



# Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

## Monthly Conference Call – Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

### Participants

#### **Coordinating Group Members:**

X	BIA – Great Plains	Heath Estey		Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey
X	BIA – Rocky Mountain	Bryce Rogers		North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin
	BIA – Northwest Region	Brad Donahue	X	Montana DNRC	Cory Calnan
X	BLM – Montana/Dakotas	Aaron Thompson	X	Montana County Fire Wardens	Patrick Lonergan
X	BLM – Idaho	Dennis Strange	X	Montana DES	Brett Lloyd
X	NPS – Intermountain Region	Paul Cerda		Montana Sheriff's & Peace Officers	Steve Holton
X	USFS – Region 1	Craig Glazier	X	Montana Fire Chiefs Association	Rich Cowger
X	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Tate Fischer	X	Facilitator	Karly DeMars

**Deputies and Others:** CJ Johnson (USFS), Dave Williams (USFS), Marty Adell (BLM Idaho), Aitor Bidaburu (NWCG, NMAC), Corey Buhl (NR Operations), Kate Holsapple (NRCC), Beau Richardson (NRCC), Jason Jarrett (MT Sheriff's and Peace Officers).

### Guest Presentations / Discussions

- **DECISION | Montana Master Cooperative Fire Agreement Proposed Updates** – CJ Johnson  
CJ presented the proposed amendments to the Montana Master Cooperative Fire Agreement - Statewide Operating Plan, which include updates to streamline interagency coordination and clarify cost-sharing and resource mobilization procedures. Notable changes include removing Great Falls Dispatch due to consolidation with Helena, updating administrative references, and reinforcing the role of Local Government Fire Forces (LGFF) under DNRC agreements. Mutual Aid guidance was revised to remove the hour requirement as well as increased the minimum billing threshold between DNRC and federal agencies increased to \$10,000. DNRC also proposed clarifications on state aircraft use, allowing deployment on federally protected lands under emergency conditions with federal line officer approval. CJ emphasized that if approved, these updates need to be socialized. Additionally, the proposed updates will be reviewed by the USFS Washington Office before formal adoption. *[Attachment 1 is included for specific reference of proposed changes]*
  - **DECISION:** The six agencies party to the Montana Master Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement were all in support of the proposed revisions (BIA, BLM, FWS, MT DNRC, NPS, USFS).
- **INFORMATIONAL | Contracted Medical Direction – Status Update & Impacts** – Dave Williams
  - The Northern Rockies Incident Medical Specialist (IMS) Program is currently without a medical direction contract for the 2025 fire season following the expiration of Dr. Southard's agreement, which impacts all agency-affiliated medical personnel (MEDLs, EMTs, Paramedics) operating under this program. Since Montana requires medical direction for providers above basic EMT, the absence of a new contract limits the use of these trained resources, increasing reliance on contracted providers who bring their own medical oversight. The IMS Program, which supports approximately 150 personnel across multiple agencies and includes a significant number of AD and EFF staff, was built to standardize medical support and training. Local medical oversight from jurisdictions like rural fire districts may offer a temporary solution. Two \$25K contracts have been submitted to re-establish medical direction, and NRCG has requested continued updates and collaboration on potential solutions, with Rich Cowger planning to follow up with Dave Williams offline.

## **Standing Reports**

- **NWCG/NMAC Update:** Aitor Bidaburu provided an NWCG/NMAC update noting that the team request form will be posted on the NICC website. Key topics included ongoing interagency coordination around fatigue management and BUYT situations, as well as international IMT coordination. The Incident Workforce Development Group (IWDG) will now report solely to NMAC due to its significant progress. Jesse Bender's position will not be backfilled; a collateral duty replacement will be sought. On the NWCG side, REMS standards for Type 1, 2, and 3 incidents are expected to be approved this week.
- **CGAC Report Out:** Dennis Strange shared a CGAC update highlighting several national coordination efforts. He committed to sharing meeting notes more promptly. NMAC is working to improve the timeliness of its updates as well. Key topics included impacts to buying teams and the development of a DOI AIMS plan, continued focus on fatigue mitigation practices across IMTs, and readiness efforts at Fort Carson for military support. Changes were noted in the CIMT request process—narratives are no longer required, and standardized situational awareness inputs will be expected, especially at Preparedness Levels 4/5 or when requesting replacement teams. NRCG will need to determine how to implement this new process. Increased catering contract thresholds may become an issue this season (200-person threshold) and IWDG will now report solely to NMAC.
- **NRCC Operations Updates:** Corey Buhl provided an NRCC Operations update, noting that while recent fire activity in Idaho, North Dakota, and Montana was generally well-managed, some units lacked full staffing and required resources from outside the NREGA. Communication with affected units was effective, offering a good test of existing processes. However, some resources were tied up with prescribed fire and unavailable for wildfire response. Early and frequent support from outside the GACC is expected this season.
- **NRCC Update:** Kate Holsapple shared that recent rain has freed up resources, allowing support to the Southwest and Eastern Areas. NRCC is wrapping up pre-season projects and workshops, including the Aircraft Dispatcher workshop this week and recent RIST sessions. The crew desk is onboarding new staff, with Dani Goodson joining from the Lolo Hotshots. Kate will be out for June, with Jay serving as acting center manager starting June 5.
- **NRCG Committee Updates:**
  - Dispatch Committee (Craig Glazier): No updates since last meeting.
  - Operations Committee (Tate Fischer) – *notes submitted via email*
    - The committee continues to ebb and flow between accomplishing taskings to being informational only, currently in a lull,
      - Discussion around needing more Operation Section Chiefs on the committee (added one late last year), if the group is going to complete tasking versus being operational,
      - Numerous opinions and discussion points that tie back to *our face-to-face discussion regarding Operations vs ICs committees.*
    - Zones: Anywhere from fully staffed to 70% vacancy, Lacking mid-level leadership.
    - Agencies: All down in staffing. 25-30% vacancy, down by 5-6 engine captains, "functional but not optimal"; Need to "keep expectations in alignment with reality".
    - Approval of BLM's Woodhawk WFM
  - Training Committee (Dennis Strange) – Committee is working on drafting comments on operating plan and will share when available.

## **Old Business**

- **UPDATE | IMT SOP/SOG Status** – Beau Richardson reported that the IMT SOP/SOG update is nearly complete, with most revisions focused on IC and IMT member recruitment and selection, updated CIM and Type 3 configurations, and refreshed links and references. The draft will be sent to the IC Committee and is intended to be integrated into the NRCG Operations Plan.
- **UPDATE | Status with WFAAs** – Agency Representative Report Outs
  - BLM supports renaming the Fire Executives Group to WFAA and is open to the group meeting. A request was made to organize a meeting.
- **DISCUSSION | Health of IMT Roster Status**
  - Aaron Thompson reported minimal changes to Team 8's roster, though uncertainty remains about agency employees' availability.
  - DNRC's intake process currently includes only five names, all tied to Team 2, but the list will remain

- open.
- Josh Harvey sent IDL's intake process letter – Karly will share with NRCG.
- BIA noted impact from DRP, as a few fire personnel opted in.
- **UPDATE | NRCG Operating Guide** - Karly has finalized the document and included all edits - will route for signature.
- **TABLE ACTION | DCAT Reports** – A recommendation was made to table the DCAT Reports discussion until the fall meeting and requested an official tasking to define the task, purpose, and end state. A future NRCG meeting in September is proposed to receive a briefing from Kate on the reports and their potential. Kate also noted a national effort to roll out a related tool.

#### **New Business**

- **DECISION | Review & Approval of NR Mobilization Guide** - Kate Holsapple outlined the errata prereading document *[Attachment 2 is included for reference]*. One key update not included in the errata letter is the reclassification of Chief Mountain from a Type 1 IHC to a Type 2 crew.
  - **DECISION:** All agencies in attendance supported the NR Mobilization Guide updates unanimously (IDL and NDFS were not in attendance).
- Round Robin
  - MT Governor's Fire Briefing will take place on June 2 in Helena, MT.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, June 17, 2025

2025 Amendments to Montana Statewide Operating Plan.v4 **\*\*ADDED DNRC & USFS PROPOSALS**

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Pg		Provision #	Previous Language/Issue	Proposed Amendment
32		Table 1	Identifies Great Falls Dispatch as a separate entity; it has been absorbed in a consolidation with Helena Dispatch	Great Falls Dispatch would be taken off the list  <b>APPROVED</b>
33		III. Interagency Cooperation, B. Interagency Resources, 3. Interstate Mobilization:	The Northwest Compact, available on DNRC Agreements, Plans, and Guides website, is an agreement between the U.S. and Canada and multiple states to govern mobilization in support of incident management.	Add a sentence: "NW Compact members can use the compact to exchange funds and resources."  <b>APPROVED</b>
35		6. Sub-Geographic Operating Plans (Sub-Geos)	Called for copies of Sub-Geos to be sent to the NRCG Executive Assistant	Replace "Executive Assistant with "Facilitator"  <b>APPROVED</b>
35		D. Local Government Fire Forces  Bullet #3.	<b>CURRENT DNRC PROPOSAL</b>	The State maintains cooperative fire control agreements with all 56 counties. This State/County Cooperative Fire Protection arrangement ensures wildland fire protection on over 55 million acres of state and private land not otherwise covered by a recognized protection agency. The county and its firefighting operations organize, respond, and perform both their respective Title 7 (Local Government Fire Protection) obligations and DNRC's Title 76 (Wildland Fire) duties as outlined in MCA § 76-13-104. Montana counties agree to provide the basic level of wildland fire protection through a system of rural firefighting organizations and county personnel. In return for this service, cooperating counties receive DNRC support in the form of organizational and technical assistance/advice, fire equipment,

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				<p>training, and direct fire control assistance when required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For state and private lands protected by the State via a State/County Cooperative Agreement, a federal agency may provide mutual aid assistance to a local government entity in the interest of preventing a growing or escalating wildfire incident. State pre-approval is not required for federal mutual aid assistance; however, the designated State Duty Officer should be notified as soon as possible. Qualified federal expenses as a supporting agency can be billed to the State in accordance with cost thresholds established in Exhibit D in the Montana Statewide Operating Plan – Reimbursable Billings and Payments.</li> </ul>
36		<p>D. Local Government Fire Forces</p> <p>Bullet #5.</p>	<p>LGFF are made available to cooperating agencies and the interagency wildland fire system through the State. Dispatching LGFF should follow all the protocols stated in the NRCG Mobilization of Local Firefighting Forces and Chapter 50 of the Northern Rockies Supplement to the NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management.</p> <p><b>CURRENT DNRC PROPOSAL</b></p>	<p>LGFF are <b>hired and</b> made available to cooperating agencies and the interagency wildland fire system through the State. Dispatching LGFF should follow all the protocols stated in the NRCG Mobilization of Local Firefighting Forces and Chapter 50 of the Northern Rockies Supplement to the NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State may reimburse LGFF for costs accrued during a Mutual Aid Period when it is in the best interest of the State.</li> <li>When operating in support of a Federal Protection agency, LGFF resources are considered an extension of the State as a Supporting Agency. The State will reimburse the LGFF for qualified expenses and in turn bill the Federal Protection Agency in accordance with cost thresholds established in Exhibit D in the Montana Statewide Operating Plan – Reimbursable Billings and Payments.</li> </ul>

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36		<p>C. Methods of Fire Protection and Suppression</p> <p>Bullet #1. Reciprocal (Mutual Aid) Fire Assistance</p>	<p>Reciprocal (Mutual Aid) Fire Assistance</p> <p><b>CURRENT DNRC PROPOSAL</b></p>	<p>(add bullet to C.1. Mutual Aid Period)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference Provision III. Interagency Cooperation, D. Local Government Fire Forces (LGFF) for additional information regarding LGFF mutual aid.</li> </ul>
36		<p>C. Methods of Fire Protection and Suppression</p> <p>Bullet #1. Reciprocal (Mutual Aid) Fire Assistance</p>	<p>Reciprocal (Mutual Aid) Fire Assistance</p> <p><b>CURRENT USFS &amp; DNRC PROPOSAL</b></p>	<p><del>Mutual Aid Period:</del> The Parties to this agreement consider their lands in the State of Montana affected by this agreement to be reciprocal. <del>The Mutual Aid</del> As needed or upon request, a Supporting Agency may assist a Protecting Agency through mutual aid assistance. Supporting Agencies are responsible for initiating agency-specific business practices and assigning financial codes that allow for cost tracking and isolation for all support provided. Supporting Agency costs incurred will be billed in accordance with thresholds established in Exhibit D in the Montana Statewide Operating Plan – Reimbursable Billings and Payments. <del>.period between the Parties to this agreement is between 4 and 24 hours. Mutual Aid periods are described in Sub-Geographic Area Operating Plans. Supporting Agencies will not bill the Protecting Agency for incident costs during the Mutual Aid Period. If the Supporting Agency’s resources are ordered to stay past the Mutual Aid Period, their costs are reimbursable. If the cost threshold of \$5,000 is reached, all costs accrued by the Supporting Agency, including costs accrued during the Mutual Aid Period are reimbursable.</del></p>

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50	<p>Exhibit D Reimbursable Billings and Payments.</p> <p>B. 3. Invoicing.</p>		<p>INVOICING: Each fire will be billed individually The Minimum Billing Threshold between the Protecting Agency and Supporting Agency is <del>\$5,000</del> <b>\$10,000</b> for all bills between the State of Montana and federal agencies.</p> <p>The Protecting Agency will not be required to reimburse the Supporting Agency for costs incurred until the Supporting Agency's total costs of suppression actions <del>exceeds</del> <b>reaches</b> <b>\$10,000</b> <del>the limits listed above.</del> <b>If the costs accrued by a Supporting Agency reach a cost threshold listed above all costs accrued by the Supporting Agency are reimbursable by the Protecting Agency.</b> The Minimum Billing Threshold will only apply for responses within the state. For cost share fires, the Minimum Billing Threshold applies to the total expended by the billing agency prior to the cost share percentages being applied.</p> <p>All bills for support outside of Montana <b>and any State-to-State Responses</b> will not be subject to the Minimum Billing Threshold and will be sent to the appropriate billing contact. See Appendix I in this SOP</p>	
38	E. Fire Prevention and Education	<p>"The Agencies will share and jointly work together to deliver fire prevention and education programs. Activities may include joint press releases, Smokey Bear programs, campaigns such as One Less Spark, One Less Wildfire, and local education programs. The Agencies shall share the cost of prevention and education activities as agreed to in Sub- Geographic Area Operating Plans but may not seek reimbursement from the cooperating agency without an executed Supplemental Fire Project</p>	<p>Add a sentence after "...local education programs"</p> <p>"All parties to this agreement may assist the Protecting Agency responsible for wildland fire suppression to perform wildfire risk assessments on public or private lands."</p> <p><b>APPROVED</b></p>	

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		Agreement or other written document."	
44	F. Aviation Operations	<p>"Montana state aircraft are not approved for use by federal agencies."</p> <p>Reordering of statement to better reflect utilization of state aircraft</p> <p><b>CURRENT DNRC PROPOSAL</b></p>	<p>Forms, safety elements, maps, resource status, contracts, and guides addressing aviation operations are located on the NRCC Aviation website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Montana State aircraft on cooperative agreements and approved by a federal agency cooperator letter are authorized for use on federally protected lands.</b></li> <li>• <del>Montana state aircraft are not approved for use by federal agencies. Under emergency circumstances, where human life is immediately at risk by wildfire on federal lands under federal protection, a federal line officer can approve the use of non-federally approved aircraft to address the immediate threat.</del> <b>Montana State aircraft not approved by a federal agency cooperator letter (non-approved cooperator aircraft) may be utilized on federal protection under emergency situations where human life is immediately at risk by wildfire. Under these circumstances and in accordance with the <a href="#">Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations</a>, a federal line officer can approve the use of non-approved cooperator aircraft to address the immediate threat.</b> This exemption must only take place when sufficient federal firefighting aircraft are not readily available to meet the emergency need.</li> </ul>
48	Appendix I	MT DNRC's Joanne Marceau has retired and was replaced by Lindsey Greene	<p>Lindsey Greene 2705 Spurgin Road Missoula, MT 59804-3199 Phone: 406-542-4230 Fax: 406-542-4217 Email: <a href="mailto:lgreene@mt.gov">lgreene@mt.gov</a></p> <p><b>APPROVED</b></p>



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50	2. State Billing by Incident	Paragraph 2, “The State of Montana...” references an agreement that has expired and will not be renewed.	<p>“The State of Montana is a member of the NW Compact. NW Compact member states can use the compact to exchange funds and resources.”</p> <p>APPROVED</p>
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# Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Date: June 1, 2025

NRCG Memo# **2025-005**

TO: Agency Personnel

FROM: Bryce Rogers, Chair - Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

SUBJECT: 2025 Northern Rockies Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization

Attached is the 2025 Northern Rockies Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization. These standards are written to reflect the interagency needs of the user and are referenced as 'NR Supplements' in blue italicized font throughout the document. This publication will be an online version only; agencies and/or individuals may print as needed locally.

The Northern Rockies Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization states, references, or supplements policy and for Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Idaho Department of Lands, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and North Dakota Forest Service.

The signatory agencies have directed the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) with review and oversight from the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) to annually revise, publish, and distribute the Northern Rockies Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization by June 1, and issue errata to this document.

The Northern Rockies Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization establishes the standards for mobilization and demobilization of resources in response to wildland fire and all-hazard events. It is tiered off the National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization which is the foundational document instituting overarching processes for total mobility of resources.

Suggestions for modification of the publication can be submitted at any time during the calendar year. The Northern Rockies Coordination Center will accept suggestions for changes either through your signatory agency, through your Local Dispatch Center, or through established interagency organizations such as NRCG Committees. April 1 will be the cut off for changes to be considered for current publication year.

Northern Rockies Coordination Center will present all recommended changes to NRCG for their final acceptance and approval. The [change request form](#) can be found on the [NRCC website](#).



## 2025 NORTHERN ROCKIES INTERAGENCY STANDARDS FOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CHANGES

### ERRATA – CHAPTER 10 OBJECTIVES, POLICY AND SCOPE OF OPERATION

- In the Preparedness Level Action charts -
  - Preparedness Level 3 Added:
    - Weekly (Wednesday) GACC briefing at the NRCC.
    - Consider weekly GMAC conference calls or MAC activation when wildfire numbers, complexities, and competition for resources increase
- Removed all reference to Great Falls Dispatch
- Edited Dispatch neighborhood ordering removing Great Falls Dispatch and realigning everything with Helena Dispatch
- Edited units and agencies Helena and Lewistown centers dispatch for
- Added verbiage for NRGALend/lease procedures, separating the process between ground resources and manned aviation resources.

### ERRATA – CHAPTER 20 OVERHEAD AND TEAMS

- Made some overall spelling or grammatical changes
- Added some verbiage to help clarify ordering OOA trainees.
- Woodhawk WFM is no longer a trainee mod and showed them as a qualified WFM2 for 2025
- Removed “GACC Only” from requirements for creating REMS requests in IROC.
- Updated new configuration and typing of REMS
- Added some verbiage to help clarify ordering of REMS within NRGAL
- Removed previous verbiage referencing IMT3 standards/configuration as it is now reflected in the National Mob Guide
- Added verbiage to clarify BUYT ordering process
- Updated BUYT contact information
- Updated Blaster contact information
- Updated WFDSS Support contact information

### ERRATA – CHAPTER 30 CREWS

- Added new language for DNRC EU contract crews

### ERRATA – CHAPTER 40 EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

- No changes

### ERRATA – CHAPTER 50 AIRCRAFT

- Removed supplemental information on flight schedule requirements as this is now a national standard.
- Removed references to Great Falls Dispatch (GDC).
- Added clarified language to cooperator aircraft section to distinguish between approved and non-approved cooperator aircraft and guide users to language/requirements in Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book).
- Removed Yellowstone from list of short haul capable programs for 2025



- Expanded on ordering guidance for Mobile Retardant Bases to include completion of Service Request Form.
- Added information on MT DNRC IAA resource
- Added clarification to DNRC aviation ordering guidance – dispatch centers will be the entities responsible for dispatching DNRC aviation assets to fire incidents
- Removed requirement for flight schedules for smokejumper para-cargo missions to become more in line with National Flight Schedule criteria
- DOI Fire On-Call Contracts section – added link to DOI Aviation Acquisition Services website
  - Added clarification that Unit and/or Agency Aviation Officer is most suitable contact for DOI On Call vendor sourcing information and assistance

## **ERRATA – CHAPTER 60 PREDICTIVE SERVICES**

- Updated all references to the Northern Rockies Intelligence Staff to “NRCC Intelligence Coordinator(s),”
- Updated all references to “SIT Reporting” and “SIT Report application”
- Updated all FAMAuth links

### **ICS-209 section**

- Updated “Turning the rights of the application over to agency personnel outside of the dispatch office” to “Turning the responsibility of updating the ICS-209 over to agency personnel outside the dispatch office”
- Added clarification for large fire criteria, including a table correlating fuel models to those found in block 29 of the ICS -209.
- Added “The incident commander changes” under Daily 209 significant event criteria.
- Added “or completed” to: “A ‘Final’ ICS-209 can be submitted once the incident is declared 100% contained” to clarify for fires that have a suppression strategy other than full suppression
- Updated “high Haines” to “low relative humidity, strong surface wind, unstable air” to reflect the NWCG definition of critical fire weather
- Added “Complex Incidents” and “When a Prescribed Fire is Declared a Wildfire” sections to headers to better define sections
- Redacted “for ICS-209 and IRWIN” from complex incident reporting business practices
- Added “or submit a final ICS-209” to transferring of incident from IMT to receiving unit
- Added “If needed, the dispatch center can call the NR Intelligence Coordinator(s) and negotiate an alternative schedule” to IMT departing before incident is 100% contained or completed

### **Incident Prioritization section**

- Updated references to Risk Management Assistance Dashboard, modified “values at risk” and “any other relevant considerations.”

### **Interagency SIT Report section**

- Updated verbiage under SIT application YTD Statistics reporting.
- Added information about the GACC acreage breakdown sheet or dashboard (2025 release)
- Updated procedures for Dispatch Center Call-Around to specify with NR Intelligence Coordinator(s) having access to each Dispatch Center’s WildCADE a call may not be needed
- Added note to reference the National Acreage Summary Dashboard or spreadsheet for incidents that cross dispatch zone boundaries.



### **Predictive Services Product Section**

- Updated verbiage in the Northern Rockies supplement “Daily Outlooks” to indicate it is a 7-day outlook and does not contain complimentary text. Updated issuance time to 10 AM.

### **ERRATA – CHAPTER 70 INCIDENT ADMINISTRATION**

- o No changes

### **ERRATA – CHAPTER 80 FORMS**

- o No changes

### **ERRATA – CHAPTER 90 FIRE ORGANIZATION GUIDE**

- o Updated contact information throughout

### **ERRATA – APPENDICES**

- o No changes

