



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Instruction Memorandum No. WY-2012-042  
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To: District Managers  
From: Associate State Director  
Subject: Step-up Plans

**Program Area:** Fire Planning, Fire and Fuels Management

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides direction to create and maintain a Step-up Plan. In addition, this IM provides clarification to information found in the 2012 *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (the Red Book).

**Policy/Action:** BLM Wyoming Districts will each create and maintain a Step-up Plan that provides guidance for actions to occur, mainly related to staffing, as fire danger increases. The Step-up Plan will include:

- Number of staffing levels used by the District
- Fire danger component or index and the range of that used to determine each staffing levels
- Preparedness and supplemental preparedness actions that could be taken on the District under each of the District's staffing levels
- Any additional conditions that could cause an create a need for implementation of supplemental preparedness
- Potential funding sources for supplemental preparedness.

The Step-up Plan should be based on analysis completed as part of the District's Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP), which is required per the Red Book. This Step-up Plan should be included in the unit's FDOP, and may be best incorporated as an appendix to the FDOP. An example of a Step-up Plan is included as Attachment 1.

**Timeframe:** Step-up Plans, that are part of the manager approved FDOP, must be in place before the Wyoming State Office will approve spending of State Director Severity for short-term needs that go beyond normal preparedness.

**Budget Impact:** Minimal budget impact is expected.

**Background:** Preparedness actions are based on operational plans such as FDOPs, Preparedness Level Plans, Step-up Plans, and/or Initial Response Plans. While the Red Book addresses many operational plans, it does not consistently clearly differentiation between the variety of plans which has caused some confusion in the field.

Beginning in 2012, the BLM required each unit to develop and maintain a Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP). FDOPs guide the application of information from decision support tools, such as the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS), by describing how this information is applied to unit fire management decisions. The FDOP is an overarching plan that contains analysis that should be used in the development of many of the other preparedness plans. These other preparedness plans do not need to be stand-alone documents, but instead a unit could create a “FDOP and Preparedness Plan” and incorporate these plans as either an appendix or a separate section in the plan. An example of an analysis that is part of the FDOP and then used in another preparedness plan is the analysis for determining Staffing Levels. Staffing Levels is the daily staffing of initial attack resources (how many resources are available on the unit?), as opposed to the actual dispatching of initial attack resources to a specific incident (how many resources are sent to a new fire?). Staffing Levels only take fire danger into consideration and are often confused with Preparedness Levels, which incorporates more than fire danger alone. Staffing Levels are based on one of the following: Ignition Component, Spread Component, Energy Release Component, Burning Index, or Keetch-Byram Drought Index. A unit may have a few as three and as many as nine Staffing Levels. The FDOP should contain the analysis for determining the unit’s Staffing Levels. Once the FDOP Staffing Level analysis is complete, information from that analysis is entered into the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) fire danger rating processor, which then computes daily Staffing Levels as a direct output of the system. The Staffing Level analysis information could then be used for a Step-up or Staffing Plan (see below).

It is important to understand that Staffing Levels are not equivalent to Adjective Fire Danger Ratings (Adjective Ratings) although both are calculated in WIMS based on parameters provided by local fire managers and both should be addressed in the unit’s FDOP. Staffing Levels are for internal agency use, while Adjective Ratings are general descriptions of fire danger for the purpose of informing the public. A unit may have three to nine Staffing Levels, but there are always five levels for Adjective Ratings. The five levels for Adjective Ratings are described by either the following words or colors: Low (L) or green, Moderate (M) or blue, High (H) or yellow, Very High (VH) or orange, and Extreme (E) or red. Adjective Ratings are based on Staffing Levels *combined* with the Ignition Component.

Preparedness Level Plans are required at the national, State/regional, and local level. These plans address the five Preparedness Levels (PLs) and provide management direction based on plan identified levels of burning conditions, fire activity, *and* resource commitments; unlike Staffing Levels Preparedness Level consider other risk and workload factors in addition to fire danger. In the past, units have confused the Preparedness Levels with Adjective Ratings most

likely because both five levels. They are different indicators to help guide different types of decisions. Often times these Preparedness Level Plans are incorporated in a local unit's FDOP and in a State/regional level's or national level's mobilization guide.

Step-up Plans, also called Staffing Plans, are not required by national policy, but are now required by BLM Wyoming. Step-up plans are designed to direct incremental preparedness actions in response to increasing fire danger. These actions are delineated by Staffing Levels. The Step-up plan should address the different Staffing Levels for the unit and the corresponding planned actions intended to address the changing fire danger conditions. A Step-up Plan should also include supplemental preparedness actions. Supplemental preparedness actions are designed to enhance a unit's fire management capability during short periods (e.g., one burning period, July 4, or other pre-identified event) where normal staffing cannot meet initial attack, prevention or detection needs. As previously mentioned these plans should be incorporated in the local unit's FDOP.

Initial Response Plans, also referred to as Preplanned Dispatch Plans or Run Cards, specify the response within a defined geographic area to an unplanned ignition based on fire weather, fuel conditions, fire management objectives and resource availability.

**Directives Affected:** This IM clarifies direction provided in Chapter 10 of the Red Book. In the future, direction on maintaining Step-up Plans will be included in the BLM Wyoming Planned Target Allocation (PTA) and/or Annual Work Plan (AWP) Directives.

**Coordination:** The BLM Wyoming State Office Fire and Aviation staff coordinated the issuance of this IM with Wyoming's District Managers and Fire Management Officers, as well as with the BLM representative to the NWCG Fire Danger Subcommittee.

**Contact:** Please contact Gwenan Poirier, Fire Planner BLM CO and WY, at 303-239-3689 or Jeff Fedrizzi, State Fire Management Officer BLM WY, at 307-775-6234 with any questions or concerns.

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Distribution

Director (FA-100), Boise, ID	1 w/atch
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1 Attachment

1 – Example Template (3 p)