**10 – POLICY AND OBJECTIVES**

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# 10 - POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

# 11 - MISSION STATEMENT

The principal mission for publication of this mobilization guide is the cost-effective and timely coordination of wildland protection agency emergency response for wildland fire. This is accomplished through planning, situation monitoring and expediting resource usage between the Forest Service (USFS), California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Weather Service (NWS) and other cooperating agencies.

# 12 – OBJECTIVES

The National Interagency Mobilization Guide identifies standard procedures which guide the operations of multi-agency logistical support activity throughout the coordination system. This Guide is intended to facilitate interagency dispatch coordination, ensuring the timeliest and cost effective incident support services available are provided. It is designed to accommodate amendments as needed and will be retained as current material until amended. Local Mobilization Guides should be used to supplement the National Interagency Mobilization Guide. Geographic Areas will provide NICC two (2) copies of their Mobilization Guide and will provide amendments as issued.

12.1 NATIONAL FIRE AND AVIATION POLICY

*The Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* provides fire and fire aviation program management direction for Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service managers. Employees engaged in fire management activities will continue to comply with all agency-specific health and safety policy. Other references, such as the *National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Incident Response Pocket Guide (PMS 461, NFES 1077)* and the *NWCG Fireline Handbook (PMS 410-1, NFES 0065)* provide operational guidance. 2.1 - NATIONAL FIRE AND AVIATION POLICY. This may also be accessed using this link <http://www.nifc.gov/PUBLICATIONS/redbook/2012/Chapter01.pdf>

**Elements of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy**

**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 land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale 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, the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, the natural and cultural resources, and the values to be protected dictate the appropriate response to 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, safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.

**6. Protection Priorities**

The protection of human life is the single overriding suppression priority. Setting priorities among protecting public communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources will be done based on the values to be protected, public 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 are wildland firefighting, hazard reduction, cooperative prevention, 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 Fire Management Plan (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). FMPs 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.

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**9. Science**

FMPs and fire programs will be based on a foundation of the best available 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 land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.

**11. Suppression**

Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits and all values to be protected consistent with resource objectives.

**12. Prevention**

Agencies will work together with their partners, 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, 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 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 effectiveness of projects through implementation of the *2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy*. The evaluation will assure accountability, facilitate resolution in areas of conflict, and identify resource shortages and agency priorities.

Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy 5 (January 2001)

***Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy*** 8 ***(February 13, 2009)***

On February 13, 2009, the Fire Executive Council (FEC) approved guidance for the implementation of federal wildland fire management policy. This guidance provides for consistent implementation of the *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001)*, as directed by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.

*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 objective 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 Land/Resource Management Plan, and/or the Fire Management Plan.

**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.

**Fire Management Objectives**

Federal agency fire management programs should assist resource managers with protecting, maintaining, and enhancing federal lands in a cost effective manner. Wildland fire management objectives are:

• Protect human life, property, and natural/cultural resources, both within and adjacent to agency administered lands.

• Minimize damages and maximize overall benefits of wildland fire within the framework of land use objectives and Land/Resource Management Plans.

• Manage the wildland fire program in accordance with congressional intent as expressed in the annual appropriations act and enabling legislation and comply with applicable departmental manual and agency policies and procedures.

• Promote an interagency approach to managing fires on an ecosystem basis.

• Employ strategies to manage wildland fires that provide for firefighter and public safety, minimize cost and resource damage, and are consistent with values to be protected and management objectives.

• Stabilize and rehabilitate resources and improvements lost or damaged by fire or suppression activities.

• Minimize and where necessary, mitigate human-induced impacts to resources, natural processes, or improvements attributable to wildland fire activities.

• Promote public understanding of fire management programs and objectives.

• Organize a fire staff that can apply the highest standards of professional and technical expertise.

• Encourage research to advance the understanding of fire behavior, effects, ecology, and management.

• Integrate fire management through all levels of the planning process.

• Prevent and investigate all unplanned human-caused fires.

**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. It 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 include 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 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.

**Fire Preparedness**

Fire preparedness is the state of being ready to provide an appropriate response to wildland fires 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, identifying values to be protected, hiring, training, equipping, pre-positioning, 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, commanders’ 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 put the fire out in a safe, effective, and efficient manner. Fires are easier and less expensive to suppress when they are small. When the management goal is full suppression, aggressive initial attack is the single most important method to ensure the safety of firefighters and the public and to limit suppression costs. Aggressive initial attack provides the Incident Commander maximum flexibility in suppression operations. Successful initial attack relies on speed and appropriate force. All aspects of fire suppression benefit from this philosophy. Planning, organizing, and implementing fire suppression operations should always meet the objective of directly, quickly, and economically contributing to the suppression effort. Every firefighter, whether in a management, command, support, or direct suppression role, should be committed to maximizing the speed and efficiency with which the most capable firefighters can engage in suppression action. When the management goal is other than full suppression, or when conditions dictate a limited suppression response, decisiveness is still essential and an aggressive approach toward accomplishment of objectives is still critical.

**Principles of Suppression Operations**

The primary means by which we implement command decisions and maintain unity of action is through the use of common principles of suppression operations. These principles guide our fundamental fire suppression 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 suppression operations and are intended to improve decision making and firefighter safety. They are not absolute rules. They 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**

The principle of the objective is to direct every fire suppression operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and obtainable objective. The purpose of fire suppression operations is to achieve the suppression objectives that support the overall management goals for the fire.

**2. Speed and Focus**

Speed is rapidity of action. Focus is the convergence of appropriate resources at the desired position to initiate action. The principle of speed and focus maintains that rapidly deploying and concentrating firefighting resources, in a calculated fashion, at the decisive time and place increases the likelihood of successful suppression actions.

**3. Positioning**

The principle of positioning maintains that rapid, flexible, and opportunistic movement increases the effectiveness of fire suppression resources. Positioning ranges from single resource offensive or defensive reactions to dynamic fire conditions, to pre-positioning 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.

**4. Simplicity**

The principle of simplicity is that clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders maximize effectiveness and minimize confusion. Simplicity contributes to successful actions.

**5. Safety**

The principle of safety maintains that ensuring the safety of firefighters and other persons affected by fire operations 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.

12.2 – WILDLAND FIRE DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM (WFDSS)

The Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) has been developed to improve decision documentation, risk assessment/decision support, and operational implementation. This system replaces the Wildland Fire Situation analysis (WFSA), Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP), Long-Term Implementation Plan (LTIP), and Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP).

Use of WFDSS is required for all federal agencies. Specific direction regarding the use of WFDSS will be issued by each agency. Your GACC website can provide you additional information as the implementation occurs.

National direction regarding WFDSS can be found at: <http://www.nifc.gov/policies/red_book/2010/Ch09Planning.pdf>

California GACCs direction and information regarding WFDSS can be found at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/fire/management/wfdss/>

Additional WFDSS information and user login to both the production and training sites may be found at: <http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS_Home.shtml>

**Requests for Fire Behavior Modeling Decision Support**

Fire modeling has been incorporated into WFDSS, in the form of Basic and Short Term Fire Behavior (single purpose models from FlamMap), near-term fire behavior and Fire Spread Probability (FSPro). Planned future additions include Fire Area Simulator (FARSITE).

Fire Behavior modeling requests will be initiated in the WFDSS program. All requests should be followed up with a phone call to the local fire behavior specialist and/or the GACC Predictive Services Intelligence Coordinator. Assistance can be obtained from:

1. Local WFDSS Fire Behavior Specialists (recommended if available).
2. Geographic Area level Fire Behavior Specialists. Each GACC will have a list of qualified Fire Behavior Specialists.
3. National Fire Decision Support Center (NFDSC). Information for requesting assistance from the NFDSC can be found at the WFDSS website: http://WFDSS.usgs.gov

**WFDSS Decision Approval and Publication**

Decisions in WFDSS are approved and published by the appropriate agency administrator as defined in the "Red Book" - Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2011 . Incident privileges must be assigned within WFDSS to designate the approver. During the approval process, prior to publishing a decision, the timeframe for periodic assessment can be set (1-14 days). Website: <http://www.nifc.gov/policies/red_book.htm>

Additional decision support can be obtained through each agency’s WFDSS contact. WFDSS coordination contact information can be found in Chapter 50 of this mobilization guide.

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