

**File Code:** 5120**Date:** February 25, 2026**Route To:****Subject:** Incident Commander Delegation of Authority Calendar Year 2026**To:** Type 3, 4, and 5 Incident Commanders

By this letter, you are, hereby, delegated the authority as an Incident Commander (IC) and/or an Incident Commander Trainee for the Upper Peninsula Fire and Aviation Management Unit, Hiawatha and Ottawa National Forests. The direction in this letter will lay out our expectations prior to fire suppression operations.

As Incident Commander, you are accountable to us, or the designated Line Officer, for the overall management of incidents that you are assigned. Management of an incident that you are assigned is the primary task; and firefighter and public safety is your first and highest priority.

As Incident Commander or Incident Commander Trainee on Type 3, 4, and 5 incidents, the following is expected:

Risk Management:

- The health and safety of fire fighters and the public that we serve is your single overriding priority. Stop, Think, Talk, Listen...then Act.
- All firefighting personnel will adhere to the 10 Standard Firefighting Orders, LCES is established, and the 18 Watchout Situations are identified and continually mitigated during suppression operations.
- Understand your role as an Incident Commander. Be deliberate in your intent, communications, and actions as you engage the fire.
- Continually monitor and evaluate risks and the effectiveness of the suppression strategy and tactics on your incident. Commit resources only when there is a reasonable expectation of operational success.
- All personnel have the right to refuse an unsafe assignment utilizing the Turn-Down Protocol available in the IRPG.
- Avoid strategy or individual tactics that simply transfer risk with low likelihood of meeting objectives from one resource to another.
- Completion of an Incident Complexity Analysis is required for all fires. That Type 3 IC's and Type 3 IC Trainees will work with the appropriate Line Officer to complete timely WFDSS assessments and decisions.



- Use of chainsaws and tree felling are one of the most hazardous activities you may engage in. Ensure that firefighters are working within their qualifications and experience levels when operating chainsaws and felling trees.

Communications:

- Establish positive communications with all assigned resources and dispatch.
- Ensure Commander's intent is clear, solicit feedback, and have open, honest, and balanced conversations.
- That you provide clear, timely and explicit communications to Duty Officers and Agency Administrators so they can provide the support you need and can share the risk.
- Communicate and coordinate with assisting cooperating agencies in a professional and positive manner.
- Contribute to maintaining a positive relationship with our local partners and cooperators and other Governments involved in the incident.
- Ensure the Agency Administrator is involved with significant, controversial, or political issues.

Resources:

- Realize that fire suppression activities can have consequences on natural resources. Utilize resource advisors or technical specialists as resources to assist with plans to minimize the impacts to natural and cultural resources.
- In wilderness areas Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) will be utilized.
- In wilderness areas the approval of specific tactical actions will be approved by the appropriate level Line Officer whom has been delegated that authority in the Eastern Regions Delegation of Authority for Use of Motorized Equipment or Mechanical Transport in Wilderness.

Human Resources

- Maintain command and control of all resources assigned to the incident, review the span of control, and ensure that the complexity of the incident is within your qualification level.
- Take actions to manage fatigue for all incidents and ensure compliance with guidelines for work-rest and length of commitment and give/get pre-approvals and justifications for deviations.
- Focus on management of the incident by delegating collateral duties to other personnel if those duties interfere with incident management.

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- Provide for training opportunities and complete performance evaluations for all fireline personnel assigned as trainees to your incident.
- Take care of yourself and each other, check in with your colleagues and yourself. Realize that everyone has different responses and recovery needs when exposed to traumatic or stressful situations. Be aware of the resources available through the agency for mental health resiliency.

All personnel assigned shall be treated with dignity and respect. Manage the human resources assigned to the fire in a manner that promotes a positive and harassment-free work environment and creates a “no tolerance” atmosphere for harassment, alcohol, or illegal drug use. Incident personnel who demonstrate any type of inappropriate behavior must be released immediately with appropriate follow-up documentation.

You are asked to make difficult decisions in a dangerous and dynamic environment. Rely on your experience and training and the experience of others; make the best decision possible and lead by example. Take good care of yourself and the people you supervise.

Any additional needs please contact Unit Fire Management Officer, Shelby Majors at (406) 224-8542 or the Unit Assistant Fire Management Officer, Zak Parmentier at (715) 889-1598.

We look forward to working with you.

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cc: ELCS