, and use of spray bars and monitors to suppress fires."

Qualifications

- ***DOI –*** *For BLM, engine operator (ENOP), CDL (tank endorsement) and airbrakes endorsement (if applicable) is required. For NPS/FWS, engine boss (ENGB) and CDL (tank endorsement) is required.*
- ***FS –*** *firefighter, type 1 (FFT1), CDL*

Staffing

Tactical water tenders will carry a minimum crew of two:

- ***DOI –*** *For BLM, a WCF class-669 tactical water tender shall be staffed with a minimum crew of one engine operator (ENOP) and one firefighter, type 2 (FFT2). For NPS/FWS, minimum staffing is one ENGB and one FFT2.*
- ***FS –*** *One FFT1 and one FFT1/FFT2.*

Dozers/Tractor Plows

Dozer/Tractor Plow Training and Qualifications

Agency wildland fire dozers/tractor plows will be staffed with personnel that meet the training and experience standards for dozer operator (DZOP) or dozer operator initial attack (DZIA) per the *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*. While on fire assignments, all operators and support crew will meet personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements.

Dozer/Tractor Plow Operational Procedures

- Agency-owned-and-operated dozer/tractor plows will be equipped with programmable two-way radios, configured to allow the operator to monitor radio traffic.
- Agency and contract dozer/tractor plows will have agency-supplied supervision when assigned to any suppression operations.

- Contract dozers must provide their own handheld programmable radio. Contract dozer/tractor plows will meet the specifications identified in their agreement/contract.
- Operators of dozer/tractor plows and transport equipment will meet DOT certifications and requirements regarding the use and movement of heavy equipment, including driving limitations, CDL requirements, and pilot car use.

All-Terrain Vehicle and Utility-Terrain Vehicle Operations

Purpose
The operation of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) presents inherent risk to personnel. These vehicles shall be used **only when essential to accomplish the mission** and not for convenience. All personnel regardless of regular work duties or positions when assigned to or engaged in wildland fire management activities will follow the guidance below. Risk management principles shall be applied to all operations. The language in this section applies to both USWFS and USFS personnel unless otherwise noted.

Policy
Programs will continue to procure and utilize commercially available UTVs that meet current safety standards. ATV use by USWFS is restricted which is outlined below.

Vehicle Standards

- **Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs)**
  UTVs utilized for wildland fire operations shall be equipped with:
  - Manufacturer-installed seat belts.
  - Steering wheel.
  - Multiple seats or approved single-seat configuration.
  - Certified Roll Over Protection Structure (ROPS) installed by the original equipment manufacturer.
  - The off-highway vehicle (OHV) shall conform to the either the American National Standard Institute Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (ANSI/OPEI) or American National Standard Institute Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ANSI/ROHVA) standard in effect at the time of manufacture and shall not have any modifications that cause non-compliance.

- **All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)**
  For the USWFS, ATVs are **prohibited from purchase, use, and operation unless a written waiver has been approved**.

  - **Waiver Requirements**
    A current, signed waiver shall be obtained prior to ATV use or procurement. The waiver must include:
    - Description of how the ATV is essential to the performance of official duties.
    - Analysis of alternatives considered.
    - Justification that the ATV is the only viable option.

  - **Annual Concurrence**
    The waiver shall include written concurrence from:
    - Geographic area fire chief/fire management officer
    - Geographic safety officer
    - USWFS Wildland Fire Safety and Risk Branch Chief

    Absent an approved waiver, ATV use is prohibited for USWFS employees.

- **Cooperators and Contractors**
  Employees of cooperating agencies may utilize ATVs when permitted by their agency policy. Contractors shall meet the requirements as written in their contract.

Operator Qualifications
ATV/UTV operators shall meet agency-specific training and certification requirements. Employees certified by their agency will be considered qualified ATV/UTV operators regardless of incident jurisdiction.

- **Minimum Requirements**
  Operators shall:
  - Possess a valid State or Tribal driver's license.
  - Comply with all license restrictions.
  - Be qualified and documented in the Interagency Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS).

- **Training**
  - Agency-approved or manufacturer-provided training is required.

- Operators shall be reevaluated every three (3) years.
- Operators with fewer than 16 hours of riding per year shall complete a check ride prior to operation.

- **Risk Assessment**
  A Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) or Risk Assessment (RA) shall be completed to acknowledge risks associated with general use. Incident use or project use must be evaluated on case-by-case basis. Approval is based upon the level of residual risk for the activity.

Qualification Documentation

- ATV Operator (ATVO) and UTV Operator (UTVO) qualifications shall be entered into IQCS.
- Certifying officials shall verify accuracy and currency.
- Qualifications shall be removed if training or currency lapses.
- Required training documentation shall be entered into IQCS and is subject to audit.

Operations

- **Passenger Requirements**
  - ATVs: Single rider only; passengers are prohibited.
  - UTVs: Passengers limited to manufacturer-installed seating capacity.

- **Seatbelts**
  Seatbelts shall be worn by all occupants whenever the vehicle is in motion.

- **Equipment**
  ATV/UTV operations shall include:
  - Minimum **5 lb. Class BC fire extinguisher**
    - Inspected monthly
    - Serviced annually
  - Personal communication device (radio, cellular phone, or satellite phone)
  - First aid kit readily available

- **Cargo**
  - Cargo shall not exceed manufacturer limits/recommendations.
  - Cargo shall be loaded and secured to not adversely affect center of gravity or vehicle stability.

- **Loading and Unloading**
  Required PPE shall be worn during loading and unloading operations.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **Helmet Requirements**
  Helmets shall be worn at all times during ATV/UTV operations in support of wildland fire activities, including fireline, patrol, suppression repair, logistics, and incident support.

  There are **no exceptions** for:
  - Low speeds
  - Smooth travel surfaces
  - Administrative use
  - Campgrounds or incident base camps

  The presence of a ROPS does not eliminate helmet requirements.

Helmet Standards for ATV/UTV

USWFS Allowable Helmets[1] for OHV Use

Equipment Type	Risk Rating		
	Low	Moderate	High
UTV	Fireline Hardhat (ANSI Z89.1 or NFPA 1977) w/chinstrap or 1/2 ("shorty")		3/4 or full face DOT or Snell motorcycle
ATV	3/4 or full face DOT or Snell motorcycle		

[1]All helmets must meet one or more of the following standards: Department of Transportation (DOT), Snell (SA2010, SA2015, or current equivalent), ANSI (Z89.1 Type I, Class G), or NFPA 1977.

USFS Allowable Helmets[1] for OHV Use

Equipment Type	Risk Rating
	Low/Moderate/High
UTV	3/4 or full face DOT or Snell motorcycle half ("shorty") helmets – *see restricted language below*
ATV	3/4 or full face DOT or Snell motorcycle

[1]All helmets must meet one or more of the following standards: Department of Transportation (DOT), Snell (SA2010, SA2015, or current equivalent).

Helmets shall:
- Be properly fitted
- Be in serviceable condition
- Be secured with chin strap

- **Restricted Helmet Types**
  The following may be used only when:
  - A JHA/RA is completed
  - Residual risk is determined to be **no greater than moderate**
  - Approved by the Incident Commander or responsible USFS Line Officer

  Restricted helmet types:
  - Hardhats (ANSI Z89.1 or NFPA 1977) with chin strap – USWFS only
  - Half ("shorty") helmets

  If risk is assessed as **high**, a DOT or Snell-certified motorcycle-style helmet shall be required.

- **Wildland Fire Management Activity PPE**
  See chapter 7 for list of personal protective equipment.

- **Eye Protection**
  Eye protection is not required when a UTV is equipped with a manufacturer-installed windshield providing adequate protection, unless otherwise specified in the JHA/RA.

- **Vehicle Cleaning/Invasive Species Prevention**
  Refer to chapter 11 for guidance on minimizing potential transmission of invasive species.

Vehicle Cleaning/Invasive Species Prevention

Refer to chapter 11 for guidance on minimizing potential transmission of invasive species.

Incident Remote Automatic Weather Stations

Incident remote automatic weather stations (IRAWS – NFES 5869) are readily deployable, portable weather stations that may be utilized in unprepared locations to monitor local weather conditions. IRAWS are intended for use on or near the fireline or at other all-hazards incidents and are installed by National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) technicians and operated as desired by fire behavior analysts (FBAN) and/or incident meteorologists (IMET) to record and distribute real time weather data.

National resource IRAWS systems are cached at NIFC and may be ordered through standard equipment resource ordering systems. Following release from an incident, these stations must be returned to the Remote Sensing/Fire Weather Support Unit (RSFWSU) at NIFC for maintenance, recalibration, and redeployment.

Aerial Ignition Devices

Information on types of aerial ignition devices, operational guidelines, and personnel qualifications may be found in the *NWCG Standards for Aerial Ignition*, PMS 501.

Ground Ignition Devices and Transporting/Dispensing Fuel

For ground ignition devices, follow the *NWCG Standards for Ground Ignition Equipment*, PMS 443, for operational guidelines, personnel qualifications, and equipment selection.

- ***DOI –*** *A 10 lb., class BC fire extinguisher is required for UTVs equipped with a ground ignition device.*

For transporting and dispensing fuel, follow *NWCG Standards for Transporting Fuel*, PMS 442.

- ***FS –*** *Direction is found in FSH 6709.11.*

Chapter 15
Communications

Policy

Agency-specific policies for radio communications may be found in:

- ***DOI –*** *Department of the Interior (DOI), Department Manual, Radio Communications Handbook (377 DM).*
- ***DOI –*** *For BLM, refer to Bureau of Land Management Radio Communications Manual (MS-1292), BLM Radio Frequency Authorization Manual (MS-1291), Frequency Authorizations Handbook (H-1291-1), Communications Tower Climbing Program Handbook (H-1292-1), Radio Frequency Exposure Awareness Handbook (H-1292-2), Radio Site facilities Standards Handbook (H-1292-3). https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm-fa-nros/SitePages/Radio%20Manuals%20and%20Handbooks.aspx*
- ***FS –*** *USDA Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 6609.14, chapters 10-40 and Forest Service Manual (FSM) 6600 Systems Management, chapter 6640 – Telecommunications.*

Dispatch Recording Devices

Recording of phone calls without all party's prior knowledge and consent is not permitted. Recording of radio traffic is appropriate.

- ***DOI –*** *All dispatch centers will be equipped with a logging recorder and copies of all recordings will be treated as official records per DM 377 Radio Handbook 4.5 B. Records will be stored, archived, and disposed of as per official records procedures.*

Cellular/Smartphone/Satellite Phone Communications

Cellular/smartphone/satellite telephones may be used to supplement tactical or operational traffic using agency approved applications. Cellular/smartphone/satellite telephones will not be used for flight following in lieu of normal flight following procedures. Telephone/smartphone/satellite communications/applications may be used for logistical purposes (TAK, PTToC, etc.).

Refer to chapter 7 for policy regarding use of mobile devices while operating a vehicle.

Radio Communications

Radio communications provide the information needed for the command/control and safety of personnel and resources.

Radio Contracts

Radios used for fire and aviation activities must be identified on the Fire Approved Radio list. The Approved Radios List is available on the National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD) website or contact your agency Telecommunications Department or the NIICD engineer at (208) 387-5720.

Radio Frequency Management

Prior to their use and transmission, all frequencies require permission from their formally appointed frequency management personnel at the local, geographic area, or national level.

When adversely impacting incident communications, radio interference must be reported to the NIICD communications duty officer (CDO) or through a communications coordinator (COMC), when assigned. Minimum reporting information required includes location, radio frequency, time and date (including interference duration), and sound or source for interference.

Daily, Initial Attack and Airtanker Base Frequency Management

Frequency assignments for normal daily and initial attack operations are made on a permanent basis and are requested through the normal radio frequency authorization (RFA) process from the local, geographic area, or national level designated frequency management personnel.

For air operations, the NIICD CDO coordinates annually with the Forest Service, DOI, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to provide air-to-ground (A/G) frequency-modulated (FM) and air-to-air (A/A) amplitude-modulated (AM) initial attack frequencies – based on designated and authorized frequency zones – as well as airtanker base frequencies. Updated frequency information is provided annually by the NIICD CDO to the Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC) to be disseminated throughout their areas as needed.

Initial attack A/G FM frequencies are engineered and authorized for use by Forest Service and DOI frequency managers to ensure that the frequencies will not cause interference to, or receive interference from other licensed users. These frequencies are authorized for use **only** within their assigned frequency zone boundaries and are not to exceed 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL) per their RFA. Any use of these frequencies outside of these parameters could cause interference with other authorized users resulting in major consequences and will be considered a safety violation in regard to the protection of life and property.

Initial attack A/A AM frequencies are engineered for use **only** within their assigned frequency zone boundaries and below 5,000 feet AGL. These frequencies are engineered by the FAA to minimize the risk of causing interference with civilian aircraft or airports located within the same geographic areas. Any use of these frequencies outside of the provided service volume is considered a major safety violation by the FAA and may result in the removal of and/or denial of use for those frequencies.

Airtanker base frequencies are engineered by the FAA for use within a 40 nautical mile (NM) radius from the base and below 5,000 feet AGL.

Frequency zone boundaries are generally in alignment with their respective dispatch center boundaries, unless other needs are determined. Where the two boundaries are out of alignment, it is the responsibility of the dispatch centers to coordinate the use of frequencies between themselves, ensuring that only frequencies assigned within the appropriate frequency zone are used. The NIICD CDO should be informed of any dispatch boundary changes by September 30th of each year so that, if possible, the frequency zone boundaries can be brought into alignment for the following year. Changes to frequency zone boundaries occur only once per year to ensure that frequencies can be safely coordinated with and authorized by their respective agency frequency managers.

All initial attack frequency assignments are depicted on maps disseminated annually by the NIICD CDO through the NIICD FireNet SharePoint site. For access to the appropriate folder, contact the NIICD CDO.

Mutual Aid Frequency Management

Mutual aid frequency sharing agreements can be made at the local level. Agreements are only approved in the specific location where assigned.

Prohibited

- Use of mutual-aid-frequency outside assigned area; and
- Formal agreements for mutual aid using NIFC national fire frequencies.

Exception

- Agency with Radio Frequency Authorization (RFA) approved by National Telecommunications Information Agency (NTIA) for frequency in the NIFC Channeling Plan; notification and coordination with NIICD CDO required.

Incident Frequency Management

National level coordination and assignment of incident frequencies are the responsibility of the NIICD CDO. All frequency assignments will be used on an interagency basis, and a master record of these assignments is maintained by the NIICD CDO.

When communications requirements exceed normal operations, the NIICD CDO may request that a GACC assign a communications coordinator (COMC) to facilitate geographic area frequency management. Additional information is in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

- Frequencies for incidents are assigned by the NIICD CDO and are managed by a qualified communications unit leader (COML).
- The COML will request all frequencies used on the incident from the NIICD CDO, or the COMC when assigned, through the established ordering process. This will include all aircraft frequencies.
- The COML is responsible for managing all assigned incident frequencies. Their assigned use will be documented on the ICS-205 (Incident Radio Communications Plan) and on ICS-220 (Air Operation Summary) forms. These completed forms will be made available to incident personnel in the incident action plan (IAP).
- If the incident is using NIICD-assigned frequencies, the COML must provide copies of the ICS-205, ICS-220, and System Diagrams to the NIICD CDO, or the COMC when assigned.
- Incidents that do not have an assigned COML will coordinate and request all frequency and communications equipment needs through the NIICD CDO and/or the COMC.

The NIICD CDO has a limited number of frequencies available to assign to incidents nationally. Additional frequencies may be borrowed from other agencies on a temporary basis and are requested by the NIICD CDO through authorized agency frequency managers when:

- The NIICD national frequencies are all committed within a specific geographic area; and/or
- New incidents within a complex create a need for additional frequencies; and/or
- The fire danger rating is extreme and the potential for additional new incidents is high; and/or
- There is frequency congestion due to incidents in close proximity.

Aviation Operations Frequency Management

- A/A AM frequencies are requested through the NIICD CDO who then coordinates with the FAA. Frequencies are engineered for use by the FAA with a service volume of 20 nautical mile (NM) radius from incident latitude/longitude or other provided center point, a 5,000 feet AGL limit, and a maximum radio transmit power of 10 watts (W). If the needs of the incident require a larger radius, a request should be made through the NIICD CDO to be coordinated with the FAA. There should be no use outside of the authorized service volume.
- A/G FM frequencies will be coordinated and assigned by the NIICD CDO. Frequencies are assigned for incident use with a service volume of 20 NM radius from incident latitude/longitude or other provided center point, a 3,000 feet AGL limit per their RFA, and a maximum radio transmit power of 10W. If the needs of the incident require a larger radius, a request should be made through the NIICD CDO. There should be no use outside of the authorized service volume.
- With the exception of an emergency, aircraft shall **not** transmit over NIICD command repeaters.

National Interagency Fire Tactical Frequencies

These shared fire frequencies are approved for ground tactical operations on incidents. Permission to use these frequencies requires submitting a request to the NIICD CDO using proper incident ordering procedures. These frequencies are for ground use only.

Prohibited use includes:

- Air-to-air communications; and
- Air-to-ground communications; and
- Radios with more than 10W output power; and
- Base stations or repeaters

Preassigned National Frequencies

National Air Guard Frequency (168.6250 MHz)

A national interagency air guard frequency will be used for emergency aviation communications. Continuous monitoring of this frequency is mandatory by agency dispatch centers and aircraft. A Continuous Tone-Coded Squelch System (CTCSS) tone of 110.9 Hz must be used when transmitting on the National Air Guard Frequency. This frequency must be programmed into the last channel of every group in fire handheld radios.

This frequency, 168.6250 MHz, is only used for:

- Air-to-air emergency contact and coordination;
- Ground-to-air emergency contact; and
- Initial call, recall, and redirection of aircraft when no other contact frequency is available.

National Flight Following Frequency (168.6500 MHz)

The National Flight Following frequency is used to monitor interagency and contract aircraft. All aircraft on point-to-point or mission flights should establish/terminate flight following and confirm Automated Flight Following (AFF) on the National Flight Following frequency.

The National Flight Following frequency is to be used for flight following, dispatch, or redirection of aircraft. No other uses, including tactics and logistics, are authorized.

All dispatch centers/offices will monitor the National Flight Following frequency at all times. A CTCSS tone of 110.9 must be used when transmitting and receiving on the National Flight Following frequency.

Smokejumper and Rappel/RADS Air-to-Ground Frequency (168.5500 MHz)

Frequency 168.5500 MHz is primarily dedicated as a national air-to-ground tactical channel for smokejumper operations within the DOI, USDA, and other agencies. Secondary use is authorized for USWFS and USFS Rappel/Rope Assisted Delivery System (RADS) aerial delivery operations. It is recommended the channel be toned on both transmit and receive for all smokejumper and RADS teams to ensure that interference issues are avoided. Smokejumpers will use tone 123.0, and RADS will use 110.9. Use of this frequency other than for the delivery of

aerial firefighters is prohibited. This frequency is not approved for ground tactical operations (line of sight) on incidents as a tactical or intra-crew channel.

Governmentwide Area Common User Frequencies (163.1000 MHz, 168.3500 MHz)
Shared frequencies 163.1000 and 168.3500 MHz are used on a non-interference basis and are not exclusive to any user. These frequencies are intended for administration use only. They are prohibited by USDA and DOI for use during air-to-ground operations and operations involving the protection of life and property.

No protection from interference will be provided to any station operating on these frequencies from other stations operating on the same frequency. The use of equipment with coded squelch is strongly encouraged to reduce nuisance interference from other users.

Permission to use these frequencies requires submitting a request to the NIICD CDO using proper incident ordering procedures.

- **NOTE:** When traveling between incidents, be sure to monitor for incident radio traffic in the area before using these frequencies.

Incident Radio Support

The incident COML should contact the CDO, or COMC if assigned, to coordinate the ordering of all NIICD radio equipment and frequencies. Refer to the current *NIICD User's Guide* for further guidance and best practices.

Radios programmed with NIICD-assigned frequencies are authorized with a maximum transmit power of 10W. When operating within the Canadian-coordination region, NIICD-assigned frequencies are authorized with a maximum transmit power of 5W; the use of mobile radios is highly discouraged.

Because frequency assignments are location-specific, NIICD communications equipment shall **not** be moved from one incident to another without the express approval of the NIICD CDO.

The COML should inform the NIICD CDO, or COMC if assigned, when radio equipment is no longer in use so that any associated frequencies can be released. All NIICD communications equipment will be returned to NIFC immediately after the incident unless otherwise authorized. Contact the NIICD CDO to coordinate the return process.

Military Communications on an Incident

Refer to the current NIFC *Military Use Handbook*.

Chapter 16
Aviation Operations and Resources

Purpose and Scope

Aviation resources are one of a number of tools available to accomplish fire-related land management objectives.

Aviation use must be prioritized based on management objectives and probability of success.

The effect of aviation resources on a fire is directly proportional to the speed at which the resource(s) can initially engage the fire, the effective capacity of the aircraft, and the deployment of ground resources.

These factors are magnified by flexibility in prioritization, mobility, positioning, and utilization of the versatility of many types of aircraft.

In addition to the priorities listed in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*,, chapter 10 under headings "Total Mobility Concept" and "Priorities," mobilization of aircraft should be based on optimizing the use of exclusive-use, contracted aircraft. Call-when-needed (CWN) aircraft will be the last ordered and the first released. The exception to this is use for initial action response and capability.

Risk management is a necessary requirement for the use of any aviation resource. The risk management process must include risk to ground resources and the risk of not performing the mission, as well as the risk to the aircrew.

Organizational Responsibilities

National Office – Department of the Interior

Office of Aviation Services

The Office of Aviation Services (OAS) within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) is responsible for coordinating aviation policy development and maintenance management across DOI agencies. While OAS does not have direct operational control over aviation missions, it has critical oversight of ensuring aviation safety, conducting accident investigations, and inspecting and approving aircraft and pilots for DOI use. OAS manages the Department's aircraft fleet, oversees compliance through audits and inspections, and provides aviation training and financial oversight. Its mission is to enhance safety, improve operational efficiency, and promote cost-effective aircraft utilization throughout DOI Aviation operations.

OAS will be joining the US Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) in 2026. During the transition into the new organization, OAS will continue to maintain responsibility as previously listed until such time that the USWFS is fully organized at which time current responsibilities held by OAS will be shifted to the USWFS.

Department of Interior – US Wildland Fire Service (USWFS)

To achieve the most efficient and effective use of the Department's wildland fire organizations, the USWFS, which reports to the Secretary of the Interior, is established to unify wildland fire fighting efforts for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and National Park Service (NPS). The USWFS provides a professional aviation organization which:

- Develops policy, procedures, and standards for all aviation activities;
- Provides direction for aviation programmatic and operational risk management;
- Leads aviation safety assurance and promotions programs;
- Responsible for funding and acquisition of all fire aircraft;
- Provides strategic program guidance and supports management of aviation activities;
- Coordinates with OAS and interagency partners to establish cooperator approvals;
- Provides coordinated training for pilots (both crewed and uncrewed aircraft);

During the transition of BIA, BLM, FWS and NPS fire aviation into the USWFS, reference USWFS Authorities/Actions and USWFS Transition Guidance in chapter 2, and current aviation policy for each of the bureaus until such time that it is superseded by direction and guidance under a USWFS National Aviation Policy.

National Office – U.S. Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

The FS has responsibility for all aspects of its aviation program, including aviation policy and budget development, aircraft acquisition, aircraft operations, aviation safety and risk management, budget, pilot standardization, and airworthiness. In addition, the FS has operational responsibility for functional oversight of aviation assets and facilities, operational coordination and utilization, accident investigation, and aircraft and pilot inspection.

The Program Director, Aviation, is responsible to the Deputy Director Aviation and Operations Fire and Aviation Management for the management and supervision of the national aviation program. The Aviation Program Director

provides leadership, support and coordination for national and geographic area aviation programs and operations. Refer to FSM 5704 for list of responsibilities.

The national fixed-wing operations branch chief and rotor-wing operations branch chief report to the AD and are responsible for national aviation operational management and oversight. This operational management and oversight and includes authority to provide direction to coordination centers regarding the mobilization and reassignment of USDA contracted national aviation resources. The branch chiefs may also delegate this authority to national aircraft coordinators or the FS aviation duty officer (ADO).

Geographic Office

- ***DOI –*** *In the geographic area, the Assistant Chief of Aviation is responsible for directing and managing aviation programs and fire resources. The Assistant Chief of Aviation reports directly to the geographic area fire chief. Each geographic area will have an aviation staff that consists of program managers to provide oversite for UAS, Fixed Wing, Rotor Wing, and Aviation Safety. Until such time that the USWFS is fully staffed at the geographic area level, bureau aviation managers (State/Region) will continue to provide direction and oversite for the specific bureau's aviation activities. Where no aviation manager is in place (geographic area/regional/State) the National Aviation Office will provide direction.*
- ***FS –*** *Geographic area aviation officers are responsible for directing and managing geographic area aviation programs in accordance with the national and geographic area aviation management plans, and applicable agency policy direction. (Refer to FSM 5700 and FSH 5709.16 for list of responsibilities). Geographic area aviation officers report to director of fire and aviation for their specific geographic area. Geographic area aviation safety officers are responsible for aviation safety in their respective geographic areas and work closely with the geographic area aviation officers to ensure aviation safety is an organizational priority (refer to FSM 5700 and FSH 5709.16 for list of responsibilities). Geographic areas have additional aviation technical specialists and pilots who help manage and oversee geographic area aviation programs. Most geographic areas also have aviation maintenance inspectors, fixed-wing program managers, helicopter program managers, helicopter operations specialists, inspector pilots, etc.*

Local Office

Some areas have interagency aviation programs that utilize an aviation manager for multiple units. Duties are similar as other local level managers. Aviation managers have the responsibility to provide competent technical expertise and management of aviation resources to the local unit.

Aviation Information Resources

Aviation reference guides and aids for agency aviation management are listed for policy, guidance, and specific procedural requirements.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For BLM, see the 9400 Manual appendix 1, National Aviation Plan (NAP), and applicable aviation guides as referenced in the NAP. For NPS, see RM-60 Aviation Management Reference Manual and applicable aviation guides as referenced in RM-60. For FWS, see Service Manual 330-339, Aviation Management and NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations, PMS 510. For BIA, see the BIA National Aviation Plan (NAP) and applicable aviation guides are references in the NAP, IAM part 57, and DM 112, 350-353.*
- ***DOI –*** *See Departmental manuals (DM) and operational procedures memoranda (OPM).*
- ***FS –*** *FSM 5700, FSH 5709.16 and applicable aviation guides when approved by the agency and referenced in policy.*

Safety alerts, operational alerts, instruction memoranda, information bulletins, incident reports, and other guidance or information are issued as needed.

An up-to-date library with aviation policy and procedural references will be maintained at all permanent aviation bases, dispatch, and aviation management offices.

Aviation Safety

The federal agencies have adopted Safety Management Systems (SMS) as the foundation for the aviation safety program. The four components of SMS are safety policy, safety risk management, safety assurance, and safety promotion. SMS is the standard for aviation safety set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

SMS focuses on:
- Emphasis on proactive risk management;
- Promotes a "Just" culture;
- Addresses systemic safety concerns;
- Holds the organization accountable;
- Identifies "What" so we can manage the manageable; and
- Communicates the "Why" so the culture can learn from mistakes.

The intent of SMS is to improve the aviation culture by increasing hazard identification, reduce risk-taking behavior, learn from mistakes, and correct procedures before a mishap occurs rather than after the accident.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management
The use of risk management will help to ensure a safe and successful operation. Risk is the probability that an event will occur. Assessing risk identifies the hazard, the associated risk, and places the hazard in relationship to the mission. A decision to conduct a mission requires weighing the risk against the benefit of the mission and deciding whether the risks are acceptable.

Aviation missions always have some degree of risk. The five sources of hazards are mission, management, machine, personnel, and media. Managing risk is a five-step process:
1. Identify hazards associated with all specified and implied tasks for the mission.
2. Assess hazards to determine potential of occurrence and severity of consequences.
3. Develop controls to mitigate or remove risk and make decisions based on accepting the least risk for the best benefit.
4. Implement controls – (1) education controls, (2) physical controls, and (3) avoidance controls.
5. Supervise and evaluate – enforce standards and continuously reevaluate their effectiveness in reducing or removing risk. Ensure that controls are communicated, implemented, and enforced.

- ***FS –*** *FSM 5700. Employees shall use an operational risk management process to evaluate the risk and hazards prior to every flight.*

How to Properly Refuse Risk (Aviation)
Every individual (Government and contracted employees) has the right and obligation to report safety problems affecting his or her safety and has the right to contribute ideas to correct the hazard. In return, supervisors are expected to give these concerns and ideas serious consideration. When an individual feels an assignment is unsafe, he or she also has the obligation to identify, to the degree possible, safe alternatives for completing that assignment. Turning down an assignment is one possible outcome of managing risk.

A "turn down" is a situation where an individual has determined he or she cannot undertake an assignment as given and is unable to negotiate an alternative solution. The turn down of an assignment must be based on assessment of risks and the ability of the individual or organization to control or mitigate those risks. Individuals may turn down an assignment because of safety reasons when:
- There is a violation of regulated aviation policy and practices;
- Environmental conditions make the work unsafe; or
- They lack the necessary qualifications or experience.

Individuals will directly inform their supervisor that they are turning down the assignment as given. The most appropriate means of documented turn down criteria is using the Aviation Watch Out Situations (*NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461).

Supervisors will notify the air operations branch director (AOBD) or unit aviation leadership immediately upon being informed of a "turn down." If there is no AOBD, notification shall go to the appropriate section chief, the incident commander (IC) or local fire and aviation staff. Proper handling of turn downs provides accountability for decisions and initiates communication of safety concerns within the incident organization.

If the assignment has been turned down previously and the supervisor asks another resource to perform the assignment, he or she shall inform the new resource that the assignment had been turned down and the reasons why. Furthermore, personnel need to realize that a "turn down" does not stop the completion of the assigned operation. The "turn down" protocol is an integral element that improves the effective management of risk, for it provides timely identification of hazards within the chain of command, raises risk awareness for both leaders and subordinates, and promotes accountability.

If an unresolved safety hazard exists, the individual needs to communicate the issue/event/concern immediately to his or her supervisor and document as appropriate.

Aviation Safety Support

Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team (ASTAT)

During high levels of aviation activity, consider requesting an Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team (ASTAT). ASTAT enhances risk management, efficiency, effectiveness, and provides technical assistance while reviewing aviation operations. If an ASTAT cannot be filled internally, the request may be placed with the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) through established ordering channels using individual overhead requests. An ASTAT should operate under a delegation of authority from the appropriate geographic area aviation manager(s) or multi-agency coordinating group. If requested by the home unit/geographic area, formal written reports will be provided to appropriate manager(s) as outlined at the in-brief. A team should be developed to fit the need of the requesting unit and may consist of the following:

- Aviation safety manager;
- Operations specialist (helicopter and/or fixed wing);
- Pilot inspector;
- Maintenance inspector;
- Avionics inspector (optional); and
- Aircraft dispatcher (optional).

Aviation Safety Briefing

Every passenger must receive a briefing prior to each flight. The briefing is the responsibility of the pilot in command (PIC) but may be conducted by the pilot, flight manager, helicopter manager, fixed-wing base manager, or an individual with the required training to conduct an aviation safety briefing. The pilot should also receive a mission briefing from the Government aircraft manager. Refer to the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, and *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510.

Aviation Hazard

An aviation hazard is any condition, act, or circumstance that compromises the safety of personnel engaged in aviation operations. Pilots, flight crew personnel, aviation managers, incident air operations personnel, and passengers are responsible for hazard identification and mitigation. Aviation hazards may include but are not limited to the following:

- Deviations from policy, procedures, regulations, and instructions;
- Improper hazardous materials handling and/or transport;
- Airspace conflicts/flight following deviation;
- Deviation from planned operations;
- Failure to utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) or aviation life support equipment (ALSE);
- Failure to meet qualification standards or training requirement;
- Extreme environmental conditions;
- Improper ground operations;
- Improper pilot procedures;
- Fuel contamination; and
- Unsafe actions by pilot, air crew, passengers, or support personnel.

Aviation hazards also exist in the form of wires, low-flying aircraft, and obstacles protruding beyond normal surface features. Each office will post, maintain, and annually update a known aerial hazard map for the local geographic area where aircraft are operated, regardless of agency jurisdiction. This map will be posted and used to brief flight crews. Unit aviation managers are responsible for ensuring the development and updating of known aerial hazard maps (*NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510).

Aerial Applications of Wildland Fire Chemical Safety

Chapter 12 contains information concerning the aerial application of wildland fire chemicals.

SAFECOM

The DOI and the FS have an incident/hazard reporting form called the Aviation Safety Communiqué (SAFECOM). The database fulfills the Aviation Mishap Information System (AMIS) requirements for aviation mishap reporting for the DOI and the FS. Categories of reports include accidents, airspace, hazards, incidents, maintenance, mishap prevention, and kudos. The SAFECOM system is used to report any condition, observation, act, maintenance problem, or circumstance with personnel or aircraft that has the potential to cause an aviation-related mishap. The SAFECOM system is not intended for initiating punitive actions. Submitting a SAFECOM is not a substitute for "on-the-spot" correction(s) to a safety concern. SAFECOMs are a tool used to identify, document, track, and correct safety-related issues. SAFECOMs do not replace the requirement for initiating an accident or incident report.

Any individual (including vendors/cooperators) with knowledge of an incident/hazard should complete a SAFECOM. The SAFECOM form, including attachments and pictures, should be entered directly on the website, or contact the Office of Aviation Services (OAS) or FS representative listed on the SAFECOM "About" page (https://www.safecom.gov/about). Electronic copies are automatically forwarded to the national, geographic area, and unit aviation managers.

The agency with operational control of the aircraft at the time of the hazard/incident/accident is responsible for completing the SAFECOM and submitting it through agency channels.

Aircraft Incidents/Accidents

Notification to the FS or OAS and DOI agency aviation safety managers is required for any aircraft mishap involving damage or injury. Use the hotline (888) 464-7427 (DOI Operations Center) or the most expeditious means possible. Initiate the appropriate unit Aviation Mishap Response Plan.

All dispatch centers responsible for coordinating a response to an aviation mishap must annually complete an aviation mishap response exercise specific to a simulated aviation incident. The exercise must utilize the unit's response plan, including an after-action review of the scenario, and be documented in the dispatch log or other documentation means. Example scenarios may include overdue aircraft, missing aircraft, a mayday response, or known aircraft accident.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

UAS Incursion Reporting Protocol

- Fire personnel should immediately notify the air tactical group supervisor (ATGS) if overhead, aircraft over the incident, the IC and dispatch. Dispatch should report all unauthorized unmanned aircraft system (UAS) or drone activity immediately via SAFECOM and to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Reporting key points:

- Report UAS information (location, color, size, altitude, flight pattern), if known.
- Dispatch centers should report incursions to the nearest Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) or follow geographic area protocol.

Policy

- UAS fire operations shall be conducted under the provisions of the *NWCG Standards for Fire Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations*, PMS 515.
- When UAS are flown for FS/DOI work or benefit, FAA, FS, and DOI regulations apply.
- All aircraft (to include UAS) purchase, lease, or acquisition **must** follow department procurement policy and procedures.
- All aircraft and pilots employed by the FS or DOI agencies **shall** be credentialed in accordance with departmental policy.
- UAS flights under FS operational control **must** adhere to USFS policy and regulations regarding their use. Guidance can be found in FSM 5700 Zero Code, *USFS National Aviation Safety and Management Plan*, and *Forest Service Standards for UAS Operations*.
- UAS flights under DOI operational control **must** adhere to DOI and agency-specific policy and regulations regarding their use. Guidance can be found in the *Departmental Manual*, parts 350-353, and Operational Procedures Memorandum 11.
- UAS procured/owned/operated by cooperating agencies (State, local, and international) may be utilized on federally managed fires when cooperative agreements are in place and the aircraft and pilot have been approved by letter nationally or geographic area.
  - ***DOI –*** *The authority to sign cooperator letters for UAS is assigned to the Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. This authority cannot be redelegated.*
- UAS flights conducted by non-participatory entities (e.g., media) must adhere to FAA regulations.
- A Special Government Interest (SGI) waiver may be required for certain UAS operations conducted within a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR). Further guidance is available at https://uas.nifc.gov/remote-pilot-toolbox.

Personnel

- Four UAS positions are listed in the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1:
  - Unmanned aircraft system pilot (UASP)
  - Unmanned aircraft system, data specialist (UASD)
  - Unmanned aircraft system, manager (UASM)
  - Unmanned aircraft system, module leader (UASL)

Crew Composition
UAS operations are typically conducted under a crew (module) concept.
Typical module configuration:
- Agency-operated systems (type 3 or 4): UASM, UASP or UASP(t) and UASD (optional)
- Contract systems (type 1 or 2): UASM and UASD

Span of control for multiple UAS operations on the same incident can be mitigated with UASL. Modules may be expanded with additional personnel when justified by incident complexity, mission volume, or operational need, consistent with agency policy and available resources.

Ordering
- UAS personnel are ordered through established dispatch channels.
- For specifics on how to order UAS, see Interagency Fire UAS Ordering.
- Agency-owned, federally contracted, exclusive-use, and CWN UAS are national resources. Geographic areas utilizing them will make them available for fires on a priority basis.

Operations
- UAS flight crews utilize established procedures (e.g., fire traffic area) for coordinating flights with aerial supervision/on-scene aircraft.
- Large UAS (typically type 1 and 2) will launch and recover from a "launch and recovery zone" which should be designated on incident aviation planning maps.
- Small (typically type 4) UAS are fireline portable, and flights will be conducted through established procedures.

Key Points
- UAS is an effective tool for situational awareness and data collection. Determine the data objective before ordering the resource and flying the mission.
- UAS ICS types are listed in the *NWCG Standards for Fire Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations*, PMS 515.
- UAS training, aircraft, sensors, and capabilities are listed on the Interagency Fire UAS Subcommittee website (see below).
- Personally owned UAS or model aircraft must not be used by Federal agencies or their employees for interagency fire use.
- Individuals who are determined to have interfered with wildland fire operations may be subject to civil penalties and criminal prosecution.

Additional Information
For more information refer to the Interagency Fire UAS Subcommittee webpage.
- ***FAA*** – *https://www.faa.gov/uas*
- ***DOI*** – *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For DOI, see https://www.doi.gov/aviation/uas. For BLM, see https://uas.nifc.gov/.*
- ***FS*** – *https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/aviation/uas*
- ***Interagency UAS*** – *https://uas.nifc.gov/*

Airspace Coordination

The Interagency Airspace Program is an aviation safety program designed to enhance aviation safety and reduce the risk of a mid-air collision. The *NWCG Standards for Airspace Coordination*, PMS 520, provides direction and procedures for airspace coordination. Additional guidance may be found in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* and supplemented by local mobilization guides.

Additional coordination information, including the agency member roster, can be found on the Interagency Airspace Subcommittee webpage.

Flight Request and Approval

Reference the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* for specific flight request and approval, and point-to-point flight information.
- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. BLM should reference the National Aviation Plan (https://www.nifc.gov/about-us/our-partners/blm/aviation/library), chapter 3. In addition, flights that require landing in a foreign country constitute international travel and are subject to policy contained in*

Instruction Memorandum No. 2022-037, International Travel Guidance and Procedures. For NPS, reference RM-60, appendix 3 and 4, for agency specific policy. For BIA, reference the BIA National Aviation Plan.

- ***FS –** Refer to the Forest Service Administrative Use of Aircraft Guide.*

Mission Flights

Mission flights are defined as flights not meeting the definition of point-to-point flight. A mission flight requires work to be performed in the air (retardant or water delivery, fire reconnaissance, smokejumper delivery), or through a combination of ground and aerial work (e.g., delivery of personnel and/or cargo from helibases to helispots or unimproved landing sites; rappelling or cargo let-down; short-haul; single-skid, toe-in, and hover exit/entry (STEP) procedures; hoist).

- PPE is required for any fixed-wing mission flight conducted below 500 feet AGL.
- Reference Interagency ALSE Handbook for all PPE requirements for special-use flights.
- All personnel will meet training and qualification standards required for the mission.
- Agency FM radio capability is required for all mission flights.
- All passengers must be authorized, and all personnel onboard must be essential to the mission.
  - ***DOI –** The authority to approve the carriage of non-aircrew members on mission flights is with the Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management and cannot be redelegated.*

Low-Level Flight Operations

The only fixed-wing aircraft missions authorized for low-level fire operations are:

- Smokejumper/paracargo;
- ASM and lead operations; and
- Aerial dispensing of retardant, water enhancers and water.

Reference the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management,* PMS 902, for definitions of limited control flights.

Operational Procedures

- A high-level reconnaissance will be made prior to low-level flight operations.
- All flights below 500 feet will be contained to the area of operation.

Congested Area Flight Operations

Airtankers under federal operational control or cooperator approved airtankers can drop retardant in congested areas. DOI authority is given in *14 CFR Part 137*. FS authority is granted under exemption 392, from *14 CFR Part 91.119* as referenced in FSH 5709.16, chapter 30.

When such operations are necessary, they may be authorized subject to these limitations:

- Airtanker operations in congested areas may be conducted at the request of the city, rural fire department, county, State, or Federal fire suppression agency;
- An ASM/leadplane is ordered to coordinate aerial operations;
- The ATC facility responsible for the airspace is notified prior to or as soon as possible after the beginning of the operation;
- A positive communication link must be established between the ASM or leadplane, airtanker pilot(s), and the responsible fire suppression agency official; and
- The IC for the responsible fire agency or designee will advise the ASM/leadplane/airtanker that all non-essential people and movable property have been cleared prior to commencing retardant drops.

Flight Following – All Aircraft

Flight following is mandatory for all flights. Refer to the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* for specific direction.

Sterile Cockpit – All Aircraft

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. Also reference the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 50.

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.

Interagency Interim Flight and Duty Limitations/Aviation Stand Downs

Aviation stand downs are a means to find time, in an otherwise demanding flight schedule, to reflect on core aviation safety values. In this context, aviation stand downs refer to an administrative decision to keep tactical aviation resources on the ground through all or part of their normal duty day or days.

Interim flight and duty limitations are a method to manage pilot and crew fatigue by reducing the length of the duty day or increasing the number of days off in the normal duty day cycle. During extended periods of high flight activity, fatigue must be mitigated by fire and aviation managers.

Aviation stand downs and interim flight and duty day limitations can be implemented at the geographic area or national level. In either case, the procedure for implementation is the same. Requests for implementation of flight and duty limitations, or proposed stand down parameters, will be made through the national aviation office through which it originated.

Decisions and procedures for implementation will be made on a coordinated, interagency basis, involving the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC), NICC, and national aviation representatives at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) and aviation contracting officers. Details of the proposal will be formalized and coordinated with other affected agencies and implemented through the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC).

Interim Flight and Duty Limitations Implementation

What is the Intent?

Interim flight and duty limitations are a method to manage contract pilot and crew fatigue by reducing the length of the duty day, reducing flight hours, or increasing the number of days off in the normal duty day cycle.

Decisions and procedures for implementation will be made on a coordinated, interagency basis, involving the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC), the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), national aviation representatives at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC), and aviation contracting officers. Details of the proposal will be formalized and coordinated with other affected agencies and implemented through the National Multi-agency Coordinating Group (NMAC).

To Whom Do the Limitations Apply?

The flight and/or duty limitations apply to contractor personnel supporting flight operations.

Contractor Personnel – Examples of eligible contractor personnel would include pilot, maintenance crews, and fuel truck drivers. For a comprehensive list of eligible contractor personnel, please refer to minimum and maximum crew staffing within the applicable contract.

Flight and Duty Limitations Evaluation Criteria and Information

Interim flight and duty limitations are written and implemented to mitigate cumulative organizational fatigue and to increase safety margins in advance. Agency leaders, employees, and aviation managers should use a proactive approach to implementation. Well rested and focused contract flight crews, maintenance personnel, fuel truck drivers, and aircrew members, are essential to safe, effective, and efficient aviation operations. Many factors may be considered, and tradeoffs are recognized. Implementation of Phase 2 and Phase 3 Interim Flight and Duty Limitations may impact Initial Attack capacity due to staffing challenges. Every effort should be made by the NICC, geographic areas (GAs), NMAC, and Agency program managers to mitigate these impacts without compromising fatigue management. Below are some criteria that may be used to recommend implementation of the phases. The below criteria are not all inclusive and other criteria, conditions, or factors may be used through a doctrinal approach.

- Phase 1 is considered standard flight and duty limitation required by the Federal Aviation Administration and agency policies.
- Phase 2 Interim Flight and Duty Limitations should be considered for any of the below conditions:
  - Moderate to high geographic area or national preparedness levels. Occasional (3 or more per week) reports of 36/6 challenges in 2 or more GAs.
  - Predicted continuation of high tempo aviation operations.
  - Increasing trend of Incidents, Incidents with Potential, or Accidents.

- Phase 3 Interim Flight and Duty Limitation should be considered for any of the below conditions:
  - High geographic area or national preparedness levels.
  - Frequent (5 or more per week) reports of 36/6 challenges in multiple (3 or more) GAs.
  - Predicted continuation of high tempo aviation operations.

Phase 1 – Standard Flight and Duty Limitations (Reference Applicable Contract for Contractor Personnel Duty Limitations)
It is the responsibility of every aviation manager to monitor and evaluate fatigue. Any decision to shorten duty days or grant additional days off needs to be approved by the applicable contracting officer.

Phase 2 – Interim Duty Limitations
When Phase 2 is activated, pilots and other contract personnel shall adhere to the day-off limitations prescribed in phase 1 and the duty and flight limitations defined under Phase 2.

The standard duty day shall be decreased by 2 hours for each contract personnel duty day requirement as outlined in the contract, and the flight crew shall fly no more than 7 hours in an operational period. If the prescribed duty day or 7 hours of flight time are exceeded, due to threats to: life, property, infrastructure, or no relief resources are available, an additional hour of rest will be recorded during the next rest cycle and documented via the SAFECOM system.

Double crews (2 complete flight crews assigned to an aircraft), augmented flight crews (an additional pilot-in-command assigned to an aircraft), and aircraft crews that work a rotating schedule (i.e., 2 days on, 1 day off, 7 days on, 7 days off, or 12 days on, 12 days off, or 14 days assigned and 7 days unassigned) may be exempted from Phase 2 limitations upon verification that their scheduling and duty cycles meet or exceed the provisions of Phase 2 limitations.

Phase 3 – Interim Duty Limitations
When Phase 3 is activated, all approved contractor personnel shall adhere to the flight and duty limitations prescribed in Phase 2 and the day off limitations defined under Phase 3.

Each contract crew member shall be given an additional day off within a 14-day period. Crews on a 12-and-2 schedule shall have 3 consecutive days off (11-and-3). Flight crews on 6-and-1 schedules shall work an alternating weekly schedule of 5 days on, 2 days off, then 6 days on and one day off. Any other approved schedule exceeds the additional day off requirement.

Understanding that not all geographic areas are engaged at this high level of activity, exceptions may be authorized by geographic area aviation managers in coordination with national aviation management on a geographic or single resource basis.

Aircraft fixed daily rates and special rates, when applicable, shall continue to accrue during the extra day off. If requested by the government, contractors may provide additional approved contractor personnel to utilize their aircraft. All costs associated with providing the additional crew will be paid for by the government at the applicable additional crew member rate in accordance with the contract.

Process to implement Interim flight and duty limitations:

Geographic Area:
1. Interagency aviation managers monitor and evaluate conditions to initiate.
2. Consult with national aviation program managers once conditions are present or predicted to occur.
3. GA aviation managers meet and confirm recommendations.
4. GA coordinating group decides to implement and issues guidance.

NMAC:
1. National aviation managers monitor and evaluate conditions to initiate nationally.
2. National aviation managers will consult GA aviation managers.
3. NMAC aviation liaisons will draft NMAC letter.
4. NMAC Chair will issue letter and guidance.

Aviation Assets

Typical agency aviation assets include helitack, rappel, short-haul, aerial supervision (ATGS), helicopter coordinator (HLCO), leadplane, aerial supervision module (ASM), large (multi-engine) airtankers (LAT), very large airtankers (VLAT), single engine airtankers (SEAT), scoopers, and smokejumpers.

- All federally contracted aviation assets (Exclusive use, on-call, and CWN) are available to move to the areas of greatest need, thereby maximizing efficiency and effectiveness of the National Response Framework. For further information please reference the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

Helicopters

Helicopter Types

The minimum specifications for the typing of helicopters (*NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Resource Typing*, PMS 200) are by useful load, passenger seats, water or retardant carrying capability, and maximum gross weight.

ICS Type Specifications for Helicopters

Attributes	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Useful load at 59° F at sea level	5,000 pounds	2,500 pounds	1,200 pounds
Passenger seats	15 or more	9-14	4-8
Retardant or water carrying capability	700 gallons	300 gallons	100 gallons
Maximum gross takeoff/landing weight	12,501+ pounds	6,000-12,500 pounds	Up to 6,000 pounds

The *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 50, contains additional direction regarding performance, staffing and maintenance support functions to mobilize national resources. For aviation safety and policy concerning wildland fire chemicals (water enhancers, retardants, foams), reference the Wildland Fire Chemicals Systems website. Other helicopter information can be found in the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510.

- ***All Federally Contracted Helicopters*** *– The use of fire chemicals mixed with on board injection or blending systems is not permitted on Forest Service-contracted aircraft. Water enhancers may be mixed and loaded from ground-based equipment when demand is mixed through a proportioner; or batch mixed to the qualified mix ratio in a separate tank, then transferred into a dip tank. Compliance with the Forest Service Qualified Product List to include qualified, approved mix ratios, is mandatory.*

Military or National Guard Helicopters and Pilots

The *Military Use Handbook* will be used when planning or conducting aviation operations involving regular military aircraft. Ordering military resources is done through NICC; National Guard resources are utilized through local or State memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Helitack

Helitack crews perform suppression and support operations to accomplish fire and resource management objectives.

Organization – Crew Size

DOI *– For BLM, **t**he baseline staffing for a BLM exclusive-use type 3 helicopter is 11 personnel. The baseline staffing for a BLM exclusive-use type 2 helicopter is 13 personnel. The baseline staffing for a BLM exclusive-use type 1 helicopter is 24 personnel. All BLM exclusive-use crews will consist of key positions, including supervisor, assistant, squad boss, and crew members. Recommended staffing levels for BLM exclusive-use helitack crews is outlined in the BLM Fire 0456 Series User Guide, https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/blm-fa/SitePages/BLM-0456-Series-Toolbox.aspx. BLM states may establish larger crew size and standards for their exclusive-use helicopter crews based on program need. Any increase in crew size will be documented in the respective state aviation plan. BLM helicopters operated in Alaska need only be staffed with a qualified helicopter manager (HMGB).*

For NPS, Helicopter exclusive-use modules will consist of a minimum of eight fire-funded personnel. The NPS regions may establish larger crew size and standards for their exclusive-use helicopter crews based on the need for an all-hazards component (fire, search and rescue [SAR], law enforcement, and emergency medical technician (EMT). Exception to minimum helicopter crew staffing standards must be approved by the National Aviation Office. NPS helicopters operated in Alaska need only be staffed with a qualified HMGB.

For BIA, For exclusive-use helitack crew size standards, see the NAP, appendices, and Exclusive Use Helicopter Module Position Standards. On-call helitack and all helicopter personnel responsibilities are outlined in the NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations, PMS 510. All helitack training and currency requirements are contained in the NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1. Each geographic area hosting exclusive-use/on-call helicopters is responsible for providing essential management, overhead, equipment, facilities, and the resources necessary to fully support the helitack crew. Host geographic areas are encouraged to increase helitack crew size minimum requirements to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness. All exclusive-use helicopter programs are required to use the OPM-

approved GS-0456 series organizational chart. The Aviation Branch Office recommends the 11 crew size organizational chart for an exclusive-use type 3 helicopter program. Minimum daily operational staffing levels will comply with NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations, PMS 510, standards.
Exclusive-Use Minimum:
- *Type 3 helicopters – 10 helitack personnel*
- *Type 2 helicopters – 12 helitack personnel*

- ***FS –** Exclusive-use helitack crew sizes will satisfy the FSM 5700, chapter 30, Helicopter Minimum Staffing requirements. At such time national crew size standards are established, the applicable national standard must be satisfied. Any deviation from the standard and the reason for the deviation must be found acceptable to the Rotor Wing Branch Chief. Experience requirements for exclusive-use helicopter positions are listed in FSFAQG, chapter 4.*

Operational Procedures
The *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510, is policy for helicopter operations.

Helibase
All helibases with two or more helicopters used for fire operations will have a helibase manager (HEBM) assigned and follow standards outlined in the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510.

Communication
The helitack crew standard is one handheld, programmable, multi-channel FM radio per every two crew persons, and one multi-channel, VHF-AM, programmable radio in the primary helitack crew (chase) truck. Each helitack crew (chase) vehicle will have a programmable VHF-FM mobile radio. Each permanent helibase will have a permanent programmable FM radio base station and should be provided a VHF-AM base station radio.

Transportation
Dedicated vehicles with adequate storage and security will be provided for helitack crews. The required gross vehicle weight (GVW) of the vehicle will be dependent upon the volume of equipment carried on the truck and the number of helitack crewmembers assigned to the crew.

- ***DOI/FS –** Federal helicopter crews will follow agency guidelines and standards for crew transportation.*

Training and Experience Requirements
All helitack members will meet fire qualifications as prescribed by the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, and their agency manual requirements. The following chart establishes experience and training requirements for FS and USWFS exclusive-use, fire helicopter crew positions.

- ***DOI/FS –** Federal helicopter crews will follow agency guidelines and standards for training and experience.*

Non-exclusive-use helicopter crewmembers (HECM) and helicopter managers (HMGB) should also meet the following currency requirements.

Note: The *Interagency Aviation Training Guide* states additional aviation training requirements ("A" courses).

Exclusive-Use Fire Helicopter Position Prerequisites

Position[1]	Minimum Prerequisite Experience[2]	Minimum Required Training[3]	Currency Requirements
Fire Helicopter Crew Supervisor	One season[4] as an assistant fire helicopter crew supervisor; IC, type 4 (ICT4), HMGB, HEBM		RT-372[5] RT-130
Assistant Fire Helicopter Crew Supervisor	One season as a fire helicopter squad boss, ICT4, HMGB, HEBM trainee	ICS-200, S-215, S-219, S-260, S-270	RT-372[5] RT-130
Fire Helicopter Squad Boss	One season as a fire HECM, FFT1; IC, type 5 (ICT5)	S-112, S-211,	RT-130
Fire Helicopter Crewmember	One season as a FFT2, HECM position task book	S-271	RT-130

[1] All exclusive-use fire helicopter positions require an arduous fitness rating.
[2] Minimum experience and qualifications required prior to performing in the exclusive-use position. Each level must have met the experience and qualification requirements of the previous level(s).
[3] Minimum training required to perform in the position. Each level must have met the training requirements of the previous level(s).
[4] A "season" is continuous employment in a primary wildland fire position for a period of 90 days or more.
[5] After completing S-372, must attend *Interagency Helicopter Manager Workshop* (RT-372) within three years and every three years thereafter.

Note: Exceptions to the above position standards and staffing levels may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate federal agency national office as appropriate.

- Some positions may be designated as COR/Alternate-COR. If so, see individual agency COR training and currency requirements.
- Fire HMGBs are fully qualified to perform all the duties associated with a resource helicopter manager.

Helicopter Rappel and Cargo Let-Down
FS rappel programs will follow the FS *Standards for Rappel Operations* (SFRO). Any exemption to the identified guides must be requested by the program through the geographic area for approval by the appropriate Federal national aviation office.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. The authority to sign rappel plans is assigned to the Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. This authority cannot be redelegated.*
- ***FS –*** *Approval is required by the national office.*

Single-Skid, Toe-In, and Hover Exit/Entry (STEP)
STEP missions may include insertion/extraction of personnel (firefighters, medical technicians, or rescuers) in support of operations and medical incidents, such as initial attack, large fire support, helispot construction, repeater missions, in areas where a ground-based approach or evacuation would expose rescuers, firefighters, and injured or ill personnel to greater risk.

Any Federal STEP program must be approved by the appropriate agency national office and follow specific agency policy.

- ***DOI –*** *The authority to sign single-skid, toe-in and hover exit/entry procedures (STEP) plans is assigned to the Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. This authority cannot be redelegated.*

Short-haul
To transport one or more persons suspended beneath a helicopter. Short-haul includes insertion or extraction of firefighters, medical technicians or rescuers for suppression operations and medical rescues. Missions may include extraction of personnel from areas where a ground-based approach or evacuation would expose rescuers, firefighters, injured or ill personnel to greater risk.

All short-haul programs must be approved by the appropriate agency national headquarters.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance.*
- ***FS –*** *National office approval is required.*

All short-haul operations will comply with the following policy:

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For NPS, reference the Helicopter Short-Haul Operations Plan. Short-haul operations consisting of both FS and NPS employees will be conducted in accordance with the NPS & USFS Helicopter Short-haul Interoperability Plan, an appendix to each respected agencies short-haul plan. The authority to sign short-haul plans is assigned to the Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. This authority cannot be redelegated.*
- ***FS –*** *Short-haul operations consisting of both FS and NPS employees will be conducted in accordance with the NPS & USFS Helicopter Short-haul Interoperability Plan, an appendix to each respected agencies short-haul plan.*
- ***FS –*** *Forest Service Standards for Short-Haul Operations*

Exemptions to the policy must be requested by the program through the geographic area office for approval by the national aviation office.

Aerial Ignition

The *NWCG Standards for Aerial Ignition*, PMS 501, is policy for all aerial ignition activities.

Fire Chemical Avoidance Areas

See chapter 12, Suppression Chemicals and Delivery Systems, for guidance.

Smokejumper Operations

The interagency (BLM and FS) *Standards for Smokejumper Operations* serves as policy for federal smokejumper operations.

The *Standards for Smokejumper Pilot Operations* serves as policy for federal smokejumper pilot qualifications, training, and operations.

Aerial Supervision Principles for ATGS, HLCO, ASM, and Leadplane

The response speed of aerial supervision resources contributes greatly to established aggressive initial attack doctrine and should be utilized accordingly. Exclusive-use (agency-owned or contracted) air tactical group supervisor (ATGS) and helicopter coordinator (HLCO) resources are geographic area coordination center (GACC) shared resources. These resources are part of a national response framework and are located at bases that provide the best strategic advantage for incident response within their zone in direct support of the airtanker and helicopter fleets. GACCs coordinate with their agencies to ensure response capabilities are commensurate to environmental conditions and provide support to NICC for national priorities. Agency program managers (national/geographic area) work with GACCs to provide expertise and make recommendations that support fire preparedness and suppression objectives for their agency and when available, their cooperators.

Aerial supervision resources will be dispatched when available to initial-/extended-attack incidents in order to enhance safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of aerial/ground operations. The objective is to minimize the instances of airtankers and helicopters operating in the fire traffic area (FTA) without aerial supervision.

In accordance with *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505, when aerial supervision resources are collocated with fixed-wing aircraft, they will be dispatched together unless the required aerial supervision is currently on scene of the incident or is being dispatched from another location. Examples of appropriate aerial supervision can include ATGS, ASM, and/or leadplane.

Incidents with three or more aircraft flying missions at the same time must have aerial supervision in the form of ATGS, ASM/leadplane or HLCO ordered by the unit maintaining operational control (operations may be continued while the aerial supervisor is enroute to the incident or operations can be continued if the resource is not available and assigned resources are notified). During times of aerial supervision absence, aircraft shall coordinate with each other to implement tasks and objectives as prioritized by the official in charge (i.e., IC or operations). A qualified smokejumper spotter (senior smokejumper in charge of smokejumper missions), rappel spotter, or short-haul spotter may coordinate their respected operations with on-scene aircraft over a fire until qualified aerial supervision arrives.

See *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505, table 1, for incident aerial supervision requirements.

Operational Procedures and Policy

The *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505, provides operational procedures and forms for all aerial supervision resources.

The *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, provides training, qualification, and currency standards.

The *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505, contains additional requirements and is policy for the Federal agencies.

Air Tactical Group Supervisor

The ATGS coordinates incident airspace and manages incident air traffic. The ATGS is an airborne firefighter who coordinates, assigns, and evaluates the use of aerial resources in support of incident objectives. Specific duties and responsibilities are outlined in the *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505.

Program Management

The air attack program is managed at the national level by agency program managers. The National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC) provides guidance through the Interagency Aerial Supervision Subcommittee (IASS), which authorizes an agency program manager/ATGS GACC representative to provide operational and programmatic oversight at the geographic area level.

Training

Classroom training is completed per the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1. Field (flight) training assignments are coordinated and prioritized by the geographic area training representatives and agency program manager/ATGS GACC representatives. National interagency ATGS training aircraft have been identified and are utilized for the sole purpose of ATGS flight training.

Operational Considerations

- Ground resources will maintain consistent communication on assigned air to ground frequencies with aerial supervision to maximize the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of aerial operations.
- Relief aerial supervision should be ordered for sustained operations to ensure continuous coverage over an incident.
- Personnel who are performing aerial reconnaissance and detection will not perform aerial supervision duties unless they are fully qualified as an ATGS.
- ATGS aircraft must meet the aircraft/avionics typing requirements listed in the *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505, and the pilot must be carded to perform the air tactical mission. Rotor-wing pilots are not required to be carded for air tactical missions.

Aerial Supervision Module and Leadplane

The aerial supervision module (ASM) and leadplane (LP) are national shared resources.

The ASM is crewed with both a leadplane pilot (LPIL) and an air tactical supervisor (AITS). These individuals are specifically trained to operate together as a team. The resource is primarily designed for providing both functions (leadplane pilot and ATGS) simultaneously from the same aircraft but can also provide single-role service.

The leadplane is staffed with a single pilot and provides coordination with fixed-wing airtankers and water scooping aircraft.

Operational Considerations

Any operation that limits the national resource availability must be approved by the agency program manager.

Aerial or incident complexity and environmental considerations will dictate when the ASM ceases low-level operations. The ASM flight crew has the responsibility to determine when the complexity level of the incident exceeds the capability to perform both ATGS and leadplane functions from one aircraft. The crew will request additional supervision resources or modify the operation to maintain mission safety and efficiency.

Policy

Only individuals authorized by the National Aviation Operations (USWFS), FS-standardization pilot (USFS), State aviation officials (State), and approved by the geographic area aviation official will be certified to function as an AITS.

Aerial Supervision Module Program Training and Qualifications

Training and qualification requirements for ASM crewmembers are defined in the *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505.

Aerial Supervision Coordination

National coordination and management of ASM and LP resources are required to ensure national coverage and capability. Agency aerial supervision/flight operation program managers (national/geographic area) will work with the NICC and GACCs to ensure staffing, aircraft readiness, and availability.

Reconnaissance or Patrol Flights

The purpose of aerial reconnaissance or detection flights is to locate and relay fire information to management. In addition to detecting, mapping, and providing fire sizeup, this resource may be utilized to provide ground resources with intelligence on fire behavior, to the IC when appropriate, and describe access routes into and out of fire areas for responding units. Only qualified aerial supervisors (ATGS, AITS, HLCO and LPIL) are authorized to coordinate incident airspace operations and give direction to aviation assets. Flights with a "reconnaissance, detection, or patrol" designation should communicate with tactical aircraft only to announce location, altitude and to relay their departure direction and altitude from the incident.

Airtankers

For the purpose of this publication, any reference to "airtanker" refers to single engine airtankers (SEATs), type I and type II large airtankers and very large airtankers (VLATs).

Federally contracted airtankers are national resources. Geographic areas administering these aircraft will make them available for initial attack and extended-attack fires on a priority basis regardless of GACC boundaries. The closest resource must be utilized regardless of base ownership, contracting agency, incident jurisdiction, or GACC boundary. This not only includes the aircraft, but also the reload base. If the closest resource isn't what was specifically ordered, the dispatch and coordination system should consult with the incident to ensure the closest resource could meet the need and request them to change the order. Efficient aircraft response is critical to the

successful outcome of wildland fire suppression. Early activation for large fire support can have a significant effect on the resource availability late in the day. NICC must be included in this discussion. Forest Service aircraft coordinators should be notified. The rationale for use of airtankers prior to normal start times for large fire support must include obtainable incident objectives in support of ground resources.

Host GACCs will confirm that no outstanding needs exist for their assigned national resources with NICC prior to releasing flight crews on airtankers and scoopers for the day when those resources are not being used within the host area and could be utilized elsewhere for emerging or ongoing fire activity.

Airtankers can and will be dispatched with a kneeboard. Resource orders are not required to dispatch an airtanker.

Airtankers and scoopers with initial attack (IA) rated pilots can operate without leadplane/ASM supervision. Airtankers with non-IA rated pilots, MAFFS and VLATs require leadplane/ASM supervision to be on scene prior to arriving on the fire. Multi-engine scoopers with non-initial attack carded pilots require either an ATGS or leadplane/ASM to be on scene prior to arriving on the fire.

SEATs with a Level 1 Pilot are permitted to fly missions in the fire traffic area with or without aerial supervision and to operate in a multiple tactical aircraft environment. SEATs with a Level 2 Pilot are permitted to fly missions (1) without aerial supervision or an approved Level 1 Pilot Trainer in the fire traffic area with themselves plus one other aircraft; (2) with aerial supervision or an approved Level 1 Pilot Trainer in the fire environment airspace concurrently with multiple aircraft. Level 2 SEAT pilots must make it known to the aerial supervisor prior to entering the fire traffic area that they are a Level 2 Pilot. When no aerial supervision is on scene, they must notify the incident commander. If neither aerial supervision nor the incident commander are on scene, the Level 2 SEAT Pilot must notify any other aircraft on the fire and/or broadcast in the blind that they are Level 2.

The *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 50, "Airtankers," contains additional direction regarding staffing and maintenance of support functions to mobilize national resources.

For aviation safety and policy concerning wildland fire chemicals see chapter 12, "Suppression Chemicals and Delivery Systems."

Federal airtankers are owned and operated by commercial vendors. Some States may contract for commercially owned airtankers, own airtankers, or order airtankers through compacts—either State-to-State or State-to-Canadian province.

Single Engine Airtanker Operations, Procedures, and Safety
The *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508, defines operating standards and is policy for DOI and FS.

Single Engine Airtanker Manager Position
The SEMG duties and responsibilities are outlined in the *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations* (*SABO*), PMS 508. The *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, lists required training for the SEMG position, ATBM position, and other base support positions. SEMGs may also refer to the *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508, for base support duties and responsibilities. The SEMG provides supervision and coordination of SEAT base operations and base support personnel. The SEMG may report to the local aviation manager, incident aviation manager, or ATBM if applicable. SEMGs assist in ensuring adherence to contract regulations, safety and policy requirements, and fiscal accountability.

SEAT Operational Procedures
Using SEATs in conjunction with other aircraft over an incident is standard practice. Agency or geographical area standards for resource mobilization may specify additional procedures and limitations. Depending on location, operator, and availability, SEATs can drop suppressants, water, or approved chemical retardants. Because of the load capacities of the SEATs (500 to 800 gallons), quick turn-around times should be a prime consideration. SEAT operations at established airtanker bases or reload bases are authorized. All DOI and FS airtanker base operating plans will permit SEAT loading in conjunction with LATs.

The management of airtankers is governed by:
- ***DOI –*** *U.S. Wildland Fire Service and DOI Departmental manuals and plans.*
- ***FS –*** *Airtankers operate in accordance with 14 CFR part 137, specific contracts, Grants of Exemption; Forest Service Manual (5700) and Handbook (5709.16); and the Forest Service Standards for Airtanker Operations.*

Airtanker Types
Airtankers are typed (*NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Resource Typing*, PMS 200) according to their load capacity:
- Very large airtankers – 6,000 gallons or more

- Type 1 – 3,000 to 5,999 gallons
- Type 2 – 1,800 to 2,999 gallons
- Type 3 – 800 to 1,799 gallons
- Type 4 – up to 799 gallons

Very Large Airtankers
Very Large Airtankers (VLATs) have some unique operational considerations including low-level supervision, terrain, airtanker base ramp operations and operations in the fire traffic area (FTA).

- Leadplane/ASM supervision is required and shall be on scene prior to arriving on the fire.
- Aerial supervisors will have technical expertise to determine if the VLAT is the right tool for the terrain and objectives.
- VLATs minimum drop height is 250 feet above the ground or canopy cover whichever is higher. Generally, drop heights should increase when using higher coverage levels.
- For specific FTA/airspace requirements, refer to the *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505.
- Airtanker bases approved for VLATs are listed in the *NWCG Airtanker Base Directory*, PMS 507.

Cooperator Multi-engine Airtankers
Multi-engine airtankers under contract to a State may be mobilized if approved by DOI/FS cooperator approval letter. Prior to mobilization, ordering agencies should confirm that current DOI/FS cooperator approval letters are in place for the requested aircraft and pilots.

- ***DOI –*** *The authority to sign cooperator letters is assigned to the Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. This authority cannot be redelegated.*

International Airtankers and Water Scoopers
International airtankers and scoopers can be activated through the agreements, NIFC/other fire coordination center, or authority or through compacts (State-to-Canadian province).

If approved with no restrictions, international airtankers and water scoopers may operate individually like U.S. airtankers and scoopers.

- NIFC-ordered, Canadian/international aircraft – Aircraft ordered through the NIFC agreement with the foreign country may be used on Federal lands if the aircraft and pilots have been inspected and approved by DOI/FS cooperator approval letter.
- Compact-ordered aircraft – Aircraft and flight crews ordered through State-to-Canadian-province compacts will be considered non-federally approved cooperator aircraft unless they have been previously inspected and approved by DOI/FS cooperator approval letter.

The standard operating procedure for the Canadian or international airtankers and water scoopers is as follows:

- If the pilot is not initial attack rated, the Canadian or international airtankers or water scoopers must be supervised by a Canadian Bird Dog or US ASM/leadplane or ATGS.
- Canadian Bird Dogs may provide low-level target identification runs ("show me" pass) for either Canadian, international or US-contracted airtankers.
- Canadian Bird Dogs are not authorized to "lead" US-federally-contracted airtankers or other international airtankers.
- Canadian Bird Dogs can perform the functions of an ATGS once approved by the US ordering agency.
- US ASM/leadplanes are authorized to "lead" Canadian and international airtankers.
- Canadian airtankers and water scoopers typically operate as a "group" with Canadian Bird Dogs as part of their operational model.
- Canadian Bird Dogs have a Canadian air attack officer (AAO) on board and function similar to a US ASM.

National Airtanker Rotation
The Federal, national airtanker fleet includes a mix of exclusive-use, CWN/on-call airtankers. To ensure consistent utilization, rotation, and management of the national airtanker fleet, the following is interagency direction for the management of airtanker rotation and supplements direction contained in *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508.

All airtankers (including federally approved cooperator and Canadian and other international airtankers) operating from the same base shall be dispatched in rotation based on the need on a first-in/first-out basis regardless of contract type (exclusive-use or CWN/on-call) or the location/jurisdiction of the incident.

First in/first out also applies to airtankers that are requested for a load/return. When an incident requires multiple loads of retardant, aerial supervisors/ICs will notify the appropriate dispatch center of the need for additional

retardant and any operational retardant delivery requirements. To ensure timely and effective retardant delivery, dispatch will order the next available airtanker in rotation if an airtanker that meets the requirement of the request is available and located at the load and return airtanker base.

If an airtanker is on load and return and another airtanker located at the reload base is capable of fulfilling the request to return (regardless of airtanker type originally requested), the ATBM will contact dispatch to make notification of adding the new airtanker into the rotation. The aerial supervision over the fire will determine how many aircraft they want in the FTA at a time. The ATBM will manage that request.

Exceptions
When any of the below exceptions are exercised, they must be documented and will include the specific reason and entity involved in not adhering to the rotation policy, regardless of jurisdiction or agency. Each instance of utilizing an exception will be communicated to the contracting agency's National Airtanker Program Manager(s) as real-time as practicable.

1. Airtankers that do not have an initial-attack-rated pilot in command will not be dispatched to a fire unless a leadplane or ASM is on scene upon the arrival of the airtanker.
2. ICs/aerial supervision declination of a specific type of airtanker.
3. On-scene aerial supervision determines that the use of a specific make/model airtanker is not effective based on factors, such as risk, maneuverability in terrain, and/or effectiveness.
4. The next airtanker in rotation has an operating restriction at the base where the airtanker is being assigned. Operating restrictions may include fuel and retardant availability, airtanker base or airport restrictions, significant downloading of fuel or retardant based on performance, daylight remaining, or distance to the incident is not considered effective.
5. Repositioning of an airtanker closer to where their maintenance crews or supplies are available. (NICC will facilitate in coordination with the GACC.
6. A benefit to the Government would be realized by changing the rotation. This will be facilitated by the GACC or NICC with consideration to days off, mission requirements, and/or anticipated need.
7. Airtankers are returning after day(s) off. Upon returning to availability from days off, these airtankers will be at the end of the rotation at the airtanker base. Airtankers working seven-day schedule retains their position in the rotation.
8. Airtankers out of service or utilizing approved maintenance breaks will retain their position in the rotation until a dispatch comes in that they cannot respond to, per contract requirements. Once they turn down an assignment, the airtanker would move to last in rotation.
9. MAFFS; NICC-ordered, State cooperators; and NICC-ordered, international airtankers, will begin rotation at that base after the contracted airtanker(s) at the beginning of each day.
10. Water scoopers will not be included in airtanker base rotations.

Rotation of Federal Airtankers at a State or Interagency Base
Federally contracted airtankers shall not remain on base, regardless of incident jurisdiction or type requested, while other airtankers are continuing to load and return. There must be a justifiable and documented reason to hold an available and capable airtanker on base. Cost should not be a consideration.

For Federal fires, Federal aircraft will be first out regardless of the ownership of the airtanker base. State airtankers are added to the rotation after the Federal airtankers.

Rotation of State Airtankers
Rotation of State resources on State incidents at a State airtanker base is established by their agency.

In cases where federally approved, State airtankers are operated in conjunction with federally contracted airtankers on an incident primarily on Federal lands, the State airtankers are added to the rotation after the Federal airtankers at the beginning of each day.

Rotation When Supporting Cross GACC Incidents
When an airtanker is load and return on an incident and the closest base is in another GACC, the airtankers on base will be added to the rotation as soon as the base hears that the airtanker is in bound and is load and return.

Additional Information
FS-/DOI-contracted airtankers, when assigned to incidents managed by other agencies or State cooperators remain under the direction of the contracting agency. FS-/DOI-contracted airtankers are bound only by their contract and will be treated fairly and equitability during their assignment with other Federal or State agencies.

Responsibilities

- GACCs:

  - Prompt the ordering units/dispatch centers to create orders for the airtankers when being added to the rotation.
  - Monitor when there is a fire and an available and capable airtanker is sitting.
- ATBMs:
  - Contact the local dispatch for the kneeboard and/or resource order for airtankers being added to rotation.
  - Proactively work to get capable and available airtankers into rotation, regardless of incident jurisdiction.

Airtanker Payloads

Loading Forest Service contracted type 2, type 1 or VLAT airtankers with water or dropping water operationally shall not occur unless the FS National Airtanker Program Manager has been notified. Use of water operationally from these airtankers will require the following prior to notification:

- The requesting unit will justify why use of a water scooper or helicopter is not the appropriate aircraft.
- Use of retardant is restricted by the fire management plan (FMP) for the unit requesting the approval to use water. A copy of the section of the FMP restricting use of retardant shall be provided to the Forest Service National Airtanker Program Manager with the notification and justification regarding not using water scoopers or helicopters.

During pre- or post-season fires, loading airtankers with water may be necessary when the nearest airtanker base may not be operational and capable of loading retardant. Once an airtanker base is operational and can load retardant, use of water shall cease.

Use of water enhancers (gels) is strictly prohibited in type 2, type 1 or VLAT airtankers contracted by the FS.

Large and Very Large Airtanker Coordination

National coordination and management of FS-contracted airtankers and scoopers is required to ensure there is airtanker and scooper coverage, response, and capability nationwide. The FS Airtanker Program Manager and FS Fixed-wing Coordinator coordinate and manage airtanker and scooper readiness and availability, capability, and response with vendors, geographic area aviation staff, national aviation staff, and NICC.

Airtanker Base Operations

For dispatch procedures, limitations, and times, refer to geographic area standards for resource mobilization and the *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508.

All permanent and temporary bases will have an updated and signed for the current year, local airtanker base operations plan (ABOP), and a qualified ATBM prior to operations out of the airtanker base airport. All personnel conducting airtanker base operations shall review the *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508, and have it available. In the absence of a qualified SEMG, if one is not available, ATBMs are authorized to manage SEATs. National contracts for airtankers, water scoopers and retardant are available upon request from the respective contracting officers.

Geographic areas aviation officials and GACCs shall coordinate airtanker base activation and closing dates with the appropriate agency airtanker base specialist to ensure national airtanker response and capability is maintained.

- ***FS –*** *National job codes for airtanker base early activation or late closing may be available to support national response and capability.*

Loading Operations

FS-contracted airtankers and modular airborne firefighting system (MAFFS) airtankers shall be loaded using a mass flow meter to measure the payload in pounds. Refer to the *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508; *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Operations*, PMS 514; *Forest Service Standards for Airtanker Operations*; and the *MAFFS Operating Plan* for more information.

Airtanker Base Personnel

Qualification requirements for airtanker base positions are located in *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1.

The ATBM provides supervision, leadership, and coordination of airtanker base operations. The ATBM has ultimate authority and responsibility over all operations at the airtanker base. The ATBM may report to the local aviation manager and/or incident aviation manager.

Startup/Cutoff Time for Multi-Engine Airtankers

Refer to the *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505.

Operational Procedures
Using SEATs in conjunction with other aircraft over an incident is standard practice. Agency or geographical area standards for resource mobilization may specify additional procedures and limitations.

Depending on location, operator, and availability, SEATs can drop suppressants, water, or approved chemical retardants. Because of the load capacities of the SEATs (500 to 800 gallons), quick turn-around times should be a prime consideration.

SEAT operations at established airtanker bases or reload bases are authorized. All BLM and FS airtanker base operating plans will permit SEAT loading in conjunction with LATs.

Water Scoopers

Single Engine Water Scoopers
Single engine water scoopers such as the AT-802F are fixed-wing, turbo-prop aircraft with amphibious floats and are ordered as a type 4 airtanker (water scooper). Minimum drop height is 60 feet above ground cover/canopy. Units ordering single engine water scoopers will need to verify there is a qualified manager on-site. Single engine water scoopers may only be managed remotely for 24 hours to allow time for assigned SEMG/ATBM or Amphibious Water Scooper Manager (AWSM) to relocate to the aircraft's operating location. Single engine scoopers engaged in delivering retardant will need to have an appropriate ATBM or SEMG on-site. Single engine scoopers delivering water enhancers will need to follow agency policy and contract as well as only delivering those products that are approved on the QPL, and at the proper mix ratios. Refer to the *NWCG Standards for Water Scooping Operations*, PMS 518.

Multi Engine Water Scoopers
FS-contracted, multi engine water scoopers are turbo-prop, amphibious aircraft that are ordered as type 3 multi-engine airtankers (Water Scooper) and are national resources. Geographic areas administering these aircraft will make them available for initial attack and extended attack fires on a priority basis. A qualified Amphibious Water Scooper Manager (AWSM) will need to be ordered by the unit requesting water scoopers and will need to be on site to coordinate water scooper operations, logistics, contract administration, and water-body assessment.

FS-contracted, multi-engine water scoopers, by contract, shall not use retardant, foam, or gels.

- ***FS –*** *The use of fire chemicals mixed with on board injection or blending systems is not permitted on Forest-Service-contracted aircraft. Water enhancers may be mixed and loaded from ground-based equipment when demand is mixed through a proportioner; or batch mixed to the qualified mix ratio in a separate tank, then transferred into a dip tank. Compliance with the Forest Service Qualified Product List to include qualified, approved mix ratios, is mandatory.*

Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS)

The *MAFFS Operating Plan* will be used when planning or conducting aviation operations involving MAFFS military aircraft. Ordering MAFFS is accomplished through the NICC; MAFFS are utilized through a national agreement (reference the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*). Several States have the ability to activate MAFFS through separate agreements that do not require ordering through NICC. Some of these States belong to Compacts and through those agreements can share State ordered MAFFS with other States in that Compact.

Cooperator Aircraft

- ***DOI –*** *The authority to sign cooperator letters is assigned to the Director and Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management. This authority cannot be redelegated.*

Cooperator-contracted aircraft also on an existing Federal contract with Federal aircraft and pilot cards may be utilized on federally protected lands when cooperative agreements are in place and the aircraft have been approved by USDA Forest Service/DOI cooperator letter.

Cooperator-contracted, exclusive-use aircraft not on an existing Federal contract may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis when cooperative agreements are in place. Approval will be by USDA Forest Service/DOI cooperator letter.

Cooperator-owned/-operated aircraft may be utilized on federally managed fires when cooperative agreements are in place and the aircraft have been approved by FS/DOI letter. Cooperator-owned/-operated aircraft meeting requirements of the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Cooperator Type 2 and Type 3 Helicopters*, PMS 525-1, or other applicable NWCG standards may be utilized on federally protected lands when cooperative agreements are in place and the aircraft have been approved by FS/DOI cooperator letter.

- All approved cooperator aircraft used on federally managed fires shall be released when Federal aircraft become reasonably available.
- The use of approved cooperator aircraft must involve a "significant and imminent threat to life or property" documented daily on the Cooperator Aircraft Use Validation Worksheet (*National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 80, Forms) to document the justification for aircraft utilization.

Non-Federally Approved Cooperator Aircraft
Cooperator-contracted, exclusive-use aircraft not on an existing Federal contract may be considered for approval on a case-by- case basis when cooperative agreements are in place.

The following conditions apply for non-federally approved aircraft:
- No federal employees are allowed to ride on board the aircraft.
- No federal employee may be assigned to a position that exercises contractual control.
- Federal personnel may load retardant at Federal airtanker bases, regardless of jurisdiction.
- Federal personnel may provide aerial supervision (ATGS, ASM, HLCO, leadplane) under existing standard operating procedures and agreements.
- The aircraft are approved to interact with Federal dispatch personnel.

Under emergency circumstances, where human life is immediately at risk by wildland fire on lands under Federal protection, an agency administrator (USWFS) or line officer (FS) can approve the use of non-federally approved aircraft. This exemption must only take place when:
- Federal airtankers cannot meet the day and time needed
- Federal airtankers cannot meet the operational needs
- No suitable Federal airtanker is available
- A Federal airtanker is on order

Agency administrators (USWFS) and line officers (FS) are encouraged to consult with agency aviation management personnel to aid in decision-making. Use the Non-federally Approved Cooperator Aircraft Use Approval form (*National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, chapter 80, Forms) to document the justification for aircraft utilization.

Approving agency administrator (USWFS) or line officer (FS) must document exemptions in accordance with agency guidance to include submitting a SAFECOM within 24 hours.

Chapter 17
Fuels Management

Introduction

The purpose of the fuels management programs within the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) is to reduce hazardous fuels and risks to human communities and improve the health of the land by creating fire-resilient landscapes and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.

The DOI and FS, along with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local partners, will work to ensure effective fire management efforts are collectively planned and implemented. These efforts will be consistent with the direction provided in:

- *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (January 2001)
- *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (February 13, 2009)
- ***DOI –*** *U.S. WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE POLICY MEMORANDUM No. 2026-002, Guidance on U.S. Wildland Fire Service Roles and Responsibilities During Transition*

Policy

The Federal fire agencies use the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484, to manage prescribed fire activities. This guide provides standardized procedures specifically associated with the planning and implementation of prescribed fire.

Fuels Management

Policy, project planning and implementation priorities, and standards common to all agencies include:

- Firefighter and public safety are the top priority.
- Describe what is minimally acceptable for prescribed fire planning and implementation. Agencies may choose to provide more restrictive standards and policy direction but must adhere to these minimums.
- Provide common language and unified direction or guidance for Federal agency manuals, directive handbooks, and guidelines to be issued as agency policy.
- Develop single unit, multiple units, and programmatic plans where the intent is to ignite a unit or units with active perimeter control.
- Plan for long-duration, landscape-scale prescribed fires, where the intent is to ignite portions of the unit and allow fire to move across the project area over time that may require supplemental information and analysis.
- Ensure that risk management is incorporated into all prescribed fire planning and implementation.
- Support safe, carefully planned, and cost-efficient prescribed fire operations.
- Support use of prescribed fire to reduce wildfire risk to communities, municipal watersheds, and other values, and to benefit, protect, maintain, sustain, and enhance natural and cultural resources.
- Support use of prescribed fire to restore natural ecological processes and functions, and to achieve land-management objectives.

Some programmatic differences are identified in the following agency-specific documentation and serve as agency-specific direction.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. BLM reference Fuels Management and Community Assistance Handbook 9214-1, NPS reference RM-18, FWS reference Fire Management Handbook, chapter 17, or BIA Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Program Business Rules Handbook, July 2008.*
- ***FS –*** *Refer to FSM 5140.*

Reporting Fuels Management Accomplishments

The Interior Fuels and Post-fire Reporting System (IFPRS) is the Department of the Interior national System of Record (SOR) for submitting estimated and completed fuels management actions. These actions include treatments and activities where the system tracks accomplishments of the fuels program as the authoritative data. Data are used for reporting performance and accountability for all agencies in the DOI. USDA FS fuels management accomplishments are entered into the FS Activity Tracking System (FACTS) as the official system of record for tracking and reporting.

Information on FACTS can be found at https://fsweb.nrm.fs.fed.us/.

Reporting Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring

Anytime a wildfire starts in or interacts with a fuel treatment area, policy requires that all agencies document the outcome to examine whether the treatment had the desired effect of reduced fire behavior and/or provided opportunities to firefighters for effective management of the wildfire.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. Refer to BLM H-9214-1, NPS RM-18, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Fire Management Reporting Requirements and Timelines Memorandum, FMB202015 - Establishment of a Fuels Management Three-Year Program of Work, or BIA memorandum Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Final Guidance, 06/05/2013.*
- ***FS –*** *Refer to FSM 5140.*

Reporting Planned Fuels Treatments Burned in a Wildfire

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. DOI acres burned in a wildfire may be reported in IFPRS as a "wildfire" treatment type if the following criteria have been met:*
  - *The area burned is preidentified (with polygon) within an IFPRS program of work.*
  - *The preidentified objectives associated with the treatment were accomplished.*
  - *The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and relevant pre-treatment compliance are complete.*

  BIA reporting requirements can be found in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Program Business Rules Handbook, July 2008, page 36.
- ***FS –*** *Acres burned from an unplanned natural ignition may be reported as accomplished, regardless of suppression actions, if the resulting fire effects meet objectives from the L/RMP or project-specific NEPA decision document. Human-caused wildfires may not be counted as accomplishment toward target regardless of the outcome. See "Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management Objectives" section below for additional information.*

Reporting of Wildfire Acres That Meet Resource Management Objectives

- ***FS –*** *Direction for reporting accomplishments from unplanned ignitions is found in the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments Tracking and Accomplishments Reporting Requirements document posted on the FACTS support page.*

Prescribed Fire During Preparedness Levels 4 and 5

Approval at the geographic area level is required prior to ignition of prescribed fires at national preparedness levels 4 and 5. Approving officials should consider relative risks and opportunities as well as availability of local resources to implement without the need for additional outside resources that could add additional strain on resource availability nationally. To limit the potential for mixed messages when at Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) or national preparedness levels 4 and 5, agencies should coordinate information on planned implementation of prescribed fires with interagency partners at the local, Geographic Area Multi-agency Coordinating Group (GMAC) and National Multi-agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) levels.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. The USWFS will approve prescribed fire implementation on DOI lands, including contracted or non-fuels management prescribed fire projects, at National or Geographic Preparedness Level 4 or 5.*
- ***FS –*** *The regional forester will approve or disapprove new prescribed fires or continue existing prescribed fire at national preparedness levels 4 and 5 or if National Fire Danger Rating System forecasted adjective rating is "extreme" for the county that the prescribed fire is located or any adjacent county. Reference FSM 5140.*

Federal Agencies Assistance

Reference section VI of the *Interagency Agreement for Wildland Fire Management among the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States Department of The Interior, and the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture*.

Agencies will enter into separate agreements for personnel and other resources provided for planning and implementation of fuels management treatments and activities. This may or may not result in an exchange of funds subject to the applicable statutory authority used.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For BIA, refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Program Business Rules Handbook, July 2008, pages 23-24.*
- ***FS –*** *USFS units will make every attempt to establish agreements in advance when planning to utilize resources from cooperating agencies to implement or respond as contingency resources for prescribed fire. However, for prescribed fire activities and exigent circumstances, where an agreement was not executed and funds were not obligated prior to commencing work, a ratification may not be necessary if an approved agreement is executed and funds obligated on I-web within 30 calendar days of the start of work. See FSH 1509.11 chapter 10, Section 15.81.*

Hazard Pay/Environmental Differential for Prescribed Fire Implementation

For hazard pay/environmental differential, refer to the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902.

Non-NWCG Agency Personnel Use on Prescribed Fire

For information regarding use of non-National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) agency personnel on prescribed fires, see chapter 13.

Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation

Agencies can contract to conduct all or part of the planning and implementation of prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for fuels management projects. Contractors must meet *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1, qualification requirements and agency standards for specific skill positions for prescribed fire operations.

If a contractor is actively involved in igniting, holding, or mopping up an agency prescribed fire, a contracting officer's authorized representative (COR) or project inspector (PI) will be on site (exceptions can be made for late stage mop up and patrol) to ensure that the prescribed fire objectives are being met and that the terms of the contract are adhered to. The agency administrator and/or fire management officer (FMO) will determine the qualifications required for the agency representative (COR or PI).

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. Refer to BLM H-9214-1, chapter 5-3, Contractor and Cooperator Prescribed Fire Plan Development and Implementation; FWS refer to Fire Management Handbook, chapter 17, and 645 FW 1 for fuels projects funded by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Coastal Program; and BIA refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Program Business Rules Handbook, July 2008, page 22.*
- ***FS –*** *Contractors must meet requirements for any specific skill positions for prescribed fire operations as described in NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, or FSH 5109.17 for positions not found in the NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, (e.g., RXB3). Reference FSM 5140.*

Use of DOI/FS Administratively Determined Pay Plan for Prescribed Fire

Administratively Determined workers may be used in support of prescribed fire under specific circumstances. Refer to the appropriate DOI/FS Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals) for information regarding the use of emergency workers for prescribed fire. Administratively Determined pay plans do not allow for use of Casuals for mechanical or chemical treatment fuels reduction projects.

Activation of Contingency Resources

In the event contingency resources are activated, sending units should respond and support the requesting agency immediately.

Non-Fire Fuels Management Activities

For policy, guidance, and standards for implementation of non-fire fuel reduction treatments (e.g., mechanical, biological, chemical), refer to agency-specific policy and direction.

- ***DOI –*** *Per Wildland Fire Management Direction from Secretary Burgum | April 8, 2026, the Department expects efficient use of appropriate tools, including:*
  - *mowing and grazing;*
  - *cutting, masticating, thinning, piling, yarding, and selling timber and salvage;*

- *establishing and maintaining linear fuel breaks and access roads;*
- *biological and chemical fuel treatments;*
- *selling vegetation products such as firewood, biomass, timber, and fence posts; and*
- *managing invasive species, including the seeding of native, non-invasive, or non-native species*

Chapter 18
Reviews and Investigations

Introduction

Agencies are required to meet their individual accident investigation and reporting requirements.

Reviews and investigations are used by wildland fire and aviation managers to assess and improve the effectiveness and safety of organizational operations and to identify opportunities for learning at the individual, unit, geographic area, and enterprise levels. Reviews and investigations demonstrate commitment to safety at all levels within the organization.

Information learned during reviews and investigations is only to be used by agencies for accident prevention and safety process improvement purposes.

Multiagency cooperation is encouraged to develop working relationships and share critical information learned from cooperative reviews and investigations. In some cases, multiple agencies will be required to review and investigate involving multiple jurisdictions.

Injury or Accident Notification (Emergency Notification)

Primary effort is to provide supportive care to injured individuals so as not to incur further injury or damage. Render immediate medical care and strive to transfer patients to definitive care within one hour of the incident.

- Complete a Medical Incident Report to begin emergency response to the incident. This may include calling 911 when not on a wildland fire incident or working within a staffed dispatch center area.
- As the initial response to the injury or accident is completed, notify the responsible organizational structure following agency, local, and geographic area protocols. At a minimum this is:
  - Direct supervisor
- Follow incident medical plan procedures when provided.
- Complete agency specific accident/injury reporting requirements.
  - DOI – SMIS
  - USDA – eSafety

Multiagency Cooperation

Many reviews and investigations involve cooperation between Federal, Tribal, State, county, and municipal agencies. To comply with each agency's authorities, policies, and responsibilities, a multiagency review or investigation may be necessary. A multiagency delegation of authority should be provided to outline roles, responsibilities, and expected deliverables.

The team leader or delegating official(s) should establish cooperative relationships with the other agencies involved in the review or investigation to ensure policies and responsibilities are met. This may involve negotiations, cooperative agreements, and coordination with the designated agency safety and health official (DASHO) or the agency official who signs the delegation of authority.

Federal Interagency Investigations

Close calls or accidents that involve interagency (Forest Service [FS] or DOI) personnel and/or jurisdiction (e.g., FS firefighter injured on DOI jurisdictional wildland fire and vice versa) shall be reviewed or investigated cooperatively and conducted at the appropriate level as outlined in this chapter.

Agency administrators will ensure that affected agencies are involved throughout the review/investigation process.

When an incident does not meet the serious accident criteria, the affected agency administrators should jointly decide what type and level of investigation will be conducted based on agency processes outlined in this chapter. Questions should be addressed to your agency wildland fire safety program manager.

Reviews/Accident-Injury Response

Reviews are methodical examinations of system elements, such as program management, safety, leadership, operations, preparedness, training, staffing, business practices, budget, cost containment, planning, and interagency or intra-agency cooperation and coordination. Reviews do not have to be associated with a specific incident. The purpose of a review is to ensure the effectiveness of the system element being reviewed, and to identify deficiencies and recommend specific corrective actions. Established review types are in the table below.

Review Types, Requirements, and Authorities

Reviews	When Conducted	Delegating or Authorizing Official
After action review	Management discretion	N/A
Preparedness review	Annually, or management discretion	Local/geographic area/national
Fire and Aviation Safety Team Review	As fire activity dictates	Geographic area coordinating group
Safety Assistance Team visit	As fire activity dictates	Local/geographic area/national
Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team review	As aviation activity dictates	Geographic area aviation manager or multi-agency coordinating group
Wildland Fire Management Annual Report and Large Fire Review (FS)	Annually or following an incident meeting the criteria.	Washington Office
Incident Specific Reviews	**When Conducted**	**Delegating or Authorizing Official**
Individual Fire review	Management discretion	Local/geographic area/national
Declared Wildfire Review	See *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484	Geographic area/national
Air Quality Exceedance Notice of Violation (NOV)	See *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484	*NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484
Accident/Injury Response	**When Conducted**	**Delegating or Authorizing Official**
Serious Accident Investigation (DOI) Facilitated Learning Analysis (USFS-Chiefs Level Review)	Management discretion	Required national delegation
Lessons Learned Review/Facilitated Learning Analysis	Management discretion, following an accident not meeting Serious criteria	Local/geographic area required delegation
Rapid Lesson Sharing	Management discretions, when there is a need to share lessons quickly	Local/geographic area delegation optional

Reviews

After Action Review

An after action review (AAR) is a learning tool intended for the evaluation of an incident or project in order to improve performance by sustaining strengths and correcting weaknesses. An AAR is performed as soon after the event as possible by the personnel involved. An AAR should encourage input from participants that is focused on:

- What was planned?
- What actually happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What are we going to do next time?

An AAR is a tool that leaders and units can use to get maximum benefit from the experience gained on any incident or project. When possible, the leader of the incident or project should facilitate the AAR process. However, the leader may choose to have another person facilitate the AAR as needed and appropriate.

AARs may be conducted at any organizational level. However, all AARs involve the exchange of ideas and observations, and focus on improving proficiency. The AAR should not be utilized as an investigational review. The format can be found in the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461, NFES 1077. Additional AAR information is available at https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/aars.

Preparedness Review

Preparedness reviews assess fire programs for compliance with established fire policies and procedures outlined in the current *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and other pertinent policy documents.

Preparedness reviews identify organizational, operational, procedural, personnel, or equipment deficiencies, and recommend specific corrective actions. Interagency preparedness review checklists can be found on the NIFC website.

- ***DOI –*** *See chapter 2, Fire Program Reviews, for 2026 local level review requirements. The USWFS will conduct scheduled aviation reviews in 2026, including BIA, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and tribally*

operated programs under PL 93-638 and Self-Governance compacts, excluding the BLM. DOI Bureaus and tribally operated programs will participate in scheduled aviation reviews during 2026.

Fire and Aviation Safety Team Review
A Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST) assists agency administrators during periods of high fire activity by assessing policy, rules, regulations, and management oversight relating to operational issues. They can also do the following:

- Provide guidance to ensure fire and aviation programs are conducted safely;
- Assist with providing immediate corrective actions;
- Review compliance with OSHA abatement plan(s), reports, reviews, and evaluations; and
- Review compliance with *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*.

FAST reviews can be requested through geographic area coordination centers (GACC) to conduct reviews at the geographic area and local level. If a more comprehensive review is required, a national FAST can be ordered through the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC).

FASTs include a team leader, who is either an agency administrator or fire program lead with previous experience as a FAST member, a safety and health manager, and other individuals with a mix of skills from fire and aviation management.

FASTs will be chartered by their respective Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG) with a delegation of authority, and report back to the GACG.

FAST reports will include an executive summary, purpose, objectives, methods/procedures, findings, recommendations, follow-up actions (immediate, long-term, national issues), and a letter delegating authority for the review. FAST reports should be submitted to the GACG with a copy to the Federal Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FFAST) chair within 30 days. See appendix H for sample FAST delegation of authority.

Safety Assistance Team Visit
In addition to FAST reviews, Safety Assistance Team (SAT) visits emphasize engaging individual firefighters, managers, and administrators to grasp potential issues, with a focus on firefighting safety fundamentals. SAT visits are not inspections. SATs are often ordered when activity within an area escalates rapidly, or when a high level of activity has been occurring for a long time. SATs can be single agency or interagency in scope and composition.

The goals of an SAT are to:

- Assist fire managers and IMTs with site visits with firefighters, fire managers, and program leaders.
- Be service oriented, assisting the local units.
- Provide early warning of potentially hazardous conditions or situations.

Direct intervention, circumventing normal chain of command, is authorized when necessary; however, the overall objective is to create a work environment where the normal operating procedures are responsible for safe practices.

Aviation Safety and Technical Assistance Team Review
Refer to chapter 16 for Aviation Safety and Technical Assistant Team (ASTAT) information.

Wildland Fire Management Annual Report and Large Fire Review (FS)
The Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, will select a subset of fires for review based on complexity and national significance, ensuring the selected fires provide a cross-sectional representation of cost, size, and oversight complexity. The reviews will be multi-tiered and foster a working environment that will improve the decision-making process and develop a capacity for organizational learning. If a site visit is required, the Washington Office, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, will notify the regional forester. The national review process can include real time analysis of fire information, informal discussions with fire managers and geographic area personnel, and/or site visits by a cadre of specialists to individual incidents and or geographic areas. For more detail, see FSM 5139.2.

Incident Specific Reviews

Individual Fire Review
An individual fire review may be conducted on incidents. Individual fire reviews examine all or part of the operations on an individual fire. Individual fire reviews may also be conducted when there are significant natural resource concerns or there are policy, political, social, or economic concerns, including significant impacts to infrastructure and energy-related corridors or there are significant and complicated cost-share or multi-jurisdictional issues. The fire may be ongoing or controlled. These reviews may be local, geographic area, or national. These reviews evaluate decisions and strategies, correct deficiencies, identify new or improved procedures, techniques, or

tactics, determine cost-effectiveness, and compile and develop information to improve local, geographic area, or national fire management programs.

Declared Wildfire Review
Every prescribed fire resulting in a wildfire declaration will receive an outcome review. Declared wildfire outcome review direction is found in these agency documents:

- *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484.
  - ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For BLM, refer to Fuels Management Manual 9214 and Handbook 9214-1, chapter 5. For NPS, refer to RM-18, chapters 7 and 17. For FWS, refer to Fire Management Handbook, chapter 17. For BIA, refer to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fuels Management Program Supplement to the NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation, PMS 484, (May 2022), chapter 3.*
  - ***FS –*** *Refer to FSM 5140.*

Declared wildfire reviews should be submitted to any staff member at the LLC (https://lessons.wildfire.gov/about-us) by the agency fuels program lead.

Air Quality Exceedance Notice of Violation Review
An Air Quality Exceedance Notice of Violation (NOV) review supports understanding of the planning, decisions, and actions taken that contributed to the NOV. Refer to *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484.

Accident/Injury Responses

Accident/Injury responses are detailed and methodical efforts to collect and interpret facts related to an incident or accident, identify causes or conditions that contributed to the accident (organizational factors, local workplace factors, unsafe acts), and develop control measures to prevent recurrence.

In addition to agency-specific accident investigation reporting requirements (SMIS/eSafety), distinct types of wildland fire incidents and accidents have specific investigation requirements.

Wildland Fire Incident and Accident Types and Definitions

- **Serious Wildland Fire Accident –** An unplanned event or series of events that resulted in death, injury, occupational illness, or damage to or loss of equipment or property. For wildland fire operations, a serious accident involves any of the following:
  - One or more job-related fatalities or imminently fatal injuries or illnesses to employees, volunteers, contractors, or the public.
  - The in-patient hospitalization of three or more employees, volunteers, or members of the public due to departmental operations.
  - Amputation(s) or loss of an eye(s).
  - Property damage (including site mitigation or cleanup) or operating loss of $500,000 or more, or (6) accident, illness.
  - Incident that a Bureau DASHO judges to warrant further investigation using the serious accident investigation procedures.
- **Wildland Fire Accident –** An unplanned event or series of events that resulted in injury, occupational illness, or damage to or loss of equipment or property to a lesser degree than defined in a "serious wildland fire accident."
- **Near-miss –** An unplanned event or series of events that could have resulted in death, injury, occupational illness, or damage to or loss of equipment or property but did not.
- **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 compromised. Entrapment may or may not include deployment of a fire shelter for its intended purpose. Entrapment may result in a serious wildland fire accident, a wildland fire accident, or a near-miss.
- **Burnover –** An event in which a fire moves through a location or overtakes personnel or equipment where there is no opportunity to utilize escape routes and safety zones, often resulting in personal injury or equipment damage.
- **Fire Shelter Deployment –** The removing of a fire shelter from its case and unfolding it to use as protection against heat, smoke and burning embers.
- **Fire Trespass –** The occurrence of unauthorized fire on agency-protected lands where the source of ignition is tied to some type of human activity.

Accident review/investigation types and final reports should be commensurate with the complexity and/or severity of the accident and focus on organizational learning and the prevention of reoccurrence. Investigations and reports may range from large investigation teams producing comprehensive accident investigation reports to first-level supervisors initiating investigations and reporting injury/property damage in their agency-specific reporting systems (SMIS/eSafety). Final accident investigation reports may range between agency- specific accident reports, small one-page RLSs, LLR reports (simple or complex), to extensive investigation reports that follow the same format as a serious accident.

Investigation and Review Types and Requirements[1]

Wildland Fire Event	Investigation or Review Type	Management level that determines review type and authorizes review[3]
Serious wildland fire accident	SAI ***FS** – FLA process or the CRP for FS employee fatality events*	National
Wildland fire accident	SAI, accident investigation, LLR/FLA, RLS, depending on severity. This is in addition to agency- specific accident report (e.g., SMIS/eSafety)	Geographic area/local
Entrapment/ burnover[2]	SAI, accident investigation, LLR/FLA, RLS depending on severity	National/geographic area
Fire shelter deployment	SAI, accident investigation, LLR/FLA, RLS depending on severity	National/geographic area
Near-miss	LLR/FLA, RLS, AAR	Geographic area/local
Fire trespass	Fire cause determination and trespass investigation	Local

[1]Agencies may have agency-specific processes that may require coordination for investigation process interface/integration with respective DOI or USFS delegation officials per the memorandum of agreement.
[2]In the event that a wildland fire entrapment or fatality occurs, immediate notification to NICC is required. A *Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Initial Report*, PMS 405-1, should be submitted to NICC within 24 hours. Submit this report even if some data is missing.
[3]Higher level management may exercise their authority to determine the type of review or investigation.

Agencies may have agency-specific processes that may require coordination for investigation process interface/integration with respective DOI or USFS delegation officials.

Selection Table for DOI/USFS Serious Accident Investigation Type[1]

Agency Affiliation of Victim(s)	Agency with Operational Control	Agency Jurisdiction	• Investigation Type • Team Lead • Deputy or Representative (Rep)
DOI	DOI	DOI	• DOI SAI • DOI Team Lead • USFS Interagency Rep
USFS	USFS	USFS	• USFS Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) • USFS Team Lead • DOI Interagency Rep
DOI	USFS	USFS	• DOI SAI • DOI Team Lead • USFS Deputy
DOI	DOI	USFS	• DOI SAI • DOI Team Lead • USFS Interagency Rep
USFS	DOI	DOI	• USFS CRP + DOI MER** • USFS Team Lead • DOI Deputy

Agency Affiliation of Victim(s)	Agency with Operational Control	Agency Jurisdiction	• Investigation Type • Team Lead • Deputy or Representative (Rep)
USFS	USFS	DOI*	• USFS CRP • USFS Team Lead • DOI Interagency Rep
Both DOI and USFS	DOI or USFS	DOI	• DOI SAI • DOI Team Lead • USFS Deputy
Both DOI and USFS	DOI or USFS	USFS	• USFS CRP + DOI MER** • USFS Team Lead • DOI Deputy
DOI or USFS	Non-federal	Non-federal	• DOI SAI or USFS CRP based on the agency of victim. • DOI lead if SAI, USFS lead if CRP. • Non-fed agency rep
Non-federal	DOI or USFS	DOI or USFS	• DOI SAI or USFS CRP based on agency jurisdiction. • DOI lead if SAI, USFS lead if CRP. • Non-fed agency rep or Deputy
Non-federal	Non-federal	DOI or USFS	• DOI SAI or USFS CRP based on agency jurisdiction (see Note 1) • DOI lead for SAI, or USFS lead for CRP • Non-fed agency rep or Deputy
DOI or USFS	DOI or USFS	Non-federal	• DOI SAI or USFS CRP based on agency victim. • DOI or USFS lead from same agency of victim. • Non-fed agency rep from different agency than lead.

[1]The table is from the *DOI Serious Accident Investigation Guide*. See the guide for additional information.
*This will require DOI approval to go outside of Departmental Manual 485 with no DOI SAI response on DOI jurisdiction lands.
**DOI Management Evaluation Report (MER) will require an expanded investigation team to ensure SAI-MER components are captured and completed.
Note 1: Non-federal agencies may have agency-specific processes that may require coordination for investigation process interface/integration with respective DOI or USFS delegating officials.

Serious Accident Investigation

For interagency serious accident investigations (SAI), a multi-agency delegation of authority to conduct the investigation may be issued. The delegation will ensure that the investigation meets the policy requirements of involved agencies.

- ***DOI –*** *The DOI Serious Accident Investigation Guide establishes core direction for DOI and interagency SAIs (exceptions for aviation accidents are stated in the guide). The guide provides SAI teams (SAIT) a standardized and comprehensive process for conducting SAIs. SAI reports will be completed, routed, and disseminated according to processes established in the guide. Reports may contain information supplemental to the requirements of the guide if it augments the ability to learn and to develop further improvements. The guide may be used entirely or in part for accidents that do not meet the serious accident definition.*
- ***DOI –*** *All DOI aviation accident and incident investigations are conducted in accordance with 352 DM 3 and the DOI Aircraft Mishap Notification, Investigation, and Reporting Handbook.*

- ***FS –*** *The FS does not use the SAI process but may assist other agencies in an SAI for incidents involving the FS interests or personnel. FS aviation accidents and incidents utilize the FS aviation mishap investigation process. The FS's response to serious accidents includes the FLA which may be used for unintended outcomes of all types and the Learning Review to FS serious accidents. Current version of the Learning From Unintended Outcome guide can be found on the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center's (LLC) website.*

Director/Chief U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service Responsibilities
The Director/Chief, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, or designee(s), of the lead agency, or agency responsible for the land upon which the accident occurred, will:

- Ensure the agency safety manager and DASHO have been notified;
- Immediately appoint, authorize (through delegation of authority), and deploy an accident investigation team;
- Provide resources and procedures adequate to meet the team's needs;
- Receive the factual and management evaluation reports and take action to accept or reject recommendations;
- Forward investigation findings, recommendations, and corrective action plan to the DASHO (the agency safety office is the "office or record" for reports);
- Convene an accident review board/board of review (if deemed necessary) to evaluate the adequacy of the factual and management reports and suggest corrective actions;
- Ensure a corrective action plan is developed, incorporating management initiatives established to address accident causal factors; and
- Ensure SAIs remain independent of other investigations.

Agency Administrator Responsibilities

- Develop local preparedness plans to guide emergency response.
- Identify agencies with jurisdictional responsibilities for the accident.
- Provide for and emphasize treatment and care of survivors.
- Ensure the incident commander (IC) secures the accident site.
- Conduct an in-briefing to the investigation team.
- Facilitate and support the investigation as requested.
- Determine need and implement CISM.
- Notify home Tribe leadership in the case of a Native American fatality.
- Prepare and issue the required 24-hour preliminary report unless formally delegated to another individual.

Notification
Agency reporting requirements will be followed. As soon as a serious accident is verified, the following groups or individuals should be notified:

- Agency administrator;
- Public affairs;
- Agency law enforcement;
- Safety personnel;
- County sheriff or local law enforcement as appropriate to jurisdiction;
- NICC through the local dispatch center and GACC. Provide a *Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Initial Report*, PMS 405-1, directly to NICC within 24 hours;
- Agency headquarters (affected agency national level); and
- Following agency policy, notify OSHA when an employee is killed on the job or suffers a work-related hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye.
  - A fatality must be reported within **8 hours**.
  - An in-patient hospitalization, amputation, or eye loss must be reported within **24 hours**.
- Notification to the respective agency's fire national safety/risk management lead is required.

Designating the Investigation Team Lead
The 1995 *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture* states that serious wildland fire-related accidents will be investigated by interagency investigation teams.

The *Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Department of the Interior* augments and provides clarification to the 1995 MOU for investigation type and team lead/deputy team lead/interagency representative designation. The MOA also provides an interagency template for joint delegation of authority. The MOA is available from agency fire safety program managers.

Following initial notification of a serious accident, the agency DASHO will designate a SAI team leader(s) and provide that person(s) with a written delegation of authority to conduct the investigation and the means to form and deploy an investigation team.

Accidents involving more than one agency will require a collaboratively developed delegation of authority that is signed by each of the respective agencies.

Serious Accident Investigation 24- and 72-Hour Reports
The final 24-hour report will be approved by the agency administrator in concurrence with the SAI delegating official. The 72-hour report will be approved by the SAI delegating official. Both reports are sent to the agency fire safety/risk management lead who will provide a copy to the LLC. Submissions should be sent to any LLC staff member at https://lessons.wildfire.gov/about-us.

- **24-Hour Preliminary Report –** The 24-hour preliminary report contains known basic facts about the accident. The responsible agency administrator will complete the report and forward to the SAI delegating official. Names of injured personnel will not be included in this report. Personnel may be referenced by position.
- **72-Hour Expanded Report –** The 72-hour report provides additional factual information, if available. The information may include the number of victims and severity of injuries. The focus should be on information that may have immediate impact on future accident prevention. The SAIT will complete and forward the 72-hour expanded report to the SAI delegating official. Names of injured personnel will not be included in this report; positions may be referenced.

Serious Accident Investigation Report
Within 60 calendar days of the incident, the SAIT will produce a final accident investigation report and a management evaluation report and forward to the DASHO through the Director/Chief, U.S. Wildland Fire Service; Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service; or designee.

- **Accident Investigation Report (AIR)** – The AIR contains a brief summary or background of the event and facts based only on examination of technical and procedural issues related to equipment and tactical fire operations. The AIR does not contain opinions, conclusions, or recommendations. Names of injured personnel are not to be included in this report; positions may be referenced. Post-accident actions (emergency response attribute to survival of a victim, etc.) should be included in this report. AIRs will be submitted to LLC by the respective agency's fire safety/risk management leads. Submissions should be sent to any LLC staff member at https://lessons.wildfire.gov/about-us.
- **Management Evaluation Report (MER)** – The MER is intended for internal use only and explores management policies, practices, procedures, and personal performance related to the accident. The MER categorizes findings identified in the AIR and provides recommendations to prevent or reduce the risk of similar accidents.

Accident Review Board/Board of Review
An accident review board/board of review is used by some agencies to evaluate recommendations and develop a corrective action plan. Refer to the respective agency's safety and health policy.

Wildland Fire Accident Investigation

- ***DOI –*** *All DOI aviation accident and incident investigations are conducted in accordance with 352 DM 3 and the DOI Aircraft Mishap Notification, Investigation, and Reporting Handbook.*
- ***FS –*** *The FS does not use the SAI process but may assist other agencies in an SAI for incidents involving the FS interests or personnel. FS aviation accidents and incidents utilize the FS aviation mishap investigation process. The FS's response to serious accidents includes the FLA which may be used for unintended outcomes of all types and the CRP reserved for coordination and response to FS serious accidents. Current versions of the Learning From Unintended Outcomes and CRP guides can be found on the LLC's website (https://lessons.wildfire.gov/).*

Accident investigations and reports should be commensurate with the complexity and/or severity of the accident and focus on organizational learning and the prevention of reoccurrence. Investigations and reports may range from large investigation teams producing comprehensive reports to first-level supervisors initiating investigations and reporting injury/property damage in agency reporting systems (e.g., SMIS/eSafety). Final accident investigation reports may range between agency-specific accident reports, small one-page RLS, LLR reports (simple or complex), to extensive investigation reports that follow the same format as a serious accident.

Notification
When an accident occurs, agency notification requirements will be followed. Notification requirements universally include:

- Local dispatch center
- Unit fire chief/unit fire management officer (FMO)
- Agency administrator
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (Refer to chapter 7 for reporting criteria.)

Investigation Team Membership
Investigation team membership should be commensurate with the complexity and/or severity of the accident. An investigation team should consist of a team leader and an adequate number of technical specialists and subject matter experts. For complex investigations, team membership may also include a chief investigator, a safety advisor/manager, and additional technical specialists, and a writer/editor. Team members may have dual roles (e.g., chief investigator/safety advisor).

Investigation Methodology
Accident investigations are detailed and methodical efforts to collect and interpret facts related to an accident and to provide specific recommendations to prevent recurrence. The accident investigation may include the following actions:

- Visual inspection of involved site, equipment, or material;
- Detailed analysis of equipment or material, as necessary;
- Interviews with involved personnel, witnesses, managers, and other pertinent persons;
- Collection and review of written statements;
- Review of records, archives, plans, policies, procedures, and other pertinent documents;
- Consideration of environmental, equipment, material, procedural, and human factors as they related to the incident; and
- Development of specific findings and related recommendations for the accident investigation report.

Accident Investigation 24- and 72-Hour Reports
The 24- and 72-hour reports should be completed when an accident investigation will be conducted. Final 24- and 72-hour reports will be approved by the accident investigation delegating official, then sent to the agency fire safety/risk management lead who will provide a copy to the LLC. Submissions should be sent to any LLC staff member at https://lessons.wildfire.gov/about-us.

- **24-Hour Preliminary Report** – This report contains known basic facts about the accident and will be completed and forwarded by the responsible agency administrator to the next higher level. Names of injured personnel will not be included in this report. Personnel may be referenced by position.
- **72-Hour Expanded Report** – This report provides additional factual information, if available. The information may include the number of victims and severity of injuries. The focus should be on information that may have immediate impact on future accident prevention. The accident investigation team will complete and forward the report to the accident investigation delegating official. Names of injured personnel will not be included in this report. Personnel may be referenced by position.

Accident Investigation Final Report
Within approximately 60 calendar days of the accident, a final report shall be submitted to the senior manager dependent upon the level of investigation (e.g., agency administrator, geographic area fire chief, and Director/Chief, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, or designee). If a lower-level investigation is conducted, a courtesy copy of the final report shall be sent to the respective agency's national fire safety/risk management lead.

The final report (minus names of employees—they should be referenced by position) will be submitted to LLC by the respective agency's national fire safety leads. Submissions should be sent to any LLC staff member at https://lessons.wildfire.gov/about-us.

Accident Investigation Report Standard Contents
Accident investigation reports will vary in length, format, and complexity. Each report should be commensurate to the complexity of the incident and focus on organizational learning and the prevention of reoccurrence. The following list is common or standard contents often found in accident investigation reports.

- **Executive Summary** – A brief narrative of the facts involving the accident including dates, locations, times, name of incident, jurisdiction(s), number of individuals involved, etc. Names of injured personnel or personnel involved in the accident are not to be included in this report (reference them by position).
- **Narrative** – A detailed chronological narrative of events leading up to and including the accident, as well as rescue and medical actions taken after the accident. This section will contain who, what, and where.
- **Investigation Process** – A brief narrative of actions taken by the investigation team. This narrative should include investigation team membership, delegation of authority information (from who and contents, include a

copy as an appendix), investigative actions and timeline (when the team conducted interviews, inspections, site visits, etc.), and if other sources were consulted (e.g., professional accident reconstruction experts, equipment manufacturers). This section may also address if environmental, equipment, material, procedural, and human factors were present, and state how findings/recommendations were developed.

- **Findings/Recommendations**
  - **Findings** – Developed from the factual information. Each finding is a single event or condition. Each finding is an essential step in the accident sequence, but each finding is not necessarily causal or contributing, and each finding may not have an associated recommendation. Findings should only include information necessary to explain the specific event or condition. Findings must be substantiated by the factual data. Findings should not include opinion or speculation.
  - **Discussion** – This provides explanation or information pertinent to a specific finding.
  - **Recommendations** – Recommendations are proposed actions intended to prevent similar accidents. Recommendations should be directly related to findings, should not contain opinion or speculation, and when appropriate, should identify the specific organization responsible for completing the recommended action. Recommendations will be evaluated and may be incorporated into future operational direction through established processes.
- **Conclusions and Observations** – Investigation team's opinions and inferences, and lessons learned may be captured in the section.
- **Reference Materials**
  - **Maps/Photographs/Illustrations** – Graphic information used to document and visually portray facts.
  - **Appendices** – Reference materials (e.g., fire behavior analysis, equipment maintenance reports, agreements).

Examples of accident investigation reports are available from agency fire safety program managers.

Lessons Learned Review/Facilitated Learning Analysis

The purpose of a lessons learned review (LLR) is to explore, investigate, or review unintended outcomes or near misses in order to learn from the event and prevent future occurrences. In order to learn from these events, conduct an LLR in an open, non-punitive manner. LLRs are intended to provide educational opportunities that foster open and honest dialog and assist the wildland fire community in sharing lessons learned information. LLRs provide an outside perspective with appropriate technical experts assisting involved personnel in identifying conditions that led to the unexpected outcome and sharing findings and recommendations.

An LLR should be tailored to the event being reviewed. The scope of the review should be commensurate with the severity of the incident. An LLR will not be substituted for a serious accident investigation (SAI) or other agency-specific accident investigation reporting requirements (e.g., DOI Safety Management Information System [SMIS] or United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] eSafety [https://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/hrm/workers-compensation/index.php#esafety]).

- ***FS –*** *The FS's formal learning review processes are the facilitated learning analysis (FLA) which may be used for unintended outcomes of all types and a Learning Review for an incident meeting FS SAI criteria. Both processes are explicitly non-punitive and must have a signed delegation. Where appropriate, and for less serious incidents the FS may also use the rapid lesson sharing (RLS) process or other review process such as AARs which typically do not have a delegation. In some cases, an FLA and an RLS may be produced for the same incident to quickly highlight lessons revealed in the learning process while the larger narrative is still being compiled. The FS does not use the SAI process but may assist other agencies in an SAI for incidents involving the FS interests or personnel. FS Aviation accidents and incidents utilize the FS aviation mishap investigation process. Current version of the Learning From Unintended Outcomes guide can be found on the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center's (LLC) website.*

A LLR will be led by a facilitator not involved in the event. A facilitator should be an appropriate fire management expert who possesses skills in interpersonal communications, organization, and be unbiased to the event. Personnel involved in the event will be participants in the review process. Depending upon the complexity of the event, the facilitator may request assistance from technical experts (e.g., fire behavior, fire operations).

The LLR facilitator will convene the participants and:

- Obtain a delegation of authority from appropriate agency level. See appendix G for a sample LLR delegation of authority;
- Identify facts of the event (sand tables maybe helpful in the process) and develop a chronological narrative of the event;
- Identify underlying reasons for success or unintended outcomes;

- Identify what individuals learned and what they would do differently in the future;
- Identify any recommendations that would prevent future similar occurrences;
- A 24- and 72-hour report should be produced as an acknowledgement that an incident has occurred and to distribute initial facts about what happened. These preliminary reports are a valuable element of the many learning-focused products that LLR teams may produce; and
- Provide a final written report, including the above items to the pertinent agency administrator(s) within two weeks of event occurrence unless otherwise negotiated. Names of involved personnel should not be included in this report (reference them by position).

A copy of the final report will be submitted to the respective agency's national fire safety lead who will provide a copy to the LLC. Refer to https://lessons.wildfire.gov/about-us.

Rapid Lesson Sharing

RLS is a type of lessons learned review (LLR) for field personnel to quickly share lessons with others. An RLS can be used to document and share lessons learned as a result of close calls, minor accidents, successes, efficient ways of performing work, adaptations, or anything from which wildland fire personnel can learn.

To visit a searchable database with RLS documents, go to the Incident Review Database Search.

To submit or view RLS documents, go to "Submit a Lesson."

Fire Cause Determination and Trespass Investigation

Introduction

Agency policy requires determination of cause, origin, and responsibility for all wildfires. Accurate fire cause determination is a critical first step for a successful fire investigation and for targeting fire prevention efforts. Proper investigative procedures, which occur concurrent with initial attack, more accurately pinpoint fire causes and can preserve valuable evidence that would otherwise be destroyed by suppression activities. Fire trespass refers to the occurrence of unauthorized fire on agency-protected lands where the source of ignition is tied to some type of human activity.

Initiation of fire cause determination must be started with notification of an incident. Initial attack dispatchers are responsible for capturing all pertinent information when the fire is reported and throughout the incident. The initial attack IC and the initial attack forces are responsible for protecting the origin area and initiating fire cause determination and documenting observations starting with their travel to the fire. If probable cause indicates human involvement, an individual qualified in fire cause determination (wildland fire investigator [INVF] or cooperator equivalent) should be dispatched to the fire.

Policy

The agency must pursue cost recovery, or document why cost recovery is not required, for all human-caused fires on public lands. The agency will also pursue cost recovery for other lands under fire protection agreement where the agency is not reimbursed for suppression actions, if stipulated in the agreement.

For all human-caused fires where negligence can be determined, trespass actions are to be taken to recover cost of suppression activities, land rehabilitation, and damages to the resource and improvements. Only fires started by natural causes will not be considered for trespass and related cost recovery.

The determination whether to proceed with trespass action must be made on "incident facts," not on "cost or ability to pay." Trespass collection is both a cost recovery and a deterrent to prevent future damage to public land. Pursue collection of costs, regardless of amount. This determination must be documented and filed in the unit office's official fire report file.

Unless specified otherwise in an approved protection agreement, the agency that has the land management jurisdiction/administration role is accountable for determining the cause of ignition, responsible party, and for obtaining all billable costs, performing the billing, collection, and distribution of the collected funds. The agency with the fire protection responsibility role must provide the initial determination of cause to the agency with the land management jurisdiction/administration role. The agency providing fire protection shall provide a detailed report of suppression costs that will allow the jurisdictional agency to proceed with trespass procedures in a timely manner.

Each agency's role in fire trespass billing and collection must be specifically defined in a relevant cooperative fire protection agreement between Federal and State cooperators. Federal agencies will follow established procedures for each agency and utilize the Intra-Governmental Payment and Collection (IPAC) system to transfer funds.

Agency references:

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. USWFS employees that are qualified as Wildland Fire Investigators (INVFs) will provide investigation services to the Bureaus. The USWFS will manage current wildfire trespass cases in coordination with Bureaus for cost recovery and records requirements. Bureau employees, including law enforcement, that are qualified as INVFs will continue to provide investigation services to the Bureaus. Bureau authorized officers will determine liability for wildfire trespass with solicitor concurrence. Recovered trespass funds will be deposited into Bureau accounts. If allowable per authority and settlement language, suppression and post-fire recovery costs will be transferred to the USWFS.*
- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. Reference BLM H-9238-1; NPS RM-18, chapter 6 and RM-9; FWS 621 FW 1; and for BIA for guidance regarding origin and cause determination on lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, see 90 IAM 6-H Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Investigation Handbook at https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/assets/public/raca/handbook/pdf/90_iam_6-h_wildfire_investigations_hb_final_signed_9.25.23_w.footer_508.pdf. For BIA guidance regarding fire trespass and damage to Indian forest products on lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, see 53 IAM, chapter 7-H, Indian Forest Management Handbook – Forest Trespass (https://www.bia.gov/sites/bia.gov/files/assets/bia/ots/dfwfm/pdf/idc-022535.pdf and https://www.bia.gov/policy-forms/handbooks).*
- ***FS –*** *FSM 5130 and FSM 5300*

Related Policy Documents

These documents provide specific direction related to incident and accident investigations.

	Safety	Prescribed Fire
DOI	USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. 485 DM, chapter 7 352 DM 3 DOI *Aircraft Mishap Notification, Investigation, Reporting Handbook* *DOI Occupational Safety and Health Program – Field Manual* For NPS, see DO/RM-50B, RM-18, chapter 3 For FWS, see 240 FW 7	USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. For NPS, see RM-18, chapter 7.
FS	FSH-6709.11 FSM-5100 FSH-6709.11 FSM 5720 (Aviation) FSM 5130 (Ground Operations) FSM 6730 (Specific Policy) FSH 6709.12 chapter 30 (General Guidance) Most recent Accident Investigation Guide, for specific guidance	FSM-5140 Same as “Safety”
Interagency	Information on accident investigations may be found in the *Interagency Serious Accident Investigation Guide*. For reporting, use the *Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Initial Report*, PMS 405-1.	Same as “Safety”

Chapter 19
Dispatch and Coordination System

Introduction

The primary mission of the national dispatch/coordination system is the timely, cost-effective, and efficient coordination, mobilization, and demobilization of wildland fire resources. This mission is accomplished at the direction of agency administrators and designated fire managers at the local, geographic, and national level and delegated to the center manager. Agency administrators and fire managers are responsible for providing direction to their respective dispatch/coordination centers. The dispatch/coordination system implements the movement of resources in response to the direction as delegated.

Agency administrators and fire managers will:

- Provide oversight for the development and implementation of dispatch/coordination center plans and operating procedures (e.g., initial response plans, dispatch operating guides/manuals, and standards for resource mobilization/mobilization guides) that enable the effective implementation of the fire management plan (FMP).
- Through prior planning, provide dispatch with an initial response plan to allocate resources to new incidents under the leadership of the center manager or delegated acting.
- Establish priorities for prepositioning and deployment of fire suppression resources based on evaluation of current/predicted fire activity and firefighting resource status and availability and communicate these priorities to the dispatch/coordination managers through established command channels for implementation.
- Serve as authorized representatives on local, geographic, and national coordinating groups and multiagency coordinating (MAC) groups.
    - ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. USWFS officials will make decisions as part of a Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group (local, geographic, national) as they affect DOI lands to establish fire priorities, allocate and re-allocate fire suppression resources.*

Dispatch/coordination center managers will:

- Ensure that dispatch/coordination center decisions and actions are consistent with priorities, established plans, and operating procedures as determined by agency administrators and fire managers.
- Implement preplanned response for allocation of resources to new incidents, pursuant to their delegation from agency administrators and designated fire managers.
- Develop and implement dispatch/coordination center plans and operating procedures (e.g., initial response plans, dispatch operating guides/manuals, and standards for resource mobilization/mobilization guides) that enable the effective implementation of the fire management plan.

National Dispatch/Coordination System

The wildland fire dispatch and coordination system in the United States has three levels (tiers):

- National – National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC)
- Geographic – Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC)
- Local – Local dispatch centers

Logistical dispatch operations occur at all three levels, while initial attack dispatch operations occur primarily at the local level. Any geographic area or local dispatch center using a dispatch system outside the three-tier system must justify why a non-standard system is being used and request written authorization from the DOI U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) national office or USFS regional office.

National Interagency Coordination Center

The National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) is located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), in Boise, Idaho. The principal mission of NICC is the cost-effective and timely coordination of land management agency emergency response for wildland fire at the national level. This is accomplished through planning, situation monitoring, and expediting resource orders between the USWFS, National Association of State Foresters (NASF), Forest Service (FS) geographic areas, National Weather Service (NWS) regions, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions through the United States Fire Administration (USFA), and other cooperating agencies.

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 the 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.

The NICC supports non-fire emergencies when tasked by an appropriate agency, such as FEMA, through the National Response Framework (NRF). The NICC collects and consolidates information from the GACCs and disseminates the National *Incident Management Situation Report* through the NICC website.

Geographic Area Coordination Centers
There are 10 GACCs, each of which serve a specific geographic portion of the United States. Each GACC interacts with the local dispatch centers, as well as with NICC and neighboring GACCs. Refer to the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* for a complete directory of GACC locations, addresses, and personnel.

The principal mission of each GACC is to provide the cost-effective and timely coordination of emergency response for all incidents within the specified geographic area. GACCs are also responsible for:
- Determining needs;
- Coordinating priorities;
- Facilitating mobilization of resources within their geographic area (GA) and in support of other GAs; and
- Supplying intelligence associated with incidents and resource availability within their GA to NICC and cooperating agencies.

Local Dispatch Centers
Local dispatch centers are located throughout the country as dictated by the needs of fire management agencies. Local dispatch centers dispatch multi-agency wildland firefighting resources within a preestablished and identified dispatch zone boundary. The principal mission of a local dispatch center is to provide safe, timely, and cost-effective coordination of emergency response for all incidents within its specified geographic-area. This entails the coordination of initial attack responses and the ordering of additional resources when fires require extended attack.

Local dispatch centers are also responsible for supplying intelligence and information relating to fires and resource status to their GACC and to their agency managers and cooperators. Local dispatch centers may work for, or with, numerous agencies, but should only report to one GACC.

Some local dispatch centers are also tasked with law enforcement and agency administrative workloads for non-wildfire operations. If this is the case, a commensurate amount of funding and training should be provided by the benefiting agency to accompany the increased workload. If non-wildfire workload is generated by another agency operating in an interagency dispatch center, the agency generating the additional workload should offset this increased workload with additional funding or personnel.

Standards for Mobilization/Mobilization Guides

The NICC and each GACC annually publish standards for resource mobilization. These standards identify standard procedures which guide the operations of multi-agency logistical support activity throughout the coordination system. These standards are intended to facilitate interagency dispatch coordination, ensuring timely and cost-effective incident support services are provided. Local mobilization guides and geographic area standards for resource mobilization supplement the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

The *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* (NFES 2092) and links to geographic area mobilization standards are available on the NICC website (https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/geographic-areas).

Local Mobilization Guide/Dispatch Operating Plan
Local dispatch centers will have a local mobilization guide or dispatch operating plan to supplement the GACC and national standards for resource mobilization. The mobilization guide or operating plan will include or provide reference to the minimum elements and procedures to guide the operation of a local dispatch center. See appendix K for minimum required elements and procedures for inclusion in a local mobilization guide/dispatch operating plan.

Local and Geographic Area Drawdown

Drawdown is the predetermined number and type of suppression resources that are required to maintain viable initial attack 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.

Drawdown is intended to:
- Ensure adequate fire suppression capability for local and/or geographic area managers; and
- Enable sound planning and preparedness at all management levels.

Although drawdown resources are considered unavailable outside the local or geographic area for which they have been identified, they may still be reallocated by the geographic area or national MAC to meet higher priority obligations.

Establishing Drawdown Levels
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 is established by the Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (GMAC) and implemented by the GACC. The GACC will notify the local dispatch offices and NICC of geographic area drawdown decision and actions.

National Ready Reserve

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

NRR implementation responsibilities are as follows:
- NMAC establishes NRR 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 NRR.
- GACCs direct local dispatch centers and/or assigned incident management teams (IMT) to specifically identify resources to be placed on NRR.
- NICC mobilizes NRR assets through normal coordination system 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 en route to new assignment in less than 2 hours;
- Resources must have a minimum of 7 days left in 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 on a daily basis.

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

Dispatch/Coordination Center Administration

Memorandum of Understanding
Each dispatch/coordination center will have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by all cooperators. This MOU will be reviewed and updated annually. Dispatch/coordination center MOUs and their associated operating plans will be current and will define:
- The roles and responsibilities of each interagency partner's fiscal and infrastructure support responsibilities;
- Administrative oversight/support groups involved with the dispatch/coordination center;
- Clear fiscal reimbursement procedures and interagency funding procedures;
- The dispatch/coordination center's organizational charts;
- Communication protocols for local and geographic area cooperating agencies, including briefings, planned meetings, and conference calls;
- Procedures for IMT mobilization and close-out; and
- Supporting documentation, such as any local initial attack or fire and aviation agreements for units serviced by the center.

Funding for facilities, equipment, and staffing needs shall be identified in each participating agency's planning and budget process and included in the MOU/operating plan.
- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for any third-tier dispatch center agreements. The USWFS will be the primary DOI representative for Dispatch Center Board of Directors for all center operations to include funding, supervision, and assignment of responsibilities.*

Service and Supply Plans
All local dispatch centers shall maintain a service and supply plan that contains current copies of procurement documents related to locally available resources. Service and supply plans must be current, complete, organized, and accessible to initial attack and expanded dispatchers.

The service and supply plan will contain current copies of competitive incident blanket purchase agreements (I-BPAs), as well as source lists for incident-only agreements. Resources and their respective contracts/agreements will be entered into the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) system, if applicable; and naming conventions will meet national standards.

For additional required components of a service and supply plan, refer to appendix K.

Continuity of Operations Plan
All centers will maintain a current continuity of operations plan (COOP) which includes a preidentified alternate location with adequate supplies, notification procedures for activation, a back-up computer system, and contingency plans for loss of telecommunications equipment and/or loss of access to network connectivity. Additionally, all centers which are required to maintain communications with field-going resources, including aircraft, will ensure the COOP identifies procedures to maintain and/or transfer communications in the event of a possible loss of radios and/or telecommunications equipment. The dispatch/coordination center may, when appropriate, delegate services and program access to neighboring centers or across geographical boundaries. This may include, but is not limited to, radio communication transfer, processing of IROC requests, utilization of CAD programs, etc.

A dispatch center and a coordination center may be designated as an emergency facility that meets the requirements of applicable building codes and NFPA standards for communication centers. They shall be equipped with a critical operations power system (COPS) that provides emergency power to communications systems, information technology (IT) rooms, telephone and radio rooms, electrical equipment rooms, mechanical equipment, fire protection equipment rooms, sanitary facilities, security systems, and other spaces and equipment designated by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) as requiring critical operations power.

Dispatch/Coordination Center Manager Delegation of Authority

All dispatch/coordination center managers shall have a signed delegation of authority providing an adequate level of operational authority from all participating agencies. The delegation of authority will include appropriate supervisory authority and a process for completion of employee performance evaluations.

The dispatch/coordination center manager may, where appropriate, complete a delegation of authority for staff that identifies roles and responsibilities for the acting center manager, coordinator-on-duty, floor supervisor, and/or internal duty officer.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. The USWFS will assume responsibility on behalf of Bureaus for any third-tier dispatch center agreements. The USWFS will be the primary DOI representative for Dispatch Center Board of Directors for all center operations to include funding, supervision, and assignment of responsibilities.*

National Interagency Coordination Center Functional Responsibilities

The NICC has established the coordinator-on-duty (NICC COD) position. The NICC COD is responsible for managing the daily operation of the NICC and for resource allocation decisions in alignment with NMAC direction.

Positioning and Movement of Resources
The NICC, in conjunction with GACCs, is responsible for ensuring a coordinated response to wildland fire incidents and/or all-hazards incidents under the NRF or other appropriate authorities. The NICC positions resources (personnel, aircraft, supplies, and equipment) to meet existing and anticipated incident, preparedness, severity, wildland, and prescribed fire needs regardless of geographic location or agency affiliation. Additionally, NICC coordinates movement of resources across geographic area boundaries and allocates resources according to NMAC direction when competition for wildland fire resources occurs among geographic areas.

Management of National Aviation Resources
As directed or delegated by NMAC, NICC allocates national resource aviation assets, in conjunction with appropriate agency aviation leadership, to the geographic areas based upon national priorities. These national resources include:

- Federal airtankers
- Federal single engine airtankers (SEATs)

- Large transport aircraft
- Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) airtankers
- Type 1 and 2 FS exclusive-use (EU)/call-when-needed (CWN) helicopters and associated helitack and/or rappellers
- Airborne thermal infrared (IR) fire mapping aircraft
- Leadplanes and aerial supervision modules
- Smokejumpers
- Smokejumper aircraft
- Water scoopers
- National contract and agency-owned unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and modules.
- Rappelers

The NICC has established authorities and procedures for dispatching aviation resources. These authorities and procedures include:

- Aircraft ordering protocols for fire, logistical and administrative flights;
- Tracking of all aircraft ordered through NICC that cross geographic area boundaries;
- Mechanisms for disseminating availability and commitment status throughout the dispatch/coordination system; and
- Procedures for mobilization and use of large transport aircraft (NICC is the sole source for large transport aircraft).
- GACCs hosting national type 1 and 2 helicopters will coordinate with NICC prior to releasing flight crews for the day when those resources are not being used within the host area and could be utilized elsewhere for emerging or ongoing fire activity.
- Priority should be given to EU aviation assets over CWN aviation assets whenever feasible.

Management of National Support Resources
NICC mobilizes national support resources such as National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD) radio systems and kits, incident remote automatic weather stations (RAWS), project remote automatic weather stations, national contract mobile food services, and national contract mobile shower facilities. Refer to the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* for more information.

Allocation of Other National Resources
As directed or delegated by the NMAC, NICC mobilizes national program resources such as complex incident management teams, national interagency procurement support, administrative payment teams, burned area emergency response teams, and national fire prevention and education teams to the geographic areas based upon national priorities. Refer to the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* for more information.

Predictive Services
The National Predictive Services Program mission is to integrate climate, weather, fuels, situation, and incident resource status information to enhance the ability of managers to make sound decisions for both short- and long-range strategic planning. Working as cohesive units situated at each of the geographic area and national interagency coordination centers, Predictive Services will blend the functions of intelligence, fire management analysis, and meteorology for delivering decision support products and services in support of geographic area and national decision-making.

The National Predictive Services Oversight Group (PSOG) provides management oversight and direction to the National Predictive Services Program. The group coordinates, directs, and oversees the development and implementation of national program products and services, ensures the integrity and cohesiveness of program operations, arbitrates differences, and provides a venue for dialogue and deliberation in support of a sustainable and effective program.

The National Predictive Services staff works under the direction of the NICC Manager, with guidance from NMAC. Geographic Area Coordination Center Predictive Services staff work under the direction of the GACC manager, with guidance from the geographic area coordinating groups (GACG). National and GACC missions share importance; and as such, national and GACC Predictive Services work in unison to create and maintain products and services which provide value to users at all levels.

Predictive Services is comprised of meteorologists, fuels and fire behavior analysts, intelligence coordinators, and officers at NICC and the GACCs. GACC managers and GACGs determine the need and allocation of positions within each GACC with input from National Predictive Service staff, the NICC Manager, and NMAC.

International and Department of War Assistance
The NICC serves as the focal point for international assistance requested from NMAC either under existing agreements (https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm) or by the US Department of State. The NICC also serves as the focal point for any requests for assistance from the Department of War.

Geographic Area Coordination Center Functional Responsibilities

Each GACC manager will be responsible for managing the daily operation of the GACC and for resource allocations within their GA. Resource allocation will be in alignment with their GMAC and NMAC. The GACC manager may identify an additional point-of-contact (POC) in the form of coordinator-on-duty (COD), duty officer and/or duty chief.

Positioning and Movement of Resources
GACCs, in conjunction with NICC and local dispatch centers, are responsible for ensuring a coordinated response to wildland fire incidents and/or all-hazards incidents under the NRF or other appropriate authorities. GACCs mobilize and position resources (personnel, aircraft, supplies, and equipment) internally among local dispatch centers to meet existing and anticipated incident, preparedness, severity, wildland, and prescribed fire needs, regardless of geographic location or agency affiliation. GACCs coordinate movement of resources within geographic area boundaries and allocate resources according to GMAC direction when competition for wildland fire resources occurs within the geographic area. GACCs will ensure adequate fire suppression capability for local and/or geographic area managers and enable sound planning and preparedness at all management levels.

Geographic areas will establish priorities for their incidents and wildland fires and report them to NICC. GACCs will notify NICC and adjoining GACCs of the commitment of national resources within their area and will notify the local dispatch offices and the NICC of geographic area drawdown decision and actions.

Geographic areas will establish ordering points with the regional ESF #4 coordinator and the ESF #4 lead at the appropriate regional response coordination centers (RRCC) and joint field offices (JFO) for any activities associated with the NRF. All response requests will be accomplished utilizing established dispatch coordination procedures.

Management of Aviation Resources
GACCs have established authorities and procedures for dispatching aviation resources. These procedures include:
- Aircraft ordering protocols for fire, logistical and administrative flights;
- Procedures for ordering agency-approved infrared (IR) mapping aircraft and UAS;
- Procedures for tracking of all aircraft within geographic area boundaries;
- Mechanisms for disseminating availability and commitment status throughout the dispatch/coordination system;
- Ordering and operational procedures between the GACC, dispatch center(s) and airtanker base(s);
- Procedures for flight following (including protocols for use of Automated Flight Following (AFF) and initial call on the National Flight Following frequency;
- Procedures for ordering and establishing temporary flight restrictions (TFR) and operating guidelines for airspace deconfliction for military airspace (military training route [MTR], Special Use Airspace [SUA], Military Operations Area [MOA]) and Restricted Areas. GACCs will participate in planned airspace meetings annually;
- Procedures for ordering and utilization of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) temporary towers;
- Procedures for reporting through the SAFECOM system; and
- Procedures for reporting drone intrusions.

Predictive Services
The GACC and/or Predictive Service managers will provide daily supervision of their respective Predictive Services programs, including developing GACC-specific operating plans. These plans will encompass the daily activities of the GACC Predictive Services program, including supervision, the flow of information within the GACC and geographic area, and the products produced for geographic area purposes. GACC and/or predictive service managers will have ultimate responsibility for ensuring GACC predictive services staff have the appropriate allocation of time and resources to produce required national products, including the National 7-Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook, the National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook, and fuels and fire behavior advisories as needed.

Local Dispatch Center Functional Responsibilities

Local dispatch centers are responsible for initial attack dispatching, coordination of communications, intelligence gathering and dissemination, and logistical support for local incidents and field operations.

Initial Attack Dispatching
Local dispatch centers are the focal point for the report of, and initial response to wildland fires, and under appropriate authorities, other emergency incidents at the local level. Deployment of response resources is made in accordance with local processes and procedures as outlined in the dispatch center's mobilization guide.

Initial Attack Response Plan
- **Response Plans**
  - Each local area will maintain and follow a documented pre-planned response plan (e.g., run cards) agency developed in coordination with land management leadership and in conjunction with a Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP) or other preparedness operation plan as required by agency.
  - 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 Statusing**
  - All available initial attack resources must be statused daily in an integrated application by 1000 local time or within 30 minutes of 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. Refer to the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* for more information.

Each dispatch office with the responsibility for initial response to wildland fires shall have a preplanned response plan that allocates resources to new wildland fires in accordance with fire management direction, initial attack agreements, and established ordering procedures. The preplanned response plan will be reviewed and updated annually prior to fire season.

Incident records will be created by the dispatch center with delegated authority for the benefiting agency and associated Protecting Unit (*NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205) based on the point of origin (POO) of the incident. Reference "jurisdictional unit" (*NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205) for additional information. Unique incident identifiers are the concatenation of the year from the fire discovery date/time, the POO protecting unit, and the local incident identifier. The year is not exposed to the user in most applications. Unique incident identifiers are referenced in user interface in the following format: MT-FNF-000567. Incident data and all ordering for the incident is tracked under this unique designator for the life of the incident. Multiple event/records will not be created when an incident burns onto or crosses jurisdictional boundaries. When duplicate records are inadvertently created, every effort will be made to rectify by aligning incident and resource data associated with two records to the correct record, the duplicate record will be updated to an invalid record.
- ***DOI –*** *All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.*

Each dispatch center shall have maps posted that depict initial attack response areas, land ownership, jurisdictional and protection boundaries, hazards, and resource concerns. Each center will also ensure that computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and geographic information system (GIS) products are current, functioning, and utilized.

When an incident's POO is on unprotected lands (*NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205) or areas for which no fire organization has responsibility for management of a wildfire authorized by law, contract, or personal interest of the fire organization (e.g., a timber or rangeland association), there are two acceptable rationales for local dispatch incident record creation:
- The responding organization determines threat to protected lands.
- The responding organization determines incident has already burned onto protected lands.

Fire management direction/duty officer will determine if either criterion is met and necessitates an incident record creation and subsequent response. In this instance, the responding organization's Unit Identifiers (Unit ID) will be used for the protecting unit data element within the unique incident identifier.
- ***DOI –*** *All DOI wildfire incident records are considered Permanent and Unscheduled by the Department and must not be disposed of or destroyed. The USWFS must retain all wildfire incident records, will follow current Bureau processes for records management, and will provide records to appropriate Bureaus so that their established record procedures for wildfire records can be followed until such time as new departmental direction on wildfire records is provided.*

Dispatch centers will have protocols in place for frequency management, priority use of frequencies, and procedures for obtaining additional frequencies.

Local dispatch centers will have protocols in place for monitoring, requesting, and disseminating fire weather forecasts, spot weather forecasts, fire weather watches, red flag warnings and other severe weather events (e.g., severe storm warnings, flash flood warnings, tornado warnings) to firefighters, incident commanders, and field-going personnel.

The National Multi-agency Coordination Group has established incident name protocols. Guidance is found in the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

All required reference material will be current and accessible, and expired or out-of-date material will be removed.

Intelligence
The intelligence function is responsible for gathering and disseminating incident, resource, weather, and predictive services information. Each dispatch center will ensure that locations and conditions of the fire weather stations are known, and a current weather station catalog is available.

Dispatch centers will ensure that coordination/communication with the local NWS Forecast Office occurs annually prior to fire season.

Local dispatch centers will have a process in place for submission of the daily situation report and ICS-209s.

Dispatch centers with websites will ensure current intelligence and weather information is posted.

Expanded Dispatch
Expanded dispatch is a functional branch of the Incident Support Organization (ISO) that supports incidents and expands as local fire conditions and activity dictates. Expanded dispatch is established when a high volume of activity indicates that increased dispatch and coordination capability is required.

Each dispatch center will have an expanded dispatch operating plan which provides specific details about when, where, and how to implement an expanded dispatch. The plan will identify logistical support facilities available for expanded dispatch use. These facilities will be preidentified, procured, and available for immediate setup, along with necessary equipment.

The expanded dispatch workspace will be separate from, but accessible to, the initial attack organization. The area should have adequate office space, including suitable lighting, heating/cooling systems, and security. Expanded dispatchers will have access to communications equipment, including telephones, fax machines, copiers, and computer hardware with adequate data storage space.

Qualified personnel should be on site in order to adequately staff required expanded dispatch functions. Expanded dispatch supervisors are responsible for establishing a staffing and operating schedule for expanded dispatch, including operational period changes, briefings, and strategy meetings.

Aviation
Each dispatch center will have documented procedures established for dispatching aviation resources. These procedures will include:

- Aircraft ordering protocols for fire, logistical, and administrative flights;
- Procedures for ordering agency-approved IR mapping aircraft and UAS;
- Procedures for disseminating availability and commitment status throughout the dispatch/coordination system;
- Procedures for coordination with airtanker bases;
- Procedures for airtanker, smokejumper, and rappeler use and restrictions;
- Procedures for flight following (including protocols for use of AFF and initial call on the National Flight Following frequency);
- Procedures for ordering and establishing TFRs;
- Procedures for airspace de-confliction for military air space (MTR, SUA, MOA) and Restricted Areas, and current aviation aerial hazard maps or Military Operating Area sectionals;
- Procedures for requesting FAA temporary towers;
- Procedures for reporting through the SAFECOM system; and
- Procedures for reporting drone intrusions.

Accident Notification

When an accident occurs, agency notification requirements will be followed. As soon as the accident is verified, the following should be notified:

- Local dispatch center;
- Unit fire chief/FMO; and
- Agency administrators.

Additional notifications should occur in the dispatch/coordination system, from the local dispatch center to the NICC through the GACC.

Incident Emergency Management Planning

To achieve successful medical response, agency administrators will ensure that their units have completed the following items prior to each field season:

- A medical emergency response plan that identifies medical evacuation options, local/county/State/Federal resource capabilities, capacities, ordering procedures, cooperative agreements, role of dispatch centers, and key contacts or liaisons;
- Standardized incident and communication center protocols identified in the "Medical Incident Report" section of the *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG),* PMS 461.
- For incidents that require the preparation of an incident action plan (IAP), Form ICS-206-WF will be used.

Dispatch/Coordination Center Reference Material

All coordination/dispatch centers will have reference materials available to all dispatchers. See appendix K for a list of minimum required reference materials.

Training

Dispatch/coordination center staff will be trained in, and follow established procedures for, the use of applications utilized in center operations.

Personnel will be cross trained in each function (i.e., aircraft, crews, overhead, equipment, intelligence) in order to provide staffing coverage. Dispatch personnel will be trained in and follow center procedures for the following (as applicable):

- Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC);
- Computer-aided dispatch (CAD);
- Fire Code;
- Automated Flight Following (AFF);
- Unit Identifiers;
- SIT Report/209; and
- Other applications (e.g., WFDSS, e-ISuite).

All dispatch center employees will have a documentation file for current season training, past season fire training, certifications and experience, fire experience, performance evaluations, and have position task books initiated appropriate to their training needs. All supervisors will be familiar with safety and accident reporting processes (e.g., Safety Management Information System [SMIS], SAFENET, SAFECOM).

All employees will have current incident qualification cards produced by the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) as per chapter 13.

Facilities and Equipment

All dispatch/coordination centers will have a telephone system with an adequate number of lines for normal business volume, and the capability to expand as conditions dictate. Centers will have teleconference capabilities commensurate with the anticipated volume of business.

Copying, facsimile, computer, and GIS systems shall meet operational needs (quantity and capability) and comply with agency standards. Software will be compatible with information resource management and agency requirements for security.

All facilities shall have an evacuation plan, security plan, and safety practices in place to safeguard the health and welfare of employees.

Adequate facilities will be available to host an expanded dispatch or Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group and shall include telephones, computer access, copiers, and basic office supplies. Rooms for MAC Group use will have adequate information technology (IT) equipment and support.

All centers will have adequate workspace with room for reference materials and other necessary items to perform assigned duties. Individual workspace should be provided away from the initial attack floor for each permanent employee, and a break room area should be provided for employees.

Employees will have access to a locked area to store data that may contain personally identifiable information (PII) or personal items.

Radio Systems

Radio systems will have an adequate number of frequencies to provide for separation of incidents and use by all interagency partners. Base station and repeater transmissions shall be recorded and maintained in accordance with agency records management policies. Radio systems may have alert tones available for use as determined by local center policies.

Appendix A
Sample Questions for Fire Site Visits by Agency Administrators

Management Direction

____Who is the incident commander? If the fire is being managed under unified command, are all commanders present? Is the incident operating smoothly?
____What is the incident organization?
____What is the current situation? What has been damaged or is at risk?
____Have you received adequate direction for the management of the incident?
____Is the Wildland Fire Decision Support System published decision still valid?
____What are the incident management objectives? Constraints? Probability of success?
____Are the tactics in the incident action plan realistic and achievable with current resources?
____Is a resource advisor needed?
____What are your estimates of suppression costs?
____What are the incident commander's concerns?
____What are the local, social, economic, and political issues?
____Are there rehabilitation needs?
____What can I, as the agency administrator, do to help?

Safety

____What are your safety concerns?
____Are these concerns resolved? If not, what needs to be done?
____What is the general safety attitude and emphasis?
____Have you assessed the potential hazardous situations and determined if the fire can be fought safely?
____Have you applied the Fire Orders, Watch Out Situations, Lookout, Communication, Escape Routes, Safety Zones (LCES) process in selecting safe and effective strategies and tactics?
____Have you effectively briefed firefighters on hazards, safety zones, escape routes, and current and expected weather and fire behavior?
____Is the safety officer position filled? If not, how is this function being addressed?
____Are you monitoring work schedules to ensure adequate rest? Are you meeting the standard work/rest guidelines?
____Have you provided for adequate rest, food, water, and health services for all personnel?
____Are all the fire personnel qualified for the positions they hold, and are they physically able to perform?
____Have you had any injuries or accidents?

Fire Suppression Operations

____What is the fire weather forecast (present and extended)?
____What is the fire behavior potential?
____Are fire personnel briefed on incident objectives, strategies, tactics, organization, communications, hazards, and safety principles?
____Are the strategy and tactics based on current and forecasted weather?
____Are the strategy and tactics safe, effective, and consistent with management's objectives and accepted fire policies and procedures?
____Do you have effective communication on the incident and with dispatch?
____Are you monitoring weather and fire behavior to make needed adjustments to strategy and tactics?
____Are you using tactical aircraft? Do you have an assigned air tactical group supervisor?
____Is aircraft use safe, effective, and efficient? Do you have a temporary flight restriction (TFR)?
____If the fire escapes initial attack, what will your role be in developing the Wildland Fire Decision Support System documentation and decision?

Administration

____Do you have any administrative concerns?
____What arrangements have you made to complete time reports, accident forms, etc.?
____Did all orders and procurement go through dispatch?
____Do you have any outstanding obligations?
____Are all rental agreements and use records properly completed?
____How did the fire start? If human-caused, has an investigation been initiated to determine the cause and develop a trespass case?
____Do you know of any current or potential claims?

Dispatch Office

____Is the incident receiving fire weather and fire behavior information?
____Is the incident getting the resources ordered in a timely manner?
____Is dispatch adequately staffed?
____What are the local, geographic area, and national preparedness levels? How do they affect this fire?
____Are the elements identified at the various preparedness levels being considered?
____What are the current local, geographic area, and national fire situations?
____What is the priority of existing fires and how are the priorities being determined?

Appendix B
Manager's Supplement for Post-Incident Review

Incident Commander _____
Incident Name and Number _____
Start Date and Duration of Incident _____
Date of Incident Debriefing _____
List of Debriefing Attendees:

Brief synopsis of fire behavior and narrative of the incident:

Fire Size-up:
- Gave an accurate size up of the fire to dispatch upon arrival?
- Managed fire suppression resources in accordance with the management objectives for the area and availability of resources?
- Did the unit support organization provide timely response and feedback to your needs? (appendix A)
- Were there any radio communication issues?

Provide for the Safety and Welfare of Assigned Personnel:
- Gave operation briefing prior to firefighters being assigned to incident operations.
- How were incoming resources debriefed; via radio, personal contact?
- Were agency work/rest guidelines followed? Was adequate food and water provided to firefighters?

Fire Suppression Operations:
- Explain how the strategies and tactics used met management objectives, without compromising adherence to the Fire Orders, Watch Out Situations, and LCES.
- How were weather conditions (daily weather briefings, spot weather forecasts or other) monitored?
- Were there adjustments needed to strategy and tactics?
- What were the potentially hazardous situations and their mitigations?
- How were projected changes in the weather, tactics, hazards, and fire behavior communicated to fire personnel?
- Were communications effective with dispatch and supervisor?
- Were all interested parties kept informed of progress, problems, and needs? Was aviation support used? If so, was it effective?
- Were there any injuries, close calls, or safety issues that should be discussed? Were these documented?

Administrative Responsibilities:
- Submitted complete documentation to supervisor for time, accidents, incident status, unit logs, evaluations, and other required or pertinent reports?
- Provided timely and effective notification of the fire status and unusual events or occurrences to dispatch and management.
- Provide the appropriate level of documentation into the Wildland Fire Decision Support System.
- If necessary, provided team transition briefing as assigned.
- Form ICS-201 was completed in accordance with local policy.

Appendix C
Sample Delegation for Unit Fire Chief/Fire Management Officer

_____, Unit Fire Chief/Fire Management Officer for the

_____ (Unit) is delegated authority to act on my behalf for the following duties and actions:

1. Represent the _____(Agency) in the _____ Multi-Agency Coordinating Group in setting priorities and allocating resources for fire emergencies.
2. Coordinate all prescribed fire activities in the _____ (Unit) and suspending all prescribed fire and issuance of burning permits when conditions warrant.
3. Ensure that only fully qualified personnel are used in wildland fire operations.
4. Coordinate, preposition, send, and order fire and aviation resources in response to current and anticipated zone fire conditions.
5. Oversee and coordinate the _____ interagency dispatch center on behalf of the _____(Agency).
6. Request and oversee distribution of severity funding for Unit Fire and Aviation.
7. Approve fire program requests of overtime, hazard pay, and other premium pay.
8. Ensure all incidents are managed in a safe and cost-effective manner.
9. Coordinate and provide all fire and prevention information needs to inform internal and external costumers with necessary information.
10. Coordinate all fire funding accounts with the budget officer to assure unit fiscal guidelines are adhered to and targets are met.
11. Approve and sign aviation request forms.
12. Approve incident qualification cards in accordance with agency policy.
13. Authorized to hire emergency firefighters in accordance with the DOI/FS Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals).

_____ _____
Unit Fire Chief/Fire Management Officer Date

_____ _____
Agency Administrator Date

Appendix D
Agency Administrator/Bureau Representative Briefing to Incident Management Team

Briefing Package for Incident Management Teams

The purpose of this template is to provide a format and content outline for the host unit to use when briefing an incident management team (IMT). Some items will not be relevant to some units; delete or add additional information as needed. An optional outline is included for those units that would like to use WFDSS to conduct the IMT briefing.

Overview for ALL Team Members

- Introduction – Agency Administrator/Bureau Representative
  - Other Agencies and Cooperators
- Objectives and Course of Action – Agency Administrator/Bureau Representative and/or Unit Fire Chief/Fire Management Officer (FMO) (Use the Wildland Fire Decision Support System [WFDSS], as needed.)
  - Objectives Tab – Incident Objectives and Incident Requirements
  - Course of Action Tab – Overview of Strategic Direction
- Situational Update – Assigned Incident Commander (IC) or Unit Fire Chief/FMO. Use the WFDSS as needed.
  - Fire Start Date and Cause
  - Situation Tab – Situational Overview
    - Analysis
      - Short-term, Near-term, and FSPro
    - Fire Environment and Safety
      - Est Ground Evacuation
      - Retardant Avoidance
    - Disturbance History (in the area)
      - Historical Fires
      - Fuel Treatments
    - Fire Weather and Danger
      - Significant Fire Potential – Predictive Services
      - RAWS stations
      - Local Fire Environment Information (Fire Weather, Fire Behavior) – Localized Anomalies, Terrain Influences, Weather Patterns or Fire Behavior, Current and Predicted Fire Weather/Fire Behavior
    - Boundaries
      - Responsible/Jurisdictional Boundaries
      - Federal Boundaries
      - County
    - Designated Areas
      - Wilderness/Potential Wilderness
      - Special Designation
      - BLM – oil/gas/range/horse and burro
    - Infrastructure
      - Facilities
      - Communication
      - Energy
      - Roads and Trails
    - Natural and Cultural Resources
      - Air Quality
      - Critical Habitat
    - Other Considerations to Include:
      - Current Planning Area in Published Decision
      - Values at Risk – Or Other Considerations That Are Not In WFDSS
      - Resource Benefits – Explain Where Fire Is Beneficial on The Landscape
      - Assessment Tab – Current Risks and Potential Benefits (use WFDSS as needed.)
    - Risk and Complexity Analysis
    - Benefits of Fire on This Landscape (Type of Fire, Where, When)
- Decision and Costs – Agency Administrator or Unit Fire Chief/FMO (Use WFDSS, as needed.)
  - Cost Tab – Outline Cost Thresholds for Current Decision

- Decision Tab – Review the Rationale of the Agency Administrator
- Local Concerns – Agency Administrator/Bureau Representative and Unit Fire Chief/FMO
  - Environmental, Social, Political, Economic
  - Law Enforcement or Investigations, If Applicable
  - Area Closures – Potential Impacts to Local Income, Outfitter Guides, Etc.
  - Initial Attack Responsibilities
  - Training Responsibilities – Inclusion of Local and Geographic Area Priority Trainees
- Incoming IC Comments
- Closing Remarks – Agency Administrator/Bureau Representative and Unit Fire Chief/FMO
  - Key Points from Leader's Intent
  - Breakout Group Meetings to Follow

Breakout Groups

Incident Commander

Written Package	Oral Briefing

• Current and expected weather, fire behavior and fire danger
• Delegation of authority
• Leader's intent
• WFDSS decision document
• Contact list
• ICS-209
• IAP and map
• Closure orders
• Local wildfire guidance documentation
• Heavy equipment policy
• Medical evacuation protocol
• Coordination of hazardous materials
	• Set up daily coordination calls between IC, agency administrator/bureau representative, (include others as needed)
	• Financial considerations/limitations
	• Other coordination expectations, such as adjoining agencies, Tribal consultation, elected officials
	• Local resource concerns (anadromous fish, cultural sites, timber, invasive species, etc.)
	  ○ Resource advisor
	• Other incidents/incident management teams (IMTs) in the area or geographic area
	• Hazardous materials
	  ○ Unexploded ordnances, asbestos, mining contaminants, etc.

Information

Written Package	Oral Briefing
• Contact list information (phone number, roles, etc.) for appropriate agencies, elected officials, business leaders • Daily updates email list • Template for press releases • Local media contacts • Media guide • Joint Information Center (JIC) contact numbers • Local unit public information plan	• If JIC activated, how the IMT will interact • Expectations of public meetings, or coordinated outreach from the IMT • Public information plan within 24 hours

Operations

Written Package	Oral Briefing

• WFDSS decision
  ○ Management action point (MAP)
  ○ Course of action
• Fire department contacts/resource list/availability
  ○ Provide structure protection guidance (as relative unit and adjoining ownership as needed)
	• Weather/fire danger information
	• Fire behavior models and predictions
	• Management action points
	  ○ Trigger points or evaluation lines for tactical operations
	  ○ Natural barriers
	• Structure protection guidance (overview from local perspective)
	• Spike camp vs. crew shuttle

Written Package	Oral Briefing
○ Evacuation plans and trigger points ○ Structure protection guidance • Contact list • Resource orders/resource list ○ Outgoing IC/Operations resource list – what is on order, what is assigned to the fire currently, what still needs to be ordered • Area maps/geospatial PDF map of fire area ○ Unit frequencies and repeater map ○ Retardant avoidance maps ○ Structure inventory data/maps ○ Values at risk maps if different than what is in WFDSS • Unit aviation briefing guide • Suppression rehabilitation plan • Mop up or rehabilitation standards/guidance • Turn back standards • Heavy equipment policy • Medical evacuation protocol • Unit identified hazards and potential mitigations (e.g., working in grizzly bear habitat, mining hazards, asbestos contaminated areas) • Coordination of hazardous materials	• Dozer line placement restrictions, recommendations, and requirements • Known structures with protection expectations • Initial attack responsibilities and procedures • Rehabilitation standards or expectations • Unit-identified hazards and potential mitigations (e.g., working in grizzly bear habitat, mining hazards, asbestos contaminated areas)

Air Operations

Written Package	Oral Briefing
• Aviation briefing guidance • Geographic area and local frequency guides • TFR maps • Frequency maps • Aviation hazard map • Unit helibase map • Retardant avoidance maps • Available aviation resources (on order and on loan) • Local airports and airstrips • Contact list (local air operations personnel and phone numbers)	• Tactical resources (smokejumpers, agency administrator, airtankers) ordering process • Helibase locations used in the past • Fuel – stationary and mobile • Helibase areas (proximity to fire) • Communication limitations • Helicopters available locally • Local weather issues (e.g., wind, smoke) • Restricted Areas (military, local flight paths, HARP, clear radar) • Known hazards • Housing for pilots • Retardant status • TFR • Retardant or water usage reporting requirements

Safety

Written Package	Oral Briefing
• Emergency Medical Field Evacuation Plan • Serious Accident and Incident Within the Incident Plan • Burn care facilities list	• Accidents to date • Unit identified hazards (e.g., unexploded ordnances, bear baiting stations, mines, snag patches, extremely rough terrain, etc.)

Written Package	Oral Briefing
• Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Guidelines for Fire Management information sheet • CISM request form • *Wildland Fire Fatality and Entrapment Initial Report*, PMS 405-1 • Memorandum of Agreement between Department of Agriculture FS and DOI • Unit identified hazards and potential mitigations (e.g., working in grizzly bear habitat, mining hazards, asbestos contaminated areas) • Completed ICS-206 for area • Contact list	• Unit protocol for communication of varying degrees of accidents ○ What level of notification does the agency administrator want? • Local medical plans, hospital locations, etc.

Finance Section (Could be combined with Logistics)

Written Package	Oral Briefing

• Unit incident business operating guidelines
• Contracts and agreements
  ○ List of all current agreements including land use agreements, fuel agreements, local purchase, equipment/resources agreements
  ○ Cell phone carrier information
  ○ Cost share agreements
  ○ Fire department cooperative fire agreements
  ○ Weed washing stations contract options
• Compensation/claims requirements and contacts (hospital liaison)
• Fiscal limitations and constraints
• Identify incident business advisor (INBA) and contracting officer(s)
• Procurement support
• Contact list
	• Overview of local/cooperator agreements

Logistics Section

Written Package	Oral Briefing

• Incident map
  ○ Incident command post (ICP) camp locations – map
  ○ Drop points
• Contracts
  ○ Cell phone carrier information
  ○ Weed washing stations contract options
• Unit frequencies and repeater map
• Medical information for area
• Expanded dispatch highlights
• Agreements
  ○ List of all current agreements including land use agreement, fuel agreements, local purchase, equipment/resources agreements
	• Medical information for the area – protocol
	• Availability of caterer or local restaurants for IMT/crews
	• Communication recommendations
	  ○ Cell phone coverage (carriers)
	• Resource ordering – Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) access and orders
	• Known ground support issues
	  ○ Rental car/vehicle availability
	• ICP/camp site recommendations (used in past)
	• Discussion of agreements

Written Package	Oral Briefing
• Contact list	

Planning Section

Written Package	Oral Briefing

• Delegation of authority
• Leader's intent
• WFDSS decision
• 209/IAP email list
• GIS contacts
• ICS-209
• Resource list (IROC orders)
• Weather, fire danger and current fuel moistures
  ○ Contacts for these products – local weather office, fuels specialist, etc.
  ○ Current spot weather forecast
• Initial map and IAP
• IROC orders/resource list
• Contact list
• Specific wildfire guidance documentation
• Remote Automatic Weather System (RAWS) ordering
• Infrared (IR) availability/ordering
• Final product expectations
  ○ Narrative/executive summary (IMT)
  ○ Transition Plan (IMT)
  ○ Demobilization Plan (IMT/expanded dispatch)
  ○ Maps (IMT)
  ○ Documentation (IMT) – number of packages required
  ○ Hard drive (IMT)
  ○ Rehabilitation Plan (Area)
  ○ Evacuation Plan (Local)
  ○ Structure Protection Plan (Area/IMT)
  ○ Known sites update (IMT/Area)
• Electronic data
  ○ FTP site posting directions or information repository (IMT hard drive)
  ○ GIS data
  ○ Known sites template
	• WFDSS documentation
	  ○ Modeling support/products
	• ICS-209 deadlines, protocols for complexities, limited fires, etc.
	• Training responsibilities

Contacts

Unit Name_____

Area	Name	Job Title	Work Phone #	Alternate #
Agency Administrator USWFS/FS		Agency Administrator Geographic Area Fire Chief Unit Fire Chief		
Bureau Representative		BIA/BLM/NPS/FWS Bureau Representative		
		Executive Assistant		
Fire Management		Fire Management Officer - FS		
		Aviation Officer		
		Dispatch Center Manager		
		Asst. Dispatch Center Manager		
		Initial Attack Dispatcher		
Administrative Representative		Incident Business Specialist		
Unit Claims Liaison		Budget Officer		
Resource Advisor		Biologist		
Archeologist		Archeologist		
Public Information		Public Affairs Officer		
Safety		Safety Officer		
Law Enforcement		Patrol Captain		
Vehicles/Fleet		Fleet Manager		
Information Systems		GIS Coordinator		
		Web Manager		
Hazmat Coordinator		Engineer		
D1		District Ranger		
		Fire Management Officer		
		Office Manager		
Priority Trainee Program		GATR		

Potential contacts include acquisition management (i.e., contracting specialists, purchasing agency, contracting officers, grants, and agreements); union representatives; human resources management (e.g., OWCP contacts); IT information (i.e., IROC/e-ISuite, customer help desk for agencies involved).

Geographic Area and Interagency

Potential contacts may include hospital liaison(s), incident business coordinator and procurement support coordinator, regional contracting specialist (VIPR), regional contractor liaison, State Department of Transportation, State troopers, State land office area manager, local law enforcement, electric/power company, etc.

Appendix E
Sample Delegation of Authority Agency Administrator to IMT and Leader's Intent

[Instructions for completion: replace underlined text with text specific to your incident. For example, in the Agency Administrator blanks, type the full name and represented agency under each signature line.]

Date:

To: Incident Commander – *Name of IC*

From: *list Agency Administrator(s)*

Subject: Delegation of Authority for *Incident Number and Incident Name*

Effective at *XXXX hours* on *provide the date*, you are delegated authority for the management of the *XXXX* incident that began on the *XXXX Jurisdictional* unit *include protecting unit at point of origin if different than jurisdictional (e.g., if the jurisdictional unit is Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, then you would include "protected by the US Wildland Fire Service") – include other agencies (jurisdictional or protecting) involved*.

This delegation carries with it the full authority for the management of the resources (personnel and equipment) and expenditure of funds directly associated with this *incident(s)*. Your primary responsibility is to organize, manage, and direct your assigned resources for safe, efficient and effective management of the incident. You are accountable to the Agency Administrator(s) or designated representative(s).

_____ _____
Agency Administrator *Date/Time*
Name and Agency

_____ _____
Agency Administrator *Date/Time*
Name and Agency

I accept this delegation:

_____ _____
Incident Commander *Date/Time*

Leader's Intent

This is an **optional** document with the following information provided as a template. The purpose is to provide information to an IMT that is not directly related to the strategic direction for managing a wildfire (strategic direction belongs in the WFDSS Decision). Some items will not be relevant to your unit; delete or add additional information as needed. Items *italicized* and underlined are areas where you should review the information and either add unit-specific information or delete those statements.

- ***DOI –*** *The USWFS, Bureaus, and Tribes (where applicable) will provide input and sign the Leader's Intent to the IC.*

Overview

This leader's intent document is one piece of many components of the entire briefing package provided to the incident management team (IMT). In addition to this leader's intent letter, the IMT will also receive the following documentation to support the management of this incident:

- Delegation of authority
- Published decision from the Wildland Fire Decision Support System
- Briefing package

Communications

It is expected we will meet *daily or as needed* to be informed on significant accomplishments or issues. Daily discussion points include but aren't limited to the following:

- *Safety*
- *Other identified values at risk*
- *Risk trade-offs*
- *Relationships with partners and stakeholders*
- *External communication*
- *Operational effectiveness (your assessment of likelihood of success of achieving all objectives)*
- *Benchmarks based on team capabilities, span of control, daily progress*
- *Complexity*
- *Cost*
- *Ramp-up and ramp- down strategies*
    - *Final fire package*

Expect to have a preliminary team evaluation at the incident closeout and a final evaluation at the end of fire season when all incident business transactions have been finalized.

Expanded dispatch is in place, please coordinate and work through XX Expanded Dispatch Center located at the interagency communication center for additional resources or support needs.

Strategic Planning

Successful management of this fire requires a common understanding of the values that require protection, their priority for protection, the probability they will be impacted, under what circumstances they require protection, what protection might look like, and how we manage our response. *Strategic direction is aligned with the land and resource management plan (L/RMP), resource management plans and associated amendments as detailed in the WFDSS decision*. It is expected that you and your necessary staffs read and follow the decision (incident requirements, incident objectives, course of action, rationale) in WFDSS. If you have questions or concerns, contact me directly to discuss or clarify. The team should assist with the following:

- Keep agency administrator/bureau representative informed of significant accomplishments/issues of which can be documented in the periodic assessment throughout the duration of the incident.
- Through your risk assessment process, provide feedback regarding needed changes to the incident objectives and course of action to mitigate unnecessary risk to firefighters.
- Provide input regarding any other identified values to be addressed in planning operations and in the WFDSS decision.
- Provide input to the current risk and complexity analysis (RCA) in WFDSS and the need for updates; RCA updates can be made to document changed conditions without publishing a new decision.
- Provide support in updating and revising the decision as necessary, and/or determining if an update to components of the decision or documentation is needed (e.g., expectation that the planning area will be breached).

- *Develop, update, and revise management action points as necessary to protect identified values (e.g., structural inholdings, communication sites, culturally sensitive areas) (The unit can list values here or refer to WFDSS).*

Throughout the life of the incident there will likely be oral discussions, agreements, or changes in tactics/management of the fire as a whole that deviate from this letter or the WFDSS Decision documentation. Such deviations must be discussed with *me* in person so that we can determine solutions and update the WFDSS Decision as needed.

Human Resources

- All personnel assigned shall be treated with dignity and respect. Manage the human resources assigned to the fire in a manner that promotes a positive and harassment-free work environment and creates a "no tolerance" atmosphere for harassment, alcohol, or illegal drug use.
- *All personnel assigned should receive evaluations prior to leaving the incident. Encourage supervisors to provide meaningful feedback regarding performance and conduct.*

Safety

- Visitor and public safety is a concern.
  - Provide timely information to publics impacted by the fire/closure areas.
  - Coordinate closures/evacuations with law enforcement as identified in the briefing package.
  - If needed, utilize the appropriate cooperative law enforcement agreement in the briefing package.
- Coordinate and consult with safety and health manager or designated agency representative as identified in the briefing package.
- Coordinate hazardous material matters with unit safety officer. Specific information has been included in the briefing package.
- *Camp security is advised due to base camp's proximity to town.*
- *Known safety hazards within the proximity of the fire area, e.g., grizzly bear baiting station at XX location, grizzly habitat (considerations for camp, spike camps, night operations), large-standing snag patch from fire, trees are severely weakened, excessively steep terrain (provide a geographical location) with large rock outcrops and no values of concern.*

Operations

Attention to firefighter and aviation safety is an absolute necessity! Incident action plans should reflect leader's intent for the incident. Tactical actions will be assessed, and effective mitigation measures will be in place to avoid putting firefighting personnel at unnecessary risk; *Consider not implementing tactical actions by assessing the value being protected versus the risk (even if mitigated) required to protect it*.

- Structure Protection
  - Ensure firefighters who engage in structure protection are staying within their tactical training, capabilities, and agency policies.
  - Document significant issues for values at risk within the ICS-209.
  - Utilize the community and structure fire protection guidelines (refer to your local guidance if relevant).
- Retardant
  - Review the fire-retardant-avoidance maps and documentation provided during the IMT in-brief or in WFDSS, and coordinate with the lead resource advisor as identified in the briefing package.
  - Follow reporting guidelines for retardant use as defined in the briefing package.
  - Follow the guidance/protocol within the wildfire guidelines for resource protection if retardant is misplaced.
  - Use retardant only when and where it is expected to be successful in slowing fire spread or reducing intensities so ground firefighters may engage the fire more safely with a higher likelihood of success.
- Aviation
  - Aviation safety is a high priority. An aviation risk assessment will be completed on all aviation missions in support of fire management. For additional guidance regarding aviation resources or local protocol refer to the briefing package and work with the unit aviation officer or their designee as a liaison.
  - An initial temporary flight restriction (TFR) has been established for the fire area, coordinate changes to the current TFR with the unit aviation officer.
- Initial Attack Operations
  - You will be responsible for initial attack activities within your designated TFR.
  - The local unit may call upon you for additional support as needed for initial attack activities.

- Natural and Cultural Resource Protection and/or Enhancement
  - Avoid damage to sensitive natural and cultural resources within the fire area; coordinate suppression actions with the lead resource advisor. Specific natural and cultural resource information has been included within the briefing package.
  - Ensure all tactical actions adhere to the unit wildfire guidelines for resource protection and develop a rehabilitation plan for the impacts associated with those actions.
  - Not all wildfire is detrimental in this planning area. Specific strategic direction is provided in the WFDSS decision.

Public Information

- *Develop a public information plan for the incident within XX hours and work closely with the unit public affairs specialist to disseminate information to internal staff, external partners, and interested publics. Refer to the briefing package for names and contacts.*
- Accuracy and timeliness of public information is important. Public meetings should be held as needed and on a routine basis.
- Maintain contact with appropriate agencies, elected officials, business leaders and members of the public as identified within the briefing package.
- Informational meetings or briefings and news releases are to be coordinated with the agency representatives as identified within the briefing package.

Finance

- *Document decisions that have incident cost ramifications within the IC daily log and provide clear rationale for the decisions.*
- Utilize the XX Incident Business Plan; please work with the designated incident business advisor (INBA) for the incident. Refer to the briefing package for contact information.
- *Procurement support is in place, XX Dispatch Center.*
- *Develop a total cost projection for managing the incident in line with the strategic direction provided for Federal lands, this needs to be completed within XX hours of being delegated authority.*
- Provide assistance in developing a cost share agreement as mutually agreed upon by the XX jurisdictions involved.

Logistics

- *Telecommunications contracts have been previously established with Verizon for phone and data plans to support IMT base camps. Specific information is included within the briefing package.*
- *The local unit has previously identified base camp and spike camp locations, please evaluate these areas before establishing new locations. Land use agreements for these sites are in place, coordinate with the incident business advisor for specific information.*
- *Maps of these areas will be provided within the briefing package.*
  - Invasive and noxious weeds – *Vehicle and equipment washing is required on fires within XX area*. Insert localized information. Refer to wildfire guidelines for resource protection on *the local unit* for additional information (*provided with the briefing package*). Please direct questions to the assigned resource advisor.

Other

  - To build capacity, the use of trainees is strongly suggested to be incorporated into team functions where available. Local trainees will receive first priority for assignments. *A list of the local trainees is included within the briefing package*.
  - Work with the geographic area training representative (GATR) to identify opportunities for priority trainees.
  - *Coordinate and work closely with the following positions/personnel – contact information as well additional contacts maybe found in the briefing package*.
  - Line officer
  - Bureau representative
  - Unit fire chief/FMO
  - Unit aviation officer
  - Interagency dispatch center manager
  - Public affairs officer
  - Unit safety officer
  - Incident business advisor

- Resource advisor
- Agency/interagency partners
- Other IMTs in the adjoining area

_____

Agency Administrator/Line Officer Signatory Date

_____

Optional signatures if needed (e.g., Bureau Representative) Date

_____

Incident Commander Date

Appendix F
Local Incident Commander Briefing to IMT

The Incident Briefing (ICS-201) form provides the basis for the local incident commander to brief the incoming team.

Briefing Information

Forms available or attached:		Other Attachments:
☐ ICS-201	☐ ICS-215	☐ Map of Fire
☐ ICS-207	☐ ICS-220	☐ Aerial Photos
☐ ICS-209		☐ Weather Forecast

Fire start date:
Time:
Fire cause:
Fuels ahead of fire:
Fuels at fire:
Fire behavior:
Fire spread:
Natural barriers:
Anchor points:
Perimeter secured, control/mitigation efforts taken, and containment status:
Life, improvements, resources, and environmental issues:
Weather forecast:

	Established	Possible
ICP:	☐	☐
Base:	☐	☐
Camp(s):	☐	☐
Staging area(s):	☐	☐

Copy machine available? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Safety issues: EMS in Place: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Air operations effectiveness to date:
Air-related issues and restrictions:
Hazards (aircraft and people):
Access from base to line:
Personnel and equipment on incident (status and condition):
Personnel and equipment ordered:
Cooperating and assisting agencies on scene:
Helibase/helispot location:
Crash fire protection at helibase:
Medivac arrangement:
Communication system in use: ☐ Radio ☐ Telephone ☐ Cell Phone
Water availability:
Review of incident action plan; copy of approved Wildland Fire Decision Support System published decision:
Smoke conditions:
Local political issues:
Damage assessment needs:
Security problems:

Appendix G
Sample Delegation – Lessons Learned Review (LLR)

Memorandum

To: LLR Facilitator; [*Title of person/office this is meant for*]

From: Delegating Official

Subject: Delegation of Authority – [*Incident name*] LLR

Situation Summary:

You are hereby designated the authority to lead and conduct a lessons learned review (LLR) for [*Incident name*]. The review process will begin at [*Identify LLR start time, date, and location*]. The fire staff and fire management office have identified the group of employees who will also be participating. That information will be provided to you upon your arrival.

You have the authority to tailor your team and the LLR process to fit the situation and your style of facilitation. However, I would like you to utilize the guidance outlined in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* chapter 18, while conducting the LLR. This includes:

- Convening the participants;
- Identifying facts of the event and developing a chronological narrative of the event;
- Identifying underlying reasons for success or failure;
- Identifying what was learned and what should/could be done differently in the future;
- Identify any recommendations that would prevent future similar occurrences; and
- Providing a final, written report covering the above items, which is due to me within two weeks of the event occurrence.

If you need any assistance, your primary contact will be [*Name of primary contact*].

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Appendix H
Sample Delegation of Authority – FAST

Delegation of Authority
_____Geographic Area
Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST)

Situation summary (issues and concerns/reason for ordering the FAST):

Objectives (measurable):

Team skills required (per objectives listed above):

The final team composition will be determined at time of dispatch and members named on the resource order.

Mission
The FAST is to conduct an independent assessment and evaluation of operational and managerial activities (related to the specific objectives stated above) at the following locations (mission segments):

The team may determine visits to other incidents/organizations/operations as appropriate and may do so after coordination with the Geographic Multi-agency Coordinating Group (GMAC). The FAST will contact the GMAC Coordinator (describe frequency of contact):

The FAST is to provide technical or managerial assistance when requested and where necessary to immediately correct an identified, critical problem. The FAST may also provide short-term assistance in managing situations or incidents when requested by the incident, organization, or operation.

Protocols
The FAST will organize and conduct an entry briefing with the appropriate managers of the locations/incidents identified previously. The entry briefing will provide the objectives and operational parameters of the mission. Once the mission segment is completed, the FAST will organize and conduct an exit briefing with the same officials or their designees, during which a draft of the mission-segment report will be presented and discussed. Components of this report will include:

- Purpose and objectives
- Findings, commendations, and recommendations
- Follow-up actions needed
- Immediate
- Long-term
- Scope (local, area, national)
- Copy of the delegation of authority

The FAST will contact the GMAC Coordinator_____.

FAST will provide a final written report to the GMAC Coordinator upon completion of all mission segments. This report will include:

- FAST final report outline
- Executive summary
- Purpose and objectives
- Summary (findings, recommendations, commendations, assistance provided)
- Critical and immediate follow-up actions required
- Introduction
- Methods and procedures
- Mission segments (summary of incidents, organizations, operations reviewed; include copies of mission segment reports)
- Analysis

- Findings and trends, commendations, and recommendations
- Follow-up actions needed
- Immediate
- Long-term
- Scope (local, area, national)
- A copy of the delegation of authority

The _____ Multi-Agency Coordination Group hereby charters and delegates the preceding authority to_____, FAST Leader, effective on _____.

/s/

Chair, _____ Coordinating Group

Date: _____

Appendix I
Area Command (AC) Complexity Assessment

Guide for ACT Engagement

Incident: _____ **Date:** _____

Check all that apply. (Current date/time and expected over next 72-96 hours.)

FACTORS	YES	NO
Multiple incident management organizations (IMTs of varying types) are assigned on a single administrative unit or several adjoining units that can be combined into a single area command.		
Local resources and managers need incident management assistance for multi-jurisdictional incidents that may/will incur a unified command organization and/or cost share agreements; may be single incident with multiple IMTs.		
Response trends, and/or planning level, political, media, or public concerns are escalating from local to geographic area level and may rise to national levels (e.g., PLs, military activation, FEMA and/or FMAG involvement).		
Incident reporting or communication requirements are diverse, time-sensitive, and/or require consolidation and clarity.		
Incident personnel are having difficulty achieving objectives.		
Intricate local land and resource management objectives and constraints exist and require close oversight for compliance.		
Special circumstances that warrant additional management oversight and support (including but not limited to serious injuries, fatalities, equipment accidents, special non-fire events happening locally) are occurring/impacting agency oversight.		
Key unit leadership (agency administrators, LOs, agency reps, unit fire chiefs/FMOs, etc.) is absent, operating beyond scope of training/experience, or multiple acting/detailed members are present/needed. Fatigue of these individuals is becoming a factor and will not improve for some time.		
Significant events (e.g., severe weather, large public events, substantial increase of initial attack) are predicted that will impact success.		
Complex, long-term, or multiple incidents are exceeding acceptable agency administrator and fire program manager span of control.		
Multiple incidents and administrative units are competing for resources. Incident prioritization, allocation of scarce resources, coordinating the sharing of critical resources, and application and management of surge resources can reduce competition and facilitate more efficient operations.		
A *theater of operations* concept is present in the thinking, planning, and operational choices of decision makers. A greater commitment to long-term strategy/planning is warranted to better utilize resources and manage incidents.		
TOTAL		

0-2 YES	3-6 YES	6+ YES
ACT *may not* be required, but can be ordered if YES items are significant	***Consider* ordering ACT: if not, monitor indicators closely and reconsider if additional YES indicators are noted**	**ACT *recommended***

Appendix J
Wildland Fire Decision Support System Information

WFDSS Overview

The Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is an interagency, web-based application that helps agency administrators and fire managers make risk-informed decisions for all types of wildland fires, regardless of complexity. WFDSS integrates the various applications used to manage incidents into a single risk-informed, collaborative system to streamline the analysis and reporting processes, providing one decision documentation system tiered to land and/or resource management plans. WFDSS Help is being updated regularly as topics or resources are added to the system and is the best source for current information on application use.

WFDSS System Access

The WFDSS application is intended for use by the US Federal Government for managing wildland fires. Users (Federal and Tribal employees and non-Federal WFDSS partners) can request accounts through the Wildland Fire Application Portal (FamAuth). For more information see System Access.

WFDSS User Roles

User roles in WFDSS have hierarchical permissions, every role builds upon the previous role. Each user will only be granted one application role per WFDSS environment. Review the User Roles help documentation to learn about the different roles.

WFDSS Incident Privileges

Incident privileges (including Collaborator, Point of Contact (POC), and Approver) are specific to each incident and determine which type of tasks user can perform. They are separate from User Roles. See Incident Privileges for more information including the self-certification requirement to be an Approver.

WFDSS Training and Support

A variety of WFDSS tutorials are hosted on the WFDSS Home page, including training videos, references for spatial fire planning, agency administrators/bureau representatives, and GAE resources. The Online Help documentation is continually being updated.

- ***DOI –*** *USWFS personnel shall follow current transition guidance as the primary direction. Where guidance is absent or lacks specificity, applicable DOI Bureau policy listed below may supplement direction, provided it does not conflict with or contradict the USWFS Transition Guidance. The USWFS will design, schedule and deliver WFDSS training for all users. Bureaus will nominate personnel and attend WFDSS training as needed.*

Geographic Area Editors Support of WFDSS Users, Incidents, and Agencies

Geographic area editors (GAE) are another source of WFDSS training and support. Their primary role is to support WFDSS users and incidents within their geographic area (GA), serve as interagency technical experts, and point of contacts (POC) for their agency or bureau. GAEs from various agencies are typically designated within each GA. GAEs work cooperatively for the benefit of all users within their GA and are both able and expected to assist any caller from any agency within their GA. GA Editor Resources can be found on the WFM RD&A website.

WFDSS Suggested Refresher and Preseason Items

Units should provide annual WFDSS refreshers to all individuals that may be involved in incident decision-making and documentation. Agency administrators and fire managers should also identify individuals assigned the fire behavior specialist role in WFDSS to understand a unit's capacity for providing analysis products and to identify future analysts for training and exposure come fire season.

WFDSS refresher training recommendations are located in the "WFDSS Refreshers" section of the WFM RD&A webpage. Suggested minimum duration for review is two hours.

The following items are recommended to be covered in annual WFDSS refreshers:

- *Unit Spatial Fire Planning Data* – briefly review what is currently available in WFDSS from the Spatial Fire Planning Service with regard to unit shapes and direction from land and resource management plans and other policy/guidance. Evaluate what fire management options can be utilized within the unit. Determine if edits are needed in the Spatial Fire Planning Service. *Boundary Fires* – discuss, with interagency partners, how fires will be managed along boundaries. Utilize a fire scenario for this discussion if possible and work through the WFDSS process.

- *Fire Scenario* – utilize WFDSS training to develop one or more fire scenarios and guide corresponding discussions. Utilize a fire scenario that is somewhat complex and includes interagency partners. If interagency partners are not involved in the scenario, discuss who, when, and how they would have been involved during an incident.
  - *Planning Area* – draw a planning area with dialogue around how to draw it and what to include within it.
  - *Spatial Inventory* – Generate and review the spatial inventory derived from drawing the planning area. Document missing values, if any, and determine if shapes are available to represent them.
  - *Reference and incident map layers* – review available map layers and the data they contain.
  - *Relative Risk, Organizational Assessment, and Incident Complexity Leve*l – complete the *NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment*, PMS 236, process making notes of what various elements were rated and why.
  - *Strategic Assessments, Strategic Courses of Action, and Estimated Final Cost* – develop these components of a decision for the scenario. Review to ensure they address the "what," "when," "where," and "why" to communicate leader's intent and indicate priority.
  - *Rationale* – draft the rationale to include "My decision is…" information. This is the executive summary of the document. Consider documenting what is allowed in the management plan, the probability of being successful, the expected duration, and what was considered but rejected. The "Rationale" section provides a list of items to consider addressing and discussing.
  - *Supporting information* – Discuss information available both within and outside the WFDSS application that can be used to increase situational awareness and decision-making and how this information can be included in the WFDSS decision.
- *Fire Behavior Models*
  - Discuss the various models (FSPro, FARSITE, MTT, FlamMap) and how any of them might be utilized to inform decision content.
  - Discuss how the models might be utilized to answer what types of questions (practice forming the questions first, and then determining which modeling tool would provide the best answer).
  - Review products previously utilized by the unit to evaluate risk on a fire or assist with decision-making.

Appendix K
Dispatch Reference

Dispatch Center Local Mobilization Guide/Dispatch Operating Plan

The dispatch local mobilization guide/operating plan will contain or provide reference to the following elements and procedures. These elements or procedures may exist in other plans or references in the local dispatch office.

- **Organization**
  - Chain-of-command/table of organization for the center, local agencies and cooperators
  - Notification process/procedures; roles/responsibilities, etc.
- **Dispatch Operations**
  - General information
  - Dispatcher roles and responsibilities
  - Procedures for each functional area (Coordinator on Duty (COD), Overhead, Crews, Equipment, Aircraft, Predictive Services, etc.)
  - Dispatcher training and qualification requirements
  - Dispatch Center Staffing Plan
    - Call-out procedures for additional personnel in emergency situations
    - Designation of duty officer for dispatch center
    - Shift limitations and day off/EFF hiring
  - Procedures for dispatch of resources off unit
- **Daily Duties**
  - Check-in/out of administrative/fire personnel
  - Procedures for gathering and disseminating intelligence and weather/briefings
  - Verification of initial attack response levels
  - Verification of status of suppression resources
  - Preparedness level establishment and verification
  - Procedures for providing information to the field about suppression/support resource availability, radio frequencies to be used, burning conditions/fuel types, weather forecast updates, local fire activity, agency policies, fire activity, incident updates, weather updates, resource status
  - Procedures for recording radio traffic, key events, and other information in a format accessible to all personnel (e.g., COD notes, shift briefs)
- **Initial Attack/Response Plan Elements**
  - Preplanned dispatch plans, run cards, and dispatch procedures
  - Management notification of a reported fire
  - Procedures for identifying preparedness levels
  - Process for assessing the appropriate response
  - Identification and notification of resources to respond
  - Cooperator support and planned response
  - Communications procedures
  - Procedures to follow when activity exceeds the initial attack/response plan
  - Aviation procedures
  - Incident name protocols
- **Emergency Operations (Fire/Non-fire)**
  - Notification of a reported incident
  - Jurisdiction verification
  - Response plan activation
  - Agency and area notification
  - Move-up and cover procedures
  - Call-back procedures
  - Evacuation of incident area
  - Closing public/private roads
  - Ordering additional personnel, equipment, and aircraft
  - Fire Weather Watch and Red Flag Warning notification
  - Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)
  - Agency duty officers (roles and responsibilities)

- *NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*, PMS 503
- Utility company notification (power and gas)
- Law enforcement dispatching procedures/requirements
- HazMat/spill response notification procedures
- Local government requesting all-risk assistance
- Search and Rescue

- **Local Agreements**
  - Copies of all interagency or inter-unit agreements and associated annual operating plans that govern the use of fire management resources
  - Maps delineating areas of responsibility for fire suppression coverage

- **Communications**
  - Procedures for assigning/managing local radio frequencies
  - Procedures for obtaining additional frequencies
  - Maps of repeater sites
  - Instructions for using local dispatch radio consoles, phones, computers, fax machines, paging systems, etc.

- **Weather**
  - Procedures for processing of weather observations
  - Daily posting and briefing procedures
  - Protocols in place for monitoring, requesting, and disseminating fire weather forecasts, fire weather watches, red flag warnings and other severe weather events (e.g., severe storm warnings, flash flood warnings, tornado warnings) to firefighters, incident commanders, and field-going personnel
  - Procedures for processing spot weather forecast requests and disseminating spot forecasts to the field
  - Procedures for immediate notification to fire suppression personnel of Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings

- **Fire Danger**
  - Locally significant fire danger indices and recording of those values daily

- **Briefings**
  - Time frames and frequencies/locations for daily briefings
  - Method for documenting briefings (time given, content of briefing, and person(s) conducting and receiving briefing)

- **Preparedness Levels**
  - General information relating to the local preparedness plan:
    - Procedures for identifying preparedness level
    - Notification to management
    - Dispatching roles and responsibilities at each preparedness level
  - Trigger Points
    - Specific triggers that cause the preparedness level to move up or down, such as number/size of fires, amount and type of resources available/committed, regional/national fire situation, condition of local fuels, observed fire behavior, human-caused risk or predicted lightning activity level, etc.
    - Specific actions tied to each preparedness level, such as extended staffing, prepositioning of suppression resources (crews, engines, airtankers, smokejumpers, etc.), the activation of local Multi- Agency Coordination (MAC) groups, making contact with other agencies, and hiring of call when needed (CWN) aircraft, emergency equipment rental agreements (EERA), or administratively determined (AD) pay plan crews.

- **Aviation**
  - Ordering/scheduling requirements and procedures
  - Special Use Airspace
  - Special use mission requirements
  - Incident/accident reporting and documentation procedures
  - Flight management/tracking procedures
  - Access to FLIP/AP1B and aviation sectional charts

- **Expanded Dispatch Plan**
  - Indicators for considering establishment of expanded dispatch

- Recommended organization and points of contact
- Overhead positions to order
- Location/facilities, equipment/supplies, support needs
- Procurement support considerations

- **Service and Supply Plan**
  - Current copies of competitive Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs)
  - Source lists for incident-only sign-ups
  - Protocols for the use of dispatch priority lists (DPLs)
  - Protocols for incident business coordination with agency administrative personnel
  - Contact lists and hiring procedures for AD or non-fire personnel, ground, and logistics support
  - A list of locations for use as staging areas, mobilization centers, and incident command posts (where applicable)
  - Procedures for local and geographic area cache ordering
  - Commercial travel procedures (including instructions on the use of the agency corporate travel cards)
  - Incident management team and procurement support mobilization

Administrative Items

- Funding, travel, time sheets, fire reports, etc.
- Procedures for completing and archiving fire records
- Procedures for mobilization of critical incident stress debriefing teams

Medical Plan

- Criteria/definitions; agency notification and documentation requirements
- Procedures for Emergency Medical Response and notification
- Activation/evacuation information
- Medical facility locations and phone numbers
- Air and ground transport (Medevac) capability
- Burn center information

Media Plan

- General procedures
- Notification requirements to agency external affairs personnel
- Routing for media calls

Required Reference Materials

All coordination/dispatch centers will have the following reference materials available:

- *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*
- *Geographic area standards for resource mobilization*
- *Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC)*
- *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*
- *Interagency Situation Report User's Guide*
- *ICS – 209 Program (NIMS) User's Guide*
- *Emergency Response Guidebook* (DOT)
- *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*, PMS 510
- *Aircraft identification/recognition/capability guide*
- *NWCG Airtanker Base Directory*, PMS 507
- *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505
- *Interagency Standards for Smokejumper Operations*
- Call-When-Needed Helicopter Contracts*
- *NWCG Standards for Airspace Coordination*, PMS 520
- *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508
- Military/National Guard Operating Plan (if applicable)
- Aviation safety plans
- AP1B/FLIP access
- Frequency guides

- National/geographic area/local aviation plans
- Local airport, SEAT base, airtanker base, helibase and smokejumper base locations
- Current and complete *NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*, PMS 503
- *National Mobile Food Services Contract*
- *National Mobile Shower Facilities Contract*
- *National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD) User's Guide*
- *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, including geographic area supplements
- NWCG NFES Catalog – Part 1: Fire Supplies and Equipment, PMS 449-1
- NWCG NFES Catalog – Part 2: Publications, PMS 449-2
- DPL contracts for vendors located in the local area
- Continuity of operations plan (COOP)
- Fire Danger Operating Plan or other preparedness operating plan as required by agency**
- Current Fire Danger PocketCards or Seasonal Trend Analysis as required by agency**
- Fire Management Plan**
- Mutual aid/initial attack agreements**

* Pre-season contact must be made to obtain this contract since it is no longer accessible on the USFS website. For copies of contracts, contact:

U.S. Forest Service Contracting
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 S. Development Avenue, MS 1100
Boise, ID 83705-5354
Phone: 208-387-5670

Fax: 208-387-5384

** Local dispatch centers only

Risk Management

Identify Hazards (Situation Awareness)

- Gather Information
  - □ Objective(s)
  - □ Communication
  - □ Who's in Charge
  - □ Previous Fire Behavior
  - □ Weather Forecast
  - □ Local Factors
- Scout the Fire

Assess Hazards

- Estimate Potential Fire Behavior Hazards
  - □ Look Up/Down/Around Indicators
- Identify Tactical Hazards
  - □ Watch Outs
- As conditions change, what other safety hazards are likely to exist?
- Consider probability versus severity?

Develop Controls and Make Risk Decisions

- Develop control measures that reduce risk:
  - □ Firefighting Orders ➔ LCES
    - Anchor Point
    - Downhill Checklist (if applicable)
  - □ What other controls are necessary?
    - Engineering/Administrative
    - PPE
    - Educational
    - Avoidance
  - □ Emergency Medevac Procedures/Plan
- Are controls in place to mitigate risk?
  - □ NO - Reassess situation
  - □ YES - Next question
- Are selected tactics based on expected fire behavior?
  - □ NO - Reassess situation
  - □ YES - Next question
- Have instructions been given and understood?
  - □ NO - Reassess situation
  - □ YES - Next question
- Consider risk versus gain

Implement Controls

- Ensure controls are in place and being implemented by personnel.
- Ensure controls are integrated operational plan and understood at all levels.

Supervise and Evaluate

- Are controls adequately mitigating the hazards?
  - □ NO – Reassess and consider:
    - Human Factors:
      - Low experience level?
      - Distracted from primary tasks?
      - Fatigue or stress reaction?
      - Unsafe attitude?
    - The Situation:
      - What is changing?
      - Are strategy and tactics working?

If situation changes significantly, restart Risk Management Process at the appropriate step.

Standard Firefighting Orders

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.
2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
3. Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.
4. Identify escape routes and safety zones and make them known.
5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.
6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
7. Maintain prompt communications with your forces, your supervisor and adjoining forces.
8. Give clear instructions and insure they are understood.
9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.
10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first.

Watch Out Situations

1. Fire not scouted and sized up.
2. In country not seen in daylight.
3. Safety zones and escape routes not identified.
4. Unfamiliar with weather and local factors influencing fire behavior.
5. Uninformed on strategy, tactics, and hazards.
6. Instructions and assignments not clear.
7. No communication link with crew members/supervisor.
8. Constructing fireline without safe anchor point.
9. Building fireline downhill with fire below.
10. Attempting frontal assault on fire.
11. Unburned fuel between you and fire.
12. Cannot see main fire, not in contact with anyone who can.
13. On a hillside where rolling material can ignite fuel below.
14. Weather is getting hotter and drier.
15. Wind increases and/or changes direction.
16. Getting frequent spot fires across line.
17. Terrain and fuels make escape to safety zones difficult.
18. Taking nap near fireline.