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# Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group

July 21, 2010

*These guidelines are intended to improve multi-agency coordination services to the Geographic Area and to build consistency and effectiveness in Sub-Geographic Area MAC operations.*

## **Operating Guidelines Sub-Geographic Area Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (Sub-Geo MAC) Northwest Geographic Area**

### Purpose

Sub-Geo MAC coordinates between the Wildland Fire Protection Agencies affected or potentially affected by an incident or multiple incidents proximally located within a sub-region of the NW Geographic Area. The intent of this effort is to provide safe and efficient incident management based on clearly-defined priorities.

### Mission

During periods of critical resource shortages, Sub-Geo MAC provides a forum to discuss actions to be taken to ensure that adequate resources are available to meet anticipated needs and to efficiently allocate those resources to incidents within their designated sub-region.

### Membership

Sub-Geo MAC consists of one representative from each of the affected Wildland Fire Agencies within a designated sub-region of the Pacific Northwest:

- Agency Administrators are primary representative; often Agency Fire Staff Officers are delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of their respective Agency Administrators.
- Membership may also include "other party" representatives who have a stake in wildland fire decisions, such as local government, industry, or citizens groups.
- Agency representatives may utilize additional agency staff to provide support.

Sub-Geo MAC members represent the interests of all affected units from their respective Agency and act within the scope of their delegations of authority and the Sub-Geo MAC mission.

### Member Roles and Responsibilities

#### Agency Administrators:

As appropriate, issues written delegation of authority to Agency Representative and supports Sub-Geo MAC decisions.

#### MAC Coordinator:

Facilitates the daily schedule, conference calls, and meetings. Ensures adequate intelligence/subject matter expertise is available to support decision-making. Documents and distributes Sub-Geo MAC decisions. Serves as the point of contact with the NW MAC and NWCC.

### MAC Members:

Inform their respective agency administrators of current/expected situation and Sub-Geo MAC decisions. Dialog with Incident Unit Agency Administrators. Inform cooperators. Establish incident priorities and allocate/reallocate resources to meet anticipated demands. Identify/resolve Sub-Geo MAC issues.

### Deliverables

Within the scope of its mission and the sub-geographic area it serves, the Sub-Geo MAC:

- Coordinates fire management/all risk incidents.
- Monitors initial attack status/capability and coordinates with local dispatch center.
- Prioritizes incidents and allocates/reallocates resources.
- Assesses sub-geographic area prevention/public information needs.
- Maintains open communications with NW MAC, NWCC, Sub-Geographic Agency administrators and local dispatch centers.

### Relationship with NW MAC

Sub-Geo MAC coordinates daily with NW MAC:

- Participates on 0730 IC/AC calls.
- Communicates Sub-Geo MAC priorities to NW MAC by 0845.
- Participates on 1600 NW MAC call.

NW MAC provides leadership and guidance to Sub-Geo MAC:

- Communicates and defines national policies and NMAC directives relative to the NWGA.
- Sets NWGA policy and issues directives as it relates to coordination and incident management.
- Exercises delegated authority as circumstances warrant.
  - NW MAC has authority to modify priorities set by the Sub-Geo MAC.
  - NW MAC has authority to reallocate resources from Sub-Geo MAC.

### Relationship with Northwest Coordination Center

Sub-Geo MAC communicates daily with NWCC:

- Coordinate critical resource needs relative to initial attack readiness.
- Obtain status/readiness of National Shared Resources.

### Relationship with Local Dispatch Center

Sub-Geo MAC communicates daily with Local Dispatch Center:

- Coordinate critical resource needs relative to initial attack readiness.
- Obtain status/readiness of Local Shared Resources.

### Relationship with IC in Sub-Geographic Area

- Communicates daily with IC's to determine incident issues and critical needs.
- Allocates/reallocates resources to/from the incident based on prioritization.

### Choosing between Sub-Geo MAC and Area Command

To avoid confusion and multiple layers of coordination, it's recommended that either a Sub-Geo MAC be convened to coordinate resource allocation/reallocation or an Area Command be utilized to manage multiple incidents/IMTs within a sub-geographic area. Understanding the differences between these organizations is critical to this decision:

### Area Command

*From the Red Book (NFES 2724): “Area Command is an Incident Command System organization established to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being managed by an ICS organization...The determining factor for establishing area command is the span of control of the agency administrator” (11-6, line 20).*

#### Area Command:

- Receives Agency Administrator Delegation of Authority to manage multiple IMTs on one or more incidents. May receive delegations from more than one Agency Administrator.
- Sets strategies and objectives, establishes priorities, allocates resources, and *supervises, manages, and evaluates* the IMTs under its *command*.

#### Sub-Geo MAC:

- Delegated authority by Agency Administrators to set priorities and allocate resources for incidents within the local geographic sub-region.
- IMT management remains with the respective Agency Administrator.
- Coordinates rather than commands; identifies and resolves issues common to all involved agencies.

### Logical Limits of a Sub-Geographic Area

Generally, a sub-geographic area should not exceed the region managed by a dispatch center and one of its neighbors.

If two dispatch centers are located within a single sub-geographic area, one dispatch center should be designated as the lead or primary point of contact.

### Role of Individual NW MAC Representatives

Personal involvement of a NW MAC representative with a Sub-Geo MAC serves to complement operational guidelines:

- Provides an opportunity to mentor and provide subject-matter expertise to the Sub-Geo MAC Group.
- NW MAC representative serving as the Sub-Geo MAC Coordinator helps to develop consistent and more efficient operating protocols.

In addition, encouraging pre-season contacts and conversations for the expressed purpose of multi-agency coordination and associated resource allocation/incident prioritization practices, would build trust and rapport. Identifying and training local MAC Coordinators, along with rotating potential Sub-Geo MAC members through NW MAC and MAC Support Group activities would build experience and provide for local, and Geographic Area, succession over the long term.

/s/ Ken Snell  
Chair

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