

“Doctrine Dialogue”
U.S. Forest Service
Fire & Aviation Management
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“Fire Suppression Doctrine Moving To Interim Directive”

The concept of ‘fire suppression doctrine’ is an enabler of “how” to think, both under variable conditions, and more importantly, under changing dynamics. However, a number of diverse perceptions coming from non-fire practitioners simply believe that fire suppression is stuck in a continuous cycle of operational commotion. Resultantly, these mis-interpretations continue to drive unrealistic, expectations regarding the intent of fire suppression. This is but one reason why fire suppression doctrine continues moving forward. Through the remainder of the calendar year, the Risk Management and Human Performance group is energizing its emphasis on implementing bolder approaches to fire management, while ensuring that people also understand the logic behind doctrinal thinking. Why is this so important?

“Doctrinal thinking empowers professional firefighters to think more effectively, adapt to fluid and dynamic situations, and to get things done more effectively with increased awareness for risk management, leadership, responsibility and accountability. Because we are moving closer to issuing an Interim Directive (ID) for Fire Suppression Doctrine, the Risk Management and Human Performance group will be preparing people for this upcoming change. With a January ’08 due date looming for distribution of the Interim Directive based on doctrinal principles, we thought it appropriate to share some of the material that will be forthcoming in the new 5700 zero code.”

Coming Soon: Changes to the 5700 zero code:

Operational Environment for Fire

No resource or facility is worth the loss of human life, however the wildland fire suppression environment is complex and possesses inherent hazards that can---even with reasonable mitigation---result in harm to firefighters engaged in fire suppression operations. In recognition of this fact, we are committed to the aggressive management of risk.

- "1. Only one management objective will be applied to a wildland fire. Wildland fires will either be managed for resource benefits or suppressed. A wildland fire cannot be managed for both objectives concurrently. If two wildland fires converge, they will be managed as a single wildland fire.
- "2. Human caused wildfires will be suppressed in every instance and will not be managed for resource benefits.
- "3. Once a wildland fire has been managed for suppression objectives, it may never be managed for resource benefit objectives.
- "4. The Appropriate Management Response (AMR) is any specific action suitable to meet Fire Management Unit (FMU) objectives. Typically, the AMR ranges across a spectrum of tactical options (from monitoring to intensive management actions). The AMR is developed by using FMU strategies and objectives identified in the Fire Management Plan.

- "5. The Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) process is used to determine and document the suppression strategy from the full range of responses available for suppression operations. Suppression strategies are designed to meet the policy objectives of suppression.
- "6. Wildland fire use is the result of a natural event. The Land/Resource Management Plan, or the Fire Management Plan, will identify areas where the strategy of wildland fire use is suitable. The Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP) is the tool that examines the available response strategies to determine if a fire is being considered for wildland fire use.
- "7. When a prescribed fire or a fire designated for wildland fire use is no longer achieving the intended resource management objectives and contingency or mitigation actions have failed, the fire will be declared a wildfire. Once a wildfire, it cannot be returned to a prescribed fire or wildland fire use status."

On Risk & Leadership:

Risk Management - Fire Management considers that no structure or resource is worth the loss of a human life. Therefore, we acknowledge and accept the duty to manage risk and mitigate hazards in order to accomplish objectives and assignments safely.

Risk Management is a continuous process of evaluating the hazards and exposures to determine appropriate current or proposed actions. Effectively applied risk management tools frame decision space, minimize incremental decision-making, and identify contingencies. Understanding and applying risk management falls on the shoulders of everyone who participates in fire management activities.

1. "We practice risk management across the full spectrum of fire management activities at all levels. Leaders analyze and evaluate employee and public exposure to the inherent hazards in fire operations and select appropriate actions and mitigations to meet clearly defined objectives and leaders' intent.
2. "Values at risk are accurately quantified and evaluated when making fire management decisions."

Leadership - The purpose of leadership is to bring order to chaos and influence an outcome. Within Fire Management, this is a solemn responsibility. Leadership requires commitment and sacrifice. It requires responsibility. Leaders motivate and direct people to accomplish objectives under often adverse and sometimes chaotic circumstances. Leaders are students of the art of leadership, which includes observation, self-evaluation, and continuous improvement. Leaders commit to making decisions for the good of the whole, and we support the line officers who lead us.

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Given that the Interim Directive is "just around the corner" – Stay tuned to "Doctrine Dialogue"- More information and materials are on their way, and all within a doctrine based "cycle of change."

Questions or Comments?

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/index.html>

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