

FIRE NEWS

Billings Interagency
Dispatch Center



1299 Rimtop Drive • Billings, Montana 59105 • (406) 896-2900
<http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/prog/fireaviation.html>

2014 Billings Area Media Guide

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Internet Addresses:

Billings Interagency Dispatch Center: <http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/prog/fireaviation/bdc.html>
Northern Rockies Coordination Center: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>
National Interagency Fire Center: <http://www.nifc.gov>
National Interagency Coordination Center: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/>
Inciweb: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>
Wild Web: <http://www.WildCAD.net/?WildWeb=MTBDC>

Social Media:

Follow us on Twitter @BLM_MTDK_Fire
<https://www.facebook.com/BLMMontana>
[Custer N.F.](#)
[Gallatin N.F.](#)

Media Hotline: Dial (406) 896-5333 to listen to recorded messages regarding recent wildfire activity in the Billings region.

KEY CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Bureau of Indian Affairs – Crow Agency

Robert LaPlant, (406) 247-7949 (Billings)

Bureau of Land Management

Brad Purdy, Public Information Officer, (406) 896-5258 (Billings)

Kristen Lenhardt, Public Information Officer, (406) 896-5228 (Billings)

Melodie Lloyd, Public Information Officer, (406) 896-5260 (Billings)

Carmen Thomason, Public Information Officer, (406) 896-2836 (Billings)

U.S. Forest Service

Mariah Leuschen, Public Information Officer, (406) 255-1411 or (406) 548-1174 cell
(Custer Gallatin National Forests-Bozeman)

Marna Daley, Public Affairs Officer, (406) 587-6703 or 406-570-5526 (Custer Gallatin
National Forests-Bozeman)

Jeff Gildehaus, Public Information Officer, (406) 446-2103 (Red Lodge)

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Bob Harrington, State Forester, (406) 542-4300 (Missoula)

John Grassy, Public Information Officer, (406) 444-0465 (Helena)

Southern Land Office (Billings)

Matt Wolcott, Area Manager, (406) 247-4401

Derek Yeager, Program Manager, (406) 247-4406

OTHER REGIONAL CONTACTS:

Montana Department of Natural Resources

Northeastern Land Office (Lewistown)

Clive Rooney, Area Manager, (406) 538-7789

Don Pyrah, Area Fire Program Manager, (406) 538-7789

Eastern Land Office (Miles City)

Chris Pileski, Area Manager, (406) 232-2034

John Raisler, Rural Fire Specialist, (406) 233-2949

Bureau of Land Management

Mark Jacobsen, Public Information Officer, (406) 233-2831 (Miles City)

Jonathan Moor, Public Information Officer, (406) 538-1943 (Lewistown)

Karly DeMars, Public Information Officer, (406) 538-1991 (Lewistown)

PROCEDURES:

Please call the Media Hotline at (406) 896-5333 first. If you don't hear anything about the wildfire you're interested in, contact one of the people listed above for incident information. Initial attack fire activity will be reported through WildWeb (<http://www.WildCAD.net?WildWeb=MTBDC>). When a large incident occurs and a team is in place, a public information officer assigned to the team will take over the responsibilities of keeping the media and public informed. Large incident information can be found at Inciweb (<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>).

TO VISIT THE INCIDENT:

Contact a public information officer to visit an incident. With advance notice he/she will be better able to set up interviews and determine the best areas for photos/filming. The public information officer can also tell you how to get to the incident and arrange for your escort. **You will need an escort at all times.**

TO FLY THE INCIDENT:

On large fires, there are usually intensive aerial fire suppression activities. There may be a combination of aircraft involved with the incident, e.g., smokejumpers, helicopters, air tankers, and smaller fixed-wing aircraft. A temporary flight restriction (TFR) will most likely be in effect. This is an official FAA-ordered air closure of approximately 3,000 feet above the fire and five nautical miles around it. Talk to your pilot about those FAA flight restrictions under 91.137a. To arrange permission for flying within the TFR, contact the public information officer assigned to the incident. He or she will attempt to coordinate your flight with the incident air operations. If operations can allow access through the TFR, a radio frequency will be provided for continual contact with the incident air coordinator during your flight over the incident. By radio, that air coordinator may tell your pilot when to enter the TFR, set a direction to approach, and assign an altitude. The air coordinator will also provide directions for leaving the fire area. Pilots should contact the FAA directly before takeoff.

SAFETY:

While visiting the incident, your escort will be with you at all times. You will need to wear fire-resistant clothing (Nomex®) when at the fire. With advance notice, the public information officer may arrange for a loaner Nomex® shirt and pants, along with a hard hat, leather gloves, and fire shelter. You must provide your own eight-inch leather boots with Vibram® soles. Natural fiber clothing is recommended for wear under the Nomex®.

HOW TO CONTACT PEOPLE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS:

When a major incident (e.g., wildfire, flood) occurs in eastern Montana, a group of experts, called an **“incident management team,”** is dispatched to the incident. The appropriate agency's public affairs/public information officer can put you in touch with the team's information officer. Once the incident management team is in place, the public information officer will begin setting up the information center. The **public information officer** is your point of contact about the

incident. His or her job is to develop complete and accurate information about the cause, size, status, people, and equipment involved, as well as to respond to other matters of general interest.

In summary, there are usually three contact points during the evolution of a major incident:

Local Public Affairs/Public Information Officer: He or she is your contact before the incident management team is in place. This person is usually located in the office of whichever land agency is initially responsible for the incident (Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, etc.)

Public Information Officer: Once the incident management team is in place, this person can usually be reached in person or by phone at the incident command post.

Multiple Agency Coordination: Multiple incidents in the same vicinity are called a “complex” and a **multiple agency coordination group (MAC)** may be established with additional information officers working in a common location for all incidents. This group will be the focal point for media contact during the multiple incidents and will most likely be located at the Billings Interagency Dispatch Center. Please contact one of the public information officers listed above to coordinate your visit to the Center.

SERVICES YOU CAN EXPECT:

If you want to visit the incident, the public information officer will coordinate that visit and provide you with an escort. They will orient you to the facilities and help by providing:

- Access to incident management team members for interviews
- Maps, incident action plans, special interest items, general information
- Contacts or coordination with law enforcement or security personnel
- Sanitation facilities and wash area
- Protective clothing to enable you to visit the fire line (with advance notice)

FEATURE STORY POSSIBILITIES:

The incident command system has considerable flexibility and can either expand or shrink to meet the needs of the incident. Incident management teams may be assigned to emergency or non-emergency situations. Some examples are:

- Fires, hazardous materials, and multi-casualty incidents
- Multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency disasters
- Wide area search and rescue missions
- Oil spill responses and recovery incidents
- Single and multi-agency law enforcement incidents
- Air, rail, water, or ground transportation accidents
- Planned events; e.g., celebrations, parades, concerts
- Private sector emergency management programs
- State and local major natural hazards management

Other newsworthy events may include:

- Fire prevention/education
- Rehabilitation of natural resources after wildfire or flood
- Staging of crews and engines
- Incident command post (camp life)
- Aircraft
- Special events
- Human interest stories

[GLOSSARY](#)