

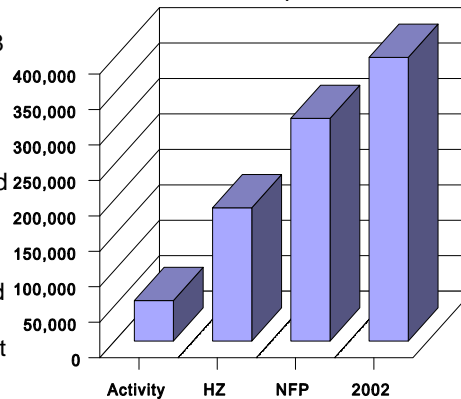
6 - Fuels Management/ Prescribed Fire

Introduction

Purpose: To develop and implement a safe, effective, and effective fuels management program to mitigate risks to people and their communities, and to restore and maintain healthy, diverse ecological systems. This will be accomplished through partnerships with local, tribal, and federal governments, as well as interested stake holders.(FWS, USFS)

Background: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fuels Management Program is relatively new. Prior to 1998 the BLM treated an average of 57,000 acres per year. The program relied on resources objectives and funding. In 1998, the Hazardous Fuels Treatment Program was established and funding was now available to treat fuels to mitigate threats to the safety of employees and the public, and protect, enhance, restore and/or maintain critical plant communities.

The BLM treated an average of 188,000 acres per year from 1998 to 2000. In 2001, Congress allocated additional funds to reduce the risks to communities and the environment. With the additional funding the BLM treated 314,000 acres in 2001. The BLM has worked collaboratively with local, tribal, state, and federal governments as well as interested stakeholders to identify risk mitigation projects that would treat 400,000 acres in 2002.



2002 Fuels Management Program :

The BLM is planning, developing, or in the process of implementing 1,584 projects. The projects will result in approximately 400,000 acres treated, 730 community assistance programs that develop local capabilities, including planning, mitigation and homeowner education, and enhance local and small business employment opportunities for the rural communities. The BLM is working closely with local, tribal, state, and federal agencies, as well as stakeholders to develop 125 risk assessments and mitigation plans to reduce the risk of wildland fire to rural communities. BLM,inconjunction with our cooperators, plans to sponsor 126 programs and out reach activities such as FIREWISE and Living With Fire in order to prevent fires and reduce public risk.

Policy

- The safety of firefighters and the public is the number one priority when planning and implementing fuels treatment projects.
- All prescribed fire projects will have an approved prescribed fire plan prior to ignition.
- All prescribed fire plans will contain measurable objectives, a predetermined prescription, and an escaped fire plan to be implemented in the event of an escape.
- All prescribed fire plans will contain the required elements as outlined in the *Prescribed Fire Handbook*. (USFS)
- All fuels treatment projects will be in compliance with NEPA requirements.
- All fuels management projects will be tracked and progress will be reported within required time frames. Impediments to the completion of the projects will be identified and actions will be taken to mitigate the impediment.
- All fuels treatment projects will be monitored to determine if treatment objectives were met and evaluation reports completed and maintained in the project file. All fuels treatment projects will support resource management objectives as identified in the Land Use Plans.

Priorities

The BLM will strategically focus fuels treatment activities by placing priority on: (USFS)

- Areas where actions will mitigate threats to the safety of employees and the public.
- Areas where actions will protect, enhance, restore and/or maintain plant communities and habitats that are critical for endangered, threatened, or sensitive plant and animal species.
- Areas where actions will reduce risks and damage from a wildfire. This includes the reintroduction of fire into fire dependant ecosystems to maintain and enhance those ecosystems and the modification of vegetation to achieve specific land management objectives.

Project Planning and Tracking

Planning

The BLM's Hazardous Fuels Treatment activities are a coordinated interdisciplinary effort supported by Resource and Fire Management. All participating disciplines will coordinate their respective roles for the planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and funding of fuels treatment projects. Resource Management is responsible for managing vegetation and soils. Fire Management is responsible for identifying hazardous fuel situations and managing mitigation activities.

All use of fuels treatments and prescribed fire will support land and resource management plans. The RMP or other land use plans serve as the document to initiate, analyze, and provide the basis for conducting fuels treatment activities and using prescribed fire to meet resource objectives.

The Fire Management Plan (FMP) serves as the program strategy document for fuels treatments and prescribed fire activities. The FMP captures and quantifies the overall fuels management program needs of the field office. The FMP identifies how fuels treatments, prescribed fire, along with other fire management strategies, will be used to meet the overall land management goals identified in land use plans.

Natural resource objectives are the driving force behind the fuels management program. Although the "phase one" fire planning identified fuels management opportunities, it often does not provide the level of detail needed to move directly to fuels treatment or prescribed fire projects. It is required that fuels treatments and prescribed fire projects be planned and analyzed using an interdisciplinary process. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is required for all fuels treatment projects.

As per Public Law 95-95, compliance with Federal, state, and local air quality regulations is mandatory and will require coordination with state and local air quality authorities. Personnel developing fuels treatment and Prescribed Fire Plans must be aware of state and local regulations and the impacts that a specific project may have on critical areas. Potential smoke or dust impacts on critical areas such as Class I air sheds, restricted areas, and non-attainment areas (often called designated areas) must be considered. Equally important are local features that could be impacted such as highways, airports, recreation sites, and smaller population centers. Prescribed Fire and Fuels Treatment Plans need to identify sensitive areas and provide operational guidance to minimize the impacts from smoke or other particulates. If potential negative impacts from smoke or other particulates could occur, an assessment of potential down wind impacts using an appropriate smoke management model will be completed. Some states require that some type of smoke dispersion modeling be done before they will issue a permit for the prescribed fire project.

Tracking

All fuels management projects will be tracked and progress reported on required time frames. Impediments to the completion of the projects will be identified and actions will be taken to mitigate the impediment.(USFS)

The tracking of fuels treatment projects is critical in meeting our established targets. States identify annual fuels treatment targets and are allocated funding to complete these projects. When impediments restrict the ability of states to meet these targets, we work collaboratively to mitigate the impediment or shift the

funding to other offices or states to implement projects in order to meet our established target.

Until a standard fuels management database can be developed, the following reports will be required.

Fuels Treatment Project Report: This report is required for submission in the Annual Work Plan to describe the projects, related workload measures, cost, etc. The report is initiated in June and finalized through coordination with states and the Office of Fire and Aviation by September 30th. Projects approved can be initiated under carry over funding and or continuing resolution prior to the approval of the Department of the Interior’s Appropriation Act. The report format is illustrated below.

Hazardous Fuels 2823

State	Org Code	Proj Name	Proj #	Location (Lat/Long)	Workload Measure		Treat Type (Acres)			Contract \$	Fed \$	Contrib \$	Tot Cost	PI Proj Treat Date	Comments
					Ele	Amt	Rx	M	O						

Department of the Interior Fuels Treatment Tracking Report: This report is required to be submitted every week. The purpose of the report is to track progress of the fuels treatment projects, identify and mitigate impediments to the completion of these projects and to initiate required actions to ensure that the established fuels targets are met. The report format is illustrated below.

DOI Fuels Treatment Report										
State	Unit Name (4 ltr ident)	Proj Name	WUI or Haz Fuel	Trt Type (M,Rx,O)	PI Treat Acres	Proj Treat Date	Comp Date	Acres Comp	Imped (Brn ban, etc.)	List Mitigation Actions

Department of the Interior Fire Report (DI-1202) This report provides specific data important for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the fuels management program.

Management Information System (MIS) This report is the Director’s tracking system. The system tracks established performance/workload elements, accomplishments, and expenditures. Each state will be assigned a workload target and will be required to report weekly accomplishments.

Prescribed Fire Plans

Plan Contents

The Prescribed Fire Plan is a stand alone and legal document that provides the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss all the information needed to implement the project.

Prescribed fire projects must be implemented in compliance with the written plan. At a minimum, address each of the elements below. The size and complexity of the prescribed fire project will determine the level of detail required. **(USFS)**

Cover Page: Signature of Preparer, Signature of Reviewer(s), Signature of Technical Reviewer, Complexity Rating, Estimated Cost, EA & RIPS numbers, Agency Administrator Approval.

Management Summary: Agency Administrator Management Summary.

Base Data: Resource Objectives, Fire Treatment Objectives, Constraints, Physical Description, Maps.

Environmental Parameters: Fire Prescription and Environmental Parameters, Fire Behavior Calculations, Smoke Management, Monitoring.

Implementation: Notifications, Organization and Equipment, Ignition and Holding, Mop Up and Patrol, Escaped Fire Plan, JHA, Public Safety, Medical Plan, Communications Plan, Go/No Go Checklist, Briefing Outline, Test Fire, Project Cost Data.

Reports: Burn Boss Report, Prescribed Fire Report.

There needs to be a clear understanding between agency administrators, fire management, and the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss as to which parts of the prescribed fire plan (if any) may be changed on-site prior to implementing the project. This information may be included in the plan or it may be established as a state or local policy. On-site changes to the prescribed fire plan will not include changes to the objectives or the fire behavior prescription. Examples of changes that might be permitted are minor boundary adjustments or minor changes in the amount or type of holding or ignition resources required, or changes in ignition patterns(s), techniques, or sequence. Any changes to the prescribed fire plan by the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss will be noted on the original copy of the Prescribed Fire Plan and dated and initialed by the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss.

Implementation

Obtaining a spot weather forecast on the first day of the burn, prior to ignition, is mandatory. The prescribed fire burn boss will monitor the general forecasts and decide on the need for additional spot weather forecasts.

Note: An exception can be made for piled slash and other burns where no rate of spread outside of the burn area is expected.

The Prescribed Fire Burn Boss or other person in charge of mop up and patrol needs to review the general weather forecast and determine if a spot weather forecast is needed.

Restrictions

Implementation of Prescribed Fires at National Preparedness Levels IV and V is restricted. (See the *National Mobilization Guide*.)**(USFS)**

At National Preparedness Level IV, concurrence by the State Fire Management Officer (SFMO) must be obtained before implementing the local Agency Administrator's recommendation for a prescribed fire. An evaluation of significant risk is made by the SFMO or representative in a presentation of the prescribed fire implementation proposal to the geographic multi-agency coordinating (MAC) group prior to prescribed fire approval. A coordination/tracking function will be established to track prescribed fires and resource commitments at Geographic Area and National coordination levels.

At National Preparedness Level V, a national level representative must concur with the SFMO's recommendation. The national level representative will present an evaluation of significant risk in a proposal to the national MAC group prior to prescribed fire approval.

Determination of Complexity

The NWCG *Prescribed Fire Complexity Rating System Guide*, is the BLM standard for rating prescribed fire complexity. A complexity rating will be completed for each prescribed fire project. The determination of the prescribed fire complexity will be based on an assessment of risk (the probability or likelihood of an unexpected event or situation occurring), potential consequences (some measure of the cost or result of an undesirable event or situation occurring), and technical difficulty (the level of skills needed to complete the project and deal with expected events).

Classify prescribed fire projects by complexity elements using the definitions outlined in the NWCG guide. It is important to note that each of the 14 elements have distinct definitions for high, moderate, or low. These definitions must be used when preparing the rating. All of the individual elements must be rated. If a specific element does not apply to a given project, indicate it as n/a. Additional

elements may be added if needed. The “Complexity Elements Work Sheet” and summary rating become an appendix to the Prescribed Fire Plan.

An initial complexity rating must be completed during the project development stage to identify items needing mitigation. These items can then be addressed during the development of the Prescribed Fire Plan. Once the Prescribed Fire Plan is near completion the final complexity rating is made and the summary rating is entered on the cover page of the Prescribed Fire Plan. The final rating will take into account any mitigation included in the plan. The mitigating measures identified in the plan should be noted in the Management Summary portion of the plan and in the JHA.

Based on the NWCG classification system, three prescribed fire complexities are possible. Any prescribed fire meeting one of the items below will be classified at the level indicated regardless of the overall rating.

High—Prescribed fires (other than pile burning) in the wildland/urban interface. The wildland/urban interface is more than an area or zone where structures meet or intermingle with wildland fuels. It is a set of conditions where structures and/or other improvements are reasonably within the reach of an escaped prescribed fire. This determination must include the factors of fuel type, fire behavior prescription, topography and containment opportunities.

Moderate—All aerial ignitions must be classified as at least moderate complexity.

Low—These types of operations typically would have few personnel assigned, have a very low threat of escape, and present a minimal risk to the people involved in the operation.

Qualifications

The Prescribed Fire Complexity System does not tie directly to the Prescribed Fire Qualifications System. The following direction will apply: All prescribed fire projects rated as “High Complexity” will require a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss rated as RXB1 and an Ignition Specialist rated as RXI1.

Safety & Qualifications

Safety Awareness

The safety of fire fighters and the public is the number one priority when planning and implementing a prescribed fire project. Every person involved in a prescribed fire project is responsible for identifying safety issues and concerns. It is the responsibility of each individual participating in prescribed fire activities to let management know if they do not understand their assignment or have safety concerns related to the assignment. **(USFS)**

All personnel will be briefed prior to any prescribed fire assignment. The briefing will ensure that all people involved understand how the project will be implemented and what their assignments are. Briefings must cover safety considerations for both known site specific hazards and potential hazards. A briefing checklist must be developed and attached to the Prescribed Fire Plan. A briefing will be given for each operational period of multi-period projects.

A Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) will be completed for each prescribed fire project and attached to each Prescribed Fire Plan.

Safety Equipment

All personnel on a prescribed fire project will be equipped with required PPE appropriate to their position or as identified in a JHA. For holding and ignition personnel the minimum PPE (unless otherwise identified in the JHA) is the same as that required for wildland fire assignments. (See Chapter 5, Safety.)
(USFS)

Smoke Exposure

Exposure to smoke during prescribed fire operations can be a significant safety concern. Research has shown that smoke exposure on prescribed fires, especially in the holding and ignition positions, often exceeds that on wildfires. There are many things that prescribed fire planners and Prescribed Fire Burn Bosses can do to reduce the personnel exposure to smoke.

Planning Smoke exposure must be considered when planning prescribed fires. Simple things such as altering line locations can have a significant impact on smoke exposure. Placing fire lines in areas of lighter fuels or moving lines to roads or other barriers that will require less holding, patrol, and mop up will significantly reduce the smoke exposure to personnel. The identification of "Buffer or Allowable Areas" (where fire outside the main control line may not need to be aggressively attacked) is also a good method to reduce smoke exposure.

Implementation There are many techniques that can help reduce the exposure of personnel to heavy smoke. Rotating people out of the heaviest smoke area may be the single most effective method of limiting smoke exposure. Changing firing patterns and pre-burning (black lining) during less severe conditions can greatly reduce exposure to smoke. The use of retardant, foam, or sprinklers can also significantly reduce the workload and exposure time for holding crews.

Qualifications

The NWCG has issued *The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide* (PMS 310-1). The guide provides a complete review of the qualification

system and explains the task book process for documenting performance and certifying personnel. The BLM has additional requirements for some positions. The qualifications for each position are shown in the chart below. All BLM personnel assigned to prescribed fire operations will meet the minimum qualifications outlined in this section. This will include personnel assigned to assist other agencies even though the other agency may have established its own (lower) qualifications.

The IQCS does not separate prescribed fire qualifications by fuel type. The local units are responsible for ensuring that prescribed fire Burn Boss (RXB1 and 2) and Ignition Specialist (RXI1 and 2) qualifications and training are appropriate for the fuel type(s) that they will be working in.

Management has the ultimate responsibility and is accountable for failures resulting from inappropriate use of personnel in unfamiliar fuel types, regardless of their Red Card rating. **(usfs)**

Prescribed Fire Qualifications Summary

Bold print represents BLM's additional requirements and positions.

Position	Qualified As	Required Training	Suggested Training	Physical Fitness	Position Task Book
Prescribed Fire Manager 1 (RXM1)	RXB1	None		None	Required
Prescribed Fire Manager 2 (RXM2)	RXB2	None		None	Required
Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 1 (RXB1)	RXB2 + ICT3	S-490 RX-410	RX-510 ECOSYS* FPM*	Light	Required
Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 2 (RXB2)	RXI2 + ICT4	S-390 RX-300 RX-310 BEHAVE	RX-410 FPM* I-300	Moderate	Required
Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 3 (RXB3)	ICT5	S-290	S-201	Arduous	None
Prescribed Fire Ignition Spc. 1 (RXI1)	RXI2 + STL (Any) or TFLD	RX-310		Arduous	Required
Prescribed Fire Ignition Spc. 2 (RXI2)	SRB (Any)	S-234	Ignition Devices	Arduous	Required

Position	Qualified As	Required Training	Suggested Training	Physical Fitness	Position Task Book
Fire Effects Monitor (FEMO)	FFT2	S-290 RX-310	S-244	Arduous	Required
Prescribed Fire Plan Preparer	RXB1/RXB2		ECOSYS*	None	None
Prescribed Fire Technical Reviewer	RXB1/RXB2* *			None	None
Agency Administrator	N/A	Fire Mgmt. Leadership		N/A	N/A

* ECOSYS = Fire and Ecosystem Management

* FPM = Fire Program Management

** Currency not required

If the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss is not qualified as an IC, a qualified IC will be identified in the Escaped Fire Plan. Additionally the transition from the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss to the IC needs to be explained.

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 3 (RXB3): As a supplement to the qualifications system, the BLM has identified this position. This position supervises prescribed fire operations that are of “low complexity.” These types of operations typically would have few personnel assigned, have a very low threat of escape, and present a minimal risk to the people involved in the operation. Examples include burning piled slash, burning landings, ditch burning, debris burning, and broadcast burns of less than one acre with a minimal chance for escape.

Note: These types of operations still require a signed prescribed fire plan; however, the detail of the plan should be commensurate with the scope of the project.

This position is supported by the IQCS. The activity area is BL and the position code is RXB3. Managers will need to check the requirements individually, since IQCS will not check them automatically.

Prescribed Fire Holding Specialist: The qualification for the Holding Boss position is the appropriate ICS Operations position. The Holding Boss will be qualified at the Single Resource Boss, Strike Team Leader, Task Force Leader, Division Supervisor, Operations Section Chief 2, or Operations Section Chief 1 as required by the number and mix of the resources assigned to the holding operation.

For some projects there may be no holding requirements, or the holding duties are assumed by the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss.

Prescribed Fire Plan Preparer: This is the person responsible for preparing the prescribed fire plan. The preparer may have other people assist in the preparation of the plan, but is responsible for the final plan content.

Prescribed Fire Plan Technical Reviewer: For prescribed fire projects rated as “Complex,” (those projects requiring an RXB1) the technical reviewer must be qualified as, or have been previously qualified, at the RXB1 level. For those Prescribed Fire Plans rated as “Moderate” or “Low,” the technical reviewer must be qualified as, or have been previously qualified, at the RXB2 level. If a field office cannot complete their own technical review, the state office will ensure that a technical review is completed by a qualified person. A primary reviewer will be designated; however, it is acceptable for other specialists to review specific portions of the Prescribed Fire Plan. For example, a Fire Behavior Analyst may review the fire behavior calculations or the Aviation Officer may review the Air Operations Plan.

Agency Administrator: Mandatory training is “Fire Management Leadership.” Additionally, a detailed briefing from the SFMO regarding the roles and responsibilities relating to the prescribed fire program with emphasis on the Prescribed Fire Plan approval process is required. At this briefing the manager will receive a copy of the *Prescribed Fire Guidance IM No. OF&A 2000-020*, and will review the appropriate sections with the SFMO, special emphasis will be given to Chapters 1 and 5.

Physical Fitness: Physical fitness levels are not established by the NWCG. The BLM has established physical fitness levels as shown in the chart. The fitness levels for Prescribed Fire Burn Boss are less than that required for ICT3. If the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss is not qualified as an IC, a qualified IC will be identified in the Escaped Fire Plan. Additionally, the transition of control from the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss to the IC must be explained.(usfs)

Currency Requirements: The prescribed fire qualifications system does not establish currency requirements to maintain prescribed fire qualifications. The currency requirement is set at five years, the same as for suppression qualifications. As with the suppression qualifications, an assignment at one level will maintain prescribed fire qualifications at the next higher level.

Prescribed Fire Monitoring

A monitoring plan is required as part of each Prescribed Fire Plan. It describes what data will be collected, when it will be collected, where on the prescribed fire site it will be collected, which methods will be used for each data element, and list the responsible person(s).

The requirements established for prescribed fire monitoring include weather conditions before ignition, during the ignition phase, the observed fire behavior, smoke dispersal, and whether fire treatment objectives have been met. Where

appropriate the monitoring of smoke dispersion and impacts should also be included. If slowly changing fuel moisture values, such as live fuel or soil moisture, are included in the prescription, actual values should also be documented.

The use of the Fire Effects Monitor (FEMO) position to accomplish the monitoring tasks is encouraged.

Project Financing

Prescribed fire projects will be funded by equitable cost-sharing. Funding for the implementation of prescribed fire projects must be identified and agreed to at the field office level. It is the responsibility of each program area (non-fire) to cover its own regular (base-eight) salaries and fixed costs. This applies to items such as preliminary site assessments, writing environmental assessments, developing

Prescribed Fire Plans, obtaining clearances, training, and monitoring. An exception is made for any dedicated staff funded out of the 2824 subactivity. Regular salaries for fire management staff (except dedicated fuels management specialists) involved in prescribed fire activities may be split funded between 2823, 2824, and 2810 as identified in the FMP.(USFS)

Funding for the implementation of prescribed fire projects must be identified and agreed to at the field office level. The Hazardous Fuel Reduction subactivity (2823) will provide funding for operational implementation costs. The *BLM Fiscal Fund Coding Handbook* provides specific guidance for the use of this funding. The primary focus of the 2823 funding is the on the ground implementation of prescribed fire projects. Additional guidance for the use of 2823 and 2824 funds can be found in Chapter 15, Administration.

Current policy is that hazard pay will not be paid for any prescribed fire.

The BLM can contract to conduct all or part of the prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for "Hazard Fuel Reduction" projects.

If a contractor is actively involved in igniting, holding, or mopping up a BLM prescribed fire, a Contracting Officers Authorized Representative (COAR) or Project Inspector (PI) will be on the site (exceptions can be made for late stage mop up and patrol) to ensure that the burn objectives are being met and that the terms of the contract are adhered to. The BLM representative (COAR or PI) must have prescribed fire and/or wildfire qualifications equal to what the BLM would require, if a BLM Prescribed Fire Burn Boss were conducting the actual operations.

Casual Firefighter Hire Authority

The DOI has been granted the authority to hire personnel under the pay plan for emergency workers for “fire use” work related to hazardous fuel reduction projects. The term of hire is restricted to no greater than 300 hours per year per person for emergency hazardous fuel reduction work.(USFS)

Complete guidance for the use of this authority can be found in Chapter 15, Administration.

Cooperation & Assistance

BLM and Other Federal Agencies

Offices are encouraged to enter into agreements for the cooperative use of prescribed fire resources. Joint ecosystem based prescribed fire management programs are encouraged to accomplish resource or landscape management objectives when consistent with Resource Management Plans.

These partnerships are encouraged at both the programmatic and project levels to implement prescribed fire projects. Coordination with other Federal agencies will occur in the planning phase for joint prescribed fire projects.(USFS)

Assistance to other BLM units may be provided without formal agreement. If the assistance is related to the implementation of prescribed fire projects, the assisting unit may use the prescribed fire number assigned by the host unit.

The BLM may provide assistance for prescribed fire that will be conducted on land administered by other Federal Agencies. The “Interagency Agreement for Fire Management,” dated 2/20/97, provided for interagency assistance without additional agreements. Assistance is initiated by the issuance of “Task Orders” that provide the project specifics. Fuels management, “including prescribed fire” is specifically covered in the agreement. The agreement states that “Agencies may choose to bill by mutual agreement.”

For more guidance see Instruction Memorandum No. OF&A 99-008 and Chapter 15, Administration.

Escaped Prescribed Fires

Definition

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Prescribed Fire becomes a wildland fire when the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss determines that an escape has, or is likely to occur. Fire outside of the planned perimeter, or outside any planned "Buffer or Allowable Areas," that cannot be contained with the holding forces identified in the Prescribed Fire Plan, is an escaped fire and will be declared a wildland fire. This is not fire that crosses the fire line which can be contained by resources on-site (no suppression charges will be used). If fire suppression funds (2821) are used to contain a prescribed fire, it must be declared an escaped fire.(USFS)

Some Prescribed Fire Plans identify "Buffer or Allowable Areas," where a fire outside the planned perimeter will not be declared a wildland fire until it exceeds specified criteria, exceeds a stated target size, or threatens the boundary of the "Buffer or Allowable Area." In such cases, an escaped fire does not need to be declared until the criteria as stated in the Prescribed Fire Plan have been exceeded.

Once a prescribed fire becomes a wildland fire it cannot be returned to prescribed fire status

Actions

When a prescribed fire is declared a wildland fire, managers still have the full range of suppression options available under the concept of the "Appropriate Management Response." If a prescribed fire is declared a wildfire, a "Fire Number" will be assigned and all suppression costs will be charged to the 2821 subactivity.

The following actions will be taken on all BLM prescribed fires that escape and are declared wildland fires:

- Take prompt and reasonable action to control and suppress the fire. This could include the development of a WFSA.
- Notify the BLM agency administrator responsible for the area.
- Notify the other agency administrator(s), and/or other land owners that may be affected, of the escaped fire. Coordinate suppression actions with the other affected parties.
- Document the time and environmental conditions that existed when the escape occurred.
- Document the incident, including all actions prior to and after the escape. Set up a file that includes all pertinent information, i.e., the prescribed fire plan, a chronology of events including the prescribed fire report and unit logs or individual statements, the fire investigation report, weather forecasts including any spot forecasts, Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) data and National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) data for the day of the escape for the nearest weather stations, photos, and any appraisal of damages.

Reviews

Fuels Management/Community Protection and Assistance Program Review

National Fuels Management/Community Protection and Assistance Program Reviews are conducted annually in three states. The purpose of the reviews are to evaluate the states program against established standards, identify deficiencies, develop corrective actions, and to make recommendations designed to enhance or improve the program. The reviews consist of several major elements of which safety is the primary concern. These elements include the following:(USFS)

- Management Direction and Considerations
- Organization and Staffing
- Planning
- NEPA
- Budget
- Business Practices
- Reporting
- Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plans
- Training and Qualifications
- Safety
- Fuels Treatment Procedures and Practices
- Record Keeping

Review teams will include national fuels/community protection and assistance program lead, agency administrator, fire manager, program analyst, safety, fuels and mitigation technical specialist. (Other technical specialists as required ie. Contracting, resource specialist, etc.) Expertise should be gathered from diverse backgrounds, and should include cooperators.

Escaped Prescribed Fire

All escaped prescribed fires will receive an administrative review. The level and scope of the review will be determined by the injuries, damage, and cost associated with the escape.

A prescribed fire that escapes and requires an expenditure of suppression funds or results in property damage, injuries, or fatalities will be investigated. BLM Manual 1112, *Safety*, Paragraph 22, outlines accident investigation procedures. The following guidelines apply to escaped prescribed fire reviews.(USFS)

The objectives of the prescribed fire review are:

- To prevent future escapes from occurring.
- To establish accountability.
- To determine if the Prescribed Fire Plan was adequate for the project.
- To determine if the prescription, actions, and procedures set forth on the Prescribed Fire Plan were followed.
- To determine if overall policy, guidance, and procedures relating to prescribed fire operations are adequate.

- To determine the level of awareness and the understanding of the personnel involved, in regard to procedures and guidance.
- To determine the extent of prescribed fire training and experience levels of personnel involved.

Responsibilities for the review are as follows:

Fire Management Officer. The FMO is required to make an investigation of all escaped prescribed fires either personally or through an appropriate designated investigator.

Field Office Manager. The field office manager has the responsibility for ensuring adequate and proper investigation of all escaped prescribed fires that result in personal injuries, burn onto private or other agency land, or requiring expenditures of up to \$50,000 for suppression and/or damage to property. The field office manager may appoint an investigation team or request that one be appointed consistent with Manual Section 1112, *Safety*, paragraph 22D, Accident Investigations.

The field office manager will notify the state director of escaped prescribed fires meeting the above criteria within 24 hours. Copies of the completed review report will be sent to the state director, SFMO, and to the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation.

State Director. State directors have the responsibility for ensuring adequate, proper investigation of all prescribed fire escapes resulting in serious or multiple personal injuries, significant burned area on private or other agency lands, or has an estimated expenditure of from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for suppression and/or property damage.

The state director will notify the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, of escaped prescribed fires meeting the above criteria within 24 hours. Copies of the completed review report will be sent to the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation. The Director is responsible for ensuring adequate and proper investigation of all prescribed fire escapes resulting in fatalities(s), injuries to people not involved in the prescribed fire operation, fire shelter deployment(s), a major transportation route closure, smoke significantly impacting a major population center or causing a public health concern, or where suppression expenditure's and/or property damage will exceed \$100,000.
(USFS)

The documentation required for a review are those listed below. A review team will be provided with all of the original documents related to the incident.

- Those items listed under "Actions" above.
- The Prescribed Fire Plan and all attachments.

- Documents pertaining to the qualifications and experience of the Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, Ignition Specialist, Holding Specialist, and other key overhead. This would include Red Cards, training and experience records, and position task books.
- Dispatch logs, radio logs, and any aviation records or logs.

Reports

All prescribed fires will be assigned a "Prescribed Fire Number" and will be reported on the BLM Fire Reporting System. Reports must be entered into the system within two weeks (14 days) after the completion of the project. A block of numbers has been issued by the Office of Fire and Aviation for each reporting office.(USFS)

If a prescribed fire escapes and is declared a wildfire, two reports will be required. The acreage burned while the fire was considered a prescribed fire is reported as prescribed fire acreage using the "Prescribed Fire Number." Acreage burned after the fire was declared a wildfire must be reported as wildfire acreage using the local "Fire Number."

The purpose of using assist numbers is to track funds spent assisting other agencies with Prescribed Fire or other Fuels Management projects. While "offset services" or billing is not required when providing assistance, using an assist number provides the basis for such actions and allows the Office of Fire & Aviation to track the total costs of assists to other agencies.

Assist Prescribed Fire numbers should only be used with the 2823 subactivity.

Assign one number per project where the cost must be tracked. Local offices may choose to assign one number per agency where there are numerous assists to a single local agency. Use the next available Prescribed Fire Number from the block assigned to your office.

Do not use an assist number for assists to other BLM offices; use the prescribed fire number assigned by the host unit.

Instructions for all reports can be found at: www.nifc.blm.gov/nsdu/fire_reporting/index.html.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Agency Specific Directions

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Refer to Service Manual 621 FW 3 Prescribed Fire Management and Fire Management Handbook Chapter 2 for specific information on prescribed fire/fuels management.

**U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Agency Specific Directions**

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Page 6-8	Safety Equipment
Page 6-9	Prescribe Fire Qualifications Summary
Page 6-11	Physical Fitness
Page 6-12	Project Financing
Page 6-13	Cooperation and Assistance
Page 6-14	Definition
Page 6-15	Reviews
Page 6-15	Escape RX Fire Investigations
Page 6-17	RX Fire reports

Although programmatic similarities exist with D.O.I. agencies, the Prescribed Fire program in the Forest Service is specifically guided by FSM 5140 and *The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy-Implementation Procedures Reference Guide*, signed by the five Federal Agencies in August 1998. This Guide is referenced by FS Manual as FSM 5140.1. FS Units engaged in prescribed fire activities must be guided by this direction. Additional direction for reviews, fiscal management and accomplishment reporting is found in various sections of FSM 5100.

Page 6-2 Fire for Resource Benefit

Direction pertaining to fire for resource benefit (G code) is found in FSM 5140 & 5140.1.

Page 6-3 Prescribe Fire Tracking

The Forest Service maintains fuels treatment accomplishment through the National Fire Plan data base.

Page 6-9 Prescribed Fire Qualifications & Standards

Forest Service direction for Prescribed Fire qualifications and physical fitness is found in FSH 5109.17

Page 6-11 Prescribed Fire Physical Fitness Standards

Forest Service direction for Prescribed Fire qualifications and physical fitness is found in FSH 5109.17

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Page 6-13 Casual Firefighter Hire Authority

Forest Service has no authority for AD hiring plan to be used in Hazardous Fuel projects.

Page 6-16 State Director
Forest Service direction is found in FSM 5190.