

National Interagency Coordination Center
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February 5, 2007

To: Patti Hiram, Chair EACG
From: Kim Christensen, NICC Manager

I am in receipt of the recent correspondence from Tom Parent of the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact in which he raises several issues and questions in terms of the arrangement between Canada and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior.

Aviation: It may become necessary for U.S. firefighting personnel to be transported on aircraft owned or contracted by the Provinces of Canada. U.S. firefighting personnel are approved to ride in aircraft that have been approved by the Provinces of Canada for the purpose of wildland fire fighting.

Policy and Operating Procedures: Under the Canada/United States Reciprocal Forest Fire Fighting Arrangement and associated operating plan, the same policies apply to Forest Service and Department of Interior (DOI) employees.

Mobilization: The CIFFC/NIFC Operational Guidelines do not override or supersede any existing cooperative wildland firefighting arrangements such as border agreements. Local agencies sharing common international boundaries are encouraged to enter into "border agreements" to facilitate preparedness and initial attack on fires posing common threat. Beyond this, federal employees may only be mobilized under the CIFFC/NIFC arrangement through NICC.

Passport Issues: The position of the Forest Service and DOI was recently clarified for mobilization of firefighters to Australia. For Forest Service employees and DOI-BLM, NPS, BIA, and FWS employees, a passport is required to go fight fire in Canada. In an emergency situation, either a government or personal passport is acceptable.

State Employees: The Canada/United States Reciprocal Forest Fire Fighting Arrangement does not specifically provide coverage for tort claims or liability for state employees, thus until there is resolution to this issue they cannot fill positions on Incident Management Teams or firefighting crews. The Federal AD hiring policy is only authorized within the U.S. and is not applicable for international support.

Canadian Resource Availability: During the peak of the 2006 season NICC was informed by the Eastern Area Coordination Center that Division Group Supervisors and other overhead resources were available in the eastern provinces. NICC consults with CIFFC on a daily basis regarding the fire situation and resource availability. CIFFC was not making any resources available to NIFC during this time, and in fact were inquiring

about our availability to assist them in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. I am unsure why eastern province resources would make themselves available for assignment in the U.S. when they were needed to support the western provinces.

Compact Resource Statusing: Compact resources can be and are statused in ROSS. The Compact Module in ROSS (Version 2.11) is scheduled for release in October of 2008. Many states are utilizing the current version of ROSS to request and mobilize resources under their compact agreements.

Meeting notes from the 2006 Fall NMAC – GMAC Meeting were distributed the first week of January. If you did not receive them let me know and I will ensure you get them.

If any further clarification is needed please contact me.

/s/ Kim Christensen
NICC Manager