



Northwest

Interagency Incident

Management Team Operations

Guide

2021

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Introduction

This document guides the operation of the 9 Northwest Interagency Incident Management Area Teams (IMTs), herein referred to as the Team(s). There are 7 Type II Teams and 2 Type I Teams that comprise the IMT's in the Northwest, herein referred as NW. The Teams may include but are not limited to individuals from the following agencies and affiliates:

- USDA Forest Service
- USDI Bureau of Land Management
- USDI Fish and Wildlife Services
- USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs
- USDI National Park Service
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State Fire Marshal's Office
- Washington Fire Chiefs' Association
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Fire Chiefs' Association
- Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office

Operations Guide

The NW Incident Management Team Operations Guide, herein referred to as the Guide, is developed by the Northwest Geographic Area Board, herein referred to as the Board, and reviewed by the Incident Commanders, IC. It is intended to serve as an aid in providing assistance to teams, team members, alternate members, and trainees in preparing for and fulfilling their assignments.

This Guide should be used in conjunction with Existing Team Handbooks including the NW Interagency Mob Guide, herein referred as NW Mob guide and the Interagency Standards for Fire, Fire Aviation Operations (aka "Redbook"). It is of the understanding that each Team may need to adapt procedures to fit the circumstances of a specific assignment. The effective and efficient management of major emergency or complex incidents requires that a Team remain flexible, have freedom to apply sound judgment, and exercise creativity in action, planning and operations to achieve desired ends.

As a Guide, this document is intended to be used as one of many tools available to teams to effectively manage incidents.

This Guide does not replace any members home agency rules or policies. With each Team having members from several different agencies, it is not possible to address every situation and how specific rule or policy would apply. Each Team member is responsible to notify their Team supervisor if an order or assignment would be in conflict with an agency rule or policy, so that a workable solution can be found.

Objectives for the Operations Guide and the Board

- Build foundations for teams. The Guidelines are intended to become a framework for the teams to work within and may be augmented with each team's guidelines and standard operating procedures, etc.
- Improve successional planning across the NW geographic area, including a focus on the prioritization and management of trainees.
- Balance skill sets across the geographic area.
- Increase partnership involvement, participation and the addition of new team members from non-traditional sources.
- Diversification of team members from across various agencies. This increases knowledge and expertise across sub-geographic areas promoting and strengthening local relationships.
- Build and improve relationships between Agency Administrators and Teams.
- Provide tools to Teams (trainee pool, alternate list, etc.)
- The Teams will manage an incident in a manner that ensures the safety of all incident personnel and the general public, promotes fiscal responsibility, considers resource values and incorporate specific Agency Administrator direction.
- The Teams will support transitions with existing incident organization or a new incoming organization which promotes the success of meeting incident objectives. This is done in a professional manner which exhibits "command and control" to the agency and the public.

Expectations

Personal and public safety are provided through a risk management process.

All Team Members are responsible for safety on the incident, including:

- Personal safety
- Safety of others
- Correct and/or Report unsafe conditions or acts immediately
- Harassment free work environment that promotes diversity, inclusion and mutual respect.

Being a Team that can minimize the incident impacts. Teams should consider the following when integrating with local agencies and communities:

- Coordinate with host agency
- Identify and involve affected stakeholders
- Involve the community
- Support the economy of the local communities
- Provide timely and coordinated evacuation information to public
- Keep the community informed on incident progress

Be professional and provide quality service.

What the Agency Administrator/Geographic Board can expect from the Teams

- Discussion on the feasibility of accomplishing objectives and the selected Course of Action with consideration of values at risk vs. firefighter exposure (i.e. Strategic Risk Assessment).
- Assistance in providing documentation of the information as stated in the Delegation of Authority or Task Order and in the case of federal wildland fire, a Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) and Strategic Risk Assessment (if applicable).
- Team functions are conducted in conformance with the Delegation of Authority or Task Order, Agency Administrator Letter of Intent, the WFDSS and any additional written direction issued by the Agency Administrator/Line Officer (AA/LO) within the established standards and guidelines of the hosting agency.
- Teams will function with professional conduct .
- Frequent and effective communication is expected between the Incident Commanders (IC), the IMT and the Agency Administrators (AA) or designees. AA/IC meetings should occur daily or as needed.
- A facilitated daily cooperater meeting, as needed.
- An understanding of the local socio-economic and political concerns of the AA/LO.
- A complete and comprehensive financial and property accountability package. At the direction of the host unit, provide a document box and/or digital documentation box. Effort should be made to follow the national template.
- Documentation of significant decisions made by the Team, including a final fire package per host unit direction.
- Efficient use of resources assigned to the incident with emphasis on agency risk management protocol and probability of success analysis, safety and cost

containment.

- Attention to Human Resource issues, with an intolerance of discriminatory or demeaning actions.
- The team will lead and facilitate an incident closeout.
- ADs are a critical part of Teams. Whenever possible, teams will pair ADs with trainees.

What the Teams can expect from the Agency Administrator/Line Officer (LO)

- The IC should have adequate access to the AA/LO for formation and clarification of objectives and routine validation.
- The Team should be given a comprehensive briefing on the situation and clear expectations prior to assuming command, by the AA/LO. A delegation of authority, WFDSS/Strategic Risk Assessment (if applicable), maps and any special instructions should be available at that briefing and should be in agreement and not contradicting.
- An Agency Representative, AREP, should be available to the Team to make decisions if the AA/LO is not readily available. A local lead Resource Advisor, READ, or other specialist should be made available.
- Local subordinates should understand AA/LO objectives and be supportive of such.
- Provide a copy of the unit's Emergency Operations Plan, if available. Protocols dealing with Incidents within Incidents (IWI), Aviation Mishaps and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) should be clearly communicated. Contact information for local area hospital/family liaisons, unit safety officers and other associated roles and responsibilities should be provided.
- The AA/LO should have an open line of communication to ensure concerns and past Team experiences are known.
- The Team should receive ongoing direct feedback on performance, or questions about performance, from the AA/LO to the IC, or from subordinates to Team members.
- The Team should be allowed to function within the parameters established in the Delegation of Authority. Changes in direction should occur with changes in the delegations or task order to insure timely implementation.
- The Team should clearly understand local concerns and key contacts, protocol regarding the release of information and primary contacts for emergencies. The Team Information Officer(s) need prompt admin access to Inciweb from the public affairs contact and be supplied with a supply of local unit maps.
- Provide county health agency contact information and local expectations for health concerns such ongoing pandemic response plans.
- An expectation that a sound risk management process will be reflected in AA/LO direction.

Team Training

Each spring, the NW Interagency Incident Management Teams will meet for a training session, as budget and agency priorities allow. Per PNWCG direction in the memo signed by the PNWCG Chair on 1/26/2020, meetings will be on a 3 year rotation. Full team participation one year followed by two years of Command and General Staff only participation. Funding for meetings will include a registration fee for entities who do not have available a single, administrative ability to pay for its member's participation. Meetings may be in-person or virtual as determined by the assigned Teams and Board. Two of the teams, on a rotational basis, are responsible for organizing and coordinating the training. The Team Training will be developed in coordination with the Board.

The Incident Commanders will receive a Delegation of Authority from the Board providing specific directions and objective for the following year prior to fire season. One Incident Commander will be assigned to the Board to represent the Teams as part of their duties. The PNWCG and/or Board will provide leader' intent and may suggest meaningful topics.

The assigned IC will report on a regular basis to the Board. An agenda will be provided at the January Board meeting for review.

Team Guidelines

ICs and Teams will develop guidelines consistent with the Northwest Interagency Incident Management Team Operations Guide. Individual Team guidelines will be reviewed by the IC to ensure consistency.

Team Configuration

Reference the Current National Mobilization Guide Standards, Chapter 20 Overhead and Teams and the NW Mob guide. Situations may occur where additional team member may be required such as working during a pandemic in a virtual environment. Additional team members to meet these needs can be negotiated and agreed to by line officers or agency administrators.

In addition, prioritized team trainees are assigned to meet position needs. A team may have more than six trainees, but numbers above six need to be negotiated and agreed to by line officers or agency administrators.

Team Selection

There are five categories of Team members:

- Primary
- Shared
- Alternate
- Trainees
- Apprentices/Non-Qualified (420/520 candidates are managed by PNW Training Program)

Selection Guidelines

These guidelines are used to select primary members, shared, alternates and trainees:

- Incident Commanders are responsible to make certain all team members have a current funding mechanism in place before being assigned to the team. For example, do the home districts for Washington fire service personnel have a valid and current agreement with the Department of Natural Resources?
- Incident Commanders, including primary, deputies, shared, alternates and trainees, are selected by the Board. Incident Commanders will be consulted concerning the selections of deputies, shared positions and trainees.
- The Board will review and approve team members. For vacant/unfilled positions on C&G, the IC will notify the Board.
- NW Mob guide describes team configurations and temporary replacements for Primary C&G members. A team will be considered unavailable for assignment if it is necessary to have more than two (2) substitutes to fill Command/General Staff positions. Host agency, with Board concurrence, may approve exceptions.
- Approved alternate pool members and primary Team members from other NW teams may be used as primary C&G to fill vacancies without prior approval from the Board. Fill-ins to the C&G from outside the geographic area will require approval of the Board. See NW Mob Guide for additional requirements.
- The Board representative for each applicant's agency is responsible for ensuring that applicants from their agency are fully qualified to be considered for the position for which they applied. Interagency skill mixes need to be evident when each Interagency IMT roster is evaluated, this is especially important for the Operations Section.

Primary Team Members

Primary team members are fully qualified individuals who have received permission, agency support and are selected for the position assigned and are listed on the team roster. Primary members are expected to have a high degree of availability with only unforeseen scheduling or prearranged periods of unavailability.

Primary Team Member Availability and Substitution

When a primary team member is unavailable for dispatch with his or her team, he/she is responsible to immediately contact his/her host dispatch office, Section Chief and/or Incident Commander.

The Section Chief or IC may select a replacement from the Alternate Pool. Alternate members should be provided opportunity to accept an assignment before other qualified people are contacted. The IC is responsible for notifying their host dispatch center of the changes.

Shared Team Members

Due to availability constraints, a shared position is filled by more than one fully qualified individual. Shared team members must coordinate their availability to provide adequate coverage when the team is in the “up” or “second up” position in the rotation schedule. Shared positions provide consistency with team cohesion and protocols by being active Team members. An IMT may draw upon the unassigned Shared position team member to fill additional staffing needs as required based on incident scale and complexity.

Shared Team Member Availability and Substitution

When neither shared team member is available for dispatch with their team, they are both responsible to immediately contact the appropriate Section Chief and Incident Commander and home dispatch office.

The Section Chief or IC may select a replacement from the Alternate Pool. Alternate members should be provided opportunity to accept an assignment before other qualified people are contacted. The IC is responsible for notifying their host dispatch center of the changes.

Alternate Members

The alternate members are fully qualified for the positions listed, and are available to substitute for, or supplement, primary or shared team members on active rosters. A list of Alternates will be provided prior to the start of the season. The Alternate list will be the primary source of replacements Pre-Mobilization. Alternates are often known to IMTs through past experience and provide future potential as primary or shared team members.

Trainee Pool Members

Two lists of Trainees will be maintained, Priority Trainees and those identified by each Team.

The Board may choose to prioritize positions/people in the Trainee Pool for assignment. The first opportunity for training assignments is given to the person assigned top priority for a given position. The Board will work with the Pacific Northwest Training Center and Washington DNR Olympia dispatch to manage the Priority Trainee Pool. Trainees prioritized to meet IFPM requirements are responsible for notifying the Pacific Northwest Training Center and/or Olympia Dispatch and Incident Commander of changes in their qualifications and availability.

Trainees assigned to a team should complete their task book as soon as practical and be recommended for certification when appropriate. Once certified, the trainee is to be moved to the Alternate list and the next trainee for that position should be given the opportunity to work on their taskbook. The intent is to qualify as many personnel as possible each season by affording opportunities to more trainees.

Apprentices/Non-Qualified Individuals

The Board encourages the use of apprentices. This type of assignment is intended to help sustain adequate numbers of qualified individuals over time; as such, they are intended to compliment formal trainee assignments. Apprentices differ from trainees in that they have an interest in Teams but lack the experience or prerequisite training necessary to be issued a Position Task Book for a specific ICS position.

The objective of an apprentice assignment is accelerated career development of the individual and eventual qualification for assignment to IMTs. They can contribute to the task at hand by providing some additional help to the incident, but are not to be relied upon to meet incident objectives. Teams will report to the Board annually on the progress of assigned apprentices.

Performance or Conduct Issues

The Incident Commander for each team has the right to replace team members at any time for poor performance, unavailability, or unacceptable behavior. Such decisions shall be documented in writing and sent to the Geographic Board member representing the employing agency of the replaced team member.

Team Performance Reviews

Prior to each fire season, the Board will provide each Incident Commander with a signed document that establishes mutual performance expectations. A representative of the Board will endeavor to attend each team in-brief and/or close-out to hear first-hand about issues and concerns. The Board will provide feedback to each Incident Commander at the end of the season about his or her performance as an incident Commander. Performance reviews are signed by both parties and a copy is sent to the Chair of the Board.

Team Apparel and Logos

Incident Commanders are responsible to ensure Team members wear professional and appropriate apparel. Should Teams decide to wear apparel with logos, a standardized logo will be used by all teams, Type I and II, unless otherwise authorized by the Board. Team(s) can suggest an updated Pacific Northwest Logo to the Board and the Board will review and approve/disapprove.

Team Mobilization

Reference the NW Mob Guide: Chapter 20 Overhead and Teams at <https://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/admin/publications.aspx>

Team Rotation

Reference the NW Mob Guide: Chapter 20 Overhead and Teams <https://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/admin/publications.aspx>

Appendix A

2021 PNW Interagency IMT Financial Support

The signatories to the Cooperative Master Agreement for Washington State – the 5 participating federal agencies and the Washington Department of Natural Resources - agree to provide financial support to the interagency Incident Management Teams (IMTs) in the Pacific Northwest. Each IMT will be provided annual financial support of up to \$3500.00 to procure supplies and equipment necessary to be prepared for the fire year. This is exclusive of IT-related support which must be requested through the Geoboard separately.

The below listed agency/team pairing will be in effect until this document is revised. Agencies will identify purchasing agents or provide guidance to expend the identified funds in accordance with the specific agency policies. Annual purchasing must be completed before the conclusion of the fiscal year.

USFS

PNW 2

PNW3

NW Team 6

BLM

NW Team 9

NW Team 12

NPS

NW Team 7

Washington DNR

NW Team 10

FWS

NW Team 13

BIA

NW Team 8