

**Forest Service Manual  
National Headquarters - Washington Office  
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Manual 5100 – Fire Management  
Chapter 5130 – Wildfire Response**

**Amendment:** 5100-2020-1

**Effective date:** August 18, 2020

**Duration:** This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

**Approved by:** Tina Terrell, Associate Deputy Chief, NFS

**Date approved:** August 2, 2020

**Responsible Staff:**

**Last Change:** 5100-2020-1 to FSM 5140

**Superseded Document(s):** 5130, Amendment 5100-2018-1, August 21, 2018

**Digest:** Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

**5130.45:** Adds National Technology and Development Program Director responsibilities to paragraph 18.

**Table of Contents**

**5130.1 - Authority..... 4**

**5130.2 - Objectives ..... 4**

**5130.3 - Policy ..... 4**

**5130.4 - Responsibility..... 5**

**5130.41 - Washington Office, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry ..... 6**

**5130.42 - Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management ..... 6**

**5130.43 - Regional Foresters ..... 7**

**5130.44 - Regional Directors, Fire and Aviation Management ..... 8**

**5130.45 - Forest Supervisors and District Rangers ..... 9**

**5130.47 - Incident Commanders ..... 11**

**5130.48 - Forest Service Employees ..... 12**

**5130.5 - Definitions..... 12**

**5130.6 - References ..... 14**

**5131 - Wildfire Doctrine and Principles ..... 15**

**5131.02 - Objectives..... 15**

**5131.03 - Policy..... 15**

**5131.1 - Leadership Principles..... 15**

**5131.2 - Operations Principles ..... 15**

**5131.3 - Risk Management Principles..... 16**

**5131.4 - Wildland Fire Response Principles..... 16**

**5132 - Organization and Management of Wildfire Response ..... 16**

**5132.02 - Objective ..... 17**

**5132.03 - Policy..... 17**

**5133 - Wildfire Response Decisions..... 17**

**5133.02 - Objective ..... 17**

**5133.03 - Policy..... 17**

**5133.1 - Responsibility..... 18**

**5133.2 - Qualifications for Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) Certification.. 18**

**5133.3 - Delegation of Authority, Risk Decision Making and Communication..... 18**

**5134 - Wildfire Response - Managing Employee and Public Risk ..... 19**

**5134.02 - Objective ..... 19**

**5134.03 - Policy..... 19**

**5135 - Wildfire Response Action on Private Land, Structure Fires, Structure Protection in the Wildland Urban Interface, and Response to Non-Wildlife Incidents..... 20**

**5135.01 - Authority ..... 20**

**5135.02 - Objective ..... 20**

**5135.03 - Policy..... 21**

**5135.03a - Private Land ..... 21**

**5135.03b - Structure Fires..... 21**

**5135.03c - Structure Protection from Wildfire and Fire Response in the Wildland Urban Interface ..... 21**

5135.03d - Response to Non Wildfire Incidents .....	22
5135.1 - Reimbursement.....	22
5136 - Information Management .....	22
5136.02 - Objective .....	22
5136.03 - Policy.....	22
5137 - Work Environment.....	23
5137.02 - Objective .....	23
5137.03 - Policy.....	23
5137.1 - Unintended Outcomes and Accidents .....	23
5137.12 - Analysis Tools .....	23
5137.13 - Administrative Actions .....	24
5138 - Severity Authorizations .....	25
5138.02 - Objective .....	25
5138.03 - Policy.....	25
5138.1 - Levels.....	25
5138.2 - Typical Uses .....	26
5138.3 - Inappropriate Uses .....	26
5138.4 - Severity Request Components .....	26
5139 - Reviews and Learning Process .....	27
5139.01 - Fire Review and Learning Process Objectives.....	27
5139.02 - Types and Standards of Fire Reviews.....	28
5139.1 - Regional Fire Reviews.....	28
5139.2 - National Fire Reviews .....	29

### 5130.1 - Authority

For wildland fire response legal authority, see FSM 5101.1 and 5101.2.

### 5130.2 - Objectives

1. The protection of human life is the preeminent objective in our wildland fire program.
2. In cooperation with partners, strategically plan and implement risk-informed and cost-effective wildfire response strategies to attain management objectives identified in Land and Resource Management Plans, to protect, sustain, and enhance resources and, where appropriate, sustain the ecological role of natural fire.
3. Use risk management principles to respond safely, effectively, and efficiently to wildfire, align wildfire response with Federal, State, and local laws, make risk-based decisions, and implement actions commensurate with identified values.
4. Take actions to align effective wildfire response to protect lives, protect communities, conserve natural resources, and restore ecological health.
5. Collect accurate information in a timely fashion and disseminate information on fire conditions and wildfire activity to interested parties.
6. Continue to improve fire management practices through learning and accountability.

### 5130.3 - Policy

1. Protecting human life is the preeminent objective in every wildfire response. Assessing the potential threat to firefighter and public safety will be a continuous process on every wildfire. Every wildfire response will establish protection objectives that seek to mitigate these threats when they are identified.
2. Apply appropriate management oversight; (see definition) and support at each organizational level to coordinate, and implement an appropriate, risk-based, and effective wildfire response program to achieve Agency goals and management objectives.
3. Recognize the interdependence of wildland fire jurisdictions in managing wildland fire, and conduct response activities collaboratively, with the proactive engagement of cooperators, partners, and the public.
4. Use a principle-centered management approach to apply experience, training, principles from Wildland Fire Doctrine (FSM 5131), see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724), and Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy to implement an appropriate, risk-based, and effective response to wildfire.
5. Initial response actions are based on policy and Land and Resource Management Plan objectives, with consideration for prevailing and anticipated environmental conditions that can affect the ability to accomplish those objectives.

6. Threats to property and natural resources will be identified and every wildfire will establish objectives that seek to mitigate these threats when time, resources, and prevailing conditions allow for action without undue risk to human life.
7. All or a portion of a wildfire originating from a natural ignition may be managed to achieve Land and Resource Management Plan objectives when initial and long-term risk is within acceptable limits as described in the risk assessment.
8. Human-caused fires and trespass will be managed to achieve the lowest cost and fewest negative consequences with primary consideration given to firefighter and public safety and without consideration to achieving resource benefits.
9. A wildland fire may be concurrently managed for one of more objectives and objectives can change as the fire spreads across the landscape. Objectives are affected by changes in fuels, weather, topography; varying social understanding and tolerance; and involvement of other governmental jurisdictions having different missions and objectives.
10. The Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) will be used to inform and document decisions related to actions, resource allocations, and risk management for all wildfire responses. Periodic assessments throughout the duration of the fire incident must be completed and documented in WFDSS (see FSM 5133.03).
11. Meet Endangered Species Act consultation requirements; see FSM 2671.45f, Consultation in Emergencies; and implement the Record of Decision for the Nationwide Aerial Application of Fire Retardant.
12. Accept the local participation in cooperative wildfire response efforts of personnel from other agencies or of cooperators not hired by the Forest Service, who do not subscribe to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification standards. In the event personnel from other agencies or of cooperators not hired by the Forest Service are needed outside of their local area in cooperative wildfire response, Forest Service requires those personnel to comply with the minimum requirements specified by the NWCG see guidelines in Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide, (PMS 310-1) or equivalent.
13. The Agency will train and support its employees to meet the requirements of the wildfire response mission. Every Forest Service employee must support wildfire response emergencies commensurate with their capabilities, training, and qualifications.
14. Request the level of incident management organization appropriate for the complexity of the incident; see guidelines in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724).

#### **5130.4 - Responsibility**

Agency Administrators (AA) are responsible for implementing an effective, efficient, risk-based wildfire response. All employees are required to support wildfire response actions.

**5130.41 - Washington Office, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry**

The Washington Office, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry is responsible for:

1. Protecting life as the preeminent priority on both emergency and planned work.
2. Communicating a clear vision of Agency goals and management principles, ensuring they are shared and understood by all levels of the organization.
3. Expressing clear intent concerning roles and responsibilities to ensure wildfire response assignments are appropriate, risk-based, and effective.

**5130.42 - Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management**

The Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management is responsible for:

1. Protecting life as the preeminent priority on both emergency and planned work.
2. Leading efforts to develop, update, and implement wildfire response doctrine and risk management principles learning from activities, reviews, and analyses.
3. Setting strategy for National wildfire response efforts in coordination with the Chief of the Forest Service, Deputy Chiefs, and Regional Foresters.
4. Monitoring and reporting the current National fire management situation to the Chief.
5. Initiating and maintaining contacts with the appropriate officials in Federal departments, Tribes, State, and local agencies to collaborate and coordinate a risk based and effective wildfire response.
6. Monitoring fire activity and communicating with adjacent organizational levels regarding delegations, decision making and incident objectives on wildfires and ensuring sound, appropriate objectives are delineated for wildfires.
7. Monitoring expenditures and ensuring fiscal oversight and accountability in wildland fire operations.
8. In conjunction with interagency partners, prioritizing, coordinating use, and mobilizing Department of Defense resources and National wildfire response resources; see guidelines in National Mobilization Guide, (NFES 2092).
9. Approving or denying requests for the mobilization and training of emergency firefighters to supplement regular personnel during emergency situations. Implementation guidance is located in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (PMS 902, NFES 2160).
10. Initiating and maintaining contacts of mutual interest with appropriate officials in foreign countries on matters regarding fire and aviation management and wildfire response in coordination with the Director of International Programs.

### 5130.43 - Regional Foresters

Regional Foresters are responsible for:

1. Protecting life as the preeminent priority on both emergency and planned work.
2. Communicating Agency goals and management principles, ensuring they are shared and understood by all levels of the organization.
3. Expressing clear intent concerning roles and responsibilities to ensure wildfire response is appropriate, risk-based, and effective.
4. Ensuring employees under their supervision are available as needed to support wildfire response.
5. Ensuring employees with supervisory or managerial responsibilities in wildfire management meet the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) and Forest Service Fire Program Management (FS-FPM) qualification standards (FSM 5125.03), stay abreast of current wildfire response information such as: factors affecting wildfire behavior and effects; wildfire response management and organization; intent and contents of Agency and interagency wildfire management directives; Land and Resource Management Plans; and economic and risk analysis.
6. Ensuring the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) Council Vice President is notified when a Forest Service incident has 300 or more individuals assigned or an incident not under Forest Service jurisdiction has a staffing level of 300 or more Forest Service employees (Master Agreement between Forest Service and NFFE, Article 28), regardless of whether a human resources specialist is ordered in accordance with FSM 5137.03 (2).
7. Monitoring fire activity and communicating with adjacent organizational levels regarding delegations, decision making and incident objectives on wildfires and ensuring sound, appropriate objectives are delineated for wildfires.
8. Monitoring expenditures and ensuring fiscal oversight and accountability in wildland fire operations.
9. Monitoring fatigue and exposure to environmental factors (for example, heat, smoke, and so forth) and ensuring fitness for command and leadership in fire management leadership and line positions, see guidelines in Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, (PMS 902, NFES 2160), FSH 5109.17, zero code, Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook and FSH 6709.11, Health and Safety Code Handbook.
10. Ensuring the immediate and appropriate notification of any aviation and wildfire fatality, serious injury, entrapment, fire shelter deployment, or accident with potential National significance; see definition (reference FSM 6730 and FSH 6709.12, ch. 30 for Accident Reporting and Investigation Policy and Guidelines).

11. Delegating authority for wildfire response to Regional Fire and Aviation Management Directors, with clear expectations to exercise principles that are consistent with Wildland Fire Foundational Doctrine, risk management and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.
12. Approving or denying requests to train and mobilize emergency firefighters, per guidelines located in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (PMS 902, NFES 2160).
13. Approving and ensuring that Severity funds are used in accordance with National program direction; see 5138.03.
14. Ensuring fire reports are accurate and complete within the required timeframes.

#### **5130.44 - Regional Directors, Fire and Aviation Management**

Regional Directors are responsible for:

1. Protecting life as the preeminent priority on both emergency and planned work.
2. Ensuring current wildfire response information, such as: factors affecting wildfire behavior; wildfire response management and organization; intent and contents of Agency and interagency wildfire management directives; and economic and risk analysis, is available to employees with supervisory or managerial responsibilities in wildfire management.
3. Monitoring fire activity and communicating with adjacent organizational levels regarding delegations, decision making, and incident objectives on wildfires and ensuring sound, appropriate objectives are delineated for wildfires.
4. Coordinating, monitoring, and providing consultation and communication for all Agency and interagency wildfire response operations in order to ensure all wildfire response actions are managed in an appropriate, risk-based, effective manner. The role of the Geographic Area Fire Program Manager (GFPM) may be delegated to a member of the Regional Office FAM staff that meets the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) requirements. The primary intent of this delegation is to place the appropriate individual who meets IFPM minimum qualification standards in the position of authority to support safe operations in the field. See IFPM Decision Paper #4 for Delegation of Geographic Area Fire Program Manager Role, [http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov/Archives/nwcg/NWCG\\_Memorandum\\_IFPM\\_Decision\\_Paper-4.pdf](http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov/Archives/nwcg/NWCG_Memorandum_IFPM_Decision_Paper-4.pdf).
5. Determining the need and request approval to train and mobilize emergency firefighters in order to provide additional expertise and skills to supplement regular Forest Service personnel during emergency situations, per guidelines located in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (PMS 902, NFES 2160).
6. Monitoring cumulative fatigue and exposure to environmental factors (for example, length of assignments, heat, smoke, and so forth) and ensuring fitness for command, leadership, and management, in fire management leadership and support positions, see guidelines in Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, (PMS 902, NFES 2160); FSH 5109.17, zero code,

Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook; and FSH 6709.11, Health and Safety Code Handbook.

7. Regularly monitor wildland fire response operations for effectiveness and make recommendations for action when there is recognition of exceptional or problematic employee performance; see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724, Chapter 5).
8. Conducting or participating in incident after action reviews (AAR), analyses, and investigations.
9. Ensuring immediate and appropriate notification of any aviation and wildfire fatality, serious injury, entrapment, fire shelter deployment, or accident with potential National significance to the Branch Chief for Aviation Safety or Branch Chief for National Ground Operations Risk Management (reference FSM 6730 and 6709.12, ch. 30 for Accident Reporting and Investigation Policy and Guidelines).
10. Ensuring upward reporting of the current fire management situation is occurring on a daily basis.

#### **5130.45 - Forest Supervisors and District Rangers**

Forest Supervisors and District Rangers are responsible for:

1. Protecting life as the preeminent priority on both emergency and planned work.
2. Overseeing management of all aspects of wildfire response on all incidents and ensure all local Agency and interagency wildfire response actions are managed in an appropriate, risk-based, effective manner; see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724, Chapter 5).
3. Monitoring fire activity and communicating with adjacent organizational levels regarding delegations, decision making, and incident objectives on wildfires and ensuring sound, appropriate objectives are delineated for wildfires.
4. Delegating authority for wildfire response to staff and incident commanders, with clear expectations to exercise principles that are consistent with Wildland Fire Doctrine, see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NWCG, NFES 2724) and Federal Wildland Fire Policy. Success is defined as safely achieving reasonable objectives with the least fire fighter exposure necessary while enhancing stakeholder support for our management efforts.
5. Ensuring employees are mobilized in wildfire positions pursuant to qualifications in accordance with the Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook (FSH 5109.17) and the Forest Service Fire and Aviation Qualifications Guide (FSFAQG).
6. Assigning appropriate level of management, supervision, and staffing to every wildfire according to the level of complexity; Use Indicators of Incident Complexity (NFES 1077) at

initial size-up (or through pre-planned response plans) and thereafter, use the Risk and Complexity Assessment as appropriate, to assure the qualifications of the assigned incident commander are commensurate with the complexity of the incident; see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, (NFES 2724; Appendix E and F).

7. Ensuring sound financial management practices are implemented and costs do not drive, but are an output of the best risk informed decisions to protect values. To accomplish this, ensure assignment of incident business personnel for advice and counsel to all Type 1, Type 2, or complex incidents. Persons assigned these duties will report directly to the appropriate Agency Administrator in accordance to the incident complexity.

8. Approving and documenting wildfire response decisions in Wildland Fire Decision Support System (FSM 5133.03).

9. Supporting fire management consistent with Agency agreements and Regional or National direction.

10. Annually conveying fire response and risk mitigation responsibilities, expectations, and authorities to Type 3, 4, and 5 Incident Commanders; see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, (NFES 2724).

11. Ensuring the locations of all fire retardant avoidance areas on the Unit, identified in the Record of Decision for the Nationwide Aerial Delivery of Fire Retardant, are provided to Incident Commanders, fire management, and supervisory personnel. Also ensuring all applicable reporting and monitoring is completed per the Record of Decision for the Nationwide Aerial Application of Fire Retardant.

12. Ensuring that incident commanders engaged on Type 1, 2, and 3 wildfires have no collateral duties.

13. Ensuring that Medical Emergency Procedures Plans and/or Incident Emergency Plans are developed for all incidents.

14. Monitoring cumulative fatigue and exposure to environmental factors (for example, length of assignments, heat, smoke, and so forth) and ensure fitness for command, leadership, and management in fire management leadership, Agency Administrator, and support positions; see guidelines in Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (PMS 902, NFES 2160) and FSH 5109.17, zero code, Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook.

15. Regularly monitor operations for effectiveness and take action when there is recognition of exceptional or problematic employee performance.

16. Ensuring employees with supervisory or managerial responsibilities in wildfire management stay abreast of and are skilled in current wildfire response information, such as: factors affecting wildfire behavior; wildfire response management and organization; intent and contents of Agency and interagency wildfire management directives; Land and Resource Management Plans; and economic and risk analysis.

17. Ensuring area burned from unplanned natural ignitions will be assessed to determine if desired conditions described in the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan have been met. These outcomes will be assessed and reported regardless of the strategy and objectives established for management of the wildfire. Refer to annual program direction for specifics on how to report accomplishments resulting from natural ignitions.

18. Ensuring their respective Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC), the appropriate Regional Fire Operations and/or Aviation Safety Program Manager, and the National Technology and Development Program (NTDP) Director are notified immediately of any aviation and wildfire fatality, serious injury, entrapment, fire shelter deployment, or accident with potential National significance (reference FSM 6730 and FSH 6709.12, ch. 30 for Accident Reporting and Investigation Policy and Guidelines).

The NTDP Director shall be notified for incidents within NTDP's sphere of expertise or for programs that NTDP manages, such as fire shelters, personal protective equipment (PPE), and mobile fire equipment (e.g., accidents involving vehicle burnovers and rollovers and incidences involving fire shelter deployment).

19. Forest Supervisors must ensure that the Incident Status Summary (ICS-209) is submitted to the Geographic Area Coordination Center.

20. District Rangers must ensure that a sufficient number of incident after-action reviews are conducted for Type 3, 4, and 5 wildfires to adequately assess the Unit's wildland fire response capability, performance, procedures and to enhance learning; see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724, Chapter 5) USFS Program Organization & Responsibilities and the Incident Response Pocket Guide (NFES 1077).

21. Determining the need and requesting authority to train and mobilize emergency firefighters in order to provide additional expertise and skills to supplement regular Forest Service forces during emergency situations; see guidelines in Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, (PMS 902, NFES 2160).

22. Ensuring an Individual Wildland Fire Report is prepared for each wildfire and entered into the historic database Fire Statistics System (FIRESTAT, FSM 5180).

#### **5130.47 - Incident Commanders**

The Incident Commander (IC) is a single individual responsible to the Agency Administrator(s) for all incident wildfire response activities. All fires, regardless of complexity, will have an IC assigned by the Agency Administrator. When more than one agency has jurisdiction for an incident, a single IC or multiple IC's may be designated by the responsible agencies; see guidelines in "Unified Command" Chapter 11, Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724). ICs have the authority and responsibility to:

1. Protect life as the preeminent priority on both emergency and planned work.

2. Make safety of firefighters, other personnel, and the public the highest priority in wildfire response activities. When a potentially life-threatening situation exists, the incident commander has the authority to supersede natural, environmental, and cultural resource objectives and requirements to provide for the safety of firefighters, other personnel, and the public.
3. Assign fireline duties to qualified personnel in order to operate safely and effectively. Incident commanders may assign trainees in accordance with direction in the Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook (FSH 5109.17).
4. Apply risk management principles and collaborate with the Agency Administrator to develop strategy and tactics to minimize firefighter exposure and meet public safety, protection, and resource management objectives. Monitor the effectiveness of the planned strategy and tactics, and adjust to achieve objectives.
5. Manage environmental exposure and fatigue in firefighters and other assigned personnel and implement appropriate mitigation actions; see guidelines in Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, (PMS 902, NFES 2160).
6. Maintain situational awareness of safety and health hazards and communicate hazard information to firefighters.
7. Ensure that assigned fireline personnel are briefed prior to assignment. Refer to the Incident Response Pocket Guide (NWCG, NFES 1077) for guidance on conducting adequate briefings.
8. Develop a Medical Emergency Procedures Plan and/or an Incident Emergency Plan.
9. Focus solely on Incident Commander Responsibilities until relieved by Agency Administrators and/or once the incident reaches a Type 2 or Type 1 complexity.
10. Ensure firefighting personnel are knowledgeable on all fire retardant avoidance areas, the requirement to not drop retardant in waterways or buffers, and the need to report any fire retardant application that does enter an avoidance area or waterway. (Record of Decision December 12, 2011 for the Nationwide Aerial Delivery of Fire Retardant.)
11. Conduct or participate in incident after action reviews (AAR) and other reviews, analyses and investigations as required in order to enhance learning.

#### **5130.48 - Forest Service Employees**

Every Forest Service employee must support Agency wildfire response needs, commensurate with personal capabilities, qualifications, training, and experience. As part of this responsibility those Forest Service employees must acquaint themselves with Agency principles, doctrine, and goals.

#### **5130.5 - Definitions**

Agency Administrator. A general term used in an interagency context meaning the official with direct, statutory authority, and responsibility for their administrative unit (for example, Forest

Supervisor, BLM District Manager, Park Superintendent, Refuge Manager, BIA Agency Superintendent or State land manager). See also: Line Officer.

Doctrine. The body of principles that guide the actions of an organization.

Line Officer. An official or designee having statutory authority who serves in a direct line of command from the Chief and has authority to make and execute decisions for their administrative unit(s). Examples are the Deputy Chiefs, Director of Law Enforcement and Investigations, Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Forest Supervisors, and District Rangers. Line Officers have authority to issue direction within the authority granted to them by stature, policy, or delegation. See also: Agency Administrator.

National Significance. Wildfire events/incidents may be considered nationally significant if they have high levels of complexity and risk, require large commitments of fire and aviation resources, incur high costs and involve political, social, natural resource or policy concerns. An unintended outcome may also be of National significance if it involves loss of life, serious injury, or loss of high value property or damage to natural resources.

Oversight. The supervision and management of work as it pertains to direction outlined in Agency policy.

Policy. The structure and procedures used to put doctrinal principles into action. The Forest Service Directive System consists of Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks which codify the Agency's policy. Manuals and Handbooks contain legal authorities, objectives, policies, responsibilities, instructions, and guidance needed by the Forest Service Line Officers and primary staff to plan and execute assigned programs and activities.

Principles. The foundation of judgment, decision making, and behaviors. From principles will come the strategies and tactics, the tools and techniques for executing them, and define the behaviors that are expected.

Risk Management. The continuous process of evaluating exposure and mitigating hazards. Risk management is a dynamic process exercised by employees engaged in wildfire response. It provides employees a way to evaluate risk and benefit relative to the overall incident objectives and course of action based on leader's intent.

Unintended Outcome. Consequences of an event that were either unanticipated or unforeseen. These consequences can have either a positive unexpected benefit or a negative unexpected detriment to the desired effect.

Wildfire. Unplanned ignition of a wildland fire (such as a fire caused by lightning, volcanoes, unauthorized, and accidental human-caused fires) and escaped prescribed fires.

Wildland Fire. A general term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland.

### 5130.6 - References

1. Wildland Fire Incident Management Field Guide (PMS 210, NFES 2943). This handbook contains basic wildfire response practices and organizational information.
2. Incident Response Pocket Guide (PMS 461, NFES 1077). This interagency guide provides a number of checklists and management practices for use in responses to wildfires and other incidents. Also available at: <http://www.nwcg.gov/?q=publications>
3. Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724)
4. National Mobilization Guide (NFES 2092)
5. Smoke Management Guide for Prescribed and Wildland Fire (PMS 420-2, NFES 1279). This publication addresses the basic control strategies for minimizing the adverse effects of smoke from wildland fires on human health and welfare. The principles in the publication are useful for wildfire smoke mitigation. Also available at: <http://www.nwcg.gov/?q=publications>
6. USFS Fire and Aviation Management Doctrine Website <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/>.
7. Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 2009). [http://www.nifc.gov/policies/policies\\_documents/GIFWFMP.pdf](http://www.nifc.gov/policies/policies_documents/GIFWFMP.pdf)
8. Implementation Guide for Aerial Delivery of Fire Retardant (March 30, 2012).
9. Record of Decision, Nation-wide Aerial Delivery of Fire Retardant (December 12, 2011).
10. Fire Statistics System (FIRESTAT) User Guide (formerly referred to as the Forest Service Wildland Fire Report User Guide).
11. Master Agreement between Forest Service and NFFE  
Website [http://www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs/Master\\_Agreement/MasterAgreementFinal.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs/Master_Agreement/MasterAgreementFinal.pdf).
12. Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (PMS 902, NFES 2160).
13. Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (PMS 484, April 2014).
14. Safety and Health Program Handbook (FSH 6709.12).
15. Health and Safety Code Handbook (FSH 6709.11).
16. Fire and Aviation Management Qualifications Handbook (FSH 5109.17).
17. Forest Service Fire and Aviation Qualification Guide <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/publications>
18. Wildland Fire Decision Support System online training, help, related resources [http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS\\_Home.shtml](http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS_Home.shtml)

19. Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) and Forest Service Fire Program Management (FS-FPM) <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/management/ifpm/index.html>

## **5131 - Wildfire Doctrine and Principles**

### **5131.02 - Objectives**

Use a doctrine approach based on leadership, operations, and risk management principles to manage risk in planning and implementing a wildfire response to support the Forest Service objectives of protecting communities, conserving natural resources, and restoring ecological health.

### **5131.03 - Policy**

1. Take all response actions to ensure the safety of firefighters, other personnel, and the public, regardless of response cost or resource loss; no resource or facility is worth the loss of human life.
2. The intent of wildfire response is to protect human life, property, and achieve protection and natural resource management objectives established in Land and Resource Management Plans.
3. Leadership principles are the fundamental doctrine on which fire and aviation management operations will be based, see FSM 5131.1.

### **5131.1 - Leadership Principles**

1. All levels of leadership are accountable for wildfire response accomplishments.
2. All levels of leadership must communicate a clear vision of Agency goals and management principles, ensuring they are shared and understood by all levels of the organization.
3. All levels of leadership must express clear intent concerning roles and responsibilities to ensure wildfire response assignments are appropriate, risk-based and effective.

### **5131.2 - Operations Principles**

Every wildfire response operation is directed toward clearly-defined, decisive, and obtainable objectives which are mutually understood at every level of command.

1. When it is time to engage a wildfire, do so in a manner that is appropriate, risk-based, and effective.
2. Command and control will be decentralized to cope with the unpredictable nature of wildfire. To achieve the leader's intent and accomplish operational objectives, subordinate commanders must make decisions on their own initiative, and coordinate their efforts to maintain unity of effort.

3. Judgment in combination with principles and rules will guide wildfire response practices and actions.
4. Rapid deployment and appropriate concentration of wildfire response resources at the decisive time and place are essential to successful wildfire response actions.
5. Maintaining a high capability to ensure effective initial attack is essential to public and firefighter safety, accomplishment of management objectives, and cost containment.
6. The interdependence of wildland fire jurisdictions requires the collaborative, proactive engagement of cooperators, partners, and the public in response activities.

### **5131.3 - Risk Management Principles**

The wildfire response environment is complex, presenting significant effects on public health and safety, and possesses inherent hazards that can result in harm to firefighters engaged in wildfire response operations, even with reasonable mitigation.

1. The Forest Service is committed to the aggressive management of risk.
2. Apply a risk management process to minimize the exposure and effects of the inherent hazards in wildfire response while maximizing the opportunities to achieve management objectives.
3. Maintaining state of the art decision support systems based on the best available science is essential for making sound decisions on how to manage all wildland fire to achieve Land Resource Management Plan objectives, including public and Agency personnel safety.

### **5131.4 - Wildland Fire Response Principles**

1. Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across Agency boundaries.
2. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to fire.
3. Response to wildfire in Wilderness focuses on the natural ecological role of fire and activities are conducted in a manner compatible with overall wilderness management objectives as defined in FSM 2320.
4. Success is safely achieving reasonable objectives with the least fire fighter exposure necessary while enhancing stakeholder support for our management efforts.

### **5132 - Organization and Management of Wildfire Response**

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a consistent nationwide template to enable Federal, State, Tribal and local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity. For response to wildfire, NIMS provides a total systems approach.

### **5132.02 - Objective**

For response to wildfire, NIMS will be applied to provide a total systems approach to establish positions, qualifications, certification requirements, and the organizational framework for wildfire response operations that allows effective collaboration and coordination of emergency response with all Federal and collaborating agencies.

### **5132.03 - Policy**

1. Comply with the qualification requirements for the skills and knowledge unique to wildfire response and the Incident Command System (ICS) as set forth in FSH 5109.17.
2. Accept the local participation in cooperative wildfire response efforts of personnel from other agencies or of cooperators not hired by the Forest Service, who do not subscribe to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) qualification standards. In the event the personnel from other agencies or of cooperators not hired by the Forest Service, are needed outside of their local area in cooperative wildfire response Forest Service requires those personnel to comply with the minimum requirements specified by the NWCG; see guidelines in Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide, (PMS 310-1) or equivalent.

## **5133 - Wildfire Response Decisions**

### **5133.02 - Objective**

Decisions will be based on existing and foreseen circumstances: be timely and implementable; and effectively communicate a course of action based on clearly defined incident objectives that establish firefighter and public safety as the highest priority.

### **5133.03 - Policy**

1. Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is the Agency's tool for risk assessment and documentation.
2. As part of the overall risk management process, the designated Agency Administrator (AA) will use the WFDSS to analyze the fire situation on all wildfire responses that exceed initial attack or response, or include a resource management objective, including fires which come onto Agency lands. Within WFDSS, the AA will establish incident objectives, and document decisions related to actions, resource allocations, and risk management. Periodic assessments throughout the duration of the fire incident must be completed, approved by the designated AA, and documented in WFDSS.

3. The Responsible Unit will complete the initial WFDSS decision document, with collaboration between Agency Administrators and Incident Commanders on any further revisions.
4. To ensure the most effective response is used throughout the life of the fire incident, data are re-analyzed, decisions reviewed and updated, and actions modified as needed based on decision support criteria within WFDSS. As incident complexity, size of organizations, values at risk and intensity of management actions increase or decrease additional analysis is used to inform decision making. Managers use periodic assessments to gather, maintain, and document situational awareness of the incident. The assessment frequency must be approved by the responsible Agency Administrator and not exceed fourteen (14) days.

### **5133.1 - Responsibility**

WFDSS approval authority may be delegated, provided that the delegated Agency Administrator meets wildfire response and WFDSS certification requirements.

### **5133.2 - Qualifications for Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) Certification**

Agency Administrators must have the required level of experience and training to be qualified to approve and certify a decision documented in WFDSS, see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, (NFES 2724).

### **5133.3 - Delegation of Authority, Risk Decision Making and Communication**

1. Incident objectives for public and firefighter safety, resource and property protection, and land management wildfire response must be identified by the responsible Agency Administrator for each wildfire incident, in consultation with the Incident Commander. Staff from Line and Incident Command organizations may be consulted as necessary. Risk management, interagency coordination, fiscal and environmental expectations and concerns must be identified as incident objectives are being developed. Delegations of authority must be issued from the appropriate Line Officer to the Incident Commander as follows:

- a. A qualified Type 3, 4, or 5 Incident Commander may assume command on scene as needed without a formal delegation of authority and it is the Agency Administrator's responsibility to relay their expectations or special considerations in a timely fashion. Formal delegations of authority to Type 3 Incident Commanders that convey expectations and special considerations may be appropriate for more complex or longer duration incidents.
- b. Delegations of authority for Type 2 wildfires are made at the Forest Supervisor level, with communication/oversight by the Regional Office.
- c. Delegations of authority for Type 1 wildfires are made at the Forest Supervisor level, with communication/oversight by the Regional Office and Washington Office.

2. For Type 2 incidents, communication and risk sharing should occur between the District Ranger, Forest Supervisor, and Regional Office levels of the organization prior to publication of

any decisions in WFDSS. Type 1 incidents, communication and risk sharing should occur between the District Ranger, Forest Supervisor, Regional, and Washington Office levels of the organization prior to publication of any decisions in WFDSS. This communication should involve considerations about values at risk, availability of resources, risk to fire and aviation resources, probabilities of success for various incident strategies, sociopolitical considerations, and costs.

## **5134 - Wildfire Response - Managing Employee and Public Risk**

### **5134.02 - Objective**

Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity. The wildland fire management environment is complex and possesses inherent hazards that are mitigated, to the extent possible, with equipment, training, and procedures. Emergency medical services and burn treatment needs for employees engaged in fire response will be identified and implementation procedures will be established to meet these needs.

### **5134.03 - Policy**

1. Prior to engagement and continuously thereafter, all employees involved in wildfire response activities must assess hazards and risks to firefighter and public safety; evaluate risk and benefit relative to the overall incident objectives; and establish a course of action based on leader's intent.
2. Agency employees engaged in wildfire response may encounter emergency situations or situations where human life is immediately at risk. Without supplanting local government responsibilities, Agency employees may provide medical aid, and assist with emergency situations within their qualifications, as long as they do so without undue risk to themselves or others. The primary purpose for trained emergency medical responders in the Agency is to provide aid to employees. For information about HAZMAT response, see FSM 2165, Response to Hazardous Materials Releases.
3. All employees responding to wildfires must adhere to the protective clothing and equipment requirements in the FSM 6710, Safety and Health Program Administration, FSH 6709.11, Health and Safety Code Handbook, Wildland Fire Incident Management Field Guide, (PMS 210, NFES 2943), and the current Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, (NFES 2724).
4. Wildland firefighters may deploy only an open-circuit, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) of the positive pressure type when smoke from wildfires other than vegetation (such as vehicle, dump, structure, or other non-wildland fuel) cannot be avoided while meeting wildfire response objectives (29 CFR 1910.134, Respiratory Protection). If such an apparatus is not available, avoid exposure to smoke from these sources.
  - a. The acquisition, training, proper use, employee health surveillance programs, inspection, storage, and maintenance of an SCBA must comply with the current National Fire Protection

Association Standard, NFPA-1981 and 29 CFR 1910.134, and must be justified by a Job Hazard Analysis.

b. Where an SCBA is approved, it may be carried only on a fire engine and its use must be consistent with FSM 5130.2, 5130.3, and this section.

5. Emergency medical and burn treatment procedures and protocols must be identified and developed to ensure safe and efficient responses to any medical emergency involving employees engaged in emergency response. These services may be provided through local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers, or by Forest Service personnel trained and certified at the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) or Emergency Medical Technician-Basic (EMT-B) level. Collaborate with local Unit, State, Tribal, and local government EMS agencies, and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or dispatch center to ensure integration of local systems into incident management organization procedures and operational briefings.

6. If an Incident Action Plan is developed for an incident, the ICS 206 Medical Plan must include detailed information regarding communication procedures, roles and responsibilities during a medical emergency. These procedures should be designed to facilitate the timely assessment, care and extraction of injured or ill personnel.

7. During the incident planning process, the Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis ICS-215A form must be used to identify medical treatment and evacuation mitigations that will be applied to each Division, Camp or other work location on the incident.

8. All Forest Service incidents may use standardized emergency medical communication protocols and terminology identified by the Agency in coordination with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group guidelines.

### **5135 - Wildfire Response Action on Private Land, Structure Fires, Structure Protection in the Wildland Urban Interface, and Response to Non-Wildlife Incidents**

#### **5135.01 - Authority**

1. Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 211.5 (36 CFR 211.5), authorizes the Forest Service to render emergency assistance in suppressing fires and in preserving life and property.

2. Title 42, United States Code, Section 1856b (42 U.S.C. 1856b), permits the Forest Service, in the absence of a written reciprocal agreement with a fire organization, to render emergency assistance in responding to wildfires and in preserving life and property from the threat of wildfire, within the vicinity of the Agency's wildfire protection facilities.

#### **5135.02 - Objective**

To support within our authority, State, Tribal, and local agencies in a coordinated, effective wildfire response. The Agency policy on response actions for structure fire extinguishment, fire response in the wildland urban interface and non-wildfire incidents is based on the premise that

other Departments and agencies must fulfill their primary roles and responsibilities on lands that are outside Federal jurisdiction. Structure firefighting and primary non-fire emergency response is outside the scope of standard Agency wildfire firefighting training.

### **5135.03 - Policy**

#### **5135.03a - Private Land**

When a fire on private land poses a potential threat to National Forest System lands, the Forest Service may conduct wildfire response activities on that private land. The Forest Service should obtain permission from the landowner when feasible, but should not delay action while seeking permission.

#### **5135.03b - Structure Fires**

The Forest Service will not usurp individual, State, or local responsibility and engage in structure fire extinguishment by:

1. Taking direct suppression actions on structures other than those that tactically reduce the threat of fire spread and can be safely suppressed with Agency resources.
2. Entering structures or working on roofs of structures for the purpose of direct suppression actions.

#### **5135.03c - Structure Protection from Wildfire and Fire Response in the Wildland Urban Interface**

1. The Forest Service will apply strategy and tactics to keep wildfires from reaching structures, as prudent to do so, considering risk to the firefighters and public, fire behavior, values at risk including natural resources, availability of firefighting resources, and jurisdictional authorities.
2. The use of wildland tactics in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), when risks are mitigated, will be based on the objective of preventing wildfire from reaching areas of structures and/or reducing the intensity of fire that does reach structures.
3. Structure protection will be limited to the use of standard wildfire response tactics including the use of standard equipment, fire control lines, and the extinguishing of spot fires near or on the structure when safe and practical; see guidelines in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NFES 2724, Chapter 5).
4. The Agency may render emergency assistance to a local government in responding to wildfires, and preserving life and property from the threat of fire, when properly trained and equipped Agency resources are the closest to the need, and there is adequate leadership to do so safely.

### **5135.03d - Response to Non Wildfire Incidents**

1. Response actions can be undertaken with proper risk assessment and mitigation will be limited to protection of life, communities, and resources where vegetation is the primary fuel. When Agency employees are trained, qualified, and equipped to take action on other than vegetation fires they may do so with proper risk assessment and mitigation (FSM 5131.66, Incident Response Pocket Guide, PMS 461, NFES 1077).
2. The Agency will not supplant local government responsibilities, or routinely serve as the primary emergency response to non-wildfire emergencies (for example, medical aids, HAZMAT, automobile accidents, water rescue, and so forth).

### **5135.1 - Reimbursement**

1. Response may be offered without reimbursement if a Forest Service-initiated prescribed fire escapes onto non-National Forest or Grassland System lands.
2. Response should be offered on a reimbursable basis on non-National Forest or Grassland System lands when requested, when responding to wildfires and in preserving life and property from the threat of wildfire, within the vicinity of the Agency's wildfire protection responsibilities.

### **5136 - Information Management**

#### **5136.02 - Objective**

Information on historical and current wildland fire response activities will be made available to support informed judgements and decisions by Agency leadership, decision makers, collaborators, Agency personnel, and the public.

#### **5136.03 - Policy**

1. The National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) must provide National daily situation reporting of fire response activities, see guidelines in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide, (NFES 2092).
2. Significant events must be reported by Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs) to the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) as soon as practical.
3. FS-5100-29, Individual Wildland Fire Report will be completed for all wildfires and any prescribed fire that is declared a wildfire and entered into the historic database Fire Statistics System (FIRESTAT, FSM 5180).

## 5137 - Work Environment

### 5137.02 - Objective

1. Every employee has the right to be treated equitably, with dignity, and participate in a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, and reprisal.
2. Accidents, serious close calls, and other undesirable events will be analyzed to determine causes of the event so that corrective actions, mitigation and learning can be implemented as quickly as possible.

### 5137.03 - Policy

1. Every employee has the right to be treated equitably, with dignity, and participate in a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, and reprisal. Every employee will apply principles of fairness and equality in their dealings with employees, cooperators and the public, see guidance in (FSM 1760, Equal Employment Opportunity).
2. Ensure Human Resource Specialists are assigned to Type 1 or 2 Incident Management Team (IMT) incidents with 300 or more assigned personnel. Human Resource Specialists should also be assigned for Type 3 incidents with greater than 300 assigned personnel when the incident is expected to last for 3 days or more. This will assist in achieving a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, and reprisal.
3. For any accident with serious potential or serious consequence that is not reviewed by a Washington Office or Chief's Office appointed team, an analysis or review team must be appointed as described in FSH 6709.12. This includes single fatalities, serious injuries or illnesses, major property damage, aircraft accidents, and incidents with serious potential.
4. When other unintended outcomes occur, the responsible Agency Administrator determines what type and level of investigation or review are appropriate.

### 5137.1 - Unintended Outcomes and Accidents

#### 5137.12 - Analysis Tools

A variety of review and analysis tools can be used individually or concurrently for multiple reviews. These tools help the Agency comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reporting or investigation requirements and other laws, regulations, and policy.

1. Coordinated Response Protocol. A Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) has been developed to coordinate the multiple reports and services needed following a serious accident. The CRP place people first and is designed to coordinate internal and external investigations in a way that minimizes the exposure of our personnel (as much as possible) to a large number of interviews. The CRP also coordinates or oversees organizational support to the victims and their families to ensure that immediate needs are met and that benefits are received in a timely

manner. The CRP coordinates or facilitates the Learning Review Team, Peer Support/Critical Incident Stress Management, Law Enforcement Investigations, Union Representation, and Human Resources support.

2. Accident Review. Using a Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) reviews are conducted after an accident, serious illness, or unintended outcome occurs with the intent of helping prevent future accidents. Accident reviews are initiated by Line Officers in the aftermath of an illness, injury, or unintended outcome when it is believed that there is a potential to derive lessons learned.

3. Aviation Mishap Investigations. When aviation accidents or related incidents occur, an Aviation Mishap Investigation must be initiated and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) must be notified. NTSB is responsible for the investigation of all private and public (non-military and non-intelligence Agency) aviation accidents (49 CFR 831.2). The Forest Service is frequently “party” to or leads the on-site investigation at NTSB’s request.

4. Civil, Criminal, or Administrative Reviews and Investigations. An event occurred and initial information collected shows evidence of an intentional act with reckless and willful disregard for human safety, dishonesty and or substance abuse.

5. Prescribed Fire (Declared Wildfire and Air Quality Notice of Violation) Reviews. Where prescribed fires escape their planned perimeter and are declared wildfires or a notice of air quality violation is issued, they are reviewed to help prevent future escapes or violations from occurring. Specific elements and objectives of the reviews are found in FSM 5140 and the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (PMS 484, April 2014).

6. Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA). This analysis is used when an event indicates a possible organizational failure, systemic cultural concern, a training program deficiency, or a doctrinal inadequacy if not addressed—could contribute to subsequent accidents. Normally, there is little potential for criminal or civil actions and the Agency Administrator is willing to forego administrative disciplinary action in order to learn from the event. It is also, used when there is an opportunity to dissect an event and demonstrate to employees (through their own words) what they learned from the event and how the organization can prevent similar subsequent events.

7. After Action Review (AAR). An AAR is a learning tool intended for the evaluation of an incident or project in order to improve performance by sustaining strengths and correcting weaknesses. An AAR is performed as soon after the event as possible by the personnel involved. An AAR should encourage input from participants that is focused on: What was planned, what actually happened, why it happened, and what can be done next time to correct deficiencies.

### **5137.13 - Administrative Actions**

1. In the event of identified firefighter misconduct or a serious violation of safety standards, the appropriate Agency Administrator must convene a panel of fire operations experts to evaluate

and document the involved individual's decisions and performance against currently accepted policy and principles for fire operations.

2. Forest Supervisors must implement measures such as qualification decertification, additional training, and administrative action, and so forth, as necessary to correct any identified safety or performance issues.

3. Both positive reinforcement and discipline will be based on individual behavior as measured by; adherence to the rules, appropriate application of doctrine, principles and guidelines; execution of responsibilities; and appropriate use of available information. Administrative actions are based on known and agreed-to distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and on known and agreed to distinctions between errors and willful violations (FSM 6172, Discipline, Adverse Actions and Performance Based Actions).

## **5138 - Severity Authorizations**

### **5138.02 - Objective**

To fund and adjust planned specific actions and staffing in excess of the planned and budgeted program to improve initial attack response capabilities and wildfire prevention activities when extraordinary weather and fire conditions have the potential to result in the occurrence, or substantial threat of occurrence, of wildfires with significant damage potential.

### **5138.03 - Policy**

1. These funds are not provided for the purpose of restoring planned funding reductions.
2. Regardless of the length of the severity authorization, funding activities will be terminated when abnormal conditions no longer exist.
3. Severity authorizations cover expenditures approved by the Regional Forester only when the Region's preparedness allocation is fully programmed or obligated for planned fire management activities and significant threat of wildfire continues.
4. Regions must submit a copy of each authorization to the Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, for requests that include National Shared Resources or are in excess of \$250,000.

### **5138.1 - Levels**

1. Regional Level. The Regional Forester may authorize severity expenditures to address short-term needs which require special preparedness activities. Short-term needs may be prompted by extraordinary events (wind or lightning) or unexpected social events that increase the potential for human-caused fire. Regional Foresters have the responsibility to ensure that these funds are used in accordance with National direction and that expenditures do not exceed amounts approved.

The Regional Forester may authorize severity requests for specified time frames not exceeding 30 days. The need for these funds should be based on extraordinary weather and fire conditions that have the potential to result in the occurrence, or substantial threat of occurrence, of wildfires with significant damage potential that create abnormal fire protection workloads.

2. National Level. Requests that include High Demand Assets: Very Large or Large Air Tankers, Type 1 or 2 helicopters, Scoopers, Type 1 Crews (Hot Shots) and or Smokejumpers are required to be coordinated and documented in writing, with the Deputy Assistant Director for Operations prior to Regional approval.

### **5138.2 - Typical Uses**

1. Temporarily increase firefighting staffing;
2. Provide standby resources and pay;
3. Preposition initial attack forces;
4. Provide additional aerial reconnaissance or other means of detection;
5. Increase aircraft availability, including airtankers outside the mandatory availability period; and
6. Increase prevention activities;
7. Supplement contractual services.

### **5138.3 - Inappropriate Uses**

1. Administrative surcharges, indirect costs, and fringe benefits; Equipment purchases;
2. Vehicle maintenance, Fixed Ownership Rate (F.O.R), upgrades, and repairs; and
3. Aircraft availability during the planned mandatory availability period of contracts.

### **5138.4 - Severity Request Components**

1. The area affected.
2. How fire weather conditions exceed those upon which the current fire management program is based, in both duration and magnitude.
3. Adjustments of Regional forces and funds which have been made or are planned.
4. Cooperator's fire situation and status of forces.
5. Current status of Regional fire preparedness funds and an estimate of when these funds will be fully obligated.

6. The amount and purpose of the requested authorization, including description, period and cost of forces, equipment, and contracts.
7. The latest Palmer Drought Index map or Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) map.
8. The latest 30- and 90-day outlook maps for precipitation and temperature.
9. The latest map showing the current month departure from normal precipitation and temperature.
10. Except for the Southern Region (Region 8), a graph of the current year energy release component (ERC).
11. A narrative regarding how fire prevention personnel and fire prevention activities will be used.
12. Optional: A narrative or trend graphs depicting the departure from normal of initial attack activity, initial attack failures, and acres burned in the severity request area.

Required Documentation. Units requesting severity authorizations must maintain adequate records documenting the actual severity conditions for which approval was granted.

### **5139 - Reviews and Learning Process**

Conduct fire management reviews in accordance with FSM 1410.

#### **5139.01 - Fire Review and Learning Process Objectives**

1. Improve overall program performance and operational effectiveness through organizational learning.
2. Maintain Agency oversight and accountability responsibilities.
3. Objectively look at actions taken by the Incident Management Team and the local Agency Administrator to meet the direction provided by the Forest Service Chief.
4. Identify how applying risk management principles affect operational decisions and their associated costs.
5. Identify improvements that can be made in sharing and clarifying expectations
6. Provide a forum to document lessons learned and make improvements in future wildfire management actions.
7. Evaluate outcomes against overall objectives identified within Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) and/or provided by Agency Administrator/Incident Commander.
8. Identify significant factors that are influencing outcomes of response operations.

## 5139.02 - Types and Standards of Fire Reviews

The basic principles for fire evaluation are the same as those established for management reviews in FSM 1410.2. This would include timely opportunities for initiating positive and constructive changes for future actions.

Informal Evaluations. The responsible Agency Administrator, Fire Management staff Officer, and Washington Office will conduct informal reviews of a subset of fires that provide a cross sectional representation of cost, size and oversight complexity.

Formal Evaluations. Each year Regional Foresters and the Washington Office will formally review fires that represent the greatest opportunity for organizational learning and/or have extraordinary characteristics related to socio/political factors, fire behavior, costs and/or risk management.

### 5139.1 - Regional Fire Reviews

1. The Regional Forester has the discretion to determine the need of a fire review. To determine the scope of a review, objectives identified above in sections 5139.01 and 5139.02 may be utilized. A review should be timely and should be a positive and constructive opportunity to examine opportunities for change in future actions. The Regional Forester may consult with the Washington Office, including the Director of Fire and Aviation Management to determine the need and extent of a review. This allows for improvement of program performance, operations, evaluation of costs, risk management and facilitates the application of focused improvements. A review may occur when an incident meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a. A Type 1 or Type 2 incident management team is assigned to the incident.
- b. There are significant political, social, natural resource, or policy concerns.
- c. The affected Forest Supervisor requests a review team.

2. At a minimum, the following areas should be focused on in the review process:

- a. Long-term strategies and objectives identified within the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).
- b. Management decisions and their alignment with Agency policy and direction.
- c. Recommendations to management for incident-specific and programmatic process improvements.
- d. Clarity of communication of Chief's Intent and the effectiveness of implementation in the field.
- e. Effectiveness of pre-season planning activities.

3. Results of the review process will be published annually describing lessons learned, systematic trends, significant factors that are influencing outcomes of response operations, and operational and systematic improvement recommendations. Findings will be sent to Regional Foresters, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, Director of Fire and Aviation Management and appropriate wildland fire responders.

### **5139.2 - National Fire Reviews**

The Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, will select a subset of fires for review based on complexity and National significance ensuring the selected fires provide a cross sectional representation of cost, size, and oversight complexity. The reviews will be multi-tiered and foster a working environment that will improve the decision making process and develop a capacity for organizational learning. If a site visit is required, the Washington Office, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, will notify the Regional Forester. The National review process can include real time analysis of fire information, informal discussions with fire managers and Regional personnel, and/or site visits by a cadre of specialists to individual incidents and or geographic areas.

1. The Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, will conduct a National review on any incidents that meet the following criteria:

Exceeds \$50 million in suppression costs and/or 100,000 thousand acres of Forest Service-managed land.

2. At the discretion of the Washington Office, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, a national review can be conducted on incidents that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- b. A Type 1 or Type 2 incident command team is assigned to the incident.
- c. There are significant political, social, natural resource, or policy concerns.
- d. The affected Regional Forester requests a review team.

3. The purpose of the review process is to:

- a. Improve overall program performance and operational effectiveness through organizational learning while maintaining Agency oversight and accountability responsibilities.
- b. Establish if Chief's Intent was clearly communicated and effectively implemented in the field.

4. Reviews will be conducted by a team of subject matter experts selected by the Washington Office, Fire and Aviation Management staff. The team could include subject matter experts in wildfire management/operations, local/Regional issues, natural resource issues, budget, and risk management.

**Forest Service Manual 5100 – Fire Management**

**Chapter 5130 – Wildfire Response**

**Amendment:** 5100-2020-1

**Effective date:** August 18, 2020

5. Results of the review process will be published annually describing lessons learned, systematic trends, significant factors that are influencing outcomes of response operations, and operational and systematic improvement recommendations. Findings will be sent to Regional Foresters, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, Director of Fire and Aviation Management and appropriate wildland fire responders.