



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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**File Code:** 5130  
**Route To:** (5100)

**Date:**

**Subject:** Incident Commanders Type 3, 4, and 5

**To:** Carson and Santa Fe National Forests Incident Commanders

This letter is the delegation of authority to you as Type 3, 4, or 5 Incident Commander to assume command of incidents on the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests commensurate with your qualification level. This letter shall remain in effect until rescinded or superseded.

With this letter you are authorized and empowered to operate across and within all districts on the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests as assigned and/or needed. You must be fully qualified according to your respective agency standards and current in your Incident Commander qualification.

It is your responsibility to notify the responsible Interagency Dispatch Center and all personnel on scene who the Incident Commander is and when a transfer of command occurs. We expect you to maintain a constant state of situational awareness as you designate work assignments, brief your personnel, and manage the incident. It is critical that you anchor to risk management principles as you make decisions regarding prioritization as well as tactics and strategies employed in fire suppression.

You are expected to communicate your Leader's Intent often to those under your command on the incident. Clear Leader's Intent and respectful supervision will empower those under your command to make decisions in the field. Through the use of doctrinal principles, you must ensure that all actions and consequences have been analyzed against risk to human life and other values. You are expected to focus on the "**5 Rights**" to limit unnecessary exposure and expenditure (**Right-Plan, Place, Time, Asset and Duration**) Understandably, the situation at hand does not always allow for complete analysis. In such instances you are expected to use your experience and judgment and make timely and prudent decisions as to the best course of action. You are expected to maximize opportunities for success through thoughtful decision making and heightened situational awareness while also minimizing exposure to risk.

Our focus must remain on achieving our "Wildfire Crisis Strategy" landscape restoration goals, while fulfilling our leadership role in emergency response. We will continue safe, effective initial attack to protect communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources. In doing so, we expect all leaders to put our people first as they put themselves in harm's way to protect communities and landscapes.

Acknowledging the inherent risks in suppressing wildfires, we expect you to continue to use all available tools and technologies to ensure proactive risk assessments, fire response, and post-fire recovery. Every fire will receive a risk-informed response, this includes safe, effective initial attack to protect communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources, and careful evaluation of every naturally ignited wildfire to determine appropriate management actions. The use of natural ignitions as a management strategy is critical to increase landscape resilience when conditions permit. Pre-planning with Potential Operational Delineations (PODs), better forecasting and knowledge of existing fuel treatments, and risk-sharing dialogue with community members, stakeholders, and cooperators, will help us make informed decisions that balance resource objectives with safety and community protection.

Your role as a leader is pivotal to sustaining our organization and ensuring our employees feel safe—psychologically, physically and socially. As such, we expect you to remain grounded in risk management principles and anchored in our core values of safety, interdependence, conservation, diversity, and service. We also will continue to support and defend any employee who is doing work in support of our mission. Bullying, sexual harassment and other forms of harassment have no place in our work environment and will not be tolerated. We expect all leaders to engage in direct communication with employees, anchoring to our Agency's values around appropriate behavior within our work environment.

Although the Federal COVID Public Emergency Declaration has ended, Executive Order 13991 remains in effect until further notice which directs Federal agencies to comply with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance regarding COVID-19 workplace safety protocols.

- Utilize deliberate risk management processes to ensure that incident responders are only committed to operations where and when they can be successful, and under conditions where important values actually at risk are protected with the least

**During your command and management of the incident, you are expected to:**

- Monitor incident personnel for signs of fatigue and adhere to work-rest guidelines as feasible. You are responsible for documenting any work shifts exceeding 16-hours in length and include how fatigue is to be mitigated.

- Effectively manage costs of the incident by planning strategies commensurate with the values to be protected without compromising efforts to minimize risk to incident personnel. You are expected to balance costs containment with personnel safety.
- Avoid strategies or individual tactics that simply transfer risk from one resource to another and do not increase the likelihood of attaining incident objectives. For example, ensure aircraft use is in support of work done on the ground and that such air tactics have a high probability of success.
- Order and utilize additional staff to provide for a management organization that is commensurate with the complexity of the incident and maintains adequate span of control. Communicate with the local duty officer regarding support personnel available locally. Local emergency services personnel may also request opportunities for training on your incident to expose them to ICS management.
- You must not assume any collateral duties while assigned as the Incident Commander such as Unit Duty Officer, or any other role that may cause a distraction. The Forest Fire Management Staff is available to help you with mitigating any concerns relative to collateral duties.
- As appropriate, refer to the guidance and information provided in the Forest Land Management Plans and Spatial Fire Plans. These documents and information will be furnished upon request. Plan guidance is also available through WFDSS.
- On extended attack, as soon as safely possible, resources assigned to the fire will need to follow the Dispatch Priority List (DPL) and follow proper IBPA practices.
- Maintain a close working relationship with District Line Officers and with cooperating agencies and other Government agencies involved in the incident or adjacent to Forest Service lands affected. Help us to maintain our positive relationships with our local partners.
- Ensure you understand any specific incident objectives set forth by the responsible Wildfire Agency Administrators or by decision support documentation that may have been prepared. Ask for written and verbal expectations from the Line Officer if you are unclear on objectives. Forest Fire Management Staff, Resource Specialists, and the Forest's Fire Information Team will be available to you for any assistance, guidance or oversight necessary.
- Maintain awareness and revisit the complexity analysis so that you may offer advice to the Wildfire Agency Administrators as the incident complexity changes.
- Provide opportunities for individual training and learning opportunities by utilizing the CAF/SNF priority trainee list.

You are in the position of an Incident Commander because you have demonstrated a fitness for command. You will be expected to continue such demonstrations. The well-being of everyone on your incident, including yourself, must be your highest priority. Your expertise and assistance are greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about this delegation, please do not hesitate to call any of the District Rangers on the Forest or the Forest Fire Management Staff.

**James Duran**

Forest Supervisor  
Carson National Forest

**cc:**

Carson NF District Rangers  
Carson NF Fire Management Officers  
Taos Interagency Dispatch Center

**Shaun Sanchez**

Forest Supervisor  
Santa Fe National Forest

**cc:**

Santa Fe NF District Rangers  
Santa Fe NF Fire Management Officers  
Santa Fe Interagency Dispatch Center

**Incident Commander**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_