



THE INTERAGENCY BOARD

Training Trigger: Wildland Fire Fighting / Urban Interface

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OPERATIONAL ISSUE

Incidences of natural ground cover fires nearer to urban areas have become more frequent in recent years. The wildland-urban interface is the area where development meets or intermingles with undeveloped wildland. In this environment fire can move between structural and vegetation fuels, increasing the likelihood that wildfires will threaten structures and people. Fire departments not traditionally responsible for Wildland firefighting are increasingly responding to calls for assistance at Wildland incidents, therefore it is necessary for urban fire departments to become better educated and trained to perform safely and effectively in these environments.

FAST FACTS

- The Incident Command System (ICS) is the basis for urban and Wildland firefighting. Wildland incidents have a high potential for rapid growth. The use of an Incident complexity analysis (see www.nwcg.gov) will help indicate the type of overhead needed to properly manage such incidents and facilitate the early ordering of the Incident Management Team.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), tools, apparatus and equipment are different for Wildland firefighting as compared to urban firefighting.
- Strategy and tactics differ significantly for Wildland firefighting fires when compared to urban fires.
- Training and educational needs from the firefighter to Incident command officer require different skill sets and knowledge.
- Annual deaths are roughly equivalent for urban and Wildland firefighting.

ACTIVITIES

Given the unique challenges for urban and suburban fire departments tasked to operate in a Wildland fire area the IAB Training & Exercises (T&E) SubGroup recommends that organizations:

1. Take advantage of most current training opportunities (www.NWCG.Gov/Training and Qualifications). Wildland training is available through most state departments of natural resources or state departments of forestry. The standard accepted by most agencies is the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) 310-1, which outlines training and requirements for each position. www.NWCG.gov
2. Review the format and process for requests in response to a Wildland firefighting incident. Pre-plan where your agency can obtain Wildland resources and their response times to incidents in your area.
3. Ensure all department members maintain a high level of physical fitness (e.g. wildland firefighters are required to carry 45lbs a distance of 3 miles in 45 minutes or less). Also refer to the Federal Wildland firefighting “pack test” work capacity test/physical fitness requirement.
4. Practice utilization of non-traditional firefighting resources employed in a Wildland fire environment (e.g. small all wheel drive fire apparatus (Type 3 – 6 engines), hand crews, aerial resources, bulldozers, and tree fallers).
5. Have an adequate communications plan (ICS 205).
6. Update urban/suburban department Emergency Operation Plans (EOP), procedures, and guidelines for Wildland firefighting incidents (See

Incident Response Pocket Guide, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/461>).

7. Clearly establish the specific mission and operational periods for the urban/suburban department before deployment to the Wildland fire area.
8. Quantify the specific department resources required to support a Wildland firefighting incident, identify the maximum number of deployable resources from an urban or suburban department, and establish minimum resource depletion levels for Wildland firefighting incidents.
9. Develop a state or region-wide plan for deployment of Wildland resources including how resources will be requested, dispatched, compensated and managed. Several states have plans that deploy resources from around the state within hours of major Wildland incidents.

TEMPLATES/BEST PRACTICES

[ICS forms applicable to size of incident.](#)
Wildland fires are one of the major incidents that can require a complete array of forms

[NIMS and ICS](#)

[National Wildland Fire Training & Qualification](#)

[Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement](#)

[NFPA Wildland/Urban Interface Report](#)

[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#)

[Wildland training skills crosswalk for structural firefighters, USFA resources](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

NFPA Standards:

- 1051 Wildland Firefighting Personnel
- 1142 Wildland Fire Management
- 1906 Wildland Fire Apparatus

<http://www.Wildfiretoday.com>

Cal Fire - <http://readyforwildfire.org>

As the InterAgency Board identifies new information on this topic, it will be posted at www.interagencyboard.org. Please send any comments, feedback, and questions to info@interagencyboard.us