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To: IDL Firefighters, Staff, and Agency Cooperators

From: Dustin Miller, Director

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Subject: Leader's Intent – 2020 Fire Season

As we enter into the 2020 fire season, we are preparing for the new challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Wildland firefighting comes with inherent risks, and now we must evolve and adapt our approach to fire management to address this new, unknown risk. I have no doubt our fire managers will continue to exercise good judgement when leading crews both on and off the fire line. This year more than ever, solid planning, sound decision-making, and flexibility will be crucial to our success. Moreover, I am directing that non-fire personnel in our agency be prepared to participate wherever needed to support the fire program this fire season.

As with any fire season, there are two main messages I would like to emphasize:

#1 – Your safety and the safety of your peers and the citizens of Idaho are an unwavering priority when it comes to pre-suppression and fire suppression activities both on and off the fire line;

#2 – Idahoans expect us to suppress fires quickly and efficiently thereby reducing the impacts of wildfire on our resources and communities. Keeping fires small limits the health and safety exposure of firefighters and the public and reduces resource loss and costs.

Because of COVID-19 and the associated risks, agency leadership and fire managers have taken steps to ensure your safety and our success this fire season. Some of these steps include:

- Drafting Department-wide standard operating protocols designed to minimize the risk of spreading the virus,
- Securing additional contracted resources to enhance our initial attack capabilities, and
- Working closely with the Governor's office and our neighboring Federal agencies to help spread the message as it relates to fire prevention.

The COVID-19 situation has dramatically changed what we once viewed as "normal life" in Idaho, and while I expect all firefighters to take this risk seriously, we still have an important job to do. It's important that we continue to monitor the situation and adapt as we move into fire season. As such, our protocols, procedures, and daily business will likely be revised or adjusted in the coming weeks.

All fire personnel have a responsibility for safety on and off the fire line. Please rely on your training, experience, and best judgement to enable safe and effective decision-making. Remember, you are a part of something greater than yourself, and the Idaho Department of Lands Fire Program is held in high regard. As such, please remember your actions and behavior reflect the reputation of our agency.

Moving forward, I expect every Idaho Department of Lands Line Officer to ensure that safe and aggressive fire suppression objectives are incorporated into every Delegation of Authority or Leader's Intent when an incident management team (IMT) is utilized to manage a fire that threatens state or private forestlands.

Be safe, be aware, and please take care of each other. Your safety is paramount along with protecting Idaho's citizens and forests from damaging wildfires.

Thank you all for your service.