

**Deference to Expertise
Small Group Exercise
Facilitating HRO in Wildland Fire
May 2007
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Overview of Scenarios

1. Carrying the Torch
2. A Higher Standard
3. At the Big One
4. Pressure is on
5. Living in a Rigid Hierarchy

Discuss these scenarios in relation to the elements of deference to expertise to the extent possible (or use any of the principles of HRO if needed).

What factors would affect the ability (or desire) to use DTE?

What are some possible ways to mitigate or correct the factors which decrease the use of DTE?

How would embracing HRO principles by the organization as a whole change the scenario or topic of discussion?

Extra Topics

Out of Touch Duty Officer/IC

Planning to a fault

Effect of an expert of expert being on site

Carrying the Torch

A Fire Operations Supervisor who has always been adamant about doctrine, leadership principles, and the processes of HRO (although he wasn't aware of HRO) was recently promoted to AFMO. He is starting to feel the pressures of the intense. He seriously feels the pressure of political and management pressures. The crew leaders begin to see some very disturbing changes in his leadership style. He is beginning to act in ways (probably unknowingly) that are contrary to his leadership principles.

What are the factors that are contributing to the change in his leadership style? (He moved to a more centralized, rank oriented, management structure.)

With the pressures that that he is feeling and the forces that are working against his HRO principles (including Deference to Expertise), how can he take up and continue to carry the torch of the HRO principles through the upper ranks?

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A Higher Standard

This is a topic of conversation rather than a scenario.

Some have said that prescribed fire and Wildland Fire Use operations are held to higher standards and put under more scrutiny than wildland fire suppression operations.

Some have said that prescribed fire and Wildland Fire Use operations personnel use “deference to expertise” to a greater extent than suppression operations.

Share experiences that confirm or deny these assumptions.

If former is true, is the latter a result of higher standards and greater scrutiny? Or a result of something else?

If one does use DTE to a greater extent than the other, what are the factors that influence this?

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At the Big One

A Division Supervisor (DIVS) is doing a sensitive burnout operation on his division. He needs one crew to perform the operation. He has a choice of a Type 1 IHC from out of state or a Type 2 crew from the home forest. He has been told that the Type 2 crew has a lot of experience burning in fuel type they will be working in.

Discuss how labels (categorizing of crews) could affect DTE?

Discuss how cultural pressures might affect DTE?

How does using DTE differ in a large fire environment compared to your home unit?

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The Pressure is On

It is mid-August in a hot, dry steep canyon. The experimental burn to be implemented is the biggest thing going on the Forest. The Forest Supervisor and Forest Fire Staff have become heavily involved. The interim District Ranger is very nervous. The burn boss is also the FMO and Ops Chief who has extensive prescribed fire experience, but not necessarily in this fuel type.

The home unit burn crew (including 2 Type 2 burn bosses) are one site. Many resources from other units have been brought in. The Fire Staff and District Ranger have a front row seat across the canyon. All forces are in place at 1100. At 1800, the decision is made to start ignition.

Operations felt that DTE was lacking throughout implementation. This was usual for this organization. Normally, DTE was an integral part of the operations. part of the operations on that unit?

What effect might the presence of the Fire Staff and District Ranger had on the use of DTE?

Discuss dual DTE role of the burn boss.

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Life in a Rigid Hierarchy

A Fire Operations Supervisor landed a AFMO job in a different region. He has always been adamant about doctrine, leadership principles, and the processes of HRO (although he wasn't aware of it as HRO). The organizations that he had previously worked for had also embraced these principles to a large degree.

After he arrived at his new job, he soon found out that he had landed in the midst of a rigid hierarchical bureaucracy (and not a nice one either).

How will this affect his ability to do his job? To use DTE?

What should/can he do to help his situation?

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