

1 SCOPE

2 Dispatchers are normally the first persons to receive requests for search and rescue or other non-fire emergency
3 assistance. Such requests often come after and the requesting parties desire immediate answers, whenever possible.
4 This chapter provides some guidelines concerning Forest Service, National Park Service, and US Fish & Wildlife
5 Service policy in these matters.

6
7 When responding to non-fire incidents; generally, the guidelines listed below will be followed by dispatchers:

8
9 Most requests for non-fire incident assistance are first cleared through the appropriate agency's Regional
10 Coordinator prior to mobilization.

- 11 ➤ Except in cases of threat to human lives, fire is the priority when in competition for resources.
- 12 ➤ Fiscal accountability, payment of base and/or overtime salary and any interagency reimbursement
13 procedures must be agreed to by all parties prior to, or as soon as possible after the initial response to the
14 incident. Payments are to be authorized via reimbursable agreements or letters of authorization to expend
15 agency funds. Fire Code is not used for non-fire incidents.
- 16 ➤ Specific agency limits of authority (e.g., law enforcement authority on non-Federal lands, Emergency
17 Medical Technician authority outside of their home state, etc.) must be addressed prior to mobilization of
18 these personnel.

19
20 **LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES**

21 Primarily, the protection of life and property and the maintenance of law and order within the territorial jurisdiction
22 of any State are responsibilities of State and local authorities. In some States, the basic law places responsibility for
23 protection of life and property and search for lost persons on the Sheriffs of the respective Counties; in other States,
24 the State Highway Patrols have the responsibility to assist during emergencies involving protection of life and
25 property. For the land area of the United States, the Air Rescue Service of the Air Force is charged with the
26 responsibility of providing search, survival aid, and rescue of passengers and crew of missing and/or crashed aircraft
27 in accidents that do not occur in the proximity of air bases. This responsibility applies to all aircraft--civil as well as
28 military.

29
30 **FOREST SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES**

31 Inside and outside the National Forests, as a humanitarian measure, the use of Forest Service personnel and
32 equipment is authorized for the purpose of protecting life and property and for relieving suffering and distress
33 arising from such causes as floods, earthquakes, fires, hurricanes, and snowstorms, but not from strikes. 5 AR 595
34 provides that "...Except in emergencies threatening loss of life or property, or as may be authorized by law,
35 Department property shall not be used for any purpose other than in the performance of work of the Department..."

36
37 The Regional Forester should be notified promptly of any extraordinary expenditure of obligation of funds or use of
38 personnel or equipment. Obligations incurred should be considered as payable out of currently available funds only,
39 without expectation of reimbursement. Please refer to the Region 8 All Hazard Response Guide. Costs for some
40 HAZMAT cleanups are recoverable through the Oil Pollution Act (OPA). Coordinate with the Regional HAZMAT
41 Coordinator for guidance.

42
43 **COOPERATION WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES**

44 Inside National Forest boundaries, the Forest Service has specific authority to act in case of need for emergency
45 assistance to persons lost, seriously ill, or injured; but this does not preclude cooperation under Memorandums of
46 Understanding with other agencies that engage in the activity. Since there are so many different agencies involved
47 in rescue work, centralized nationwide operating arrangements are neither practical nor desirable. Memoranda of
48 Understanding involving search and rescue should, accordingly, be made at the Regional level or, where National
49 Forests are widely separated, at the Forest level with guidance by the Region.

50
51 Any such cooperative work that the Forest Service does, either with or without reimbursement to the Government
52 should be under advance letters of understanding with those agencies.

1 AUTHORIZATION TO ACT ON REQUEST OF OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

2 The Forest Service has authority at the request of another Federal agency to perform for the agency whatever
3 assistance it is equipped to render regardless of location, with either advance of funds or reimbursement under
4 Section 601 of the Economy Act of June 30, 1982 (31 U.S.C. 686). Where such requests are anticipated, it is
5 desirable to have any understanding with the responsible Federal Agency as to any action to be taken by the Forest
6 Service. Such understanding should be worked out at the Regional level (Refer to Chapter 40 - Cooperation).
7

8 The USDA Forest Service and the Department of Interior have primary and support responsibilities under the
9 Federal Response Plan (FRP) during Presidential declared disasters. Refer to Section 15.1 of this mobilization guide
10 for more information.
11

12 LOST, ILL, INJURED, OR DECEASED PERSONS

13 The Forest Service recognizes its public duty to render assistance in cases involving persons lost or who die in the
14 National Forests. This includes transporting persons seriously ill, injured, or die to the nearest place where the sick
15 or injured person (or where the body) may be transferred to interested parties or local authorities.
16

17 Section 3 of the Act of May 27, 1930 (16 U.S.C. 575) authorizes the payment of necessary expenses to effectuate
18 this policy. This authorization is limited to those cases where the person's condition necessitates prompt removal to
19 a place where medical attention and care are available; and the situation could only be rectified through action of the
20 Forest Service. The authorization does not contemplate expenditures from Forest Service funds in ordinary cases of
21 illness, etc., of persons who at the time are inside a National Forest. Similarly, Forest Service funds should be
22 expended for removal of the body of a deceased person only when it is impractical to arrange for its prompt removal
23 by or at the expense of relatives or other interested persons or local authorities. In the event of minor accidents,
24 particularly where there appears to be no immediate danger to life or health, incidental help and information or
25 advice may be given by the Forest Service; but usually the person or persons involved, if able, should make their
26 arrangements for relief, medical attention, or repair. Usually relatives, friends, local authorities, and other interested
27 persons or agencies cooperate voluntarily in defraying necessary **expenses**.
28

29 R-8 PAYMENTS POLICY

30 Salaries and travel expenses of personnel assigned to the relief or assistance job will be paid from their normal
31 general account. Other expenses incurred will be paid from National Forest Protection and Management (P&M)
32 funds. Forests or other units should handle the payment of expenses for this emergency work. At the time of the
33 financial review, if Forests find they cannot absorb these additional expenses, they should request a supplemental
34 fund allocation. Request should be made to the Regional Budget Officer accompanied by justification of need.
35

36 DISASTER PLANS

37 NATURAL DISASTERS

38 The Regional Forester's Emergency and Major Disaster Plan for Natural Disaster in the Southern Region (May
39 1979) is found in the All Hazard Response Guide. In addition, individual Forests and Districts may have local
40 disaster plans (for example: plans to prepare and respond to tropical storms and hurricanes).
41
42

43 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILLS

44 The "Safety and Health Program Handbook" (FSM 6709.12) establishes notification requirements for hazardous
45 materials accidents. This normally will be the responsibility of the Forest Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)
46 Coordinator. In many cases, the Forest Dispatcher will receive the initial communication from the field, and
47 will need to follow up on this information. Each Dispatch/Coordination Center should have a list of actions to
48 be taken in the event that a hazardous material accident is reported. This should be developed by the Forest
49 HAZMAT Coordinator and the Dispatcher, and can use the same format as the procedures to be followed in the
50 event of a downed aircraft (see Appendix C). A sample plan follows.
51

52 NOTE: Offer information to first responders from the "orange book" ("Emergency Response Guidebook" DOT
53 5800).
54

1 SAMPLE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILL PLAN

- 2 • Receive and log the information that is reported.
3
4 • Dispatch public safety units as appropriate:
5

UNIT	PHONE NUMBER
Medical	
Ambulance	
Law Enforcement	
State Troopers	
Sheriff Department	
Police Department	
Other	

- 6
7 • **Notify appropriate line officer:**
8

NAME	TITLE	OFFICE PHONE	HOME PHONE
	District Ranger		
	District Ranger		
	Forest Supervisor		

- 9
10 • **Notify Forest HAZMAT Coordinator:**
11

NAME	OFFICE PHONE	HOME PHONE

12
13 **CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS IN EMERGENCY CASES (SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR DEATH).**

- 14 ➤ Get rescue unit and equipment on the way.
15 ➤ Notify doctor and give instructions. In some cases, this will be No. 1.
16 ➤ Notify District Ranger.
17 ➤ Notify Forest Supervisor or Acting.
18 ➤ Notify the SACC Coordinator through normal channels. He or she will notify all
19 appropriate RO
20 ➤ Notify County Sheriff's office and State Police. (Arrange with them for a coroner in case of a death.)
21 ➤ See that Information Officer is designated. Information Officer will interact with the press, and ensure that only
22 reliable information is released. No names will be released until next of kin has been notified.
23 ➤ Instruct lookouts (or other key positions) to remain on duty as necessary.
24 ➤ Notify next of kin as soon as reliable information is available. Information Officer will handle this. If off-
25 Forest personnel are involved, the home Forest or Region should be called on to do the actual notifying of next
26 of kin. Be sure to request them to let Ranger District or Forest know as soon as next of kin have been notified
27 so a statement can be given to the press.
28

29 **MANDATORY USDA FOREST SERVICE REGIONAL OFFICE NOTIFICATION SITUATIONS**

30 Notify the Regional Office, as stated in FSM 6732.12, immediately, when these conditions exist in addition to those
31 identified in the parent text:

- 32 ➤ One employee or enrollee was injured and requires five (5) or more days of hospitalization.
33 ➤ The Forest Service was involved and a private citizen was killed or is likely to die.
34 ➤ All damage to government property (leased, owned, rented, or borrowed) in excess of \$1,000, excluding forest
35 fire.
36 ➤ Indication of gross negligence or misconduct on the part of an employee or enrollee involved in any third party
37 accident.

- 1 ➤ Evidence or indication that drugs, including alcohol, were in use or were contributing factors in an accident
- 2 involving an employee or enrollee.
- 3 ➤ Minor aircraft accident.
- 4 ➤ Fatalities from suspected natural causes when the employee was on the job or in travel status.
- 5 ➤ The Regional Office person notified is responsible for notifying the Washington Office in accordance with
- 6 parent text FSM 6732.12.
- 7 ➤ A release of a hazardous material (including pesticides) into the environment should be reported to the Region 8
- 8 spill Haz-Mat coordinator within 24 hours.
- 9

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT NAME	CONTACT TITLE	OFFICE PHONE	CELL
Darryl Harley	Regional Safety Manager	404-347-7781	404-273-8120
Walt Sternke	HAZMAT Coordinator	404-347-3369	678-576-1826
Emmanuel Hudson	Alternate HAZMAT Coordinator, BAER/NRDA	404-347-3849	404-375-2361
Mary Morris	Deputy RF – Operations	404-347-4177	404-275-6606
Jerome Thomas	Deputy RF – Natural Resources	404-347-4177	404-354-6321

10
11 For after-hours telephone numbers, please see Chapter 50 "USFS Southern Regional Office" directory, or contact
12 SACC.

13
14 The unit making the initial notification report should include items listed in parent text FSM 6732.12, 2. However,
15 notification should not be delayed if all of the information is not available.

16
17 **INVESTIGATION TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

18 Composition of Region/Area Investigation Team

- 19 ➤ Chief Investigator
- 20 ➤ Regional Safety Manager
- 21 ➤ Director, Budget and Financial Management, will identify a team member when a third party is involved.
- 22 ➤ The Chief Investigator and Safety Manager will select additional team members relative to the type,
23 location, and severity of the accident.
- 24

25 **Designation of Chief Investigator**

26 The Chief Investigator will be a Deputy Regional Forester/Assistant Area Director from the functional area involve
27 when:

- 28 • One or more employees or enrollees are fatally injured, or death is likely to occur.
- 29 • The Forest Service is involved and one or more private citizens are fatally injured, or death is likely to
30 occur.
- 31 • Property damage of \$50,000 or more, excluding forest fires or natural disaster.
- 32

33 Under the following conditions, the decision to have an Investigation Team will be made by the Regional Forester
34 on a case-by-case basis. If a Team is formed, the Chief Investigator will be a Forest Staff Officer or Forest
35 Supervisor.

- 36 • One employee or enrollee is injured requiring five (5) days of hospitalization.
- 37 • Hospitalization of three (3) or more employees or enrollees.
- 38 • The Forest Service is involved and five (5) or more private citizens are hospitalized.
- 39 • Indication of gross negligence or misconduct on the part of an employee or enrollee involved in any third
40 party accident.
- 41 • Any indication that the use of alcohol or other drugs by an employee or an enrollee may have been a
42 contributing factor in any accident.
- 43 • Property damage of \$10,000 to \$49,000, excluding forest fires or natural disaster.

1 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

2 Responsibilities and procedures for non-fire emergencies are outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan for each
3 National Park Service Region. The following are excerpts from the Southeast Regional Office Plan.

5 LAW ENFORCEMENT

6 Level 1 incident is to be telephoned immediately to Shenandoah National Park Dispatch 1-800-732-0911 and to the
7 Southeast Region Law Enforcement Specialist or the Chief of Ranger activities. All reportable incidents are to be
8 reported (including Level 1 telephone reports) via a cc: Mail report. cc: Mail reports are to be sent to: WASO
9 Ranger Activities, Bill Halainen (for the Morning Report), Chief of Ranger Activities, and the Regional Law
10 Enforcement Specialist.

12 Special Event Teams

13 Special Event Team Commander: Jon Pierce

14
15 In the case of a special event which requires a Special Events Team (SET), and time permits, the Park
16 Superintendent must submit a written request to the Chief of Ranger Activities explaining the need for the request
17 and outlining the number and type of resources needed and estimated cost. The authority for activating a SET can
18 only be granted by the Regional Director or his designee. If time does not permit a written request, or for guidance
19 in determining if a SET Team is needed, contact Jon Pierce at 404-507-5726 or cell number 678-634-8395.

21 SEARCH AND RESCUE

22 Refer to Appendix C of this chapter.

23 "Advise the NPS Southeast Regional Emergency Services Coordinator (ESC), Mark Ruggiero when a search and/or
24 rescue appear that it will go into a second day. Requests for assistance should first be made to the Regional ESC.
25 The Regional Emergency Coordinator may obtain resources through the appropriate State Interagency Coordination
26 Center or SACC.

28 CHEMICAL SPILLS (OIL AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS)

30 Contact for Resources

31 Southeast Region or WASO Coordinator listed below.

32 Reporting

33
34 All oil spills, hazardous chemical releases, pipeline accidents, transportation accidents involving hazardous material
35 or oil, releases of radioactive materials, and releases of etiological or hazardous biological materials must be
36 reported to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center immediately (1-800-424-8802). Refer to
37 www.nrc.uscg.mil on the internet for updated information on the National Response Center. The U.S. Coast Guard
38 or the Environmental Protection Agency will respond with or designate an On-Scene Coordinator who will ensure
39 that proper action is being taken to minimize the impact and clean up the spill. Advise the Southeast
40 Regional Oil Spill and Hazardous Materials Coordinator after ensuring that the National Response Center has been
41 notified. The Southeast Regional Oil Spill and Hazardous Materials Coordinator will ensure the WASO
42 Coordinator is notified. Parks should be prepared to assist the On-Scene Coordinator with logistics and information
43 about sensitive park resources. Park staff should not participate directly in clean up activities unless trained and
44 certified in handling hazardous materials. The Park is to document affect of the spill on park resources, operations,
45 and visitor services. Also document the amount of staff time directed towards the incident.

50 Southeast Region Coordinators
NPS Southeast Region Oil Spill and Hazardous Material Coordinator – Brian Cook
Office: 404-507-5727
Cell: 404-512-0885

NPS Southeast Region Emergency Services Coordinator – Mark Ruggiero Office: 404-507-5625 Cell: 850-766-4398
WASO Coordinator – Dave Anderson Office: 202-513-7168 CL#: 240-205-3203

1
2 **PUBLIC HEALTH**

3 When a Public Health Emergency arises, call the Regional Public Health Service Consultant.
4

5 **OTHER EMERGENCIES**

6 "Reporting and mobilization of resources for other emergencies will be as outlined within the NPS Southeast Region
7 Emergency Operations Plan, dated 2009. For natural disaster or other all-hazard emergencies, contact: Mark
8 Ruggiero (Southeast Regional Emergency Services Coordinator); or Jeff Brice (Assistant Area Coordinator (NPS) –
9 SACC)."
10

11 **MANDATORY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REGIONAL OFFICE NOTIFICATION SITUATIONS**

- 12 • NPS units should notify the Regional Fire Management Office under the following circumstances:
13 • Action was taken on a fire and a request will be made for regional funding
14 • Wildland fire results in an injury or a structure/dwelling is damaged or destroyed
15 • Assistance from a cooperating agency was incurred
16 • NPS Southeast Region Emergency Services Coordinator - will be notified for all SAR, SCUBA, EMS and
17 natural disasters occurrences.
18

19 **Southeast Regional Office Incident Reporting Procedures**

20 The Regional Law Enforcement Specialist, should be notified of Level 1 incidents by telephone, and should be sent
21 a copy of cc reports for both Level 1 and 2 incidents. Refer to Southeast Regional Office Emergency Operations
22 Plan, dated 2011.
23

Jon Pierce - Regional Law Enforcement Specialist Office : 404-507-5726 Cell: 678-634-8395

24 For after-hours telephone numbers, please see Chapter 50 "NPS Southeast Regional
25 Office," or contact SACC.
26
27

28 **LEVEL 1 - Immediate Reporting**
29

- 30 • **Employee Fatalities:** All employee deaths from any cause, whether on duty or off duty.
31 • **High Property Damage:** Any incident resulting in property damage in excess of \$100,000.
32 • **Officer Fatality or Threatening Injury:** The death or life-threatening injury to any law enforcement employee
33 while in the performance of his or her duties.
34 • **Serious Crimes:** Serious crimes, which occur in any park area.
35 • **Drug Incidents:** Major or unusual drug seizures or drug-related arrests in which the circumstances, value,
36 and/or the amount of the seizure could attract media or political attention.
37 • **Political Officials:** Serious incidents, major events or serious accidents involving senior political officials of
38 state, Federal or foreign governments or their immediate families.
39 • **Terrorist Activity:** Actual, attempted or planned terrorist activity, sabotage or other hostile acts against NPS
40 property.

- 1 • **Significant Law Enforcement Events:** Significant law enforcement events other than planned special events,
2 which have required or may require the dispatch of specially trained teams to augment normal enforcement
3 capabilities.
- 4 • **Disasters:** Major, natural or human-caused disasters, which cause significant injuries, resource or property
5 damage to or impact on visitor use of an NPS- administered area, including dam failures, floods and storms.
6 Wildfires are excluded; they should be reported to the Branch of Fire Management in Boise.
- 7 • **Weapons Discharge:** The discharge of a weapon by an employee toward another individual or any discharge
8 of a weapon at any employee.
- 9 • **Use of Force:** Any use of force by a law enforcement officer those results in serious injury or death to another
10 individual.

LEVEL 2 - Standard Reporting

All incidents under these criteria are to be reported to WASO Ranger Activities via hard copy mail within three working days of the incident's occurrence along with a carbon copy to NPS Regional Law Enforcement Specialist.

Incidents of exceptional significance – Level 2+ incidents, i.e., those that have or will likely draw major media coverage – should be reported immediately following the procedures for Level 1 reports.

- 17 • **Visitor Fatalities:** Visitor fatalities, except by natural causes.
- 18 • **Employee Injuries:** Serious injury* to any employee, either on or off duty.
- 19 • **Employee Arrest:** Arrest or detention of any employee on felony charges, regardless of arresting or detaining
20 agency.
- 21 • **ARPA Incidents:** Any incident which will likely lead to an Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA)
22 prosecution.
- 23 • **Wildlife Incidents:** Wildlife attacks or incidents which result in serious injury* or death to persons.
- 24 • **Drug Incidents:** Drug seizures in which the value of the drugs exceeds \$5,000, or major drug cases which are
25 investigated by other agencies but which were initiated by the NPS or in which the NPS assisted.
- 26 • **Missing Persons:** Confirmed missing persons where foul play is suspected.
- 27 • **Felony Arrests:** Multiple felony arrests.
- 28 • **Demonstrations:** Demonstrations or other hostile acts (planned, purported or actual) on or adjacent to parks.
- 29 • **Malicious Destruction:** Significant malicious damage to cultural or natural resources.
- 30 • **Theft and Burglary:** Monetary losses in excess of \$10,000 through theft or burglary (excluding vehicle thefts).
- 31 • **Search and Rescue:** Major searches and/or rescues generally defined as any SAR requiring a significant call-
32 out of resources or a prolonged or difficult search.
- 33 • **Aircraft Accidents:** Aircraft accidents, which are reportable under Aviation Management Directorate (AMD)
34 criteria or involve military, civilian or non-NPS owned or contracted aircraft.
- 35 • **International Events:** Any significant event involving foreign nationals or international cooperation.
- 36 • **Arson:** Any incident of known or suspected arson.
- 37 • **Poaching Incidents:** Any significant animal, plant, mineral, pale ontological or other park natural resource
38 poaching incident.
- 39 • **Multiple Injuries:** In-patient hospitalization of five or more NPS personnel or non-NPS personnel in any single
40 accident.
- 41 • **Structural Fires:** Structural fires involving any NPS-owned property.
- 42 • **Special Events:** Any event in a park which requires significant mobilization of resources, attracts substantial
43 media attention, and/or has particular relevance to the National Park System or Service or its cultural, historical
44 and natural assets.
- 45 • For purposes of this reporting system, serious injuries are defined as those that require
46 advanced life support and/or lead to overnight hospitalization.
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Report Contents

All reports should contain the following information, in so far as the solicited information is known and available:

Subject	Name or Description of Incident
Time and Date	Time and date of occurrence.
Location	Brief description of incident location.
Summary	Brief description of incident.
Names/Titles	Names and titles of persons involved if appropriate.
Status of Case	What's being done and/or will be done next.
Agencies	Other federal, state, local or other agencies involved or to become involved in the incident.
Media	The level of media interest and involvement.
Submitter	Name and title of person submitting report, which should appear on the report itself (not in a Lotus Notes cover).
Contact	Name and telephone number of the park person who can be contacted for additional information, or a 24-hour contact number.

U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Serious incidents are to be telephoned immediately to Southeast Regional Chief, Office of Refuge Law Enforcement Stan Garner 404-679-7213. All reportable incidents are to be reported via telephone and a follow-up email to Stan_Garner@fws.gov.

What is a serious incident? A serious incident is a law enforcement incident, emergency condition, unusual event, or homeland security concern that could focus public interest on the Department or the Service or result in inquiries to the Secretary of the Interior or the Director.

The Chief, Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (DRLE):

- (1) Has primary responsibility for ensuring that serious incidents are reported to the Director, other Service officials, respective Regional Law Enforcement Chiefs, and the IOC;
- (2) Develops and revises procedures for reporting serious incidents;
- (3) Supervises the Service Duty Officer(s); and
- (4) Provides the Directorate with summary information about serious incidents

A. Serious Incidents Servicewide: Table 1-2 summarizes the types of serious incidents you must report for information on how and when).

Table 1-2: Serious Incidents to Report to the Service Duty Officer	
Type of Incident	Description
1. Employee death or serious injury	Death, life-threatening injury, or hospitalization of an employee that occurs while performing official duties.
2. Other death	Death of a person that occurs on Service property.
3. Criminal incidents	<input type="checkbox"/> Terrorist threats or activity (including significant vandalism or hostile acts against people or property). <input type="checkbox"/> Theft or loss of explosives or explosives materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Threats to employees. <input type="checkbox"/> Assaults to employees. <input type="checkbox"/> Bomb threats.

Table 1-2: Serious Incidents to Report to the Service Duty Officer	
Type of Incident	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discharge of a firearm when associated with a crime against a person. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrations involving civil disobedience. <input type="checkbox"/> Hostage or barricade situations. <input type="checkbox"/> Detention facility incidents resulting in serious bodily injury or death. <input type="checkbox"/> Significant border incidents requiring the deployment of law enforcement personnel (see Table 1-4 for specifics about the Southwest Border). <input type="checkbox"/> Kidnappings. <input type="checkbox"/> Hate crimes involving violent acts. <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle pursuits involving significant property damage, serious bodily injury, or death. <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious people or packages where extraordinary action by law enforcement personnel is necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Critical missing people or Amber Alerts. <input type="checkbox"/> Arsons of a significant nature. <input type="checkbox"/> Significant environmental crimes or Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) violations on Service lands. <input type="checkbox"/> Crimes that might result in significant media or political attention. <input type="checkbox"/> Theft of aircraft from lands under the jurisdiction of the Service or theft of aircraft owned, operated, or under the operational control of the Service (regardless of who owns the land). <input type="checkbox"/> Theft of Service badges, credentials, uniforms, vehicles, license plates, or other official Service insignia. <input type="checkbox"/> Theft of Service-issued firearms. <input type="checkbox"/> Drug seizures meeting or exceeding the following thresholds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Methamphetamine (1 pound) o Marijuana plants (1,000 plants) o Processed marijuana (500 pounds) o Cocaine (1 pound) o Heroin (1 pound) o LSD (100 doses) o Psilocybin mushrooms (1 pound) o “Club Drugs” (e.g., MDMA, Rohypnol, GHB, Ketamine) (100 doses)
4. Use of force incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use of force by law enforcement personnel that results in the serious injury or death of a subject. <input type="checkbox"/> Physical application of an Electronic Control Device (ECD) (e.g., Taser®) to a subject. <input type="checkbox"/> Any police canine deployment where a bite occurs. <input type="checkbox"/> Any intentional discharge of a firearm by law enforcement personnel (excluding non-injury discharges during training, recreational shooting activities, and authorized administrative uses such as the dispatch of wildlife or nuisance animals). <input type="checkbox"/> Any unintentional discharge of a firearm by law enforcement personnel (excluding non-injury discharges during training).
5. Significant law enforcement events	When deploying specially trained teams to augment normal Service law enforcement and security capabilities.
6. Significant search and rescue incidents	When they occur on lands under the jurisdiction of the Service.
7. Aircraft accidents	When they occur on lands under the jurisdiction of the Service or accidents involving aircraft owned, operated, or under the operational control of the Service (regardless of who owns the land). Also must report these incidents in accordance with 330 FW 5 , Aircraft Mishap Notification, Investigation, and Reporting.

Table 1-2: Serious Incidents to Report to the Service Duty Officer	
Type of Incident	Description
8. Political incidents	When they involve political officials of Federal, State, or foreign governments or their immediate families and occur on lands under the jurisdiction of the Service.
9. Natural or human-caused disasters	When they occur on lands under the jurisdiction of the Service and cause significant damage. This includes hazardous material spills. The threshold of property damage must be in accordance with 446 DM 17 .
10. Loss of Service firearms, ECDs or law enforcement badges and credentials	Any loss of firearms, ECDs, or law enforcement badges and credentials.
11. Property damage of more than \$100,000	When it occurs on lands under the jurisdiction of the Service.
12. Incidents that could result in significant media interest	When they occur on or are adjacent to lands under the jurisdiction of the Service.

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B. Serious Incidents Affecting Homeland Security: Table 1-3 summarizes the types of incidents that may affect homeland security that you must report immediately.

Table 1-3: Other Serious Incidents Related to Homeland Security to Report	
Type of Incident	Description
1. Critical Infrastructure Protection	Information regarding vulnerabilities, surveillance, physical targeting, or cyber targeting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Major national monuments and icons, <input type="checkbox"/> Key resources, such as major dams or major oil/natural gas production and transmission infrastructure, and <input type="checkbox"/> Major public or private events taking place on Service lands.
2. Land and Maritime Borders (see Table 1-4 for Southwest Border incidents)	Information regarding illegal cross-border activity (routes, methods, conveyances, and organizations) that impacts Service lands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Human smuggling, <input type="checkbox"/> Drug smuggling, and <input type="checkbox"/> Smuggling weapons or other dangerous articles.
3. Terrorism	Information regarding terrorist(s); activists with terrorist intent; insurgent; or criminal element plans, intentions, activities, capabilities, or threats to attack any Service critical infrastructure or key resource, Service facility, or personnel, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indications of illegal entry into the United States by terrorists, <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious activities that may indicate pre-operational planning or targeting of Service infrastructure, resources, facilities, or personnel, <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious transportation conveyances operating in proximity to Service infrastructure or resources, <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving direct or implied threats (e.g., phone calls, emails, etc.) to infrastructure or resources, and <input type="checkbox"/> Information about the operations and tactics that terrorists may use to target infrastructure, resources, facilities, or personnel.

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C. Serious Incidents on the Southwest Border: Except for the incidents listed in Table 1-4 below, when one of the incidents from Tables 1-2 and 1-3 occurs on the Southwest Border, you must report it immediately. Table 1-4 summarizes the types of incidents you have 3 business days to report if they occur on a station within 100 miles of

1 the United States’ Southwest International Border. For these incidents only, you must submit a written incident
 2 report within 3 business days of the incident.
 3
 4

Table 1-4: Southwest Border Incident Reporting (3-day reporting requirement)

Type of Incident	Description
1. Illegal cross-border activities	Information regarding illegal cross-border activity that crosses or impacts Service lands such as: <input type="checkbox"/> Human smuggling, <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle pursuits, <input type="checkbox"/> Firearms or weapons discharged or seized, <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned vehicles, and <input type="checkbox"/> Other unusual activity or significant damage to natural resources.
2. Assaults	<input type="checkbox"/> Assaults on law enforcement officers (including officers from other agencies), employees, or visitors.
3. Threats	<input type="checkbox"/> Threats to law enforcement officers, employees, or visitors.
4. Drug Seizures or Arrests	When the value or amount exceeds a personal use standard. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify type, quantity, and value of the drugs. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the quantity or value of cash, vehicles, firearms, or property related to the incident. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify citizenship of the arrestee(s). <input type="checkbox"/> Identify if it was a violent incident or if any threats occurred. <input type="checkbox"/> Include seizures and arrests conducted by other agencies, if available.
5. Border Fence Breaches	Also report pedestrian or vehicle barrier breaches.
6. Undocumented Alien Apprehensions	<input type="checkbox"/> Report apprehensions other agencies conduct on Service land, if available. <input type="checkbox"/> Report deceased, undocumented aliens.

5
 6 **Special Operations Response Team – (SORT)**
 7 SORT Commander: Stan Garner
 8

9 In the case of an event which requires a Special Operations Response Team (SORT), and time permits, the Refuge
 10 Manager must submit a written request to the Chief of Refuge Law Enforcement explaining the need for the request
 11 and outlining the number and type of resources needed and estimated cost. The authority for activating a SORT can
 12 only be granted by the Regional Director or his/her designee. If time does not permit a written request, or for
 13 guidance in determining if a SORT Team is needed, contact Stan Garner at 404-679-7213 or cell number 404-825-
 14 7693.
 15

16 **MANDATORY U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE REGIONAL OFFICE NOTIFICATION SITUATIONS**

- 17 • FWS units should notify the Regional Fire Management Office under the following circumstances:
- 18 • Action was taken on a fire and a request will be made for regional funding
- 19 • Wildland fire results in an injury or a structure/dwelling is damaged or destroyed
- 20 • Assistance from a cooperating agency was incurred
- 21 • FWS Regional - Emergency Services Coordinator - will be notified for all natural disasters occurrences.
- 22 • FWS Regional - Law Enforcement Specialist –will be notified for all law enforcement incidents which are
- 23 identified in previous tables.
 24

25 Report Contents

26 All reports should contain the following information, in so far as the solicited information is known and
 27 available:
 28
 29

Subject	Name or Description of Incident
Time and Date	Time and date of occurrence.
Location	Brief description of incident location.
Summary	Brief description of incident.
Names/Titles	Names and titles of persons involved if appropriate.
Status of Case	What's being done and/or will be done next.
Agencies	Other federal, state, local or other agencies involved or to become involved in the incident.
Media	The level of media interest and involvement.
Submitter	Name and title of person submitting report, which should appear on the report itself (not in a Lotus Notes/Microsoft Outlook cover).
Contact	Name and telephone number of the park person who can be contacted for additional information, or a 24-hour contact number.

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Southeast Regional Office Incident Reporting Procedures

The Southeast Regional Chief, Office of Refuge Law Enforcement, should be notified of serious incidents by telephone, and should be sent a copy of reports.

Stan Garner - FWS Regional Chief, Office of Refuge Law Enforcement
Office : 404-679-7213 Cell: 404-825-7693

For after-hours telephone numbers, please see Chapter 50 "FWS Region 4 Office," or contact SACC.

CHEMICAL SPILLS (OIL AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS)

Contact for Resources

USFWS Southeast Region Spill Coordinator listed below.

All oil spills, hazardous chemical releases, pipeline accidents, transportation accidents involving hazardous material or oil, releases of radioactive materials, and releases of etiological or hazardous biological materials must be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center immediately (1-800-424-8802). Refer to www.nrc.uscg.mil on the Internet for updated information on the National Response Center. The U.S. Coast Guard or the Environmental Protection Agency will respond with or designate an On-Scene Coordinator who will ensure that proper action is being taken to minimize the impact and clean up the spill. Advise the Southeast Regional Oil Spill and Hazardous Materials Coordinator after ensuring that the National Response Center has been notified. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be prepared to assist the On-Scene Coordinator with logistics and information about sensitive agency resources. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff should not participate directly in cleanup activities unless trained and certified in handling hazardous materials. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to document affect(s) of the spill on agency resources, operations, and visitor services. Also document the amount of staff time directed towards the incident.

50 Southeast Region Coordinators
USFWS Southeast Region Oil Spill and Hazardous Material Coordinator – Greg Masson
Office: 404-679-7223
Cell: 678-428-4215

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29

RESERVED FOR STATEMENT ON BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS RESPONSIBILITIES

SOUTHERN AREA AIRCRAFT RADIO EQUIPMENT AND FREQUENCY MANAGEMENT

Equipment Management

9600 channel radios and NFES #004390 Starter Systems are available through the Southern Interagency Fire Cache. Any State or Federal Wildfire Agency with a tactical aircraft can request 9600 channel radios by placing a supply resource order through normal ordering channels to SACC.

Frequency Management

”Flight Following” (168.650MHz) has been adopted as a National Flight frequency by all Regions. It can be used as an initial air-to-ground contact frequency but not as a primary air-to-ground frequency. Transmitters on this frequency must be equipped with an encoder 110.9Hz

“Air Guard” (168.625MHz) is a "guard" frequency for initial contact with and for emergency radio traffic only. This frequency is not a discussion frequency. All aircraft are required to monitor Air Guard at all times, regardless of what other frequencies they are monitoring. All mobiles and handheld radios within Region 8 should be programmed with these two frequencies. Transmitters on this frequency must be equipped with an encoder 110.9Hz

Note: It is important that dispatchers monitor and control the use of air net frequencies.

Air Tactical Frequencies. There are four air tactical frequencies programmed into a 9600-channel radio. They are:

Designator	Frequency	Channel
Air Tactics 1	166.675	Channel 1
Air Tactics 2	169.150	Channel 2
Air Tactics 3	169.200	Channel 3
Air Tactics 4	170.000	Channel 10

These frequencies were established to relieve some of the traffic from the air net frequency. The aircraft should monitor air net while using this frequency. When necessary, air tactical frequencies may be reassigned by Dispatchers. Dispatchers should refer to these frequencies as air tactical and give the frequency.

State Coordination Centers and SACC must coordinate with each other in the assignment of frequencies for aircraft use. Prior to flight, frequencies other than Guard frequencies should be assigned to aircraft by phone. This can easily be done if the requesting office provides SACC, at the time of request, with an aircraft contact frequency for use on arrival in the incident area. SACC will then pass the frequency on to the office filling the request.

FOREST SERVICE PROCEDURES

In a forest fire emergency situation, emergency temporary VHF aircraft frequency assignments may be obtained by the Communications Unit Leader in the 118-136 MHz band where use of aircraft not equipped with Forest Service radios or when the communications load is too heavy for existing fire and air operations networks.

Incident Commander will make a request to the SACC Coordinator through regular dispatching channels:

- Number of frequencies required.
- Type(s) of aircraft involved.
- Number of aircraft involved.
- Area of operation, given as a 100-mile radius of a central location

**1 The SACC Aircraft Coordinator will forward that request to the CDO at NIRSC who will coordinate with
2 the FAA.
3**

- 4 • The above action will be taken PRIOR to activation of any aeronautical frequency since conflict with air traffic
5 control or other flight service communications could be hazardous.**
- 6 • SACC will be advised as soon as the emergency is over, so that the frequencies can be returned to the FAA.
7**

**8 If the frequency being requested is a VHF FM radio frequency (150-174MHz Band) then the SACC aircraft
9 coordinator or equipment/radio coordinator will contact the Regional Frequency Coordinator for assistance. The
10 Regional Frequency Coordinator will contact the Washington Office for frequency assistance or work with the NIFC
11 CDO for frequency assistance. If for any reason the Regional Frequency Coordinator is not available then the
12 request will be forwarded to the NIFC CDO. The CDO will bring the Regional Frequency Coordinator up to date
13 when they become available.
14**

15 DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AGENCIES

**16 This Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of the
17 Interior (DOI) is for the purpose for sharing assigned radio frequencies for air-to-air and air-to-ground
18 communications west of the 95th meridian.
19**

**20 The frequency for the National Air Guard is 168.625 for Government aircraft assigned to incidents. It is for
21 emergency communications for aviation. A separate receiver is required in assigned aircraft which permits
22 continuous monitoring. Transmitters on this frequency should be equipped with a CTCSS Encoder on 110.9 Hz.**

- 23 • Emergency ground - to - aircraft communications.**
- 24 • Emergency aircraft - to - aircraft communications.**
- 25 • Initial call, recall, and re-direction of aircraft when no other contact frequency is available.**
- 26 • All other frequencies are assigned by the Incident as needed.
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1 RADIO FREQUENCIES
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COORDINATION/DISPATCH CENTERS					
COORDINATION/DISPATCH CENTER (LOCATION)	CALL SIGN	NATIONAL FLIGHT FOLLOW	AIR GUARD	DISP. NET 171.550	PRIMARY CENTER FREQUENCY/TONE
ALABAMA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (MONTGOMERY, AL)	ALABAMA DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	168.725
ARKANSAS-OKLAHOMA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (HOT SPRINGS, AR)	HOT SPRINGS DISPATCH	YES	YES	YES	169.675 EAST 169.175 WEST
GEORGE WASHINGTON-JEFFERSON INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (ROANOKE, VA)	ROANOKE DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	171.575
GEORGIA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (GAINSEVILLE, GA)	GAINSEVILLE DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	168.775
KENTUCKY INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (WINCHESTER, KY)	DANIEL BOONE DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	North Zone (164.9125 TX & RX) tone 103.5 South Zone: (164.800 TX & RX) tone 103.5 Redbird Zone (164.9375 TX & RX) tone 103.5
LOUISIANA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (PINEVILLE, LA)	PINEVILLE DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	169.925 110.9
MISSISSIPPI INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (JACKSON, MS)	JACKSON DISPATCH	NO	NO	NO	
NORTH CAROLINA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (ASHEVILLE, NC)	ASHEVILLE DISPATCH	YES	YES	YES	168.725 MTNS EAST Tone 103.5

SAVANNAH RIVER INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (NEW ELLENTON, SC)	SAVANNAH RIVER DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	169.975
SOUTH CAROLINA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (COLUMBIA, SC)	COLUMBIA DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	164.125 136.5 168.675
TENNESSEE INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (CLEVELAND, TN)	CHEROKEE DISPATCH	YES	YES	NO	169.925 Tone 103.5
TEXAS INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (LUFKIN, TX)	LUFKIN DISPATCH	NO	YES	NO	168.725
VIRGINIA INTERAGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA)	CHARLOTTESVILLE DISPATCH	NO	NO	NO	N/A

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National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG)

Website to NIFOG: <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/nifog/>

The National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG) is a technical reference for emergency communications planning and for radio technicians responsible for radios that will be used in disaster response. The NIFOG includes rules and regulations for use of nationwide and other interoperability channels, tables of frequencies and standard channel names, and other reference material, formatted as a pocket-sized guide for radio technicians to carry with them.

AIRCRAFT RADIOS

No aircraft will operate (or continue to operate) on fires without radio communications.

Except for leadplanes and airtankers, pilots will identify their aircraft by type of aircraft and "N" number (e.g.: King Air 182Z).

Special use aircraft have 9600 channel radios plus the VHF frequencies. Other light fixed wing aircraft will normally only have radios with VHF capabilities.

WILDERNESS FIRE MANAGEMENT

USDA FOREST SERVICE

The Regional Forester is responsible for approving the use of prescribed fire and natural ignition fires managed for resource benefits on a wilderness by wilderness basis through approval of the appropriate management plan. The management plan sets forth the standards and guidelines for the use and application of prescribed fire and natural ignition fires managed for resource benefits and the methods of monitoring results (FSM 2324.04b).

During a wildfire emergency response every effort should be made to utilize the tools and methods that will minimize impacts to Wilderness and Wilderness values. Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) should be employed whenever possible; however Wilderness values must never be allowed to compromise safety of firefighters or the public.

At times it may be necessary to utilize equipment, typically under extreme circumstances and to protect life and or private property. In those cases see FSM 2320 for current direction, the 2007 version is excerpted and summarized below:

1 During a wildfire emergency response the Forest Supervisor has the authority to approve:

- 2** ➤ Chainsaws
- 3** ➤ Mist blowers
- 4** ➤ Vehicle travel
- 5** ➤ Helicopters
- 6** ➤ Helicopter aerial ignition during burnout or backfiring operations
- 7** ➤ Use of fire retardant

8
9 During a wildfire emergency response, the Regional Forester may approve:

- 10** ➤ Dozers and heavy equipment use

11
12 When requesting Regional Forester approvals, the Wilderness Fire Checklist form below should be completed and
13 sent to SACC.

14
15 SACC will contact:

- 16** ➤ Jimmy Gaudry, Regional Wilderness Program Manager – 404-347-2761 or (c) 404-805-8110
- 17** ➤ Ann Christensen, Director Recreation/Wilderness/Heritage/Interpretation - 404-347-2479
- 18** ➤ Stephen P. Weaver, Regional Assistant Director - Fire & Emergency Operations - 404- 353-7083
- 19** ➤ Dan Olsen, Director Fire and Aviation Management – 404-347-3464

20
21 This staff will collectively provide advice and guidance to the Regional Forester.

22
23 **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

24 National Park Service policy pertaining to using prescribed fires (PF) and natural ignition fires managed for resource
25 benefits in wilderness areas is that these fires may be used to reduce fuel loadings or change vegetative patterns and
26 diversity caused by the suppression of wildland fires. In addition, prescribed fires and natural ignition fires may be
27 used in wilderness areas to keep wildland fires from threatening developments, significant resources, or from
28 leaving the wilderness. Natural ignition fires with an approved fire management plan containing pre-determined
29 criteria and a management decision tree can be managed and not immediately suppressed.

30
31 Guidance and approval procedures for the use of mechanized equipment in wilderness areas of the National Park
32 Service are outlined in individual unit fire management and wilderness management plans

33
34 **U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE**

35 Wildfires in wilderness or other especially reserved areas are appropriately suppressed unless there is an approved
36 prescribed fire plan. The use of all suppression methods, tools and equipment, including motorized equipment, is
37 authorized in wilderness areas or proposed wilderness areas; however suppression methods least damaging to
38 wilderness values and objectives will be used. Proper planning and approval of the plan should reduce the concern
39 about the "appropriateness" of the suppression action.

40

NATIONAL FOREST
WILDERNESS FIRE CHECKLIST

ARTHUR CARHART NATIONAL WILDERNESS TRAINING CENTER



MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
DECISION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

“ . . . except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act...”

– The Wilderness Act, 1964

Introduction

The Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) is designed to assist wilderness managers in making appropriate decisions in wilderness. Use of the MRDG requires familiarity with the difference between wilderness and other public lands as defined by the Wilderness Act

This Overview document provides general information about the MRDG process, its origination, and how it relates to other processes such as NEPA analysis. Please refer to the accompanying MRDG [Instructions](#) and MRDG [Worksheets](#) for specific information about completing the MRDG.

Wilderness Act Guidance

The concept of Minimum Requirements comes from Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964:

“Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.” (emphasis added)

Applicable actions include, but are not limited to, scientific monitoring, research, recreational developments (trails, bridges, signs, etc.), and activities related to special provisions mandated by the Wilderness Act or subsequent legislation (such as grazing, exercising mineral rights, access to inholdings, maintenance of water developments, and commercial services).

1 The following three boxes contain excerpts from the Wilderness Act of 1964 that may be useful
2 reminders of key provisions of the law applicable to the use of this Minimum Requirements Decision
3 Guide.
4

5 What is the purpose of wilderness?
6

7 “In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing
8 mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States..., leaving no lands
9 designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the
10 policy of Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of
11 an enduring resource of wilderness.” Section 2(a)
12

13 What is wilderness?
14

15 “...lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition...” Section 2(a)
16

17 “...an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without
18 permanent improvements or human habitation...” Section 2(c)
19

20 “...generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s
21 work substantially unnoticeable...” Section 2(c)
22

23 “...has an outstanding opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation...”
24 Section 2(c)
25

26 “...may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or
27 historical value.” Section 2(c)
28

29 How is wilderness administered?
30

31 “...shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them
32 unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas,
33 the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding
34 their use and enjoyment as wilderness...” Section 2(a)
35

36 “A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby
37 recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man is a visitor
38 who does not remain.” Section 2(c)
39

40 “An area of wilderness is...protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and... its preservation
41 and use in an unimpaired condition...” Section 2(c)
42

43 “...each agency administering wilderness... shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the
44 area...” Section 4(b)
45

46 “...wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational,
47 conservation, and historical use.” Section 4(b)
48

49 In addition to the Wilderness Act, subsequent legislation and agency policy may influence
50 determination of the minimum required for action. In some instances, Agencies have included more
51 guidance and definitions in their respective policies. Please See [Agency Guidelines](#) for more specific
52 information.
53

1 Use of this Guide

2 The MRDG is a process to identify, analyze, and select management actions that are the minimum
3 necessary for wilderness administration. It applies this direction from the Act and incorporates a two-step
4 process. Step 1 determines whether administrative action is necessary. If action is found to be necessary,
5 then Step 2 provides guidance for determining the minimum activity. Step 2 has been referred to as
6 determining the minimum tool but could include any type of activity, method, or equipment.

7
8 The MRDG can be used as:

- 9 - A process for evaluation and documentation;
- 10 - A guide to help discuss proposals with interested parties; or
- 11 - A review of on-going management practices to determine if they are necessary or if a
12 Less intrusive practice can be implemented.

13
14 The level of detail and effort necessary to effectively utilize the MRDG process depends on the scope and
15 complexity of the issue or problem being considered. One person might adequately analyze simple actions;
16 complex actions may require the coordination of several resource specialists. Likewise, some issues
17 warrant public scoping and involvement with stakeholders to provide information, gather input, and make a
18 better decision.

19
20 The MRDG Worksheets provide a series of questions about the necessity of taking any action to resolve a
21 situation and the most appropriate methods or tools to use. The decision to approve an action is a critical
22 aspect of wilderness management. At times, the decision is not straightforward and requires a delicate
23 balancing act.

**24
25 Emergencies**

26 Do not use the MRDG for emergency situations; follow procedures already outlined in approved
27 emergency plans. The minimum requirements concept should be incorporated into such plans when they
28 are being prepared, so that minimum necessary methods and tools are being utilized to meet the needs of
29 the emergency.

**30
31 Safety**

32 The safety of wilderness visitors, employees, volunteers, and contractors is a priority in all decisions and
33 actions. Complying with Section 4(c) of The Wilderness Act and conducting a minimum requirement
34 analysis using the MRDG does not alter or diminish this need.

35
36 The MRDG is intended to help identify, analyze and select management actions that are the minimum
37 necessary for wilderness without compromising safety. A fair and honest evaluation of all available
38 options, within agency safety requirements, is needed to make an appropriate decision for wilderness.
39 Wilderness managers are encouraged to learn, cultivate, and share traditional and primitive skills and
40 develop alternative minimum impact methods and tools that allow activities to be accomplished safely with
41 a minimal amount of impairment to the wilderness character.

**42
43 The MRDG and NEPA**

44 The Minimum Requirements Decision Guide is designed to assist with preparation of a NEPA analysis, if
45 needed, but is not a substitute for a NEPA analysis. Portions of the MRDG may be transferable to a
46 subsequent NEPA analysis as shown below.

47
48 Agency NEPA guidelines do not necessarily require a process to determine if administrative action in
49 wilderness is necessary or to select the administrative activity that causes the least adverse effect to the
50 wilderness resource and character. The MRDG provides a method to determine the necessity of an action
51 and how to minimize impacts; NEPA analysis compares and discloses the environmental effects of
52 alternatives, documents a decision, and requires public involvement.

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Process Comparison

Minimum Requirements Decision Guide	NEPA Analysis
STEP 1: Determine if Action is necessary.	
Description	Purpose and need for action Existing environment or condition
Valid existing rights, special provisions, other legislation, or other guidance from policy or plans (Step 1 A-C)	Management direction
Wilderness character (Step 1 E) Public purposes of wilderness (Step 1 F)	Issues
STEP 2: Determine the minimum tool.	
Alternative descriptions	Proposed Action and Alternatives
Alternative comparison criteria	Alternative comparison by issues
Effects to wilderness character	Environmental consequences
Selected alternative	Decision
Rationale	Reasons for the decision
Monitoring/reporting requirements	Decision conditions

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The MRDG and the Planning Process

The degree to which a MRDG can be useful in the planning process will vary depending on the scope of the process and the objectives for the plan. Listed below are the three typical planning levels in use by the agencies and a suggested use of the MRDG.

Planning Level	Use of the MRDG
<u>Comprehensive Land Use Planning</u> (i.e. forest plans, park plans, refuge plans, resource management plans, and wilderness management plans) - Establish or modify desired condition, general unit standards or guidelines and/or make land use allocations	Use the MRDG to help screen alternatives in anticipation of the need to authorize actions in the future while insuring the preservation of wilderness resource and character.
<u>Programmatic Planning</u> (i.e. Trail Plans, Weeds Treatment Plans, Monitoring Plans, Restoration Plans, Step Down Plans, etc.) - Analysis of multiple, similar, or routine project proposals or activities (trail maintenance, monitoring, dam maintenance, etc.) in one assessment	Use the MRDG to prepare a single analysis for similar, current, and/or future actions where the social and biophysical values and potential effects will be nearly identical. Create a 'decision tree' or 'GO/NO GO checklist' to be able to assess the necessity for action involving the Section 4(c) uses as similar needs come along in the future.
<u>Project or Site Specific Planning</u> (i.e. wildlife survey, stream crossing, trail repair, weed treatment, etc.) - Analysis of site-specific or non-recurring actions.	Use the MRDG to determine if administrative action is necessary and, if so, determine the minimum activity.

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Habits, Assumptions, and the Spirit of the Wilderness Act

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- Limited budgets and other priorities for staff and crew time make implementing the minimum requirements provision of the Wilderness Act more challenging. It's tempting to use the Section 4(c) provision, and the MRDG to justify an exception to allow use of motorized equipment, or any of the other prohibited uses, thinking we will get the job done quicker, easier, or cheaper without having to obtain the additional primitive/traditional skills training or tools or utilize an unfamiliar method.
- The National Wilderness Preservation System was established, in part, to designate lands as wilderness to guard against a "growing mechanization" and to provide for areas to be managed "in contrast" to other lands. The Wilderness Act contains no provision that mandates use of "quicker, cheaper, and easier" as criteria for authorizing any of the prohibited uses. The only criteria are to determine that it is the minimum necessary requirement. Agency policy further defines or adds to these decision criteria.
- The myths about safety, cost, efficiency, and resource protection related to use of primitive/traditional skills, tools, and travel methods vs. motorized equipment can be dispelled. Training and tools are available, and the wilderness resource and character can be protected with creative use of information, education, and even temporary closures if necessary. Habits that make us think that motorized equipment is the best choice can be changed and the MRDG can help if it is used as an analysis tool and not a justification statement.

APPENDIX A

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPILLS - INITIAL DISCOVERY

NOTE: advise reporting unit not to become involved in rescue, containment, plugging of leaks, or other operational activities. Advise them to restrict their role to self-protection, hazard identification, area security and reporting.

When the initial report is received, the Dispatcher should ask the following:

- Describe the scene.
- Can you see any numbers or placards on the vehicle or containers? If so, what are they? Are any warning signs or symbols visible?
- Is the driver or any passengers available to talk to?
- Is anyone injured, ill, vomiting, overcome, trapped or in need of rescue?
- Is the spill in progress? Can you hear or see leaking valves or containers?
- Are there any response units on the scene?
- Advise the reporting unit:
- Keep a safe distance and stay upwind of the spill.
- Use the DOT Guidebook and pass on the warning associated with the indicated chemical.
- Protect yourself. Do not touch, walk into or inhale smoke, vapors or fumes from the spilled material. Do not attempt to obtain a sample. Treat as if it is toxic.
- Secure the area. Stop traffic if feasible. Do not allow entry until proven safe by the local authorities responding to the spill.
- Do not attempt rescue (leave that to trained personnel with protective equipment).

Notify:

- Local authorities with response responsibilities.
- District Ranger.
- HAZMAT Coordinator.
- Regional HAZMAT Coordinator within 24 hours.