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Chapter 07

Interagency Coordination & Cooperation

Introduction

Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners. The same capabilities used in wildland fire management will also be used, when appropriate and authorized, on non-fire incidents in the United States and on both wildland fires and non-fire incidents internationally.

National Wildland Fire Cooperative Agreements

USDOJ and USDA Interagency Agreement for Fire Management

The objectives of the *Interagency Agreement for Fire Management Between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) of the United States Department of Agriculture* are:

- To provide a basis for cooperation among the agencies on all aspects of wildland fire management and as authorized in non-fire emergencies.
- To facilitate the exchange of personnel, equipment (including aircraft), supplies, services, and funds among the agencies.

DOI, USDA, and DOD Interagency Agreement

The purpose of the *Interagency Agreement for the Provision of Temporary Support During Wildland Firefighting Operations among the United States Department of the Interior, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Department of Defense* is

- To establish the general guidelines, terms and conditions under which NIFC will request and DoD will provide temporary support to NIFC in wildland fire emergencies occurring within all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. Territories and Possessions, including fires on States and private lands. It is also intended to provide the basis for reimbursement of DoD under the Economy Act.

These and other agreements pertinent to interagency wildland fire management can be found in their entirety in the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide* (NFES #2092).

National Wildland Fire Oversight Structure

Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC)

The Council is a cooperative, interagency organization dedicated to achieving consistent implementation of the goals, actions, and policies in the National Fire Plan and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. The Council provides

1 leadership and oversight to ensure policy coordination, accountability and
2 effective implementation of the National Fire Plan and the Federal Wildland
3 Fire Management Policy.

4
5 The Council consists of the Department of Agriculture's Undersecretary for
6 Natural Resources and the Environment and the Chief of the U.S. Forest
7 Service, the Department of the Interior's Directors of the National Park Service,
8 the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, the
9 Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and the Chief of Staff to the Secretary of
10 the Interior. Staffing the Council will be coordinated by the Department of
11 Agriculture's Office of Fire and Aviation Management and the Department of
12 the Interior's Office of Wildland Fire Coordination.

13
14 **Office of Wildland Fire Coordination (OWFC)**

15 The Office of Wildland Fire Coordination (OWFC) is a Department of Interior
16 organization responsible for managing, coordinating and overseeing the
17 Department's wildland fire management programs and policies. They include:
18 smoke management, preparedness, suppression, emergency stabilization and
19 rehabilitation, rural fire assistance, prevention, biomass, hazardous fuels, budget
20 and financial initiatives, and information technology. The OWFC also
21 coordinates with interagency partners including government and non-
22 government groups.

23
24 **The National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB)**

25 The National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) is a self-directed
26 group comprised of the federal agency Fire Directors established to resolve
27 wildland fire management issues common to its members. The board seeks to
28 improve coordination and integration of federal fire and aviation programs,
29 while recognizing individual agency missions. The Board focuses on issues
30 currently impacting wildland fire management and provides a forum for better
31 utilization of fire management resources.

32
33 **National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)**

34 The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) is made up of the USDA
35 Forest Service; four Department of the Interior agencies: Bureau of Land
36 Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Indian Affairs
37 (BIA), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); and State forestry agencies
38 through the National Association of State Foresters. The purpose of NWCG is
39 to coordinate programs of the participating wildfire management agencies so as
40 to avoid wasteful duplication and to provide a means of constructively working
41 together. Its goal is to provide more effective execution of each agency's fire
42 management program. The group provides a formalized system to agree upon
43 standards of training, equipment, qualifications, and other operational functions.

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1 **Multi-Agency Management and Coordination**

2

3 **National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group**

4 National multi-agency coordination is overseen by the National Multi-Agency
5 Coordination (NMAC) Group, which consists of one representative each from
6 the following agencies: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife
7 Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA),
8 Forest Service (FS), National Association of State Foresters (NASF), and the
9 Federal Emergency Management Agency – United States Fire Administration
10 (FEMA-USFA), who have been delegated authority by their respective agency
11 directors to manage wildland fire operations on a national scale when fire
12 management resource shortages are probable. The delegated authorities include:

- 13 • Provide oversight of general business practices between the National Multi-
14 Agency Coordination (NMAC) group and the Geographic Area Multi-
15 Agency Coordination (GMAC) groups.
- 16 • Establish priorities among geographic areas.
- 17 • Direct, control, allocate and reallocate resources among or between
18 geographic areas to meet NMAC priorities.
- 19 • Implement decisions of the NMAC.

20

21 **Geographic Area Coordinating Groups**

22 Geographic area multi-agency coordination is overseen by Geographic Area
23 Multi-Agency Coordinating (GMAC) Groups, which are comprised of
24 geographic area (State, Region) lead administrators or fire managers from
25 agencies that have jurisdictional or support responsibilities, or that may be
26 significantly impacted by resource commitments. GMAC responsibilities
27 include:

- 28 • Establish priorities for the geographic area.
- 29 • Acquire, allocate, and reallocate resources.
- 30 • Issue coordinated and collective situation status reports.

31

32 **Sub-Geographic/Local Area Multi-Agency Coordinating Groups**

33 Sub-geographic or local area multi-agency coordination is overseen by Sub-
34 Geographic/Local Area Multi-Agency Coordinating Groups, which are
35 comprised of local area lead administrators or fire managers from agencies that
36 have jurisdictional or support responsibilities, or that may be significantly
37 impacted by resource commitments. Local MAC responsibilities include:

- 38 • Establish priorities for the local area.
- 39 • Acquire, allocate, and reallocate resources.
- 40 • Issue coordinated and collective situation status reports.

41

42 For additional information on MAC Groups see Chapter 11 of this book,
43 Chapter 30 of the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide* or pertinent
44 Geographic Area mobilization guides.

45

1 **National Dispatch/Coordination System**

2 The wildland fire dispatch system in the United States has three levels (tiers):

- 3 • National
4 • Geographic
5 • Local

6
7 Logistical dispatch operations occur at all three levels, while initial attack
8 dispatch operations occur primarily at the local level. Any geographic area or
9 local dispatch center using a dispatch system outside the three-tier system must
10 justify why a non-standard system is being used.

11
12 *The National Interagency Mobilization Guide*, which is revised annually,
13 describes interagency mobilization and dispatch procedures at all levels. All
14 state/regional and local units without deviation will follow its directives.

- 15 • **BLM** - Any geographic area or local dispatch center using a dispatch
16 structure outside the approved three-tier system must annually request
17 written authorization from the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation.
18 • **FS** - Any geographic area or local dispatch center using a dispatch
19 structure outside the approved three-tier system must annually request
20 written authorization from the Forest Service Regional Director of Fire
21 and Aviation.

22
23 **National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC)**

24 The National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) is located at the National
25 Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), Boise, Idaho. The principal mission of the
26 NICC is the cost-effective and timely coordination of land management agency
27 emergency response for wildland fire at the national level. This is accomplished
28 through planning, situation monitoring, and expediting resources orders between
29 the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Areas, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
30 States, National Association of State Foresters (NASF), Fish and Wildlife
31 Service (FWS) Regions, Forest Service (FS) Regions, National Park Service
32 (NPS) Regions, National Weather Service (NWS) Regions, Federal Emergency
33 Management Agency (FEMA) Regions through the United States Fire
34 Administration (USFA), and other cooperating agencies.

35
36 NICC works with Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs), as well as
37 with other countries (e.g. Canada and Mexico). NICC coordinators also interact
38 with the directors of fire and aviation programs, as well as with the national
39 MAC Group.

40
41 NICC supports non-fire emergencies when tasked by an appropriate agency,
42 such as FEMA, through the National Response Plan. NICC collects and
43 consolidates information from the GACCs and disseminates the *National*
44 *Incident Management Situation Report* through the NICC website at
45 <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>

1 Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs)

2 There are 11 GACCs, each of which serves a specific geographic portion of the
3 United States. Each GACC interacts with the local dispatch centers, as well as
4 with NICC and neighboring GACCs. Refer to the *National Interagency*
5 *Mobilization Guide* for a complete directory of GACC locations, addresses, and
6 personnel.

7
8 The principal mission of each GACC is to provide the cost-effective and timely
9 coordination of emergency response for all incidents within the specified
10 geographic area. GACCs are also responsible for determining needs,
11 coordinating priorities, and facilitating the mobilization of resources from their
12 areas to other geographic areas.

13
14 Each GACC prepares an intelligence report that consolidates fire and resource
15 status information received from each of the local dispatch centers in its area.
16 This report is sent to NICC and to the local dispatch centers, caches, and agency
17 managers in the geographic area.

**18
19 Local Dispatch Centers**

20 Local dispatch centers, are located throughout the country as dictated by the
21 needs of fire management agencies. The principal mission of a local dispatch
22 center is to provide safe, timely, and cost-effective coordination of emergency
23 response for all incidents within its specified geographic area. This most often
24 entails the coordination of initial attack responses and the ordering of additional
25 resources when fires escape initial attack.

26
27 Local dispatch centers are also responsible for supplying intelligence
28 information relating to fires and resource status to their GACC and to their
29 agency managers and cooperators. Local dispatch centers may work for or with
30 numerous agencies, but should only report to one GACC.

31
32 Some local dispatch centers are also tasked with law enforcement and agency
33 administrative workloads for non-fire operations; if this is the case, a
34 commensurate amount of funding and training should be provided by the
35 benefiting activity to accompany the increased workload. If a non-wildland fire
36 workload is generated by another agency operating in an interagency dispatch
37 center, the agency generating the addition workload should offset this increased
38 workload with additional funding or personnel.

**39
40 Standards for Cooperative Agreements****41
42 Agreement Policy**

43 Agreements will be comprised of two components: the actual agreement and an
44 operations plan. The agreement will outline the authority and general
45 responsibilities of each party and the operations plan will define the specific
46 operating procedures.

- 1 Any agreement which obligates federal funds or commits anything of value
2 must be signed by the appropriate warranted contracting officer. Specifications
3 for funding responsibilities should include billing procedures and schedules for
4 payment.
5
- 6 Any agreement that extends beyond a fiscal year must be made subject to the
7 availability of funds. Any transfer of federal property must be in accordance
8 with federal property management regulations.
9
- 10 All agreements must undergo periodic joint review; and, as appropriate,
11 revision. The best general reference on agreements is *Partnership for Efficiency
12 through Cooperative Agreements* by the NWCG.
13
- 14 Assistance in preparing agreements can be obtained from local or state office
15 fire and/or procurement staff.
16
- 17 All appropriate agreements and operating plans will be provided to the servicing
18 dispatch center. The authority to enter into interagency agreements is extensive.
- 19 • **BLM** - *BLM Manual 9200, Departmental Manual 620 DM, the Reciprocal
20 Fire Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. 1856, and the Federal Wildland Fire
21 Management Policy and Program Review.*
 - 22 • **FWS** - *Service Manual, Departmental Manual 620 DM, and Reciprocal
23 Fire Protection Act, 42U.S.C. 1856.*
 - 24 • **NPS** - *Chapter 2, Federal Assistance and Interagency Agreements
25 Guideline (DO-20), and the Departmental Manual 620 (DM-620). NPS-
26 RM-18, Interagency Agreements, Release Number 1, 02/22/99.*
 - 27 • **FS** - *FSM 1580, 5106.2 and FSH 1509.11.*

28

29 **Elements of an Agreement**

30 The following elements should be addressed in each agreement:

- 31 • The authorities appropriate for each party to enter in an agreement.
- 32 • The roles and responsibilities of each agency signing the agreement.
- 33 • An element addressing the cooperative roles of each participant in
34 prevention, pre-suppression, suppression, fuels, and prescribed fire
35 management operations.
- 36 • Reimbursements/Compensation - All mutually approved operations that
37 require reimbursement and/or compensation will be identified and agreed
38 to by all participating parties through a cost-share agreement. The
39 mechanism and timing of the funding exchanges will be identified and
40 agreed upon.
- 41 • Appropriation Limitations - Parties to this agreement are not obligated to
42 make expenditures of funds or reimbursements of expenditures under
43 terms of this agreement unless the Congress of the United States of
44 America appropriates such funds for that purpose by the Counties of -

- 1 _____, by the Cities of _____, and/or the Governing Board of Fire
2 Commissioners of_____.
- 3 • Liabilities/Waivers - Each party waives all claims against every other party
4 for compensation for any loss, damage, personal injury, or death occurring
5 as a consequence of the performance of this agreement unless gross
6 negligence on any part of any party is determined.
 - 7 • Termination Procedure - The agreement shall identify the duration of the
8 agreement and cancellation procedures.
 - 9 • A signature page identifying the names of the responsible officials should
10 be included in the agreement.
 - 11 • *NPS - Refer to DO-20 for detailed instructions and format for developing*
12 *agreements.*

13 **Annual Operating Plans (AOPs)**

14 Each agreement shall be accompanied by an Annual Operating Plan, which shall
15 be reviewed, updated, and approved prior to the fire season. The plan may be
16 amended after a major incident as part of a joint debriefing and review.

- 17 • The plan shall contain detailed, specific procedures which will provide for
18 safe, efficient, and effective operations.

19 **Elements of an AOP**

20 The following items shall be addressed in the operating plan:

- 21 • **Mutual Aid**
22 The operating plan should address that there may be times when
23 cooperators are involved in emergency operations and unable to provide
24 mutual aid. In this case other cooperators may be contacted for assistance.
- 25 • **Command Structure**
26 Unified command should be used, as appropriate, whenever multiple
27 jurisdictions are involved, unless one or more parties request a single
28 agency incident commander (IC). If there is a question about jurisdiction,
29 fire managers should mutually decide and agree on the command structure
30 as soon as they arrive on the fire; Agency Administrators should confirm
31 this decision as soon as possible. Once this decision has been made, the
32 incident organization in use should be relayed to all units on the incident as
33 well as dispatch centers. In all cases, the identity of the IC must be made
34 known to all fireline and support personnel.
- 35 • **Communications**
36 Radios being used in wildland firefighting operations must be able to
37 function in both wideband and narrowband mode. In mutual aid situations,
38 a common designated radio frequency identified in the operating plan
39 should be used for incident communications. All incident resources should
40 utilize and monitor this frequency for incident information, tactical use,
41 and changes in weather conditions or other emergency situations. In some
42 cases, because of equipment availability/capabilities,
43 departments/agencies may have to use their own frequencies for tactical
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1 operations, allowing the “common” frequency to be the link between
2 departments. It is important that all department /agencies change to a
3 single frequency or establish a common communications link as soon as
4 practical. Clear text should be used. Avoid personal identifiers, such as
5 names. This paragraph in the Annual Operating Plan shall meet Federal
6 Communications Commission (FCC) requirements for documenting shared
7 use of radio frequencies.

8 • **Distance/Boundaries**

9 Responding and requesting parties should identify any mileage limitations
10 from mutual boundaries where “mutual aid” is either pay or non-pay status.
11 Also, for some fire departments, the mileage issue may not be one of initial
12 attack “mutual aid,” but of mutual assistance. In this situation, you may
13 have the option to make it part of this agreement or identify it as a situation
14 where the request would be made to the agency having jurisdiction, which
15 would then dispatch the fire department.

16 • **Time/Duration**

17 Responding and requesting parties should identify time limitations (usually
18 24 hours) for resources in a non-reimbursable status, and “rental rates”
19 when the resources are in a reimbursable status. Use of geographic area
20 interagency equipment rates is strongly encouraged.

21 • **Qualifications/Minimum Requirements**

22 Agencies, under the National Interagency Incident Management System
23 (NIIMS) concept, have agreed to accept cooperator’s standards for fire
24 personnel qualifications and equipment during initial attack. Once
25 jurisdiction is clearly established, then the standards of the agency(s) with
26 jurisdiction prevail. This direction may be found in the documents *NWCG*
27 *Clarification of Qualifications Standards - Initial Attack 6/20/01*.

28 • **Reimbursement/Compensation**

29 Compensation should be “standard” for all fire departments in the
30 geographic area. The rates identified shall be used. Reimbursements
31 should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, as some fire departments
32 may not expect full compensation, but only reimbursement for their actual
33 costs. Vehicles and equipment operated under the federal excess property
34 system will only be reimbursed for maintenance and operating costs.

35 • **Cooperation**

36 The annual operating plan will be used to identify how the cooperators will
37 share expertise, training, and information on items such as prevention,
38 investigation, safety, and training.

39 • **Dispatch Center**

40 Dispatch centers will ensure all resources know the name of the assigned
41 IC and announce all changes in incident command. Geographic Area
42 Mobilization Guides, Zone Mobilization Guides and Local Mobilization
43 Guides should include this procedure as they are revised for each fire
44 season.

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1 **Types of Agreements**

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3 **National Interagency Agreements**

4 The national agreement, which serves as an umbrella for interagency assistance
5 among federal agencies is the Interagency Agreement Between the Bureau of
6 Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Fish and
7 Wildlife Service of the United States Department of the Interior, and the Forest
8 Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. This and other national
9 agreements give substantial latitude while providing a framework for the
10 development of state and local agreements and operating plans.

11

12 **Regional/State Interagency Agreements**

13 Regional and state cooperative agreements shall be developed for mutual aid
14 assistance. These agreements are essential to the fire management program.
15 Concerns for area-wide scope should be addressed through these agreements.

16

17 **Local Interagency Agreements**

18 Local units are responsible for developing agreements or contracts with local
19 agencies and fire departments to meet mutual needs for suppression and/or
20 prescribed fire services.

21

22 **Emergency Assistance**

23 Approved, established interagency emergency assistance agreements are the
24 appropriate and recommended way to provide emergency assistance. If no
25 agreements are established, refer to your agency administrator to determine the
26 authorities delegated to your agency to provide emergency assistance.

27

28 **Contracts**

29 Contracts may be used where they are the most cost-effective means of
30 providing for protection commensurate with established standards. A contract,
31 however, does not absolve an Agency Administrator of the responsibility for
32 managing a fire program. The office's approved fire management plan must
33 define the role of the contractor in the overall program.

34

35 Contracts should be developed and administered in accordance with federal
36 acquisition regulations. In particular, a contract should specify conditions for
37 abandonment of a fire in order to respond to a new call elsewhere.

38

39 **Domestic Non-Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation**

40

41 **Homeland Security Act**

42 The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296) established the
43 Department of Homeland Security with the mandate and legal authority to
44 protect the American people from the continuing threat of terrorism. In the act,
45 Congress also assigned DHS as the primary focal point regarding natural and
46 manmade crises and emergency planning.

1 **Stafford Act Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance**
2 The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public
3 Law 93-288, as amended) establishes the programs and processes for the Federal
4 Government to provide disaster and emergency assistance to States, local
5 governments, tribal nations, individuals, and qualified private non-profit
6 organizations. The provisions of the Stafford Act cover all hazards including
7 natural disasters and terrorist events. In a major disaster or emergency as
8 defined by the act, the President “may direct any Federal agency, with or
9 without reimbursement, to utilize its authorities and the resources granted to it
10 under Federal law (including personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and
11 managerial, technical, and advisory services) in support of State and local
12 assistance efforts.”

13
14 **Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5**
15 HSPD-5, Management of Domestic Incidents, February 28, 2003, is intended to
16 enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents by
17 establishing a single, comprehensive national incident management system.
18 HSPD-5 designates the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Principal
19 Federal Official (PFO) for domestic incident management and empowers the
20 Secretary to coordinate Federal resources used in response to or recovery from
21 terrorist attacks, major disasters, or other emergencies in specific cases.

22
23 **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**
24 HSPD-5 directed that the DHS Secretary develop and administer a National
25 Incident Management System (NIMS) to provide a consistent, nationwide
26 approach for Federal, State, and local governments to work effectively and
27 efficiently together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic
28 incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. To provide for
29 interoperability and compatibility among Federal, State, and local capabilities,
30 the NIMS will include a core set of concept, principles, terminology, and
31 technologies covering the incident command system: multi-agency coordination
32 systems; unified command; training; identification and management of resources
33 (including systems for classifying types of resources); qualifications and
34 certification; and the collection, tracking, and reporting of incident information
35 and incident resources.

36
37 **National Response Plan**
38 Federal disaster relief and emergency assistance are managed under the
39 Department of Homeland Security/Emergency Preparedness and
40 Response/Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/EPR/FEMA) using
41 the National Response Plan (NRP). The NRP, using the NIMS, is an all-hazards
42 plan that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of
43 domestic incidents. The NRP provides the structure and mechanisms for the
44 coordination of Federal support to State, local, and tribal incident managers and
45 for exercising direct Federal authorities and responsibilities.

46

1 **Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes**
 2 The NRP includes 15 Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes, which are a
 3 component of the NRP that detail the mission, policies, structures, and
 4 responsibilities of Federal agencies for coordinating resource and programmatic
 5 support to the States, tribes, and other Federal agencies or other jurisdictions and
 6 entities during Incidents of National Significance. Each ESF Annex identifies
 7 the ESF coordinator and the primary and support agencies pertinent to the ESF.
 8 The primary agency serves as a Federal executive agent under the Federal
 9 Coordinating Officer to accomplish the ESF mission. Support agencies, when
 10 requested by the DHS or the designated ESF primary agency, are responsible for
 11 conducting operations using their own authorities, subject-matter experts,
 12 capabilities, or resources. USDA-FS is the coordinator and primary agency for
 13 ESF #4 – Firefighting. Other USDA-FS and DOI responsibilities are:

15 ESF Support Annex	USDA-FS Role	DOI Role
16 # 1 Transportation	Support	Support
17 # 2 Communications	Support	Support
18 # 3 Public Works and Engineering	Support	Support
19 # 4 Firefighting	Coord. & Primary	Support
20 # 5 Emergency Management	Support	Support
21 # 6 Mass Care, Housing, and Human 22 Services	Support	Support
23 # 7 Resource Support	Support	
24 # 8 Public Health and Medical Services	Support	
25 # 9 Urban Search and Rescue	Support	
26 # 10 Oil and HazMat Response	Support	Support
27 # 11 Agriculture and Natural Resources		Primary
28 # 12 Energy		Support
29 # 13 Public Safety and Security	Support	Support
30 # 14 Long-term Community Recovery 31 and Mitigation		Support
32 #15 External Affairs		Support

33
 34 **Non-Stafford Act Non-Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation**

35 In an actual or potential Incident of National Significance that is not
 36 encompassed by the Stafford Act, the President may instruct a Federal
 37 department or agency, subject to any statutory limitations on the department or
 38 agency, to utilize the authorities and resources granted to it by Congress. In
 39 accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5, Federal
 40 departments and agencies are expected to provide their full and prompt
 41 cooperation, available resources, and support, and appropriate and consistent
 42 with their own responsibilities for protecting national security.

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1 **International Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation**

2

3 **U.S. - Mexico Cross Border Cooperation on Wildland Fires**

4 In June of 1999, the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture
5 signed a Wildfire Protection Agreement with Mexico. The agreement has two
6 purposes:

- 7 • To enable wildfire protection resources originating in the territory of one
8 country to cross the United States-Mexico border in order to suppress
9 wildfires on the other side of the border within the zone of mutual
10 assistance (10 miles/16 kilometers) in appropriate circumstances.
11 • To give authority for Mexican and U.S. fire management organizations to
12 cooperate on other fire management activities outside the zone of mutual
13 assistance.

14

15 National Operational Guidelines for this agreement are located in Chapter 40 of
16 the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide*. These guidelines cover issues at
17 the national level and also provide a template for those issues that need to be
18 addressed in local operating plans. The local operating plans identify how the
19 agreement will be implemented by the GACCs (and Zone Coordination Centers)
20 that have dispatching responsibility on the border. The local operating plans
21 will provide the standard operational procedures for wildfire suppression
22 resources that could potentially cross the U.S. border into Mexico.

23

24 **U.S. - Canada, Reciprocal Forest Firefighting Arrangement**

25 Information about United States - Canada cross border support is located in
26 Chapter 40 of the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide*. This chapter
27 provides policy guidance, which was determined by an exchange of diplomatic
28 notes between the U.S. and Canada in 1982. This chapter also provides
29 operational guidelines for the Canada – U.S. Reciprocal Forest Fire Fighting
30 Arrangement. These guidelines are updated yearly.

31

32 **U.S. - Australia/New Zealand Wildland Fire Arrangement**

33 Information about United States - Australia/New Zealand support is located in
34 Chapter 40 of the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide*. This chapter
35 provides a copy of the arrangements signed between the U.S. and the states of
36 Australia and the country of New Zealand for support to one another during
37 severe fire seasons. It also contains the Annual Operating Plan that provides
38 more detail on the procedures, responsibilities, and requirements used during
39 activation.

40

41 **International Non-Wildland Fire Coordination and Cooperation**

42

43 **International Disasters Support**

44 Federal wildland fire employees may be requested through the Forest Service, to
45 support the U.S. Government's (USG) response to international disasters by
46 serving on Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs). A DART is the

- 1 operational equivalent of an ICS team used by the U.S. Agency for International
2 Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to provide an on-
3 the-ground operational capability at the site of an international disaster. Prior to
4 being requested for a DART assignment, employees will have completed a
5 weeklong DART training course covering information about:
- 6 • USG agencies charged with the responsibility to coordinate USG responses
7 to international disaster.
 - 8 • The purpose, organizational structure, and operational procedures of a
9 DART.
 - 10 • How the DART relates to other international organizations and countries
11 during an assignment. Requests for these assignments are coordinated
12 through the FS International Programs, Disaster Assistance Support
13 Program (DASP).
 - 14 • DART assignments should not be confused with technical exchange
15 activities, which do not require DART training. More information about
16 DARTs can be obtained at the FS International Program's website:
17 <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/aboutus/dasp/welcome.htm>.