Understanding the Information Provided in the
National Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR)

The national Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR) provides a synopsis of national wildland fire activity that occurred the previous day (or week during weekly reporting). It also reports non-fire incidents whenever a significant number of wildland fire resources are committed to these incidents. The report is produced daily at national Preparedness Level 2 and above, or whenever activity warrants daily reporting. The IMSR is produced weekly during periods of minimal or low fire activity (at Preparedness Level 1). The report is posted to the web at 5:30 a.m. Mountain Time during daily reporting, or 8:00 a.m. Mountain Time during weekly reporting periods. The IMSR is comprised of five sections: header table showing national fire activity and special statements (if any); individual significant fire summaries for Geographic Areas experiencing significant fire activity; a national weather statement; 6 Minutes for Safety topic; and tables containing daily and year to date statistics by Geographic Area and agency.

The IMSR is produced by the Predictive Services Intelligence Section at the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) in Boise, Idaho. Information for the IMSR comes from several different sources. All of the fire activity information comes from Situation Reports and Incident Status Summary (ICS-209, or "*209*") reports submitted in the Sit-209 program within the Fire and Aviation Management Web applications system (FAMWEB). This includes current fires and acres and large incident information from 209 reports, as well as year to date fire and acre totals for each Geographic Area and agencies. The Predictive Services weather discussion is prepared by a Predictive Services meteorologist at the NICC. The *6 Minutes for Safety* topic comes from the 6 Minutes for Safety web page (http://www.wildfirelessons.net/uploads/6mfs/home.html).

Title information at the top of the IMSR includes the national preparedness level (PL), which is determined by fire activity levels, number and kind of resources committed to incidents, and other factors. More about preparedness levels can be found at: http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references/Definition_of_PL_Levels.pdf.
Fires that meet the national significant fire criteria are reported in the IMSR under the Geographic Area that the fire occurs within. The NICC criteria for significant fires are those that exceed 300 acres in grass and brush fuels (fuel models 1 through 7), 100 acres in timber fuels (fuel models 8 through 13), or have a Type 1 or 2 team assigned. Non-fire incidents will be reported if a significant number of wildland fire fighting resources are assigned. Fire and non-fire incidents must submit an ICS-209 to be included in the IMSR (if the incident meets the above size and complexity criteria).

The national fire activity table at the top of the IMSR provides a synopsis of activity that occurred since the last IMSR report was produced. It shows the national initial attack activity level, the number of new fires reported, the number of new significant fires (denoted by an asterisk), the number of contained and uncontained significant fires, and the number of incident management teams assigned.

National initial attack activity levels are based on the total number of *new* fires reported on dispatch center Situation Reports: **Light: 0 – 199 fires   Moderate: 200 – 299 fires   Heavy: 300 fires and above**
During weekly IMSR reporting periods, activity levels are determined by taking the total number of fires reported for the week and dividing that number by seven to get a daily average for that week.

New significant fires are those that have not previously been reported in the IMSR, and are denoted with an asterisk before the fire name in the narrative and table. Significant full suppression fires within complexes are counted as uncontained large fires (the number of significant uncontained fires within a complex appears in parenthesis after the fire name in the fire narrative, as shown below). (Note: in order to determine significant uncontained fires within a complex, the incident must report the name, the percent of containment and management objective for each significant fire within the complex in the ICS-209 report.) *Only significant fires managed under a full suppression objective are counted as uncontained significant fires in the IMSR*.

Significant fires that are being managed for multiple objectives (not full suppression) are _not_ counted as uncontained significant fires in the IMSR. (See page 3 for more information about multiple objective fires.)

In the example below the number of large uncontained fires is five (four in the Delta Complex, plus the Eagle Trail fire). The Applegate and Toklat 2 fires are being managed for multiple objectives. The way to determine this is by the "N/A" in the % Ctn and Est Ctn fields in the table. Also, the Eagle Trail fire is a new large fire (denoted by the asterisk next to the fire name in both the narrative and the table).

* **Eagle Trail**, Tok Area Forestry, Alaska DOF. IMT 2 (Allen). One mile south of Tanacross, AK. Spruce and tundra. Active fire behavior.

Delta Complex (4 fires)**,** Delta Area Forestry, Alaska DOF. Twenty miles north of Delta, AK. Spruce. Smoldering.

Applegate, Tanana Zone, BLM. Started on state land 25 miles northeast of Manley Hot Springs, AK. Black spruce. Creeping with isolated interior torching.

Toklat 2, Tanana Zone, BLM. Started on state land 25 miles southwest of Nenana, AK. Black spruce and tundra. Creeping and smoldering. Numerous structures threatened.

Incident Name	St	Unit	Size	Size Chge 24 Hrs	% Ctn	Est Ctn	Totl Pers	Pers Chge 24 Hrs	Crw	Eng	Heli	Strc Lost	$$ CTD	Origin Own
* Eagle Trail	AK	TAS	1,200	---	12	9/6	176	---	4	8	2	0	NR	ST
Delta Complex	AK	DAS	2,300	210	65	9/21	119	-1	3	1	2	0	120K	BLM
Applegate	AK	TAD	3,454	0	N/A	N/A	45	-10	1	0	1	0	340K	ST
Toklat 2	AK	TAD	650	89	N/A	N/A	14	3	0	1	1	0	218K	ST

A table for each Geographic Area, similar to the national synopsis table, appears above the list of large fires burning within that area. Next to the Geographic Area name is the preparedness level (PL) for that Geographic Area. Geographic Area preparedness levels (PL) come from GACC Situation Reports, GACC web sites, or by other means.

Example
Alaska Area (PL 4)

New fires:	4
New large fires:	1
Uncontained large fires:	8
Type 2 IMTs committed:	2

Significant fires are reported in the IMSR beneath the Geographic Area table. Uncontained fires have a narrative briefly describing the current situation for that fire. This information comes directly from the Incident Status Summary (ICS-209). There are six key components to a large fire narrative: incident name; agency responsible for managing the incident (not necessarily the owner of the land the fire is burning on); name of the incident management team (if one is assigned); incident location (in miles from the nearest identifiable town); fire behavior; and resources threatened. Other pertinent information may also include evacuations, closures, and other significant events.

Contained fires do not get a narrative, but are reported in the large fire table for that Geographic Area. Unit identifiers for contained fires appear below the table so readers can identify the agency responsible for the fire only if that unit identifier is not spelled out elsewhere in the report. If the information needed for the large fire narrative isn't provided on the ICS-209 report, the IMSR narrative for that incident will include the statement, "No further information received."

The large fire table contains statistical information about each large fire in that Geographic Area. Contained fires appear below uncontained fires in the table. The table lists the state the fire is located in, the unit identifier for the managing agency, current acreage, change in size since last report (in acres), percent contained, estimated containment date, total personnel assigned, change in number of personnel since last report, number of crews, engines and helicopters, structures lost, estimated suppression costs to date and land ownership at the point of origin. Like the narrative, all of this information comes from the ICS-209 report.

Incident Name	St	Unit	Size	Size Chge 24 Hrs	% Ctn	Est Ctn	Totl Pers	Pers Chge 24 Hrs	Crw	Eng	Heli	Strc Lost	$$ CTD	Origin Own
Golem	GA	GAS	350	-75	55	9/14	82	-22	1	2	0	1	NR	ST

The change in size field in the table will show a negative value if the acreage is reduced from the previous ICS-209. This can be the result of better mapping or estimation of size from the previous ICS-209. Personnel change shows the increase or decrease in a 24 hour period. Origin ownership identifies whose land the fire started on. Agency unit identifier information is available on the web at: http://www.nifc.blm.gov/nsdu/unit_id/Publish.html.

New fires, or previously reported fires, will have three dashes placed in the 24 hour size and personnel change columns. An 'NR' (for not reported) appears if no information is provided on the ICS-209 for percent contained (% Ctn), structure losses (Strc Lost), costs to date ($$ CTD), and sometimes other fields that are missing information. The estimated containment field (Est Ctn) gets an 'UNK' (unknown) if that information is not provided on the ICS-209. As described above, fires being managed for multiple objectives will show '**N/A**' (for *not applicable*) in both the percent contained (% Ctn) and estimated containment date (Est Ctn) fields.

In the example below the View incident is a multiple objective incident, and is not counted as an uncontained suppression fire. Notice that both the percent contained (% Ctn) and estimated containment date (Est Ctn) fields show 'N/A' (for not applicable). The Oak fire is a new large fire (*) that did not report percent contained (% Ctn) or cost to date ($$ CTD), so NR was put in those fields. The Abel Mountain fire reported no estimated containment date, so UNK was put in that field.

Example

Incident Name	St	Unit	Size	Size Chge 24 Hrs	% Ctn	Est Ctn	Totl Pers	Pers Chge 24 Hrs	Crw	Eng	Heli	Strc Lost	$$ CTD	Origin Own
* Oak	OR	RSF	494	---	NR	9/6	576	---	14	20	5	0	NR	FS
View	OR	MHF	4,757	21	N/A	N/A	537	-123	14	8	5	0	8.6M	FS
Abel Mountain	OR	WIF	3,454	0	35	UNK	99	-10	2	2	2	0	4.0M	PRI

Geographic Areas should prioritize their large fires in the Geographic Area Situation Report. Prioritized fires appear in the IMSR in the order set by the Geographic Area. Fires that are not prioritized by the Geographic Area Coordination Center will be prioritized at NICC. Geographic Areas are prioritized in the IMSR by NICC staff using several factors, including current and expected fire activity, complexity of current large fires, weather conditions and resource commitment.

Large fires that are being managed under a full suppression objective appear in the IMSR every day that an ICS-209 is submitted until the fire is contained. If an active incident doesn't submit a 209 two consecutive days in a row the incident will be dropped from the IMSR. The IMSR narrative will include the statement, "**No new information**" on the first day that no 209 is received. The statement, "**Last report unless new information is received**" is added after the second day that no 209 is received. On the third consecutive day that no 209 is submitted, the incident is dropped from the IMSR.

A large fire that is being managed for objectives will initially be reported in the IMSR for one day with a narrative stating, "**Last report unless significant activity occurs**." The fire will be dropped from the IMSR until it reaches 1,000 acres in size at which time it will appear again in the IMSR for one day. The fire will again appear in the IMSR each time the fire increases 1,000 acres in size until the fire is contained.

If a Type 1, 2 or WFMT team is assigned, or the management objective changes to full suppression, the fire will appear in the IMSR every day until it's contained, or the team is released. If a multiple objective fire is not contained at the time the team is released, it will be dropped from the IMSR the following day, and reinstated only when significant activity occurs (as defined above). A significant commitment of resources will also keep a multiple objective fire in the IMSR daily, even if little or no activity is occurring and no team is assigned.

Below the last Geographic Area section is a table containing data on those fires that were not reported in the Geographic Area large fires portion of the IMSR. This table is titled Other Fires, and is updated weekly using information derived from ICS-209 reports on *currently active 209s.* The intent of this table is to provide managers with an idea of how many fires are burning on the landscape that aren't reported in the large fire section of the IMSR, including personnel counts. This table may include smaller fires that are being managed for multiple objectives, full suppression fires, and large multiple strategy incidents. The table also includes fires that are 100 percent contained, but are still submitting ICS-209 reports. Any large fire reported in the large fire section of the IMSR will not be included in the Other Fires table. An ICS-209 must be submitted to have its information included in this table. Any ICS-209 report that hasn't been updated in more than a week will not be included in this table.

Following the *6 Minutes for Safety* topic are the fire summary tables. The tables depict current and year to date data on the fire season nationwide. Below are descriptions for the tables.

Fires and Acres Yesterday (or last week during weekly reporting cycle) are derived directly from Situation Reports submitted by individual units through their Geographic Areas. The ICS-209 program does not provide data for this table.

Fires and Acres Year to Date is derived directly from Situation Reports submitted by individual units. The ICS-209 program does not provide data for this table.

Ten Year Averages are derived from a spreadsheet maintained by the NICC Intelligence Desk. Not all dates during the year have ten years of data, so the statement "Ten Year Averages" can vary from five to ten years during the year.

Prescribed Fires and Acres Yesterday and **Prescribed Fires and Acres Year to Date** are derived the same way as Fires and Acres described above. This table depicts prescribed fire project accomplishments.

Canada Fires and Hectares are provided by the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. They report from May to the end of the Canadian fire season (usually September or early October).

Each day the IMSR is produced, several maps are created depicting the locations of the significant fires shown in the report. One map shows all significant fires reported in the IMSR, and the other shows only the newly reported large fires in the IMSR. These maps can be found on the web at:
http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us/lg_fire2.php   (all large fires)
http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us/Lg_fire2.php?new   (new large fires)
As of 2010 Hawaii and Alaska also have their own significant fire maps available at the above web sites.

Direction for submitting Situation Reports and ICS-209 reports can be found in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide and Geographic Area Mobilization Guides at:
http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm
http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/   (Click on the map to go to a particular Geographic Area.)

More detailed information about Predictive Services and intelligence can be found at http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/predictive.htm, and in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide: http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/mobguide/index.html

Q & A

Why do other sources of wildfire information seem to contain more current, or updated information?
The purpose of the IMSR is to provide a synopsis of significant wildfire activity for the previous 24 hours. The information included in the IMSR comes from Situation and ICS-209 reports, which are typically updated once a day in the evening. Both the Situation Report and the ICS-209 program are designated authoritative sources by federal land management agencies.

I submitted a 209 report, but my fire wasn't included in the IMSR. Why?
There are many reasons why a fire doesn't get reported in the IMSR. If the fire doesn't meet the national minimum large fire criteria, it won't be included in the IMSR. A 209 submitted several days after a large fire was contained will not be reported in the IMSR (unless the IMSR is being published weekly, in which case it includes all active or contained fires reported during the previous week).

Why did my uncontained fire get dropped from the IMSR?
Active uncontained fires may be dropped from the IMSR if no 209 is submitted for three consecutive days. An incident gets a three day grace period to submit an updated 209 report. More about this on page three above. An uncontained fire may also get dropped from the IMSR if no activity has occurred for a long period of time, and little activity is expected until containment.

Why does the Fires and Acres Yesterday table show no fires for an agency in a GACC when the large fire section reports a new large fire in that GACC?
Any large fire that's reported in the IMSR for the first time is a "new large fire." However, the fire may have actually started several days ago, and either wasn't reported on a 209, or didn't meet large fire criteria until the day before it appeared in the IMSR. The Fires and Acres Yesterday table in the IMSR depicts only new fires that started the previous day. Also, if a dispatch center doesn't submit a Situation Report, or count the new large fire on their Situation report, a new large fire won't be included in the Fires and Acres Yesterday table.

What fires does the 'Other Fires' table in the IMSR represent?
This table was added to the IMSR in 2012 at the request of the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC). The table is a summary of all active large fires (those that submitted 209 reports) that are not reported in the large fire section of the IMSR. The table provides a more inclusive picture of active fires burning across the country, regardless of management strategy.

Is the first large fire reported in the IMSR the nation's top priority fire?
No! This is a long standing myth. Each Geographic Area Coordination Center may prioritize the fires burning within their GACC. The National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) prioritizes Geographic Areas that have large fires using a number of factors, including number of large fires, teams assigned, complexity of the fires, resources assigned, and current and expected fire activity within a GACC. So the number one fire in the Geographic Area that is placed at the top of the IMSR becomes the first fire in the IMSR by default.

The top fires listed in the IMSR get scarce resources before other fires near the bottom of the IMSR.
Another myth. Scarce resources are allocated at the Geographic Area and national levels using many different criteria, which may or may not include ICS-209 information.

If the deputy incident commander for a team is managing the fire, why doesn't his or her name appear in the IMSR?
The NMAC has directed that the IMSR should include only the name of the officially designated incident commander for a team, even if that incident commander isn't directly managing the incident.

We put a location in block 14 of the 209, but the IMSR reports a different location. Why?
Very often the location reported in block 14 of the 209 doesn't provide sufficient information to determine distance from a nearby town. In these cases the NICC intelligence staff will try to determine a location from a nearby town to put in the IMSR report. For example, the 209 may state the location as "the crossroad of forest roads 239 and 114." Or, "Whiskey Jack Basin." These are not suitable locations for the IMSR. In these cases a location from a nearby town will be determined using the latitude and longitude provided in the 209 report.

An incident management team (IMT) got assigned to the fire, but the IMSR doesn't report that. Why?
The IMSR is based on information provided by ICS-209 reports. If the 209 doesn't show an IMT committed, and the team commitment can't be confirmed by other reliable sources, then no IMT information will be included in the IMSR until the information can be confirmed through reliable sources.

* As a rule of thumb, if information about an incident isn't included in the 209 report, then it will likely not be included in the IMSR.