

National Dispatch Standard Operating Guide For Contracted Resources

A Guide for Dispatchers & Incident Support Personnel

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1. Introduction

The intent of this guide is to provide standard operating guidelines to dispatchers and incident support personnel in the mobilization & demobilization of contracted resources. This guide is intended to supplement the National Interagency Mobilization Guide (NFES 2092), as well as geographic area & local mobilization guides.

This guide has been developed in accordance with federal agency(s) guidelines for contracted resources, and established business practices as outlined in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide, the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH), the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) Users Guide, and the Interagency Standards ROSS Operations (ISROG) Guide, and in accordance with the Forest Service Acquisition Regulations (FSAR) on Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements.

The guidelines established in this document do not preclude the Government at any time from mobilizing agency owned or agency (Federal, state, or local) cooperator resources prior to mobilizing contracted resources for incident support.

This guide will be updated annually and approved by the Washington Office (WO) Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) staff or designee(s).

2. General Information

In January of 2009 the Forest Service introduced its new web-based application, the Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) system. This application is designed to solicit, award, and administer preseason Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs), formerly Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERAs). VIPR supports the 2005 USDA OIG audit findings requiring the Forest Service to implement a more rigorous approach to managing preseason incident agreements, and to comply with the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).

The Bureau of Land Management is using the PRISM system for establishing preseason agreements, but follows the same guiding principles and procedures established for the Forest Service and outlined in this guide.

The standard operating guidelines developed within this guide utilizes both Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management guidelines in incident procurement of contracted resources.

Other federal agencies and state cooperators may have their own established agreements and guidelines for incident support and may or may not follow these guidelines depending on agency jurisdiction of the incident.

3. Additional Information

The information provided in this section directs the user where to find additional information on guidelines and procedures for mobilization and demobilization of contracted resources, and information pertaining to incident procurement.

National Information/Links

National Interagency Mobilization Guide

<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/mobguide/index.html>

Interagency Standards for ROSS Operations Guide (ISROG)

<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references/ISROG.pdf>

USDA Forest Service Acquisition Management – Incident Procurement

<http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/>

National Interagency Fire Center – National Forest Service Contracting

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/contracting/>

USDA Forest Service – Incident Business Practices

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/ibp/acquisition/acquisition.html>

NWCG Incident Business Working Team

<http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/ibpwt/index.htm>

Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH)

<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/large.html#iibmh>

USDA Forest Service Virtual Incident Procurement System (VIPR)

<http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/incident/vipr/> (internal web site)

<http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/vipr.php> (external web site)

Geographical Area Information/Links

Geographical Area Coordination Centers (GACC)

<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/index.htm>

Information for contracted equipment is provided under the Equipment/Supply link located on each GACC website menu

4. Types of Solicitations & Agreements

The Forest Service has developed national solicitation templates for Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs), to provide consistency in the acquisition methodology, methods of hire, and equipment typing and standards. The Forest Service national solicitation templates for equipment are available at the following Web site:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/solicitations.php>

I-BPAs are awarded preseason using a best value award process and by using Choosing by Advantages (CBA) methodology to determine the dispatch priority. Award is based on reasonable price, acceptable past performance, qualified personnel and minimum equipment standards. The CBA determines the priority dispatch order for the equipment on the Dispatch Priority List (DPL) based on price and various equipment and/or personnel attributes.

Forest Service I-BPAs use the SF-1449 generated by the VIPR system. BLM may use the SF-1449 or the OF-294.

A National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs has been developed by the Forest Service, identifying a cycle for competing equipment that is commonly used to support incidents. I-BPAs are solicited on three primary levels (national, regional, and local) as identified in the National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs. This solicitation plan is located at the following Web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/comsolplan.php>

NOTE: Agencies solicit for contracted resources based on their local and geographic area needs, and therefore may not solicit for all contracted resources listed in this guide. Some geographic areas have collaborated on the solicitations with their federal and state cooperators by identifying which agency will take the lead for specific resource categories. In this case, some contracted resource categories may or may not be on a DPL provided by the Forest Service or BLM, but on a DPL or resource list provided by another federal or state cooperator. Dispatch procedures for agreements awarded by cooperators may vary from Forest Service and BLM agreements based on the host agency policy and other determining factors. In geographic areas where this occurs, follow local and geographic area ordering procedures.

A. National I-BPAs

One national solicitation is issued for all regions.

B. Regional I-BPAs

One solicitation issued in each region. However, two regions can partner to issue inter-regional solicitations as appropriate.

C. Local I-BPAs

The solicitation level and acquisition cycle is determined by the region (forest, zone, and region). Solicitation level will vary and can be different from region to region.

D. Incident-only EERAs

Incident-only EERAs are used to sign up contracted resources not available through the I-BPA competitive process due to availability or exhaustion of the DPL, and resources hired through other established dispatch ordering procedures. Incident-only EERAs are valid only for the duration of the incident they were signed up on. Once the incident releases the contracted resource, the agreement is no longer valid.

Forest Service at-incident EERAs will use the OF-294 form. BLM may use the SF-1449 or the OF-294 form for incident-only EERAs.

Types of Agreements

I-BPA	EERA
Competitive	Non-competitive
Preseason	Incident-only
Non-emergency	Emergency
SF-1449	OF-294
VIPR (FS) / PRISM (BLM)	No automation

5. Dispatch Priority

Dispatch priority will be given to contracted resources under competitive I-BPAs for all extended attack incidents or planned need support when ordering contracted resources. The Government intends to dispatch contracted resources based on this dispatch priority for other than initial attack.

Dispatch priority for contracted resources does not preclude the Government from using any agency owned or agency (Federal, state, or local) cooperator resources for initial attack or extended attack/large fire support before ordering/mobilizing contracted resources under agreement. Agency owned and/or agency cooperator resources may be requested at any time.

The following exceptions apply to dispatch priority:

- A) Initial Attack (IA) – dispatchers will follow the “closest forces” concept and utilize locally available resources (agency, agency cooperators, neighborhood agreements with agency & agency cooperators) according to agency and incident needs. The DPL is not required to be used during initial attack and Contractor resources may or may not be used.

NOTE: If the DPL is used for IA, the dispatcher may order the closest contracted resource (closest forces) to the incident to meet date and time needed. Whenever possible based on the availability and date and time needed, the established DPL ranking should be followed.

B) Tribal preference policy established within reservation jurisdiction.

C) The Government normally will dispatch contracted resources in accordance with this protocol; however, the number of resource requests in process and the actual fire conditions at the time of dispatch may require deviation from normal procedures in order to respond effectively to such conditions. Any such deviation will be within the discretion of the Government, and will not be deemed a violation of any term or condition of the agreement.

When any of the above identified exceptions are utilized for an incident, dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

Dispatchers may not hold contracted resources in reserve as a contingency force in a non-pay status when that resource is available.

A. Dispatch Priority Lists (DPLs)

Dispatch Priority Lists are generated for all contracted resources awarded under competitive I-BPAs. Each contracted resource has an identified Host Dispatch Center. The "Host Dispatch Center" may be a local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) if the GACC has chosen to host a contracted resource. A DPL will be posted to the web providing the priority listing for each resource category awarded under an I-BPA.

Dispatch procedures for cooperator solicitations (state & other federal agencies) may vary from Forest Service and BLM solicitations based on the host agency policy and other determining factors. In geographic areas where this occurs, follow local and geographic area ordering procedures.

Forest Service Dispatch Priority Lists will be linked to the GACC Web sites under Equipment/Supplies. This Web site will provide a link to the Forest Service DPLs at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/dispatch.php>. Individual GACC web sites may be accessed at: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/index.htm>.

Agency Contracting Officers (CO) will notify host dispatch centers and/or GACCs immediately when any changes occur on the DPL, such as equipment replacements, suspension of resources, or termination of an agreement. The Host Dispatch Center must ensure the most recent version of the DPL is utilized. This can be accomplished by checking the DPL Web site utilizing the date/time stamp on the published DPLs and through communications with the Contracting Officer.

Host Dispatch Centers will follow the established DPL ranking order when ordering contracted resources in the following categories:

Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Apparatus	Mechanic w/Service Truck
All Terrain Vehicle (ATV)	Mobile Laundry
Bus, Coach	Mobile Sleeper Unit
Bus, Crew Carrier	Potable Water Truck
Chainsaw Repair Service	Pumper Cat
Chipper	Refrigerated Trailer
Clerical Support Unit	Softtrack
Communications Trailer	Skidgine
Computer/Printer	Tent and Canopy
Copier	Toilets (Portable)*
Dozer	Tractor Plow
Engine	Transport
Excavator	Vehicle Rental
Faller Module	Vehicle w/Driver
Feller Buncher/Masticator/Road Grader/Skidder	Water Tender (Support)
Fuel Tender	Water Tender (Tactical)
GIS Unit	Weed Washing Unit
Gray Water Truck	
Handwashing Station (Portable)*	
Handwashing Station (Trailer Mounted)	
Helicopter Operations Support Trailer	

NOTE: *Portable toilets, portable handwashing stations, and wheelchair accessible portable toilets are listed on one DPL. Resource categories listed above are subject to change depending on agency(s) needs, requirements, and solicitation schedules.

1. How to Use the DPL

When receiving a request for which contracted resources may be utilized, the dispatcher will use the DPL. Available Contractors on the DPL must be contacted in the order of the DPL ranking. If an incident orders a specific type of equipment with a special attribute, (e.g. dozer with winch) the dispatcher may contact the first available Contractor on the DPL with the specific attribute identified. **Only the attributes that are listed on the DPL may be utilized to deviate from the DPL ranking, and special attribute requests must be documented on the resource order form.**

When receiving a dispatch call, the Contractor shall confirm their availability and ability to meet the date and time needed as identified on the resource order, and confirm actual location of resource, meeting contract specifications and applicable travel regulations. If the Contractor has an unavailable status, cannot be reached, not at identified location per agreement, not able to meet the date and time needed, or able to provide

the requested resource(s), the dispatcher may proceed with contacting the next available contractor identified on the DPL. ***Substitution (swapping) of resources by the contractor is not allowed.***

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

Requests will be placed according to established ordering procedures as outlined in the appropriate Mobilization Guide (National, Geographic and/or Local). Contracted resources will be utilized according to their respective DPL, however, see *NOTE below.

NOTE:** As referenced under Dispatch Priority in Section 5 of this guide, the Government will normally dispatch contracted resources in accordance with this protocol; however, the number of resource requests in process and actual fire conditions at the time of dispatch may require a deviation from normal procedures in order to respond effectively to such conditions. Any such deviation will be within the discretion of the Government, and will not be deemed a violation of any term or condition of the agreement with the USFS or BLM. ***This deviation is applicable to all dispatch tiers, local, geographic, and national, when fire activity, conditions and/or preparedness levels reflect the need for this deviation.

B. Resource Lists

A Resource List is generated from agreements that are not competed through a competitive process. The Resource List may be based on when the date of the agreement is signed, price or other determining factor determined by the agency, and not by a “best value” determination. BLM and state agencies may use resource lists for some equipment categories. The Forest Service uses DPLs for all equipment categories on an I-BPA.

1. How to Use the Resource Lists

Check with the appropriate agency for protocol on how to use Resource Lists for contracted equipment. Agency protocol may vary on how to use the Resource Lists, and may be sorted by an agency specific ranking method.

6. Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS)

All requests for contracted resources will be created and placed in the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) using established ordering procedures. Naming conventions and data entry standards will be followed when entering new vendor and resource information into ROSS. This information is located on the ROSS Web site at: <http://ross.nwcg.gov/>. Click on “Documents Library” for the current standards for data entry for resources & vendors.

Naming conventions and data entry standards shall apply when a resource item is entered into ROSS and/or when using the “Fill with Agreement” option.

Specific procedures for how the varying types of contracted resources will be entered into ROSS are identified below under resource and service items.

The decision made as to which category (resource item or service) contracted resources were placed into was based on agreement type (I-BPA or EERA), type of resource, and service provided by that resource. It was determined that all tactical resources would be entered as a resource item and some support resources due to frequency of use.

The Interagency Standards for the ROSS Operations Guide (ISROG) provides standard business practices for using ROSS within the interagency business community. This guide is located at the National Interagency Coordination Center Web site at: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm> under Reference Materials.

NOTE: Incident-only EERAs will be entered into ROSS using the “Fill with Agreement” option.

A. Resource Items

All contracted resources identified below will be “entered, maintained, and stasured” in ROSS as resource items. Resource items entered into ROSS will include information for Contractor, contract, and resource item.

Resource items will follow the applicable naming conventions and data entry standards as identified above when entering data and filling the request. The following contracted resources will be entered into ROSS as a “resource item” with complete information as identified above:

Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Apparatus	Mobile Laundry
Bus, Crew Carrier	Mobile Sleeper Unit
Clerical Support Unit	Potable Water Truck
Communications Trailer	Pumper Cat
Engine	Skidgine
Faller Module	Softtrack
Fuel Tender	Water Tender (Support)
GIS Unit	Water Tender (Tactical)
Gray Water Truck	Weed Washing Unit
Helicopter Operations Support Trailer	
Heavy Equipment (Dozer, Tractor Plow, Excavator, Transport)	
Feller Buncher/Masticator/Road Grader/Skidder	

B. Service Items

For resources which are used by a contractor to provide a service (e.g. Road Grader, portable toilets, tents), dispatchers will not enter this equipment as a resource item, but

will fill the request using the “Fill with Agreement” option in ROSS. When filling requests for these items, dispatchers will select the vendor name or if not available in ROSS, enter the vendor name and applicable agency agreement number.

Service items will follow the applicable naming conventions and data entry standards as identified above when using the “Fill with Agreement” option in ROSS.

The following contracted resources are considered services and will not be entered into ROSS as a Resource Item:

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV/UTV)	Handwashing Station (Trailer Mounted)
Bus, Coach	Mechanic w/Service Truck
Chainsaw Repair Service	Medical Equipment
Chipper	Portable Toilet
Computer/Printer	Refrigerated Trailer
Copier	Tent and Canopy
Handwashing Station (Portable)	Vehicle w/Driver
	Vehicle Rental

7. Mobilization of Contracted Resources

A. Initial Attack

The following guidelines are applicable for initial attack (IA) occurring on Federal Lands (USFS & BLM) or any lands under agreement and protected by these federal agencies, and for cooperating agencies using contracted resources under agreement with the USFS and BLM.

During IA, dispatchers will utilize the closest forces concept. Contracted resources may or may not be ordered depending on incident needs. Host Dispatch Centers may use neighborhood/border agreements for agency and agency (Federal, state, or local) cooperator resources, Dispatch Priority Lists (DPLs), Resource Lists, and incident-only EERAs to meet IA needs.

If a DPL or a Resource List is used for IA, the dispatcher may order the closest contracted resource to the incident to meet immediate needs. However, whenever possible based on the date and time needed, the established DPL ranking should be followed. Incident-only EERAs should be requested only if all other contracted resources cannot meet the incident’s needs.

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

Additional information on procedures is located under the Dispatch Priority section of this guide, and under the Forest Service solicitation language found within the agreement in Section D.6.1, Dispatch Priority.

1. Transition from Initial Attack to Extended Attack

If the incident transitions from IA to extended attack, incident-only EERAs for contracted resources utilized on the incident may or may not be replaced with contracted resources from the DPL based on the decision by the Incident Commander (IC) to meet specific incident objectives or operational needs. However, if additional contracted resources are requested by the IC, the DPL will be used.

B. Extended Attack

The following guidelines are applicable for extended attack/large fire support incidents occurring on Federal Lands (USFS & BLM) or any lands under agreement and protected by these federal agencies, and for cooperating agencies using contracted resources under agreement with the USFS and BLM.

The Host Dispatch Center must exhaust all available resources on their DPL prior to placing requests for contracted resources outside of their zone or requesting incident-only EERAs, provided that the contracted resources on the DPL can meet the needed date and time of the incident.

Orders for contracted resources will be placed with the first available Contractor identified on the DPL until:

- 1) Contractor is unavailable
- 2) Contractor cannot be reached
- 3) Contractor's resource is not at location identified per agreement
- 4) Contractor is unable to meet the date and time needed
- 5) Contractor cannot provide requested resources

The dispatcher may proceed with contacting the next available Contractor identified on the DPL, if the contractor cannot meet the above requirements.

When receiving a dispatch call, the Contractor shall confirm availability and ability to meet specified timeframes identified on the resource request, and identify actual location of resource ordered. If the agreed upon date and time is different than what the resource order states, the dispatcher filling the request will have documented the agreed upon date and time in ROSS after discussion and concurrence from the ordering unit.

The Contractor shall check in with the incident at the date and time agreed upon when dispatched with the appropriate resource ordered and identified on the resource order. ***Substitution (swapping) of resources by the contractor is not allowed.***

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

Prior to departing for the incident, the Contractor shall provide to the dispatcher the complete name of each person dispatched with the contracted resource, and the Estimated Time of Departure (ETD) and Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) from point of dispatch to incident reporting location.

Host Dispatch Centers may use a FAX or email to provide a hard copy of the resource order to the Contractor prior to their departure to the incident. The Contractor shall furnish a copy of the agreement, resource order and request information upon arrival and check in at the incident.

8. Availability of Contracted Resources

The Contractor is responsible for maintaining their current status (available/unavailable) by informing the Host Dispatch Center of their availability, or if available to the Contractor through their Host Dispatch Center, will self-status their availability/unavailability in ROSS. ***When contracted resources display an unavailable status, the resources will not be eligible for dispatch under these guidelines.***

Note: Self-status is available only to contracted resources entered into ROSS as a resource item. Refer to Resource Items, Section 6 of this guide for a list of contracted resources identified as resource items.

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

Dispatchers may not hold contracted resources in reserve as a contingency force in a non pay status when that resource is available.

9. Reassignment of Contracted Resources

A. Reassigned from Incident to Incident

Based on contracted resource availability and need, a contractor may be reassigned from one incident to another. Local dispatch centers will ensure local DPLs are exhausted and/or contracted resources not available, prior to reassigning out of area contracted resources to other incidents.

B. Released to Host Dispatch Center

Contractors shall not seek out reassignments once released from the incident to the Contractor's host dispatch center. Any new resource order must originate from the Contractor's Host Dispatch Center.

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

10. Demobilization of Contracted Resources

The Incident Commander (IC) will determine the priority of demobilization. When demobilizing contracted tactical equipment, Contractors awarded I-BPAs as a result of competitive solicitations, shall be given priority to remain on the incident over tactical equipment with incident-only EERAs, unless the IC determines it necessary to deviate based on a specific incident need or objective. ***This applies to contracted tactical equipment only, and not all contracted resources.***

Incident-only EERAs are for the duration of the incident only, and will terminate at the end of the incident.

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

11. Cancellation of Contracted Resources

If the resource order is cancelled after the resource order has been confirmed, filled, and the resource is in route to the incident, the resource is considered mobilized. Payment will be made in accordance with the agreement by the resources host unit agency.

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts with in the appropriate system of record (CAD or ROSS).

12. Ordering/Filling Procedures for Contracted Resources in ROSS

When ordering and filling requests with contracted resources, consider incident needs, location of the incident, and the requested needed date and time. Determine the type of resource needed, including specific needs such as gallon capacity, special equipment attributes, length of equipment and all-wheel drive, taking into consideration narrow, steep, mountainous roads. Once this information is identified and order is placed in ROSS, consult the appropriate DPL or Resource List.

When ordering and filling requests with contracted resources, follow the national guidelines outlined in the Interagency Standards for ROSS Operations Guide (ISROG), applicable mobilization guides, and the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) Users Guide.

Refer to Section 6, Resource Ordering and Status System of this guide for which contracted resources items identified below are a fill as “resource item” or as a “Fill with Agreement” equipment item.

NOTE: Typing information for resources have been identified in agency(s) solicitations. Although certain resource typing has been identified in ROSS, some resources may not be identified by type as identified in the agency(s) solicitation/agreement. When applicable, type of resource should be specified in “special needs” of the request.