

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Forest Service R-6**

**OR/WA**

**Bureau of Land  
Management**

**United States Department of  
Interior**

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**Reply Refer To: 5100 (FS)/ 9210 (BLM) (OR-934) P**

**Date: July 8, 2003**

**FS-Memorandum**

**EMS TRANSMISSION 07/11/2003  
BLM-Information Bulletin No. OR-2003-196**

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

**Subject:** Use and Payment of Washington State Fire District Resources on Federal Incidents in 2003

Attached is a briefing paper, which provides guidance on the use and payment of Washington State fire district resources on federal incidents for 2003. Because of workload and funding issues, Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) will no longer coordinate or hire volunteer fire district personnel for use on federal incidents.

The Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group (PNWCG) agencies are seeking a long-term solution to coordination and reimbursement of Washington State Fire district resources. The Washington State Fire Marshal is pursuing legal authorities to help remedy the current situation, but will be unable to implement statewide coordination in 2003. In the interim, we suggest that field units follow the guidance described in the briefing paper.

Also attached is a template Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement for use between local units and fire departments.

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/s/ Leo Sidebotham  
LEO SIDEBOTHAM  
Chief, Branch of Fire and Aviation Management

Authenticated by  
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2 Attachment(s)

- 1 - [Briefing Paper](#) - Use and Payment of Washington State Fire District Resources on Federal Incidents in 2003 (2pp)
- 2 - [Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement](#) (10 pp)

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BLM Distribution  
WO- (FA100)

cc:  
WO  
Barbara Kennedy, RO

## Briefing Paper

### Use and Payment of Washington State Fire District Resources on Federal Incidents in 2003

**Issue and Background:** Use of fire district resources on incidents increased exponentially in recent years, particularly in the state of Washington. Currently a multitude of processes are used to mobilize and pay for fire district resources including State Mobilization, mutual aid agreements between state and federal agencies, and AD/Casual hires. Several issues have been raised that are unresolved:

- **AD/Casual Hires:** Fire district volunteers are often hired by the employing agency through AD and Casual hiring authorities. The fire district volunteer then becomes an employee of the hiring federal or state agency and becomes the agency responsibility for training, medical standards, workman's compensation, etc. It also creates a tremendous workload for the hiring agency. Because of these issues, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will no longer coordinate or hire volunteer fire district personnel on federal jurisdictional incidents.
- **Lack of an overall coordinating entity for fire districts:** There is currently no single agency in Washington that mobilizes and reimburses fire districts. DNR has assumed a substantial amount of this workload in the past, but given current funding levels and increasing workload, DNR will only coordinate Fire Service Career (paid) personnel in 2003. The Washington State Fire Marshal is pursuing authorities for statewide coordination of Fire District Resources. However, they will be unable to implement this in 2003.

**For 2003, use and reimbursement of fire district resources will be as follows:**

#### **Federal Incidents:**

**National and Area Incident Management Team (IMT) Personnel:** There is no change in the process for primary IMT members. The Forest or other federal agency nearest to the Fire District where the primary IMT member is employed will create a local Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. Most of these agreements are currently in place, but may need modifying or updating to reflect the current language, using the attached template. This agreement will be used to process payments when the teams are assigned to federal fires. WDNR will process payments for incidents under their jurisdiction.

**Volunteer Fire District Personnel for Local Use:** For local use in 2003, the responsibility of hiring volunteer Washington Fire Service personnel for Forest Service/BLM incidents is the choice of the local unit that has the working relationship with the fire department. This is a change from previous years when DNR paid and then billed the Forest Service (FS) for the volunteers work on FS incidents. For a number of

Attachment 1-1

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reasons most Fire Districts will not pick up and pay their volunteers when they work on federal incidents. If forests wish to utilize local volunteer fire district personnel, they may do so through the AD hire authority. Specify hiring and equipment procedures in the Annual Operating Plan of the local Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. Those forests that have local Cooperative Fire Protection Agreements with fire districts can make payments directly to the fire districts for those items specified in the agreement.

Because of the issues and responsibilities associated with hiring volunteer fire department staff as AD personnel, we suggest you limit their use. Do **not** dispatch volunteer fire department AD personnel to incidents out of your area.

Local unit's responsibilities for paying Washington Fire Service volunteers are:

- Ensure that the AD hiring package is completed prior to dispatch.
- Receive completed fire time reports (FTR) and other related expense forms
- Checks FTR's and send to the EFF Casual payment center for payment.
- Process travel and expense requests.

**Career Fire District Personnel not part of IMT's:** For 2003, DNR will continue to pay Washington State Fire Service career employees and they request that they be involved in the dispatch process so the billing process can be agreed to at this time.

**Other Incidents:**

**Mobilization Act Incidents:** When the Washington Mobilization Act is in place, the Washington State Patrol will coordinate dispatch and payment of Fire Service personnel, including being the temporary employer of volunteers.

**Multi-Jurisdictional Incidents:** Local federal and state agency administrators should agree to who will cover costs of fire district resources either at the time of the incident, or in the local annual operating plan.

**WDNR Jurisdiction Incidents:** WDNR will coordinate hire and payment of career and volunteer fire district employees under their authorities.