

1 **Chapter 05**
2 **USDA Forest Service Wildland Fire and Aviation Program**
3 **Organization and Responsibilities**
4

5 **Introduction**

6 This handbook is intended to be a program reference guide that documents the
7 standards for operational procedures and practices for the USDA Forest Service
8 Fire and Aviation Management program. The standards provided in this
9 handbook are based on current agency and interagency wildland fire
10 management policy, and is intended to provide fire and aviation program
11 guidance and to ensure safe, consistent, efficient and effective fire and aviation
12 operations. This document will be reviewed and updated annually.

13 The Forest Service Director of Fire and Aviation Management, the Director of
14 Human Resources and the Forest Service Line Officer Team have developed
15 core fire management competencies for inclusion into the position descriptions
16 and in selection criteria for Agency Administrators. They are presented here for
17 reference.

18
19 **Evaluation Criterion**

20 Knowledge of fire program management including ability to integrate fire and
21 fuels management across all program areas and functions; ability to implement
22 fire management strategies and integrate natural resource concerns into
23 collaborative community protection and ecosystem restoration strategies;
24 knowledge to oversee a fire management program including budget,
25 preparedness, prevention, suppression, and hazardous fuels reduction; ability to
26 serve as an Agency Administrator during an incident on an assigned unit; and
27 ability to provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diversified firefighting
28 workforce that exists in a "safety first" and "readiness" environment.

29
30 **Training and Core Competencies**

31 Attend a regional or national "Fire Management Leadership for Agency
32 Administrators" training session.

33
34 Require a shadow assignment with a fully qualified Agency Administrator.

35
36 Receive training or experience in the Wildfire Situation Analysis (WFSa) and
37 Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP).

38
39 Provide a Delegation of Authority to Incident Commanders.

40
41 **Performance Standards**

42 Add the following standards to the existing performance standards for Forest
43 Supervisors and District Rangers under Performance Standard #4, Leadership,
44 Coaching, and Supervising:

- 45
- Integrate fire and fuels management across all functional areas.

- 1 • Implement fire management strategies and integrate natural resource
2 concerns into collaborative community protection and ecosystem
3 restoration strategies on the unit.
- 4 • Manage a budget that includes fire preparedness, prevention, suppression,
5 and hazardous fuels in an annual program of work for the unit.
- 6 • Perform duties of Agency Administrator and maintain those qualifications.
- 7 • Provide a fully staffed, highly qualified, and diverse workforce in a "safety
8 first" environment.

9 These standards are based on current policy and provide program guidance to
10 ensure safe, consistent, efficient, and effective Fire and Aviation Operations.
11 This document will be reviewed and updated annually.

12

13 **Specific Agency Administrator Performance Standards for Fire and**
14 **Aviation at the Field Level**

15 **Preparedness**

- 16 • Take all necessary and prudent actions to ensure firefighter and public
17 safety.
- 18 • Ensure sufficient qualified fire and non-fire personnel are available to
19 support fire operations at a level commensurate with the local and national
20 fire situation.
- 21 • Ensure accurate position descriptions are developed and reflect the
22 complexity of the unit. Individual Development Plan's promote and
23 enhance FMO currency and development.
- 24 • Provide a written delegation of Authority to FMOs that provides an
25 adequate level of operational authority at the unit level. Include Multi-
26 Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group authority, as appropriate.
- 27 • Identify resource management objectives to maintain a current Fire
28 Management Plan (FMP) that identifies an accurate level of funding for
29 personnel and equipment.
- 30 • Develop preparedness and fire use standards that are in compliance with
31 agency fire policies.
- 32 • Management teams meet once a year to review fire and aviation policies,
33 roles, responsibilities, and delegations of authority. Specifically address
34 oversight and management controls, critical safety issues, and high-risk
35 situations such as transfers of incident command, periods of multiple fire
36 activity, and Red Flag Warnings.
- 37 • Ensure fire and aviation preparedness reviews are conducted each year.
- 38 • Meet annually with major cooperators and review interagency agreements
39 to ensure their continued effectiveness and efficiency.
- 40 • Convene and participate in annual conferences and fire reviews.

41

42 **Suppression**

- 43 • Ensure use of fire funds is in compliance with Agency policies.

Comment [F1]: This sentence doesn't make sense to me. Is it intending to say: "Maintain a current FMP that specifies resource management objectives, and identifies the levels of funding, personnel and equipment necessary to meet them."?

- 1 • Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) is completed and approved on
2 all fires that escape initial attack. Alternative evaluation and certification
3 requirements are followed.
- 4 • WFSAs that are expected to exceed \$10,000,000.00 in suppression costs
5 are forwarded to the Regional Office for review and approval.
- 6 • Management reviews are conducted on all fires that require a WFSA.
7 Personally attend reviews on Type 1 and Type 2 fires.
- 8 • Provide incident management objectives, written delegations of authority,
9 and a complete Agency Administrator Briefing to Incident Management
10 Teams.
- 11 • Evaluate the need for resource advisors for all fires, and assign as
12 appropriate.
- 13 • For all unplanned human-caused fires where responsibility can be
14 determined, ensure actions are initiated to recover cost of suppression
15 activities, land rehabilitation, damages to the resource and improvements.

Comment [F2]: The term "After Action Review" is being consistently misused to describe management reviews; reviews short of an investigation. We need to be careful to maintain the integrity of the AAR as a tool for small unit review of an operational period or mission.

17 Safety

- 18 • Review safety policies, procedures, and concerns with field fire and
19 aviation personnel.
- 20 • Ensure timely follow-up actions to program reviews, fire preparedness
21 reviews, fire and aviation safety reviews, and management reviews.
- 22 • Monitor the fire situation and provide oversight during periods of critical
23 fire activity and situations of high risk.
- 24 • Ensure there is adequate direction in fire management plans to maintain
25 fire danger awareness.
- 26 • Take appropriate actions with escalating fire potential.
- 27 • Ensure appropriate investigations are conducted for incidents, entrapments,
28 and serious accidents.

30 Fire Use

- 31 • Ensure an approved burn plan is followed for each prescribed fire project,
32 including follow-up monitoring and documentation to ensure management
33 objectives are met.
- 34 • Ensure that a Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP) is completed and
35 implemented for all fires managed for resource benefits.
- 36 • Provide management oversight by personally visiting wildland and
37 prescribed fire activities each year.
- 38 • Ensure compliance with National and Regional Office policy and direction
39 for prescribed fire activities and ensure that periodic reviews and
40 inspections of the prescribed fire program are completed.
- 41 • Approve Prescribed Fire Plans. Authority may be delegated to the Agency
42 Administrators as provided under specific directions.
- 43 • Review Prescribed Fire Plans and recommend or approve the plans
44 depending upon the delegated authority. Ensure that the Prescribed Fire

1 Plan has been reviewed and recommended by a qualified technical
2 reviewer who was not involved in the plan preparation.

4 **Fire Management Positions**

5 The following lists show the minimum operational experience recommended for
6 fire management positions. *The Interagency Fire Program Management*
7 *Qualifications Standards* will be used as guidelines in conjunction with specific
8 agency requirements when filling vacant fire program positions, and as an aid in
9 developing Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for employees.

11 **Specific Fire Management Staff Performance Standards for Fire** 12 **Operations at the Field Level**

14 **Preparedness**

- 15 • Maintain “safety first” as the foundation for all aspects of fire and aviation
16 management.
- 17 • Ensure that only trained and qualified personnel are assigned to fire and
18 aviation duties.
- 19 • Develop, implement, evaluate, and document fire and aviation training
20 program to meet current and anticipated needs.
- 21 • Establish an effective process to gather, evaluate, and communicate
22 information to managers, supervisors, and employees. Ensure clear
23 concise communications are maintained at all levels.
- 24 • Ensure fire and aviation management staffs understand their roles,
25 responsibilities, authority, and accountability.
- 26 • Develop and maintain an open line of communication with public and
27 cooperators.
- 28 • Regardless of funding level, provide a safe, effective, and efficient fire
29 preparedness and fire use program.
- 30 • Organize, train, equip, and direct a qualified work force. An Individual
31 Development Plan (IDP) must be provided for incumbents who do not
32 meet new standards. Establish qualification review process.
- 33 • Take appropriate action when performance is exceptional or deficient.
- 34 • Ensure fire and aviation policies are understood, followed, and coordinated
35 with other agencies as appropriate.
- 36 • Ensure that adequate resources are available to implement fire management
37 operations.
- 38 • Provide fire personnel with adequate guidance, training and decision-
39 making authority to ensure timely decisions.
- 40 • Develop and maintain agreements, annual operating plans, and contracts on
41 an interagency basis to increase effectiveness and efficiencies.
- 42 • Develop, maintain, and annually evaluate the FMP to ensure accuracy and
43 validity.
- 44 • Ensure budget requests and allocations reflect preparedness requirements
45 in the FMP.

Comment [F3]: What information?

- 1 • Develop and maintain current operational plans, (e.g., dispatch, pre-attack,
2 prevention).
- 3 • Ensure that reports and records are properly completed and maintained.
- 4 • Ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability in planning and
5 expenditures.
- 6 • Assess, identify, and implement program actions that effectively reduce
7 unwanted wildland fire ignitions and mitigate risks to life, property, and
8 resources.
- 9 • Work with cooperators to identify processes and procedures for providing
10 fire safe communities within the wildland urban interface.

11

12 Suppression

- 13 • Ensure completion of a job hazard analysis (JHA) for fire and fire aviation
14 activities, and implement applicable risk mitigation measures.
- 15 • Provide for and personally participate in periodic site visits to individual
16 incidents and projects.
- 17 • Utilize the incident complexity analysis to ensure the proper level of
18 management is assigned to all incidents.
- 19 • Ensure incoming personnel and crews are briefed prior to fire and aviation
20 assignments.
- 21 • Coordinate the development of the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis
22 (WFSA) with local unit staff specialists for all fires that escape initial
23 attack.
- 24 • Ensure effective transfer of command of incident management occurs and
25 safety is considered in all functional areas.
- 26 • Monitor fire activity to anticipate and recognize when complexity levels
27 exceed program capabilities. Increase managerial and operational
28 resources to meet need.
- 29 • Complete cost recovery actions when unplanned human-caused fires occur.

30

31 Safety

- 32 • Ensure work/rest and R&R guidelines are followed during all fire and
33 aviation activities. Deviations are approved and documented.
- 34 • Initiate, conduct, and/or participate in fire management related reviews and
35 investigations.
- 36 • Monitor fire season severity predictions, fire behavior, and fire activity
37 levels. Take appropriate actions to ensure safe, efficient, and effective
38 operations.

39

40 Fire Use

- 41 • Ensure a written, approved burn plan exists for each prescribed fire project.
- 42 • Ensure all escaped prescribed fires receive a review at the proper level.
- 43 • Provide the expertise and skills to fully integrate fire and aviation
44 management into interdisciplinary planning efforts.

- 1 • Effectively communicate the “natural role” of wildland fire to internal and
- 2 external agency audiences.
- 3 • Ensure compliance with National and Regional Office policy and direction
- 4 for prescribed fire activities and ensure that periodic reviews and
- 5 inspections of the prescribed fire program are completed.