



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Date June 29, 2022

NRCG Memo# 2022-003

To: Northern Rockies Interagency Wildland Fire Community

From: Chair, Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Subject: Rapid Extraction Module Support

The NRCG Board recognizes that incident management teams (IMT) may have a need for Rapid Extraction Module Support (REMS) and anticipate that requests will occur. In the absence of a national standard, and in an attempt to develop a standard approach that works in the area, the Northern Rockies will move forward in the interim with REMS as a stand-alone extraction unit when required. REMS configurations may include medically qualified personnel from Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic to Paramedic. The intent of REMS, no matter the configuration, is to utilize advanced rope and rescue techniques to extract an injured or ill firefighter safely from steep and challenging terrain.

In wildland fire communities, Rapid Extraction Module Support (REMS) presents an option to extract firefighters suffering from an injury or illness while conducting fire suppression in terrain or conditions not conducive to standard extraction methods. REMS is an extraction team that provides technical expertise in the use of Low Angle Rescue Operations (LARRO), High Angle Rope Rescue Operations (HARRO), and advanced terrain techniques to transport a patient to either a vehicle or aircraft for transport to an appropriate medical facility.

The NRCG Board directed a task group to determine if REMS would benefit the Northern Rockies Interagency Wildland Fire Community. Currently the Northern Rockies has a mix of Federal, State, Tribal and Local Cooperators with a variety of extraction capabilities. REMS would be desirable when conditions do not allow aviation resources the ability to fly safely, and when terrain is too steep or challenging to use current conventional methods of extraction. The task group estimates that only 5% of fire operations occur during these types of environmental conditions. The task group recognizes that there exists adequate medical capability on incidents within the Northern Rockies that can be attained through current medical staffing methods outside of REMS; however, a need for technical extraction is likely to occur on some incidents. Agency Administrators and IMTs also should look seriously at tactical plans that put resources at risk in high-angle situations where there are limited values at risk, or where operational risk management would lead to another tactic.



ORDERING METHOD

REMS will be ordered as an “O” number in IROC. The IROC naming convention and dispatch procedures will be contained in the 2022 Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide. In the absence of a national standard, assistance from the dispatch community will be required as to how to order the REMS resource.

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

REMS will work with adequate fireline supervision under Operations in conjunction with assigned medical personnel and the Medical Unit Leader. ICS is flexible depending on needs and situation.

MINIMUM REMS CONFIGURATION

Since there is currently no standard on REMS configuration(s), the NRCG currently suggests the following as guidance:

- Four Personnel
 - One NWCG FFT1 qualified individual, all others NWCG FFT2 qualified (arduous physical fitness).
 - All trained in Low Angle Rope Rescue Operations.
 - Two trained in High Angle Rope Rescue Operations.
- A four-wheel drive vehicle capable of carrying the entire module and equipment.
- May be ordered with UTV.
- All necessary extraction equipment will be listed in the Northern Rockies Supplements to the [NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management](#), Chapters 20 & 50.

DURATION

REMS should be considered when environmental conditions are not conducive to aviation or other support and when incident objectives require operating on steep and/or otherwise challenging terrain. REMS are a specialized resource and may be in short supply. IMTs are expected to release REMS when they are no longer needed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REMS

Since the legal authority and responsibility for search-and-rescue operations varies jurisdictionally, Incident management teams should first determine with the incident-hosting agency what authorities exist for fire incident extractions versus search-and-rescues before seeking out local government capabilities to fulfill REMS needs. Local government capabilities could include local fire, law enforcement, or search and rescue organizations. County search & rescue organizations frequently train for LARRO/HARRO and should be the first consideration. IMT Liaisons will need to gather the County’s capability from the County Sheriff at the IMT in-briefing or as soon as possible. Use of local government may have varying agreement requirements prior to hiring. Coordination with the sheriff to assure that the county has resources on hand in a non-pay “on call” status should an IMT need them ready for rapid response may present the best option in lieu of “hiring”.

CONTRACT REMS

Currently no pre-season agreements are in place for commercial market REMS. All commercial REMS will need to be contracted through incident only agreement processes (EERA). The defined minimum REMS specification will allow for incident only contracts within the Northern Rockies. Contract REMS would be desirable only if local government could not provide.



A copy of the REMS letter of direction can be found on the [NRCG website](#).

Josh Harvey
Chair, Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG)

