



# Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

## Monthly Conference Call – Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

### Participants

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

	BIA – Great Plains	Heath Estey		Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey
X	BIA – Rocky Mountain	Bryce Rogers	X	North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin
X	BIA – Northwest Region	Brad Donahue	X	Montana DNRC	Cory Calnan
X	BLM – Montana/Dakotas	Aaron Thompson	X	Montana County Fire Wardens	Patrick Lonergan
	BLM – Idaho	Dennis Strange	X	Montana DES	Brett Lloyd
X	NPS – Intermountain Region	Paul Cerda		Montana Sheriff's & Peace Officers	Steve Holton
	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:** Corey Buhl (NR Operations), Marty Adell (BLM Idaho), Brian Nickolay (Montana Fire Chiefs Association alternate), Aitor Bidaburu (NMAC/NWCG)

### Standing Reports

- **NWCG/NMAC Update** (Aitor Bidaburu) NMAC is meeting twice weekly on Mondays and Thursdays. As of Monday, 6/17, the national preparedness level tracker is at 2.8. NMAC is still trying to support Canada – there have been extension requests for many of the assigned resources. NMAC is exploring “surge packages” to proactively move resources from slower geographic areas to busier GAs earlier in the season. Correspondence will be coming out to clarify fund codes for surge deployments. Weekly data calls are taking place focused on team capacity and impacts of VISP, VERA, and DRP. New NMAC memo is out regarding the '*National Standard for Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) Configuration*', which provides flexibility in previously required unit leader positions in logistics and finances. ([NMAC Correspondence M2025-07](#)).

NWCG is actively working on committee reorganization. Major effort currently underway to reduce the number of NWCG committees. There are currently 17 parent committees and dozens of subcommittees. NWCG would like to end up with 10 parent committees and many fewer subcommittees. There will be listening sessions with committee chairs and vice chairs where information will be collected and analyzed to make final decisions by the end of calendar year 2025.

- **CGAC Updates** – no report
- **NRCC Operations** (Corey Buhl) - The Northern Rockies Geographic Area has experienced an unusual level of activity for June, but overall response has been effective in meeting resource needs. However, several operational issues have emerged, including dispatch centers struggling with ordering procedures, poor coordination with neighboring units, and communication failures during critical incidents (e.g., unreported accidents, stranded airtankers). Units have sent resources out-of-GACC despite local demand, and some teams have had to borrow entire sections to mobilize. A CIMT was appropriately ordered for the Post Fire on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, though follow-up is needed on closeout and ordering procedures for the communications advanced team. Concerns were raised about a Type 3 team handling a complex fire and related AD pay rates. DNRC fire response has been strong, and efforts are underway to retain helicopters in the GACC and coordinate surge resource support with NMAC. A memo from the coordinating group may be warranted to address communication and coordination gaps.

- **NRCC Update** - Kate is on vacation, Jay McAllister is acting. Coordination Center operations are going well, NRCC is short an assistant aircraft position, but has detailers lined up throughout the summer.
- **NRCG Committee Updates:**
  - **Training Committee:** no report
  - **Business Committee:** Met last week for quarterly meeting. Group continues to work on the Northern Rockies supplement updates. Talked about the national buying team situation. USFS will continue with the AIMS process while DOI plans to have a similar process. State agencies have no change in their purchasing processes.

### **Old Business**

- **UPDATE | IMT SOP/SOG Status** – NRCG is asked to review the provided draft plan and provide comments to Beau Richardson.
- **DISCUSSION | NR IMT Roster Status** – NRCG IMT Liaisons
  - Team 6 is #1 in NR for the next few days. The team rostered around 75 folks on roster with all our main positions are filled.
  - Team 2 roster health is looking better now that the USFS has allowed employees who took DRP to participate in fire response this season. DOI should expect to hear similar direction. Overall, the team is looking good for one or two assignments. A third assignment back-to-back would be extremely challenging. Need to support teams in 7 days down and spreading out assignments.

### **New Business**

- **INFORMATIONAL | NRCC SIOF Communications** - Aaron Thompson - The Coordinating Group discussed improving internal communication protocols, using NMAC's text group for medical incident awareness as a model. A proposal is being developed to create a similar text group for the Coordinating Group, specifically for serious accidents, incidents, or fatalities. NRCG members expressed support, and the group agreed to define clear sideboards for its intended use. The following is information received from an NMAC member regarding their communication model:

#### NMAC Text String Communication

*NMAC communication via the 2025 NMAC Primary text string may be either informational or decisional. Informational text messages such as accident notifications, significant fire activity, and geographic preparedness level changes do not require a reply or a "copy" by members. Decisional text messages such as approval for CIMT or crew commitments require a reply from each agency in the affirmative or negative for each instance. One response per agency is necessary. The NICC Manager or Deputies will within reason, attempt to contact non-responsive agencies during the allocated amount of time of a decision. In the event that there is no positive communication, that response will be deemed as approved to reach consensus. Appendix 2 outlines accident notification -*

<https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/NICC/5-NMAC/Ops%20Plan/Current%20NMAC%20Ops%20Plan.pdf>

**ACTION ITEM:** Collect phone numbers of each coordinating group member and develop an 'NRCG Text String or Communication App protocol. Deadline: July 15.

- **DISCUSSION | NRCG Rep/GMAC Calendar** – Reserve your representative dates here: <https://teamup.com/ksbs51934ubjtx7ibk>
  - Open weeks: June 22-28; June 29-July 5; August 3-9; August 10-16; September 7-27
- **Round Robin**
  - Bryce Rogers reported that BIA is working with HR to implement a zone concept that consolidates local agency oversight under the regional office in the Rocky Mountain Region. The plan, currently in development with personnel actions underway, was approved by the former Regional Director who has since taken DRP. On the ground, a qualified FMO will rotate between zones, with all staff reporting directly to the region while still maintaining line officer involvement.

**Next Meeting:** July 15, 2025