



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Date: April 24, 2020 NRCG Memo# 2020-004

To: Northern Rockies Agency Administrators and Incident Management Team Members

From: Northern Rockies Wildfire Agency Administrators and the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Subject: 2020 Incident Management Team Expectations

Thank you for your commitment to the Northern Rockies Incident Management Teams (IMT). Whether you are new or have been on our teams in the past, the Northern Rockies Wildfire Agency Administrators (WFAA) and Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) appreciate your commitment to managing wildland fire incidents for us during the 2020 season. This season may be one of our most challenging yet, with the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty it brings to all of us. We will have to be patient, vigilant, and adaptive in order to protect, from COVID-19, our own health, that of the communities we serve, our colleagues, and our families to the best of our abilities while protecting citizens, communities and our natural resources from wildland fire.

The NRCG, with the support of the WFAA, is working diligently to develop practices and procedures to mitigate COVID-19 exposure throughout all aspects of wildland fire incidents. The recommendations will be dynamic and will require your patience as our guidance evolves as new information becomes available and our best practices are updated and implemented. You will need to adapt to the rigors of wildland firefighting with COVID-19 exposure mitigations.

We acknowledge that all members of our teams volunteered to participate and contribute and that doing so is a personal and professional choice. With the current threat presented by the COVID-19, some team members may elect to not participate in order to minimize their risk of exposure and/or exposure to their families. We respect those decisions and understand that we may not have a full complement of team members on all assignments. Finally, in regard to COVID-19, please seek every opportunity to use remote assignments and other innovations to minimize the number of people we deploy into risky field living circumstances.

Our new focus on COVID-19 does not diminish our commitment to the principles and practices that always anchor the high standards we expect of all Northern Rockies wildland fire resources. Northern Rockies IMT members represent the NRCG collectively; and we expect the professionalism and leadership from our IMTs and each and every member of our teams. Please discuss and continually reinforce the guiding principles below with your teams and the resources working with your teams.





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Safety:

- Make Firefighter and public safety not just a consideration in how to do work but the foundation of how decisions are made.
- Risk management should be a fundamental and an ongoing component of all fire management planning decisions. Make sound decisions based on firefighter/aviation/public safety, values at risk both public and private, and probability of success with the end-state clearly expressed and understood.
- Ensure risks are discussed and communicated; carelessness or unsafe actions are not acceptable. Promote safe driving practices at all times.
- Ensure incident emergency medical procedures are in place and communicated to those on the ground for every wildland fire. Exercise and practice scenarios to be better prepared for when accidents occur.
- All personnel are expected to adhere to the 2:1 work/rest ratio. Incident Commanders, along with their command and general staff, should set the example. Breaking the 2:1 work/rest ratio should be the exception that must be documented and mitigated.

Personnel:

- Respond to emergency incidents within and outside of the Northern Rockies with highly skilled and qualified personnel.
- Handle stressful situations with frequent and positive support in team/crew interaction and promotion of group camaraderie.
- Promote a professional attitude with all of our resources through continuous positive interaction and support.
- Harassment of any form will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of all team members to say something when they see or hear someone being harassed. Agencies need to be notified when any form of harassment occurs. Every single person whether agency, local, or contractor working on a fire assignment deserves the right to be treated fairly.

Communication:

- Ensure your interaction with hosting units, local fire management, and local incident commanders is professional and reflects positively on the Northern Rockies.
- Immediately notify agency administrators of any serious “close call,” serious accident, injury, or fatality.
- Conduct quality After Actions Reviews (AARs) with hosting agencies, peers, supervisors, and subordinates. Make an effort to debrief and learn from your experiences and share lessons learned with others in the fire community.
- Ensure that any public interaction is a positive reflection on Northern Rockies.
- Understand and utilize the chain of command to keep home unit and hosting supervisors informed.





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- Our most experienced and successful incident team members must continue to move into the more complex incident management team types. Encourage team members to look for opportunities to participate and advance to the next level of incident management teams. It is expected that everyone embrace the challenges of transitioning from Type 3 to Type 2 to Type 1 IMTs, otherwise hosting seven IMTs in the Northern Rockies will not be sustainable.

Speed to competency:

- It is our expectation that trainees be given the opportunity to perform in target positions, receive an honest clearly documented evaluation and if competent, be recommended for certification. The Position Task Book process was implemented by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) to document competency in the various tasks of a position, not to serve as a record of how many times a person performs in a position to prove they are competent. It is imperative that evaluator and agency certifiers take this into consideration when an individual is being considered for certification.

Thank you again for your continued commitment and long-standing dedication to the Northern Rockies Geographic Area. We look forward to working together to meet our shared goals and expectations.

Diane Mann-Klager
Chair, Wildfire Agency Administrators Group

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