



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

February 25, 2003

Memorandum

To: NWCG Members, Working Team and Advisory Group Chairs

From: Chair, NWCG

Subject: Revision of the Ten Standard Firefighting Orders

The original ten Standard Firefighting Orders were developed in 1957 by a task force commissioned by the USDA-Forest Service Chief Richard E. McArdle. The task force reviewed the records of 16 tragedy fires that occurred from 1937 to 1956. The Standard Firefighting Orders were based in part on the successful "General Orders" used by the United States Armed Forces.

The Standard Firefighting Orders were organized in a deliberate and sequential way to be implemented systematically and applied to all fire situations (see attached article "Original Ten Standard Orders", by John Krebs). The reorganization of the Orders was undertaken in the late 1980's to form an acronym ("Fire Orders"), thus changing the original sequence and consequently, the intent of the orders as a program and logical hazard control system.

Upon joint recommendation of the NWCG Training, Safety & Health, and Incident Operations Standards Working Teams, NWCG approved the restoration of the original ten Standard Firefighting Orders, with minor wording changes (see attached), at the May 22-23, 2002 meeting in Whitefish, Montana.

To implement this decision, several initial actions are required. The appropriate Working Teams are hereby assigned the indicated task(s) as soon as is feasible.

- Revise S-130 "Firefighter Training" to restore the Standard Firefighting Orders (Training Working Team).
- Revise PMS 410-1, Fireline Handbook (Incident Operations Standards Working Team).
- Revise PMS 461, Incident Response Pocket Guide (Incident Operations Standards Working Team).
- Update recurrent training, such as S-132 "Standards for Survival" (Training Working Team).

- Include this revision in all NWCG courses as they come up for scheduled revision (Training Working Team).
- Identify other NWCG non-training publications requiring this revision, and advise the responsible working team (Publications Management System Working Team).
- Post and announce the revision on the NWCG website (Safety & Health Working Team).

We feel this change back to the original intent and format will improve firefighters' understanding and implementation of the ten Standard Firefighting Orders. Please ensure this information is passed on to all your fire management personnel.

cc: Chairs, Geographic Area Coordinating Groups

STANDARD FIREFIGHTING ORDERS

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.
2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
3. Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.
4. Identify escape routes and safety zones, and make them known.
5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.
6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
7. Maintain prompt communications with your forces, your boss and adjoining forces.
8. Give clear instructions and be sure they are understood.
9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.
10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first.