

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Forest Service**

**R-6**

**OR/WA**

**Bureau of Land  
Management**

**United States  
Department of  
Interior**

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**Date:** June 27, 2003

**FS-Memorandum**

**EMS TRANSMISSION June 30, 2003  
BLM-Information Bulletin No. OR-2003-191**

**To:** Forest Service Forest Supervisors and Bureau of Land Management District Managers

**Subject:** Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group (PNWCG) Recommendations from Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST) Report

A review by the Fire and Aviation Safety Team following the 2002 fire season identified a number of safety problems that were encountered during this extremely busy year in the Northwest. Attached are the recommendations from the PNWCG Steering Committee in response to the very extensive 2002 FAST report.

It is our expectation that all Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service units will embrace these interagency solutions to these problems and implement each of the recommendations this fire season.

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1 Attachment(s)

1 - [FAST Report Recommendations](#) (27 pp)

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WO- (FA100) - 1

cc:  
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"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

# Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group

May 27, 2003



To: PNWCG Field Units

From: PNWCG Steering Committee



Subject: Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST) Report Recommendations

The PNWCG Steering Committee is making the following recommendations and providing the following materials in response to the 2002 Fire and Aviation Safety Team Report. The listed "part number" and title refer to a specific finding and recommendation from the FAST Report. PNWCG has provided recommendations and or direction relative to each part and request all field units to respond appropriately.



## PART 1.6, WRITTEN EXPECTATIONS



**FAST Finding:** As an organization, ODF has not formally adopted the Thirtymile requirements; however, it does recognize how the Thirtymile requirements must be applied to individual ODF resources when assigned to USFS incidents. ODF single-resources assigned to USFS fires acknowledge that they are expected to comply with the work/rest guidelines. ODF IMT's assigned to USFS incidents have incorporated the Thirtymile requirements in their management of incidents, but manage the IMT in accordance with ODF guidelines per the Northwest Interagency Agreement.



**FAST Recommendations:** The USFS should clarify the expectations relative to Thirtymile compliance when ODF IMT's are assigned to a USFS incident under a resource order. If not already done, have USFS formally notify all partner organizations (including State Forestry Programs) of these expectations. Encourage these other agencies to communicate these expectations throughout their organizations.



## PNWCG Recommendations:

**United States Forest Service (USFS) has clarified the expectations relative to Thirtymile compliance when other agency IMT's are assigned to a USFS incident (see Incident Commander Responsibility List, Attachment A, derived from FSM 5100, FSM 5120 and FSM 5130).**



**To assist all agencies in understanding the needs and requirements of the OSHA/30 Mile Abatement Plan for use by USFS personnel on other agency lands, PNWCG is making the following two checklists available for Agency Administrators and Incident Commanders (see Attachments A & B, derived from FSM 5100, FSM 5120 and FSM 5130) on the OSHA/30 Mile Abatement Plan.**



FAST Finding: The DOA's issued to the IMT's all specifically mention the commitment to firefighter and public safety. Several specifically included compliance with the Thirtymile requirements as a responsibility.

FAST Recommendations: Suggest that all DOA's be required to have standard statements concerning firefighter safety and, where applicable, Thirtymile compliance since these should be the same regardless of location.

**PNWCG Recommendations:**

**Every Delegation of Authority (DOA) issued for the management of incidents will specifically address the commitment to firefighter and public safety. The recommended DOA for Type 3, 4 and 5 PNW incidents available in the PNW Mobilization Guide addresses this issue for those incidents. Where the OSHA/30 Mile Abatement Plan is applicable the DOA needs to specifically address the Incident Commander Responsibility List (Attachment A).**

PART 6.2, STANDARD PACKET – INCLUDING ADFP

FAST Finding (Synopsis): There is a need for standardized IC packets for type 3 through 5 fires.

FAST Recommendations: Consider the development of a standardized IC packet for use throughout the Geographic Area to ensure consistency.

**PNWCG Recommendations:**

**A USFS and BLM task group headed by Nancy Ashlock have developed a draft "standard" Type 3, 4 & 5 Incident Commander packet for USFS and BLM incidents. This packet is available as, "Attachment C" for potential use within the Interagency Community.**

PART 9.2, ADD ERC TO BRIEFINGS

FAST Finding: Fire managers realize that the Pocket Cards are relatively meaningless without also knowing the current ERC or BI. Accordingly, the current ERC or BI value is consistently included in the daily weather forecast (broadcasted by dispatch over the radio to initial attack forces) and/or provided in the briefing (by IMT's on larger incidents).

FAST Recommendation: If not already done, add the daily ERC values as a briefing element.

**PNWCG Recommendations:**

**For those agencies that utilize pocket cards, they are most useful when ERC's are tracked daily. Agency Administrators and Fire Management Officers should insure that daily ERC's are communicated to all personnel as a daily briefing element.**

#### PART 9.3, MONITOR POCKET CARD USE – PREPARE REVIEWS

FAST Finding: There is some concern that the Pocket Cards are used inappropriately. For those agencies participating in the use of pocket cards, the purpose of the pocket card should be discussed with fireline personnel. An explanation of the intent and use of the pocket cards should be given during yearly firefighter refreshers. Pocket cards should be utilized during daily briefings. The appropriate use of pocket cards needs to be monitored by the Fire Management Officers.

FAST Recommendation: Use of the Pocket Cards should be monitored to ensure they are being used appropriately. The purpose for the Pocket Card should be discussed with fireline personnel.

#### **PNWCG Recommendations:**

**For those agencies participating in the use of pocket cards, the purpose of the pocket card should be discussed with fireline personnel. An explanation of the intent and use of the pocket cards should be given during yearly firefighter refreshers. Pocket cards should be utilized during daily briefings. The appropriate use of pocket cards also needs to be monitored by the Fire Management Officers.**

#### PART 11.2, DAILY SCHEDULE

FAST Finding (Synopsis): Implementation of work/rest guidelines has resulted in situations where initial attack forces “timed out”, leaving fires understaffed and in some cases unstaffed.

FAST Recommendation: To minimize the impact of work/rest guidelines on initial attack operations, managers should be encouraged to make adjustments to the daily schedule, such as staggering shifts and starting shifts for some initial attack forces later in the day. When initial attack actions occur, the IC should be notified of the status of forces with regard to length of shift and work/rest. Accordingly, this should be added as an item for consideration on the initial attack-briefing checklist.

#### **PNWCG Recommendations:**

**See the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) memo dated April 11, 2003 on Work Rest Guidelines and Length of Assignment, which provides clarification on FAST 11.2 issue (Attachment D).**

#### PART 11.5, DIRECTION FOR DISPATCH OFFICES

FAST Finding: On federal incidents, many of the work/rest violations occurred as non-local resources traveled to the incident. It was noted that the IC has little control over these resources while they are enroute.

FAST Recommendation: Dispatch offices should ensure that adequate time is built into requested ETA's for off-unit resources to ensure compliance with the work/rest requirements. Also, IC's need to factor travel times into shift length.

**PNWCG Recommendations:**

**Clear direction to dispatch units and overhead personnel on work rest guidelines, night mobilization and agency policy is located in the PNW Area Mobilization Guide, Chapter 20, pursuant to the NWCG April 11, 2003 memo on Work Rest Guidelines and Length of Assignment (Attachment D).**

PART 19.1, DISENGAGEMENT

FAST Team Finding: Many of those interviewed stated that the term “disengagement” is widely perceived by the public as meaning that suppression efforts have been suspended and forces have withdrawn completely from the fire, although they all agreed that this is a misconception.

FAST Team Recommendation: Public information initiatives should address this misconception. In dealing with the media and public, special emphasis should be made to clarify the correct meaning of “disengagement”. Consider developing new terminology that expresses the intended meaning of the term “disengagement”.

**PNWCG Recommendations:**

**The following definitions may be used to explain disengagement/engagement to the general public. These two examples are distributed to all PNWCG Field Units for use by Agency Incident Information Officers as a “standard” when working with the public.**

**Alternative One:**

**DISENGAGEMENT/RE-ENGAGEMENT DEFINITION**

**When one or more of the Ten Standard Fire Fighting Orders become compromised, firefighters will disengage. Disengagement is the temporary, orderly retreat until modified firefighting tactics can be safely implemented. This may occur on a small portion of the fire or the entire fire.**

**Firefighters should retreat by way of designated escape routes to anchor points, previously burned areas (black areas where there is no risk of reburn), or other safe areas devoid of fuel. The area of retreat should generally be down slope/down canyon and up-wind away from the direction of fire spread.**

**Once all firefighters have safely reached these areas, re-evaluation of the fire behavior, weather conditions, complexity and whether additional resources are necessary to re-engage in suppression tactics.**

**To re-engage, the 10 Standard Fire Orders will be “firm rules of engagement” and must not be compromised. The probability of success with any new strategy must be reassessed.**

**\*IIO to Attach Ten Standard Fire Orders when released to the public**

### **Alternative Two:**

#### **DISENGAGEMENT/RE-ENGAGEMENT DEFINITION**

**When one or more of the Ten Standard Fire Fighting Orders become compromised, firefighters will disengage, i.e. when firefighters are in jeopardy, they will retreat and reassess.**

- **DISENGAGEMENT is the temporary, orderly retreat of firefighters until modified firefighting tactics can be safely implemented.**

**This may occur on a small portion of the fire or the entire fire. Firefighters will retreat by way of designated escape routes to anchor points such as previously burned areas (black areas where there is no risk of reburn), or other safe areas devoid of fuel. Retreat should generally be down slope and up-wind away from the direction of fire spread.**

- **RE-EVALUATION begins once all firefighters have reached safe areas.**

**Evaluate fire behavior, weather conditions (existing, forecasted), complexity, and whether additional resources are needed. Subsequent strategies should consider direct attack from safe anchor points until the situation changes.**

- **RE-ENGAGEMENT occurs only after re-evaluation of modified firefighting tactics and consideration of the Ten Standard Fire Orders, considered the “firm rules of engagement”, which must not be compromised.**

**The probability of success with any new strategy must be reassessed (continually).**

**\*IIO to Attach Ten Standard Fire Orders when released to the public**

## PART 21.4, EVALUATION PROCESS FOR IMT'S

FAST Finding (Synopsis): On some incidents, there were indications that some key IMT management principles dealing with team dynamics, good communications—both verbal and horizontal, decision processes and principles of command, within some IMT's had broken down. It was recommended that Agency Administrators (AA) bring in a review team, to assist them in dealing with these issues, should the AA not have the fire background or training in recognizing these breakdowns.

FAST Recommendations (Synopsis): We recommend that PNWCG implement a process whereby an AA in need of assistance could call upon a predestinated evaluation team made up of 2-3 individuals with previous experience on Type 1 and 2 IMT's to assist in evaluation, assessment and corrective action when an IMT is experiencing problems. This team would use an established set of team management criteria, complete the evaluation and assessment in 1-2 days and provide the AA with results and recommendations for use in team oversight.

### **PNWCG Recommendations:**

**It is the Agency Administrator's (AA) responsibility to ensure that the Incident Management Team is functioning properly early on. If an AA does not have the background to resolve issues that arise, it is recommended that the AA work with the respective agency regional fire office to have appropriate personnel resource ordered to assist. This assistance may be provided by another experienced AA to shadow the AA, other agency personnel with knowledge of fire team use or contracted personnel who are assigned to assist the AA and team in resolving identified issues. The need for a review should be identified and issues resolved within the first three to four days of the incident.**

**An evaluation process to assist the AA is located in Appendix R of the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations 2003 (Red Book).**

## PART 21.8, PROVIDE EVACUATION PLAN EXAMPLES

FAST Finding: On a large incident where major subdivision was threatened, a Population Protection Plan was developed to unify 20 different cooperators and define evacuation procedures.

FAST Recommendation: This is an example of what worked well, and the concept should be shared with other units throughout the Geographic Area.

### **PNWCG Recommendations:**

**Appropriate examples will be placed on the PNWCG Web Site when available.**

## ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A:

### Incident Commander Responsibilities

(Re: Thirtymile Hazard Abatement)

<b>Action</b>	<b>Documentation Required</b>
Make safety of firefighters and the public the highest priority. When a potentially life-threatening situation exists, supersede natural and cultural resource considerations if necessary to provide for safety.	No
Prepare a complexity analysis on each wildland fire at the time of initial attack as part of the size up.	Yes
Ensure all firefighting actions are in full compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of the applicable Watch Out Situations has been accomplished.	No
Ensure arriving ground fireline resources on Type 3 – 5 wildland fires have positive and documented contact with appropriate incident management personnel and receive a briefing.	Yes
Provide fireline-qualified individuals training on entrapment recognition and deployment protocols when such training has not been provided by the home/host Units.	Yes
Manage fatigue of personnel and ensure compliance with work/rest and length of assignment guidelines.	Yes
Personally conduct inspections for safety and health hazards, including compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of applicable Watch Out Situations.	Yes
Assign personnel to fireline positions for which they are qualified, as certified by their employing agency. Assign trainees per FSH 5109.17.	No
Include compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of applicable Watch Out Situations in after-action reports.	Yes
Monitor effectiveness of planned strategy and tactics. Immediately delay, modify, or abandon firefighting action on any part of a wildland fire where strategies and tactics cannot be safely implemented.	No
Ensure that performance ratings are completed on Type 3 – 5 wildland fires for all ground resources assigned from outside the local area.	Yes
On Type 1 – 3 wildland fires, accept no collateral duties except for unfilled command and general staff positions.	No

ATTACHMENT B:

**Agency Administrator Responsibilities**  
(Re: Thirtymile Hazard Abatement)

<b>Action</b>	<b>Documentation Required</b>
Develop and distribute Fire Danger Pocket Cards to each fireline supervisor on Type 3 – 5 wildland fires.	No
Make safety of firefighters and the public the highest priority. When a potentially life-threatening situation exists, supersede natural and cultural resource considerations if necessary to provide for safety.	No
Annually convey to Type 3 – 5 Incident Commanders your expectations and their responsibilities and authorities.	No
Provide fireline-qualified individuals training on entrapment recognition and deployment protocols.	Yes
Ensure employees are mobilized in wildland fire positions for which they are qualified.	No
Formally assign an Incident Commander to all wildland fires.	Yes
Ensure supplemental inspections for safety & health hazards are conducted and documented in incident records on a minimum of 10% of the Unit's Type 3 – 5 wildland fires.	Yes
Ensure Incident Commanders on Type 1 – 3 wildland fires have no collateral duties (except duties for unfilled C&G positions).	No
Ensure fatigue is identified and appropriately managed.	No
Accomplish after action reviews on Type 3 wildland fires and for selected Type 4 – 5 wildland fires.	Yes
<b>Monitor Incident Commander performance relative to the following actions:</b>	
Make safety of firefighters and the public the highest priority. When a potentially life-threatening situation exists, supersede natural and cultural resource considerations if necessary to provide for safety.	No
Prepare a complexity analysis on each wildland fire at the time of initial attack as part of the size up.	Yes
Ensure all firefighting actions are in full compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of the applicable Watch Out Situations has been accomplished.	No

**Agency Administrator Responsibilities Continued**  
(Re: Thirtymile Hazard Abatement)

Ensure arriving ground fireline resources on Type 3 – 5 wildland fires have positive and documented contact with appropriate incident management personnel and receive a briefing.	Yes
Provide fireline-qualified individuals training on entrapment recognition and deployment protocols when such training has not been provided by the home/host Units.	Yes
Manage fatigue of personnel and ensure compliance with work/rest and length of assignment guidelines.	Yes
Personally conduct inspections for safety and health hazards, including compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of applicable Watch Out Situations.	Yes
Assign personnel to fireline positions for which they are qualified, as certified by their employing agency. Assign trainees per FSH 5109.17.	No
Include compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of applicable Watch Out Situations in after-action reports.	Yes
Monitor effectiveness of planned strategy and tactics. Immediately delay, modify, or abandon firefighting action on any part of a wildland fire where strategies and tactics cannot be safely implemented.	No
Ensure that performance ratings are completed on Type 3 – 5 wildland fires for all ground resources assigned from outside the local area.	Yes
On Type 1 – 3 wildland fires, accept no collateral duties except for unfilled command and general staff positions.	No

ATTACHMENT C  
Incident Commanders Incident Packet

## DRAFT NORTHWEST INCIDENT ORGANIZER DRAFT

### Initial Attack Size Up / Risk Analysis

Date:			
Time of Dispatch:			
Time of Arrival on Scene:			
1. Fire Name:	Incident Number:		Charge Code:
2. Incident Commander:			
3. Fire Location: (degrees - minutes- seconds)			4. Size:
T.	R.	Sec.	Access:
LAT:	LONG:		Land Ownership:
5. Fuels Burning: <input type="checkbox"/> Grass <input type="checkbox"/> Brush <input type="checkbox"/> Slash <input type="checkbox"/> Re-prod <input type="checkbox"/> Timber (light, heavy) <input type="checkbox"/> Snag <input type="checkbox"/> Logs <input type="checkbox"/> Duff			
Adjacent fuels: <input type="checkbox"/> Grass <input type="checkbox"/> Brush <input type="checkbox"/> Slash <input type="checkbox"/> Re-prod <input type="checkbox"/> Timber (light, heavy) <input type="checkbox"/> Snag <input type="checkbox"/> Logs <input type="checkbox"/> Duff			
6. Character of Fire:		7. Flame Length:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Smoldering <input type="checkbox"/> Creeping <input type="checkbox"/> Running		<input type="checkbox"/> under 2' <input type="checkbox"/> 2' - 4' <input type="checkbox"/> 4' - 8' <input type="checkbox"/> 8' - 11'	
<input type="checkbox"/> Torching <input type="checkbox"/> Crowning <input type="checkbox"/> Spotting		<input type="checkbox"/> 11' plus	
8. Position On Slope:		9. Percent Slope:	10. Aspect:
<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom 1/3 <input type="checkbox"/> Middle 1/3		<input type="checkbox"/> 0 - 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 - 45	<input type="checkbox"/> North <input type="checkbox"/> East <input type="checkbox"/> South
<input type="checkbox"/> Top 1/3		<input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 60 <input type="checkbox"/> 60 plus	<input type="checkbox"/> West <input type="checkbox"/> Flat ridge top
11. Wind:		Speed: _____	Wind Indicators:
Direction: <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> Upslope		<input type="checkbox"/> Cumulus <input type="checkbox"/> Lenticular	<input type="checkbox"/> Cold fronts <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Up canyon <input type="checkbox"/> Down slope <input type="checkbox"/> Down canyon			
12. Spread Potential:			
<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Very High			
13. Values at Risk: (Check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Houses	<input type="checkbox"/> T&E Species	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/Historical	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety	
14. Hazards: (Check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Snags	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazmat	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Interface	
<input type="checkbox"/> Power Lines	<input type="checkbox"/> Mine Shafts	<input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation Concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
15. Cause: <input type="checkbox"/> Lightning <input type="checkbox"/> Human Caused (protect origin/consider Fire Investigator) <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
16. Additional Resources Needed:			
Personnel:	Equipment:	Supplies:	Aircraft:

### Safety Analysis

(If you answer **NO** to any of the questions, **take corrective action immediately!**)

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Are the Standard Fire Orders being followed and the 18 Watchout Situations being mitigated?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Do you have a current forecast?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Is observed weather consistent with forecast? (Consider spot forecast)
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Can you control the fire with resources available under expected conditions?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Have you developed a plan to attack the fire? (Direct or indirect, anchor points, escape routes, head or flank attack, priority areas)
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Have you communicated your plan to everyone on the incident?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Has the command structure been identified to all resources and dispatch?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Are lookouts in place or can you see the entire fire area?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Can you communicate with everyone on the fire and with dispatch?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Are escape routes and safety zones established and identified? If you are using the black, is it a clean burn with no re-burn potential?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Have you reported the status of the fire to dispatch?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Will the fire be controlled before the next operational period?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Do you have a complete list of assigned and ordered resources?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	If the fire will not be controlled before the next operation period or the size of the organization exceeds the IC's capability to manage, have you informed dispatch?
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Are you still comfortable managing this fire? Use incident complexity analysis.
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	Do all Fire Line Supervisors have the local pocket card and Incident Response Pocket Guide?

Comment:	
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## Incident Objectives

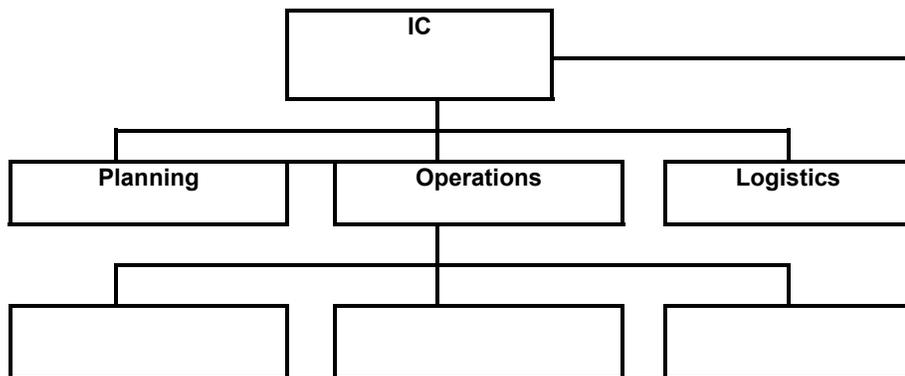
1. **SAFETY** of Firefighters and Public.

2.

3.

4

Your goal is to manage the incident and not create another.



Safety Officer:
Resource Advisor:
Air Operations:
Base Camp Mgr:

Staging Area Mgr.:
Staging Area Location:
Resources Staged:

Radio Frequencies		
Net	Frequency	Tone
Command	RX TX	
Support / Dispatch	RX TX	
Air-to-Ground	RX TX	
Air-to-Air	RX TX	
Tac 1	RX TX	
Tac 2	RX TX	

Phone Numbers	
Name	Number

### Standard Firefighting Orders

<b>Fire Behavior Group</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecast.</li> <li>2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.</li> <li>3. Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.</li> </ol>
<b>Fireline Safety Groups = Personnel Safety</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Identify escape routes / safety zones and makes them known.</li> <li>5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.</li> <li>6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.</li> </ol>
<b>Organizational Control Group = Tactical Decisions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Maintain prompt communications with your forces, your supervisor and adjoining forces.</li> <li>8. Give clear instructions and insure they are understood.</li> <li>9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first.</li> </ol>

# Resource Summary

Refer to page 93 of the Incident Response Pocket Guide for Briefing Checklist

Resources Ordered	Resource Identification	Date/ETA	At Scene	No. of People	Briefed	Location / Assignment	Released	Release Time
		/			<input type="checkbox"/>	/	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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**INCIDENT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS (If you have checked "yes" on 3 to 5 of the boxes, consider requesting the next level.)**

	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Fuels extremely dry and susceptible to long-range spotting or you are currently experiencing extreme fire behavior.								
Weather forecast indicating no significant relief or worsening conditions.								
Current or predicted fire behavior dictates indirect control strategy with large amounts of fuel within planned perimeter.								
<b>Firefighter Safety</b>								
Performance of firefighting resources affected by cumulative fatigue.								
Overhead overextended mentally and/or physically.								
Communication ineffective with tactical resources or dispatch.								
<b>Organization</b>								
Operations are at the limit of span of control.								
Incident action plans, briefings, etc. missing or poorly prepared.								
Variety of specialized operations, support personnel or equipment.								
Unable to properly staff air operations.								
Limited local resources available for initial attack.								
Heavy commitment of local resources to logistical support.								
Existing forces worked 24 hours without success.								
Resources unfamiliar with local conditions and tactics.								
<b>Values to be protected</b>								
Urban interface; structures, developments, recreational facilities, or potential for evacuation.								
Fire burning or threatening more than one jurisdiction and potential for unified command with different or conflicting management objectives.								
Unique natural resources, special-designation areas, critical municipal watershed, T&E species habitat, cultural value sites.								
Sensitive political concerns, media involvement, or controversial fire policy.								

**AFTER ACTION REVIEW**  
Refer to page 16 of the Incident Response Guide

<b>Incident Name:</b>	<b>IC:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>IC Type:</b>
<b>Critiqued By:</b> (List name of attendees)				
<b>What was planned?</b>				
<b>What actually happened?</b>				
<b>Why did it happen?</b>				
<b>What can we do next time?</b>				
<b>Comments:</b>				



**NATIONAL WILDFIRE**  
COORDINATING GROUP  
National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705

April 11, 2003

Memorandum

To: NWCG Members  
GACG Chairs

From: NWCG Chair /s/ J L Stires

Subject: 2003 Work Rest Guidelines and Length of Assignment

The NWCG tasked an interagency group to review the current work rest guidelines and length of assignment policy. This group met and drafted recommendations based on the request. The recommendations have been discussed, edited, and are now ready for implementation for the 2003 fire season.

The enclosed document supersedes any prior transmittals of the work rest and length of assignment guidelines, and provides clarification within the Initial Attack Exception contained in Chapter 10, Section 12.7-1.

The changes in the guidelines provide for opportunities to improve in managing fatigue for all resources, as well as additional flexibility in length of assignment commitments.

The work rest guidelines and length of assignment changes will be included in the 2003 publication of the National Interagency Mobilization Guide (Mob Guide) as well as an amendment to the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH).

The NWCG would like input from the field throughout the fire season to assist in the finalization of these changes. These guidelines and policy will be reviewed in the fall for additional clarification. Upon review, the final guidelines and policy will be included in the full revision of the IIBMH to be published the spring of 2004, as well as the 2004 publication of the Mob Guide.

ATTACHMENT D PAGE 2:

Submit your comments no later than October 1, 2003, electronically to Stephanie Horton, [shorton@fs.fed.us](mailto:shorton@fs.fed.us). The comments will be forwarded to the task group leaders. Please do not send comments until the changes have been in-place for a period of time this season in order to adequately determine if they are meeting the needs in the field.

UPDATED INTERAGENCY INCIDENT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
HANDBOOK LANGUAGE

**April 11, 2003**

Chapter 10

12.7-1 – Work/Rest Guidelines. Work rest guidelines should be met on all incidents.

Work Rest Definitions

For the purposes of defining work and rest in the context of the 2:1 work/rest ratio:

Work is considered to be any time attributable towards the work shift, compensable or not.

Rest is considered all time off duty outside of the work shift. (Refer to Sections 12.2 through 12.6 for on-shift, off-shift, and meal periods.) Meal periods (compensable or non-compensable) during an assigned operational period do not count towards rest. Rest includes compensable (“coyote tactics”) or non-compensable breaks greater than 90 minutes.

A work/rest period includes all hours since the last rest period that met the 2:1 work/rest ratio.

Applying Work Rest Guidelines

To maintain safe and productive incident activities, incident management personnel must appropriately manage work and rest periods, assignment duration and shift length for crew, overhead personnel and support personnel. Plan for and ensure that crews, overhead personnel, and support personnel are provided a minimum 2:1 work to rest ratio (for every 2 hours of work or travel, provide 1 hour of sleep and/or rest).

On incidents during assigned operational periods, work shift time includes travel to and from the worksite, compensable and non-compensable meal breaks, rest breaks  $\leq 90$  minutes, debriefing and equipment refurbishment following the shift in preparation for the next operational period. Work shift length maximums are just that and should be reduced as necessary to counter the effects of acute or cumulative fatigue.

The Incident Commander or Agency Administrator shall document, approve, and include in the daily incident records, the justification for work shifts exceeding 16 hours, including travel time, and for those periods that do not meet 2:1 work to rest ratio. Documentation must include mitigation measures employed to achieve compliance with 2:1 work to rest ratio policies. An acceptable method of documentation is the use of the Excess Hours Log found in the Appendix Tool Kit of this handbook.

#### Initial Attack Exception

The initial attack operational period begins at the time of dispatch. Prior approval and documentation is required if the operational period exceeds 16 hours. Approval will only be granted by the Agency Administrator, or their designee, responsible for the incident if it is essential to

- 1) accomplishing immediate and critical suppression objectives, or
- 2) addresses immediate and critical firefighter or public safety issues.

After the initial attack operational period exception, 2:1 work rest guidelines will be met before the resource returns to work.

Work/Rest Mitigation: Management should use techniques to minimize the effects of cumulative fatigue, such as:

- Provide short rest breaks (up to 20 minutes)
- Schedule rest/sleep breaks during early morning hours (0001- 0500)
- Provide for rest periods of at least 1.5 hours each
- Provide supplemental food items according to policy
- Utilize shorter shift lengths ( $\leq 14$  hours or less)

Utilize split shifts (for initial or critical times)

Assign fatigued personnel to less strenuous work

Provide extended off-shift time to allow employees to recover

12.7-2 - Length of Assignment.

1. Assignment Definition

An assignment is defined as the time period (days) between the check-in at the first incident or reporting location on the original resource order and commencement of return travel to the home unit.

2. Length of Assignment

All assignments are exclusive of travel.

All assignments are limited to 14 days, exclusive of travel, with possible extensions identified below.

Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the 14-day limit, regardless of pay status, for all resources, including incident management teams.

3. Day Off

After completion of a 14-day assignment and return to the home unit, one day off will be provided (1 after 14). Every effort should be made to achieve the day off within the individual's regularly scheduled days off. However, if the next day upon return from an incident is a regular workday, a paid day off will be authorized (State regulations may preclude authorizing this for State employees). A paid day off must occur on the calendar day immediately following the return travel and is chargeable to the incident. (See Section 12.1-2) (5 U.S.C. 6104, 5 CFR 610.301-306, and 56 Comp. Gen. Decision 393 (1977))

Pay entitlement, including administrative leave, for a paid day off cannot be authorized on the individual's regular day(s) off at their home unit.

Agencies will apply holiday pay regulations, as appropriate. A paid day off is recorded on home unit time records according to agency requirements.

Casuals are not entitled to a paid day off upon release from the incident or at their point of hire.

Contract resources are not entitled to a paid day off upon release from the incident or at their point of hire.

#### 4. Assignment Extension

Assignments may be extended in situations where life and property are imminently threatened, suppression objectives are close to being met, a military battalion has been assigned, or replacement resources were ordered and unable to fill. The IC must perform a risk management process before considering extension of the resource. The process will identify and document the risks involved with extending the resource and fatigue countermeasures employed. A copy of the documentation should be provided to the individual(s). A form has been developed to assist in meeting this requirement and can be found in the Appendix Tool Kit section of this handbook.

The resource and their Geographic Area Coordination Center Manager, home unit supervisor, the agency administrator and the IC must agree with the extension.

- a. Resources may be extended for a period not to exceed 5 days, excluding travel. (See #3 above for day off information (1 after 14) upon return to their home unit.)
  - b. Resources may be extended for a period up to an additional 14 days (back-to-back assignment) during Geographic Area or National Planning Levels 4 or 5.
  - c. Resources may be extended for a period up to an additional 14 days immediately following a five- day extension as identified in a. above.
- b. The employee will be given two paid days off:
- at the end of a 14 day assignment (b. above), or
  - at the end of a 14 day assignment with an extension (c. above)

These days off are provided prior to beginning the 14-day assignment extension, recorded as guarantee hours, and charged to the incident. After a back-to-back assignment, individuals will be released to and remain at their home unit for a minimum of four days prior to accepting a new assignment. These 4 days may include an authorized day off, regular workdays, regular days off, and/or leave. (See #3 above for day off information (1 after 14) upon return to their home unit.)

***Tool Kit Addition***

**Documentation of Length of Assignment Extension Requirements**

Documentation of any type of assignment extension should include the following:

- I. Name of Resource:
  
- II. Type of Extension (5 day or Back to Back (PL 4 or 5)):
  
- III. Rationale for extension (mark one or more)
  - A. Life and Property threatened
  - B. Suppression objective are close to being met
  - C. Replacement resources are not available (unable to fill)
  - D. Military Assignment
  - E. Other
  
- IV. Risk Assessment Process  
Risks associated with extending the resource (e.g., Condition of Resource (fatigue, etc), Last day off, Terrain or other environmental condition, Assignments to date, etc.)

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Mitigation of Risks (e.g., Reduce hours per operational period, Provide day off, Change of assignment, etc.)

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V. Concurrence

A. Resource Name: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Home Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Geographic Area Coordination Center Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

F. Incident Agency Administrator or Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

G. Recommended by Section Chief, name and title: \_\_\_\_\_

H. Reviewed by Safety Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Approved by Incident Commander: \_\_\_\_\_