



Emergency Support Function #4 Firefighting Annex

Primary Agency: Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

Support Agencies: Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Fire Administration
Department of the Interior
Environmental Protection Agency

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4 — Firefighting detects and suppresses wildland, rural, and urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, a major disaster or emergency requiring Federal response assistance.

B. Scope

ESF #4 manages and coordinates firefighting activities, including the detection and suppression of fires on Federal lands, and provides personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of State and local agencies involved in rural and urban firefighting operations.

II. Policies

- A. Processes and procedures established in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide will be followed in responding to a major disaster or emergency under the Federal Response Plan (FRP).
- B. National support will be accomplished through the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) at Boise, ID.
- C. Coordination with, and support of, State and local fire suppression organizations will be accomplished through the State Forester, in cooperation with the State Fire Marshal, State emergency management agency, or other appropriate State agency operating under the Incident Command System (ICS).
- D. Priority will be given to saving lives and protecting property, in that order.
- E. The primary agency for this ESF will be the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, at the national level. For operations that occur in the State of Alaska, operational lead for firefighting response will be the Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management.

III. Situation

A. Disaster Condition

1. The management of a large firefighting operation is complex, often involving thousands of resources and many different agencies and jurisdictions. Fire resulting from, or independent of but occurring coincidentally with, a major disaster or emergency may place extraordinary demands on available resources and logistics support systems.
2. A major disaster or emergency may result in many urban, rural, and wildland fires. The damage potential from fires in urban areas during and after a major disaster (such as an earthquake) exceeds that of all other causes. Numerous fires may have the potential to spread rapidly, cause extensive damage, and pose a serious threat to life and property. Urban fire departments not incapacitated by an earthquake may be totally committed to fires in urban areas. Normally available firefighting resources may be difficult to obtain and use because of massive disruption of communication, transportation, utility, and water systems.

B. Planning Assumptions

1. Many urban, rural, and wildland fires may result from or occur coincidentally with an earthquake or as the result of another significant event. Large, damaging fires may be common.
2. At the time of a major disaster or emergency, there may be wildland fires burning elsewhere in the United States. These fires will draw on the same resources (e.g., air, crews, overhead, engines, or other tactical and support resources) that would be needed to support firefighting and other emergency operations. It must be assumed that some firefighting resources will become scarce, resulting in the disaster-related firefighting operations competing for resources through established resource ordering channels.
3. Telephone communications may be interrupted, making radio communications necessary. Early ordering of radio starter systems from NICC is a high priority.
4. Wheeled-vehicle access may be hampered by bridge failures, landslides, etc., making conventional travel to the fire location extremely difficult or impossible. Aerial attack by airtankers, helicopters, and smoke jumpers may be essential in these situations. Helicopter availability may be scarce, and damage to airports or runways will cause congestion at usable airports.
5. Agencies that commonly support large fire suppression operations, including the military and General Services Administration (GSA), may receive urgent requests from nonfire-related agencies for personnel, equipment, and supplies. Many resources commonly available for use in fighting large wildland fires will be scarce or unavailable.

6. Wildland firefighting techniques may have to be applied to rural and urban fire situations, particularly where water systems are inoperative. Aerial delivery of fire retardants or water for structural protection may be essential. In the case of multiple fires, firebreaks may be cleared and burning-out and backfiring techniques may be used.
7. Efficient and effective mutual aid among the various Federal, State, and local fire suppression agencies requires the use of ICS with compatible firefighting equipment and communications.

IV. Concept of Operations

A. General

1. ESF #4 will manage and coordinate Federal firefighting activities. This will be accomplished by mobilizing firefighting resources in support of State and local wildland, rural, and urban firefighting agencies. ESF #4 will use established firefighting and support organizations, processes, and procedures. Responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs lies primarily with local Incident Commanders in coordination with the Emergency Response Team (ERT) at the Disaster Field Office (DFO).
2. Requests for firefighting assistance and resources will be transmitted from the DFO to the appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center. For resources beyond those available within the geographic area, the requests will be sent to NICC at Boise, ID. NICC will contact the National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer in the event of national-level shortages or unavailability of needed resources.
3. Resolution of such shortages will be pursued by the Emergency Support Team (EST) and, when necessary, by the Catastrophic Disaster Response Group (CDRG). Actual firefighting operations will be managed under the ICS. Situation and damage assessment information will be transmitted through established fire suppression intelligence channels and directly between the national-level and regional-level ESFs according to ESF #5 — Information and Planning procedures.

B. Organization

ESF #4 has a parallel structure at the national and regional levels.

1. National-Level Response Support Structure

- a. The National Director for Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Service, will represent the USDA on the CDRG.
- b. National ESF #4 activities will operate under the direction of the Assistant Director for Operations, Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Service. Assistance will be provided as necessary by the Forest Service and DOI Fire Directors at NIFC.

- c. The Disaster and Emergency Operation Specialist will serve as the National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer. The National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer or a representative will be located at Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Headquarters (HQ) during a disaster when ESF #4 is activated. This position is a member of the EST and is the link to the National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at Forest Service HQ.
- d. The national ESF #4 will provide broad policy and coordination support to the CDRG and, based on recommended DHS requirements, may be operational on a 24-hour basis. Support agencies will have representatives available by telephone or pager on a 24-hour basis when necessary.
- e. National logistics support and interregional mobilization of resources will be provided by NICC.

2. Regional-Level Response Structure

Federal firefighting response support is coordinated by the Regional/Area Fire Coordinator provided by the Forest Service Regional/Area Office. The Regional/Area Fire Coordinator has responsibility for establishing and maintaining coordination with the National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer, Forest Service Region, regional support agencies, and ERT. ESF #4 will be represented by a Fire Suppression Support Coordinator at the DFO. Regional firefighting response and logistics support will be provided by Geographic Area Coordination Centers and the NICC in accordance with established Mobilization Guides. Support agencies will have representatives available by telephone or pager on a 24-hour basis for the duration as necessary.

C. Notification

1. Upon notification by DHS of a potential or actual event requiring response, the National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer, Forest Service, will notify all other ESF #4 members by telephone or pager.
2. The Regional/Area Fire Coordinators and NICC also will be notified by telephone or pager.

D. Response Actions

1. Initial Actions

The National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer or representative will:

- a. Locate at DHS within 2 hours of notification;
- b. Establish communication links with DHS, national primary and support agencies, USDA Emergency Operations Center (EOC), National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at Forest Service HQ, and Forest Service Director at NIFC;
- c. Establish communication links with the Regional/Area Fire Coordinators; and

- d. Obtain an initial fire situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures.

2. Continuing Actions

The National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer or representative will:

- a. Obtain, maintain, and provide fire situation and damage assessment information through established intelligence procedures;
- b. Determine and resolve, as necessary, issues regarding resource shortages and slow processing, interagency conflicts, and policy matters involving the CDRG;
- c. Maintain close coordination with the CDRG, support agencies, NICC, and DFO; and
- d. Maintain a complete log of actions taken, resource orders, records, and reports.

V. Responsibilities

A. Primary Agency: Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

1. Provide qualified representatives to serve as National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer, Regional/Area Fire Coordinator, and Fire Suppression Support Coordinator at the DFO.
2. Task support agencies as necessary to accomplish ESF #4 support responsibilities.
3. Provide logistics support through the Geographic Area Coordination Center and/or NICC for mobilizing resources for firefighting.
4. Assume full responsibility for suppression of wildfires burning or threatening national forest system lands.
5. Provide and coordinate firefighting assistance to other Federal land management, State forestry, and local fire organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the FRP.
6. Arrange for direct liaison with fire chiefs in the designated area to coordinate requests for firefighting assistance in structural or industrial fire protection operations.
7. Provide information to ESF #5 as assessments of fire-caused damages are obtained.

B. Support Agencies

1. Department of Commerce

- a. Provide fire/weather forecasting as needed from NIFC at Boise, ID, or from a nearby National Weather Service Forecast Office under the terms of existing interagency agreements.
- b. Provide urban and industrial hazard analysis support through the Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

- c. Provide fire/weather support under the terms of the National Agreement for Meteorological Services in Support of Agencies with Land Management and Fire Protection Responsibilities.

2. Department of Defense

- a. Assume full responsibility for firefighting activities on U.S. military installations.
- b. Support firefighting operations on nonmilitary lands with personnel, equipment, and supplies under the terms of the existing interagency agreement, including the arrangement of liaisons as required.
- c. Provide contracting services through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to urban and rural firefighting forces to obtain heavy equipment and/or demolition services as needed to suppress disaster-related fires.

3. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Fire Administration

Provide advice and assistance relating to structural firefighting and establish communications with State Fire Marshals in adjoining States.

4. Department of the Interior

- a. Assume full responsibility for fighting wildfires burning on lands within its jurisdiction.
- b. Assist the Forest Service in managing and coordinating firefighting operations.
- c. Provide firefighting assistance to other Federal land management organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the FRP.

5. Environmental Protection Agency

Provide technical assistance and advice in the event of fires involving hazardous materials.

C. Other Organizations

State forestry organizations in most States are responsible for wildland firefighting on non-Federal lands. States may assist other States in firefighting operations and may assist Federal agencies through agreement.

VI. Reference

National Interagency Mobilization Guide available from NICC.

VII. Terms and Definitions

A. Fire Suppression Support Coordinator

The person representing ESF #4 at the DFO.

B. Incident Command System

An on-site incident management system applicable to all types of emergencies. Includes standard organizational structure, agency qualifications, training requirements, procedures, and terminology enabling participating agencies to function together effectively and efficiently.

C. National Fire Suppression Liaison Officer

The Disaster and Emergency Operations Specialist, Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Service. This person is a member of the EST operating at the national level. Primary responsibility is to provide liaison among the EST, the National Director of Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Service HQ, and other support agencies.

D. National Interagency Coordination Center

The organization responsible for coordination of national emergency response for wildland fire suppression, located at the NIFC in Boise, ID.

E. Regional/Area Fire Coordinator

The person primarily responsible for operation of ESF #4 at the regional level.