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.

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

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 is determined by completing a risk and complexity assessment (RCA). (Refer to samples in appendix E and F.)

Incidents not meeting the recommended incident typing characteristics in this chapter should have a documented RCA (appendix E) verifying the command organization is appropriate.

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. The RCA form is found in appendix E.

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 appendix F.

The RCA can be used to populate the "Relative Risk Assessment" and "Organization Assessment" portions of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).

Command Organizations

Incident Command

All wildfires, regardless of complexity, 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 incidents, delegations/expectations may be written or oral;
  - ***BLM –*** *BLM district managers will provide a written delegation of authority and expectations to the unit's type 3, 4, and 5 ICs annually prior to fire season.*
- 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 *Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)* are utilized. The MIR is found in the Medical Plan (ICS-206-WF) form available at https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/ics-forms;
- 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
- Type 2 incident command
- Type 1 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 *IRPG* 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 jurisdictional agency. 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 *IRPG* 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.

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.

The following position standards can be used for local incidents:

Type 3 Functional Responsibility	Minimum Qualification Standards for Local Incidents
Safety	Line safety officer (SOFR)
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 2 Incident Characteristics

- Preestablished incident management team (IMT) managed by type 2 IC or complex IC.
- ICS command and general staff positions activated.
- Many ICS functional units required and staffed.
- Geographic and/or functional area divisions established.
- Complex aviation operations.
- Incident command post, base camps, staging areas established.
- Incident extends into multiple operational periods.
- Written IAP required for each operational period.
- Operations personnel often exceed 200 per operational period and total personnel may exceed 500.
- Requires a published decision in WFDSS or other decision support document.
- Requires a written delegation of authority to the IC.

Type 2 Incident Command

These ICs command preestablished IMTs that are configured with ICS command and general staff and other leadership and support positions. Personnel performing specific type 2 command and general staff duties must be qualified at the complex, type 1 or type 2 level according to the PMS 310-1 standards and any additional agency requirements.

Type 1 Incident Characteristics

- Preestablished IMT managed by type 1 or complex IC.
- ICS command and general staff positions activated.
- Most ICS functional units required and staffed.

- Geographic and functional area divisions established.
- May require branching to maintain adequate span of control.
- Complex aviation operations.
- Incident command post, incident camps, staging areas established.
- Incident extends into multiple operational periods.
- Written IAP required for each operational period.
- Operations personnel often exceed 500 per operational period and total personnel may exceed 1000.
- Requires a published decision in WFDSS or other decision support document.
- Requires a written delegation of authority to the IC.

Type 1 Incident Command

These ICs command preestablished IMTs that are configured with ICS command and general staff and other leadership and support positions. Personnel performing specific type 1 command and general staff duties must be qualified at the type 1 or complex level according to the PMS 310-1 standards and any additional agency requirements.

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 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 M for the Area Command (AC) Complexity Assessment template.

Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMTs)

Complex incident management teams are managed by the geographic area (GAC) with direct guidance from NMAC which prioritizes and directs the use of IMTs. They are mobilized to Type 1 and Type 2 incidents by the geographic area coordination centers (GACCs) and will scale up or down as appropriate to meet the needs of the incident. At national preparedness levels 4 and 5, these teams are managed by NMAC. Depending on the complexity of the interface between the incidents, other specialists may also be assigned in areas such as aviation safety, information, long-term fire planning, and risk assessment and analysis.

Type 1 Incident Management Teams

Type 1 IMTs are managed by GMACs and are mobilized by the GACCs. At national preparedness levels 4 and 5, these teams are managed by NMAC.

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.

NIMO's standard configuration consists of seven command and general staff positions qualified at the type 1 level. If needed, NIMO can expand to meet various complexity levels.

Types of NIMO assignments include:

- National or geographic area/regional 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 a type 2 or type 3 incident or designated projects.
- Manage multiple type 3 ignitions within an area (e.g., GACC, forest, zone).
- Support and mentor agency administrators with a 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., R2 Bark Beetle, R5 marijuana eradication, or regional support during higher planning/activity levels.)

Type 2 Incident Management Teams

Most type 2 IMTs are managed by GMACs and are coordinated by the GACCs. Some 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
- Buying/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.

Buying/Payment Teams

Buying/payment teams support incidents by procuring services, supplies, and renting land, facilities, and equipment. These teams may be ordered when incident support requirements exceed local unit capacity. These teams report to the agency administrator or the local unit administrative officer. See the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management* for more information.

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 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 mobilization guides.

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 the agency administrator to describe and assess the fire situation, review completed fire behavior analysis products, develop incident objectives and requirements, develop a course of action, evaluate relative risk, complete an organization assessment, document the rationale, and publish a decision.

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 attendance, are encouraged but are only one component of a unit's overall preseason planning strategy.

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 N and https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS_Home.shtml.

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 have a record created in WFDSS. For more information on the IRWIN project see https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/WFIT/applications/IRWIN/index.shtml.

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 WFDSS via the "Data Management" tab.

- ***NPS –*** *NPS recommends preloading management direction into WFDSS during preseason.*
- ***FWS/BIA –*** *FWS and BIA units are not required to preload management direction into WFDSS.*

A published decision documents:

- Strategic direction from L/RMP and/or FMPs;
- Incident objectives and requirements;
- Incident management strategies and courses of action;
- Estimated costs for the duration of the incident;
- All affected jurisdictions that participated in the decision process and concurred with the strategies selected;
- agency administrator(s) has 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 "Agency Administrator Responsibilities" under "Managing the Incident" heading and appendix G for delegation of authority specifics.

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. agency administrator roles and responsibilities are addressed in agency chapters 2-6.

Additional considerations for determining that 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 course of action is 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.

Considerations for determining when a new decision may be needed:

- Costs are expected to exceed the estimated final costs in the current decision; or
- Management action points have changed since the current decision was published.

Additional information about WFDSS can be found in appendix N. User support information, training materials, and other resources can be found at https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS_Home.shtml.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System Decision Approval and Publication

All agencies having jurisdiction within a WFDSS planning area must be provided 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. In order for one Federal agency administrator to be delegated authority as an "Approver" for another agency, a preseason agreement describing those authorities may be needed; see your agency's delegation of authority policies for additional guidance.

Every wildfire decision will consider the development of protection objectives which also provide for safety of firefighter and the public and minimize the loss of, and damage to, property, cultural and natural resources.

- ***FS –*** *Decisions are required to include protection objectives. Regional foresters must approve WFDSS decisions that include objectives to pursue resource benefits at Geographic and/or National PL 4/5. See chapter 5 for more information.*

Units considering developing a decision for a group of fires, merged fires, or a complex should reference NWCG Memorandum EB-M-16-024, *NWCG Data Management Standards for Incidents Complexes and Merged Wildfires* at https://www.nwcg.gov/executive-board/correspondence 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 or a new decision. For DOI bureaus, to-

date agency costs that exceed the decision authority of the agency administrator require the publication of a new decision and/or notification as described in the Approval Authorities table. Approval of WFDSS wildfire decisions by agency administrators constitutes awareness of estimated final fire costs for the incident.

Decisions in WFDSS are approved and published by the appropriate line officer(s) and/or authorized agency administrator(s) for the agency(s) participating in the decision. Agency administrator authority is defined in the tables below but may be subject to re-delegation or reservation of authority.

As approvers of WFDSS decisions, agency administrator s will ensure that periodic assessments are completed until the fire is declared out.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System Decision Approval Authorities by Agency

DOI WFDSS Approval Authorities

Cost Estimate[1]	WFDSS Approval[2]
Less Than $5 Million	BLM district manager[3] NPS park superintendent FWS refuge manager BIA agency superintendent
$5 Million - $10 Million	BLM district manager[3] NPS park superintendent[4] FWS/BIA regional director[5]
Greater Than $10 Million	BLM district manager[3] NPS park superintendent[4] FWS National Director[5] BIA Bureau Director[5]

[1]***NPS/FWS/BIA –*** *Cost estimate should be based on estimated final cost of the incident.*

[2]***Alaska –*** *Alaska WFDSS decisions require an additional approval from the protecting agency fire management officer as per the Alaska Statewide Annual Operating Plan. In addition, Alaska WFDSS decisions affecting Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporation lands and DOI lands not managed by BLM require an additional approval from the Alaska Fire Service (AFS) as the fiscally responsible agent. Fiscal approvals for these wildfires with costs less than $5 million are delegated to AFS zone FMOs. Fiscal approvals for these wildfires with costs of $5 million and above are delegated to the Alaska Fire Service Manager.*

[2]***FWS Alaska –*** *FWS WFDSS approval authority has been delegated to refuge managers for all fires since suppression funding flows through BLM Alaska Fire Service instead of FWS. When an incident meets or exceeds Federal combined expenditures of $5 million and more than 50% of the burned acres are managed by the FWS, the Alaska Fire Service manager will ensure that written notification is provided to the regional chief of refuges and the Branch of*

Wildland Fire Chief. When an incident meets or exceeds Federal combined expenditures of $10 million and more than 50% of the burned acres are managed by the FWS, the Alaska Fire Service Manager will ensure that written notification is provided to the FWS National Director, the Regional Chief of Refuges, and the Branch of Wildland Fire Chief.

*[3]**BLM** – Approvals may be redelegated to the field or national conservation lands manager per agency policy. See chapter 2 for fire cost notification requirements.*

*[4]**NPS** – Park superintendents will provide written notification to the regional and/or agency director when an incident meets or exceeds Federal combined expenditures of $5 million and/or $10 million in suppression costs, and more than 50% of the burned acres are managed by the NPS. Written notifications should be emailed with a copy to the Chief, Branch of Wildland Fire.*

*[5]**FWS** – Regional directors and National Director may delegate WFDSS approval authority as per agency policy.*

*[6] **BIA** – Current policy requiring the Bureau Director to approve decisions over 10 million dollars is delegated to BIA regional directors per agency memorandum.*

Incident Type	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.*

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.

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 at https://wfdss.usgs.gov/.

Managing the Incident

Agency Administrator Definition

An agency administrator is the official responsible for the management of a geographic unit or functional area. Agency administrators are the managing officer of an agency, division thereof, or jurisdiction having statutory responsibility for incident mitigation and management. Some examples include NPS park superintendent, BIA agency superintendent, USFS forest supervisor,

BLM district manager, FWS refuge manager, State forester, Tribal chairperson, fire chief, police chief.

Agency Administrator Responsibilities

The agency administrator manages the land and resources on their organizational unit according to the established land management plan. Fire management is part of that responsibility.

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 and delegates the authority to the IC to take specific actions to meet those objectives. Agency administrator responsibilities to an IMT include:

- Conduct an initial briefing to the IMT (appendix D).
- Provide an approved WFDSS published decision.
  - ***FS –*** *Ensure that significant decisions related to strategy and costs are included in WFDSS.*
- Complete an RCA (appendix E and F) to accompany the WFDSS published decision.
  - ***BLM –*** *Completion of the Relative Risk and Organization Assessment within WFDSS satisfies the need for an RCA.*
  - ***FS –*** *Complete an RCA for type 1, 2, and 3 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 G) and to other appropriate officials, agency administrator representative, resource advisor (READ), 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;
  - Assign a READ(s) to the IMT;
  - 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.

- 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 Representative Responsibilities

The agency administrator representative (the on-scene representative for the agency administrator) is responsible for representing the political, social, and economic issues of the agency administrator 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 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

The READ is responsible for anticipating the impacts of fire operations on natural and cultural resources and for communicating protection requirements for those resources to the IC. The READ should ensure IMT compliance with

the L/RMP and FMP. The READ should provide the IC with information, analysis, and advice on these areas:

- Rehabilitation requirements and standards;
- Land ownership;
- Hazardous materials;
- Fuel breaks (locations and specifications);
- Water sources and ownership;
- Critical watersheds;
- Critical wildlife habitat;
- Noxious weeds/aquatic invasive species;
- Special status species (threatened, endangered, proposed, sensitive);
- Fisheries;
- Poisonous plants, insects and snakes;
- Mineral resources (oil, gas, mining activities);
- Archeological site, historic trails, paleontological sites;
- Riparian areas;
- 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, national monuments, national conservation areas, national historic landmarks, areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, wild and scenic rivers).

The READ and agency administrator representative positions are generally filled by local unit personnel. These positions may be combined and performed by one individual. Duties are stated in the *Resource Advisor's Guide for Wildland Fire* (PMS 313).

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."

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.

Large fires are classified as 100 acres or larger in timber fuel types, 300 acres or larger in grass fuel types, or when a NIMO, complex, type 1 or 2 IMT is assigned, regardless of the size of the incident or the suppression management strategy. An ICS-209 should be submitted daily for all uncontained full-suppression wildfires that meet large fire criteria. An ICS-209 should be submitted weekly (Thursday evening) for all wildfires meeting large fire criteria that are being managed under strategies that are less than full suppression. The agency administrator may require additional reporting times. Refer to local, zone, and/or GACC guidance for additional reporting requirements.

Incident History and Financial Records

Wildfire incidents on Federal lands managed by the FS and DOI (except BIA) 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.

The host unit will be responsible for retaining the incident documentation package including the IHF and financial records.

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
- Risk and Complexity Assessment.

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 appendix I for the IMT 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.

The agency administrator will provide a copy of the evaluation to the IC and the state/regional FMO and retain a copy for the final fire package.

The state/regional FMO will review all evaluations and will be responsible for providing a copy of evaluations documenting performance to the Geographic Area Coordinating Group or agency managing the IMT.

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 to IMTs will convey appropriate emphasis on the preservation of wilderness character and resources and will ensure interaction with local wilderness READs.

- ***BLM –*** *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 (READ) 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 –*** *For 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 –*** *For all wilderness fire management actions proposing the use of any of the Wilderness Act 4(c) prohibitions, a minimum requirements analysis will be completed.*
- ***FS –*** *For all wilderness fire management actions proposing the use of any Wilderness Act 4(c) prohibitions, a minimum requirements analysis is recommended.*
- ***BLM/NPS/FWS/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.*
- ***BIA –*** *For all wilderness fire management actions refer to L/RMPs.*

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. Consult the NWCG website (https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/invasive-species-subcommittee) to obtain these protocols. Local area or agency guidelines may also be available and useful and local biologists, READs 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, READs 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 (https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/invasive-species-subcommittee) 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 READ. 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 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.

- ***NPS –*** *For 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 3.*
- ***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 (Incident Response Pocket Guide, 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.

- ***NPS –*** *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 *Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response Guidebook – Interpretation of Department of the Interior 620 DM 7 and USDA Forest Service Manual 2523, For the Emergency Stabilization of Federal and Tribal Trust Lands* (version 4.0, February 2006) and *Interagency Burned Area Rehabilitation Guidebook – Interpretation of Department of the Interior 620 DM 7, For the Burned Area Rehabilitation of Federal and Tribal Trust Lands* (version 1.3*,* October 2006).

Suppression Repair

Planned actions taken to repair the damages to resources, lands, and facilities resulting from wildfire suppression actions and documented in the IAP. 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 bureau director 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.*

Rehabilitation

Efforts taken within 5 years following 21 days after the ignition date of a wildfire to repair or improve wildfire-damaged lands unlikely to recover naturally to management-approved conditions or to repair/replace minor assets damaged by wildfire.

- ***DOI –*** *A separate Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan (BAR) or in combination with Burned Area Emergency Response Plan (BAER).*
- ***FS –*** *A Burned Area Emergency Response Plan (BAER).*

Restoration

Continuing the rehabilitation beyond the initial five years 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	5+ years
Responsibility	IC/ agency administrator	agency administrator	agency administrator	agency administrator
Funding type	Suppression (fire)	Suppression (emergency stabilization)	Rehabilitation or regular program	Regular program

Emergency Stabilization Approval Authorities

Level	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	FS
Local Approval Level	<$250,000 Agency superintendent	$0 Field/ district manager	$0 Refuge manager	$0 Park superintendent	$0 District ranger $0 Forest supervisor

Level	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	FS
Regional/ State Approval Level	$250,000-$500,000 Regional director	<$100,000 State director	<$500,000 Regional director with regional fire management coordinator concurrence	<$500,000 Regional director	$500,000 Western regional foresters $100,000 Eastern Regional Foresters
National Approval Level	>$500,000 Director of Fire Management	>$100,000 Director	>$500,000 Chief, Branch of Fire Management	>$500,000 Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation	>$100,000 or $500,000 Director, Watershed and Wildlife Management

Burned Area Emergency Response Teams

BAER teams are a standing or ad hoc group of technical specialists (e.g., hydrologists, biologists, soil scientists) that develop and may implement portions of the BAER plans. 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 skills and size should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the wildfire.

The agency administrator is responsible for designating an interdisciplinary BAER team. However, BAER teams must coordinate closely with IC and IMT to work safely and efficiently. The agency administrator is responsible for submitting the Emergency Stabilization BAER Plan to the regional office for review and approval within the timeframes established by each agency. Coordination should occur with the regional BAER coordinator. If needed, extensions can be negotiated with those having the appropriate level of approval authority.

- ***DOI –*** *The Department of 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. The full national BAER team is dispatched to more difficult incidents involving extreme risks to human life and critical Federal assets. Potential floods, mud and debris flows, watershed/municipal water supplies, urban interface, and complex and multiple jurisdictions are the dispatch prioritization criteria issues factored into the mobilization decision. Less complex incidents will use local, regional, interagency, and contracted ad hoc BAER teams that may be supplemented with national BAER team personnel. Bureau coordinators maintain rosters of BAER personnel for less complex incidents.*

- ***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 Mobilization Guide.*
- ***FS –*** *Each Forest Service unit identifies a core BAER team prior to fire season. Regional coordinators maintain rosters of experienced BAER personnel in the region. When needed, specific BAER personnel representing needed specialties from other units can either be contacted directly or through dispatch. See FSM 2523 and FSH 2509.13 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.
    - ***BLM/NPS/USFS/BIA/BOR –*** *Final fire reports for wildfires that originate on agency lands, or lands formally protected by these agencies, shall be certified in InFORM.*

- ***FWS –*** *For wildfires that originate on FWS lands, or lands formally protected by FWS, final fire reports shall be submitted via the Fire Management Information System (FMIS), as noted in chapter 4.*
- ***Other agencies –*** *Several State agencies and certain other Federal agencies, such as those under Department of Defense, 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 https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/fire-reporting-subcommittee.

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 human resources, including classification, payroll, commissary, 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 All Hazards-Supplement to the NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management establishes business management guidelines for the Department of the Interior's (DOI) all-hazards incidents. The DOI Supplement is under review.*

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 approving official 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.

Significant Wildland Fire Review (DOI)

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 mobilization guides.

- ***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 BLM, 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* at https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/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 contains the catalog of materials, information about these programs, and online ordering instructions. Refer to https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/conservationeducation/about/education-themes/wildland-fire.

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 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*. 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 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 state/regional 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.

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*, 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*, 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 (OF-315)*. 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 (OF-315).

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 (OF-315) and should be accomplished by ordering the item from DLA.

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