

Appendix 2

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 1:

Description: Minimal large fire activity nationally. Most Geographic Areas have low to moderate fire danger. There is little or no commitment of national resources.

- A. Management Direction/Consideration: Agency/Geographic Areas will determine appropriate actions.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators within Geographic Areas.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 2:

Description: Several Geographic Areas are experiencing high to extreme fire danger. Wildland fire activity is increasing and large fires are occurring in one (1) or more Geographic Areas. Minimal mobilization of resources from other Geographic Areas is occurring. There is moderate commitment of national resources with the potential to mobilize additional resources from other Geographic Areas.

- A. Management Direction/Consideration: Agency/Geographic Areas will determine appropriate actions.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators within Geographic Areas.

- B. Management Direction/Consideration: Daily morning briefings conducted for the NMAC.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator.

- C. Management Direction/Consideration: Monitor Geographic Area wildland and prescribed fire status, resource commitments and preparedness levels.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator, Geographic Area Coordinators.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 3:

Description: Two (2) or more Geographic Areas are experiencing wildland or prescribed fire activities requiring a major commitment of national resources. Additional resources are being ordered and mobilized through NICC. Type 1 and 2 IMTs are committed in two (2) or more Geographic Areas and crew commitment nationally is at 50%.

- A. Management Direction/Consideration: Agency/Geographic Areas monitor Wildland Fire Use (WFU), prescribed fire activities, and suppression requirements to maximize efficient resource utilization for identified priorities.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators within Geographic Areas.

The full range of fire management activities whether emergency suppression, WFU, or prescribed fire, can occur simultaneously. Assessing these activities is important for strategic planning and resource allocation.

- B. Management Direction/Consideration: Ensure agency qualified personnel are available for fire assignments.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators within Geographic Areas.

Each year firefighter qualifications are updated as new training is accomplished. There is also refresher training to accomplish. Firefighters also must pass a physical fitness test to be certified. Getting these activities done, allows personnel to be mobilized quickly.

- C. Management Direction/Consideration: Daily morning briefing conducted for the NMAC.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator.

- D. Management Direction/Consideration: Coordinate the repositioning of national resources as may be appropriate.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator.

Areas may have requirements for prescribed fire or suppression needs. Moving resources from areas of lower activity to ones of higher activity is a frequent occurrence.

- E. Management Direction/Consideration: Consider requesting Severity Funds to strengthen fire preparedness capability (scarce National Resources).

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator.

Requesting Severity Authorization allows agencies to bolster capability by hiring people on early, extending staffing hours, and contracting for additional capability. This can also fund repositioning of resources.

- F. Management Direction/Consideration: Assess resource availability from Canada.

Responsibility: NMAC

The US works very closely with the Canadian provinces. Annual coordination meetings occur, agreements are in place, and each national coordination center (NICC and CIFFC) dialog on a daily basis concerning fire activity.

- G. Management Direction/Consideration: Monitor critical National Interagency Support Cache Inventories and provide appropriate direction to Geographic Areas.

Responsibility: NMAC.

The wildland fire agencies have 11 interagency incident support caches around the country. Inventory levels are monitored and coordination with GSA and other supply sources occurs.

- H. Management Direction/Consideration: Geographic Areas provide NICC with timely intelligence on existing and emerging situations.

Responsibility: Geographic Area Coordinators.

As situations become more critical, the need for information increases. Decisions on resource allocation and determining priorities become more complex.

- I. Management Direction/Consideration: Aviation Management Directorate (AMD) and FS Aviation inspect all Type 1 and Type 2 helicopters.

Responsibility: National Aviation Officer, FS and Director, AMD.

Both Interior and FS aviation inspectors step up inspection programs for private contractors engaged in firefighting activities.

- J. Management Direction/Consideration: Advise the military of the need for a Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) to be assigned to NIFC.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator.

- K. Management Direction/Consideration: Evaluate the need to activate the National Interagency Support Cache Coordinator at NICC.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator, National Interagency Support Cache Managers.

This move can lead to dedicating an individual to focus on fire cache inventories and coordinate supply concerns or issues from a national perspective.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 4:

Description: Three (3) or more Geographic Areas are experiencing incidents requiring Type 1 and 2 IMTs. Competition exists for resources between Geographic Areas. Nationally, sixty (60%) of Type 1 and 2 IMTs and crews are committed.

- A. Management Direction/Consideration: Establish MAC Group at NIFC and conduct MAC Group Meetings daily.

Responsibility: NMAC.

This increases the level of program management focus on the current and future situations. Predictive Services provides detailed briefings and provides decision support by analyzing fuel conditions, climatological patterns, and resource capability.

- B. Management Direction/Consideration: WFU and prescribed fire application can be continued or be initiated if the proposed action is approved by an agency at the regional or state office level. This approval must be based on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on area resources and activities and include feedback from the GMAC. The GMAC provides information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a WFU or prescribed fire application. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators, regional and state office.

Increased scrutiny of agency activities, which might impact emergency suppression requirements for resources. This allows for strategic planning to occur at a geographic level so resources can be effectively allocated.

- C. Management Direction/Consideration: Establish IR Coordinator position at NICC, as appropriate.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator.

This action provides a focal point for the Infrared Mapping program and maximizes efficient utilization of aircraft performing this mission during high use periods. The position also coordinates with NASA, DOD, and commercial sources of imagery to extend capability.

- D. Management Direction/Consideration: Allocate/preposition national resources.

Responsibility: NMAC.

When competition for resources occurs, the NMAC will provide the NICC with priorities to determine where to move resources. Due to the dynamic situation each day presents, decisions are time sensitive and must be determined quickly.

E. Management Direction/Consideration: Train additional emergency firefighters as may be appropriate.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators within Geographic Areas.

Areas striving to be self-sufficient have the option of training additional firefighters to be used locally. This involves gathering trainers, agency employees to manage the crews, providing personal protective equipment, and arranging a facility. Firefighters may be used immediately or at a later time.

F. Management Direction/Consideration: Coordinate "off-site" training of emergency firefighters with Geographic Areas.

Responsibility: NMAC Coordinator.

If the critical need is for firefighters, the NMAC can request a Geographic Area to sponsor training for emergency firefighters. This involves gathering trainers, agency employees to manage the crews, providing personal protective equipment, and arranging a facility. Typically after training and the successful completion of the physical fitness test, trainees are immediately dispatched to a fire.

G. Management Direction/Consideration: Encourage: (1) assignment of Communications Frequency Managers and Aviation Specialists to all complex multiple incidents; (2) activation of MAC Group as may be appropriate.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators within Geographic Areas.

This action is directed at providing focus on program areas where we have safety and high cost issues to manage.

H. Management Direction/Consideration: Geographic Areas provide NICC with fire priorities and other pertinent information at [0300 daily].

Responsibility: Agency Administrators within Geographic Areas.

In addition to formal situation reporting requirement, this includes an assessment of which fire has priority within a Geographic Area and the rationale for that choice. This may also include priority for a specific resource type i.e. "We have plenty of crews but could use a helicopter."

I. Management Direction/Consideration: Implement Military Training Plan. Assemble Training Cadre for training military.

Responsibility: NMAC Coordinator.

This prepares for training the military to become firefighters. The training plan outlines activities for the training group; assemble cadre, assemble materials, orient to possible mobilization location. The cadre is composed of 5-7 instructors who are assisted by the civilian component who will remain with the military during the assignment.

- J. Management Direction/Consideration: AMD and FS Aviation contract, award, and inspect additional CWN Type 1 and Type 2 helicopters.

Responsibility: National Aviation Officer, FS and Director, AMD.

Often at high levels of activity, contracting entities work with the Helicopter Association, International (HAI) to identify other vendors who could be available to support firefighting. This also includes resources from Canadian vendors if available.

- K. Management Direction/Consideration: Activate the National Interagency Aviation Coordinator position.

Responsibility: National Agency Aviation Offices - FS, BLM, AMD.

This action is directed at providing focus on a critical, high cost program and to ensure interagency consistency.

- L. Management Direction/Consideration: Activate the National Interagency Support Cache Coordinator position at NICC.

Responsibility: NICC Coordinator

This action dedicates an individual to focus on National Interagency Support Cache inventories and coordinate supply concerns or issues from a national perspective.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 5:

Description: Geographic Areas are experiencing major incidents which have the potential to exhaust all agency fire resources. Eighty percent (80%) of Type 1 and 2 IMTs and crews are committed, as well as the majority of other national resources.

- A. Management Direction/Consideration: Continue with Planning Level 4 activities.

Responsibility: NMAC Coordinator.

- B. Management Direction/Consideration: Request Canadian Liaison for NMAC.

Responsibility: NMAC Coordinator.

We have found that having a representative available at NIFC during these periods result in smoother operations and facilitate border crossings. Terminology clarification, resolving operational questions and addressing fiscal issues occurs.

C. Management Direction/Consideration: Assess the need for international assistance

Responsibility: NMAC

D. Management Direction/Consideration: Add Coordinator position at NICC to coordinate military mobilizations.

Responsibility: NMAC Coordinator.

This action dedicates an individual to focus on working with issues regarding utilization of DOD assets. This position works hand in hand with the DOD liaison position and his/her staff on a daily basis. Activities include mobilization coordination, clarification of procedures as outlined in the Military Use Handbook, and situation reporting.

E. Management Direction/Consideration: WFU and prescribed fire application can be continued or be initiated if the proposed action is recommended at the regional or state level. The National agency representative will assess risk and impacts of the proposed actions and discuss with the NMAC. This group will have an opportunity to provide information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a WFU or prescribed fire application. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

Responsibility: Agency Administrators, regional and state office fire staff, NIFC staff and NMAC.

Increased scrutiny of agency activities, which might impact emergency suppression requirements for resources. This allows for strategic planning to occur at a geographic and national level and better utilization of limited resources.

F. Management Direction/Consideration: Prepare Geographic Area evaluation/assessment of current and projected fire situation when requested by the NMAC.

Responsibility: GMACs.

In addition to formal situation reporting requirement, this includes an assessment of the current situation, current capability and future needs. Analysis of trends and projected outcomes is common.

G. Management Direction/Consideration: When requested by the NMAC, make available and incorporate project equipment into the NFES Fire Cache System.

Responsibility: GMACs.

In terms of equipment that can be used on fires, this brings full agency capability to the fire priority even at the expense of other program areas.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 5 TO 4:

Description: Competition for resources has significantly decreased. No critical fire weather events are forecasted for the next twenty-four (24) hours and moderating weather conditions are forecast for the next three (3) to five (5) days.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 4 TO 3:

Description: Significant demobilization is occurring. Crews are being released daily and sent to home units. Fifty percent (50%) of total crew capability is available for new fires. All ground DoD resources have been released. Moderating conditions are forecasted for the next twenty-four (24) hours, and higher humidity and lower temperatures are forecasted for the major fire areas.

PREPAREDNESS LEVEL 3 TO 2:

Description: The majority of large fires are contained. Initial attack resources are again available. Geographic Area crew availability is at or above the fifty percent (50%) level. There is no competition for resources between Geographic Areas. Large fire areas are expected to receive precipitation with associated higher humidity and lower temperatures.