

Los Padres National Forest
Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

2022



Recommended By:

Forest Fire Management Officer – Jim Harris

Approved By:

Forest Supervisor – Christopher Stubbs

Date Signed: _____

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Staffing and Specific Action Guide is the method for coordinating staffing and preparedness of fire resources on the Forest. The guide is a tool intended to expedite administrative decisions for timely staffing actions. It is intended to share decision making information and processes with line officers, fire managers, and fire suppression resources. Implementation requires daily consideration of existing conditions and available funds. Extraordinary conditions that may require additional measures over those provided by the SSAG should be approved by the Forest Supervisor.

Objectives

- a. To ensure the Los Padres National Forest is prepared to react to new and emerging wildfire incidents within an Approved Management Response in accordance with existing laws, regulations, guidelines and management directives.
- b. Provide Fire & Aviation Management personnel with adequate guidance and decision-making authority to ensure timely decisions.
- c. To specify the maximum measures that can be allowed without appealing to higher authority. Judgment and existing local conditions may require less. The need in all cases will dictate the use.

Staffing actions will be based on fire danger potential. Los Padres Communications Center (LPCC) will utilize the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) program to determine the Actual and Predicted Staffing Levels. The following are the standardized dispatch response levels within our DPA. A Low FDR = a Low Response, a Moderate or High FDR = a Moderate Response, and a Very High or Extreme FDR = a High Response. The specified number of resources are “accumulative”:

	<i>LOW RESPONSE</i>	<i>MODERATE RESPONSE</i>	<i>HIGH RESPONSE</i>	<i>2ND ALARM</i>
Air Attack		1		
Air Tanker		1	1	
Lead Plane		1		
Helicopters		1	1	
Engines	1	2	2	5
Dozers		1	1	
Water Tenders		1	1	
Crews	1		1	1
Patrols	1	1		
Overhead	1	1		1
Helitanker			1	

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Forest Supervisor – Responsible for approving the plan at the Forest level.
- B. Forest Fire Management Officers / Forest Duty Officers – Coordinate the overall Forest resource staffing and appropriate suppression capability. Will provide oversight to ensure fiscal responsibility and that actions are within alignment of WFPR and WFSU policies. Will provide guidance and clarification of any item in this plan, as requested.
- C. Division Chiefs / Battalion Chiefs/ Duty Officers – Responsible for the proper execution of all fire management activities on the District and any area under contract from other public agencies. This includes understanding, adhering to, and implementing local cooperative fire agreements and this staffing plan with consultation and coordination with the Forest Duty Officer.
- D. Communication Center Manager – Responsible for the summarization and documentation of action taken within the SSAG. He/she will advise the Forest Fire Management Officer of any discrepancies noted. LPCC will compute and announce the individual weather station Staffing Levels.
- E. Work Supervisors – Approve employee Time and Attendance (T&A) in the PAYCHECK system. Verify the hours and job codes entered are accurate and follow policy found in FSH 6109.11 Pay Administration, Attendance and Leave Handbook and the Guidance for Use of Incident Job Codes.

3. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The individual weather station Predicted Staffing Level will be utilized as the basis for daily staffing. In some cases, Los Padres Communications Center may announce a revision or a special staffing condition. Emergency situations may necessitate staffing hours to be extended or days off to be cancelled. The Forest Duty Officer will monitor conditions of fire weather, emergency incident activity, and resource availability on or adjacent to the Forest and adjust staffing as appropriate. This also applies to geographic conditions when resources are scarce and fire activity exists.

- A. Finance – (ref. FSH 6509.11, FBMH 5109.34)
 - (1) Fire management personnel will be financed from WFSE to the extent budgeted for pre-suppression activities.
 - (2) All fire related overtime should be charged to WFSU, Severity or other approved fund code as supplied in Region 5 Guidance on the use of Incident Job Codes with approval from the Forest Duty Officer or relevant Incident Commander.
 - (3) Current direction is for FAM employees to code base times to 'B' codes while assigned to incidents. Employees and supervisors are responsible to ensure this is entered accurately.
- B. Employment of temporary personnel - As listed in this guide, may begin at the start of the pay period closest to May 15 and continue through November 15. In some case, the W.O. and/or R.O. may extend temporary/1039-hour limitations if conditions

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

necessitate.

- C. AD personnel - May be used as directed by the AD Pay Plan to meet the requirements of this plan. These employees are not intended to replace temp and seasonal hiring authorities for positions identified in the SFAMO.
- D. Tour of Duty-The Forest will establish the regular daily tour of duty for each employee on the districts. Core hours for all initial attack resources will be 0930 to 1800 hours. In some cases, modules may be scheduled 4-10 hour work days which will cover the core hours. These hours commence at the start of High Fire Season and last until the end of daylight savings time. The pay period after daylight savings, core hours will change to 0800-1630.
- E. District fire resources will be managed by a qualified Duty Officer who will be free of individual module responsibility and meet all Duty Officer requirements of the FS Fire & Aviation Qualification Guide (Chapter 4).
- F. Days Off – All fire suppression personnel will follow work-rest guidelines while on assignment and while on Forest. Personnel will have a minimum of 2 days off per week unless one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - (1) Uncontrolled fires on or threatening the Los Padres National Forest.
 - (2) Initial attack resources or support personnel are depleted to the point where coverage does not meet the Forest Draw Down levels or the staffing requirements of this plan.
 - (3) A module is below minimum staffing requirements and is needed to meet District or Forest draw down levels.When any of the above circumstances require an employee to work regularly scheduled days off, causing an employee to exceed 14 days of work, supervisors will ensure that the employee receives 3 days off for R&R.
- G. Maximum Daily Tour – Maximum time to be worked in any single day will be 10 hours, unless emergency or extended staffing actions are involved.
- H. Fire Suppression Module Staffing
Engine, Hotshot, Helitack, Dozer, and other regular crews used for fire suppression shall be trained to standards and accompanied by a red carded qualified supervisor each day the crew is on duty.

Module supervisors will be career employees, either PFT or Permanent Seasonal. The alternate or assistant supervisor should also be a career employee, whether an operator (driver), assistant, or some other working title. If there is no red-card qualified supervisor present, the module is not available for fire dispatch.

Personnel may be expected to work at alternate stations or with modules other than their own. Examples of this would include when firefighters are not mobilized with their modules or when another module needs assistance to meet the minimum staffing requirements

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

(1) Engines

Type 3 engine crews are five person effective. Staffing will include two leadership positions and three firefighters; this is commonly referred to as 5/0 staffing. The leadership positions are identified as an Engine Boss and a

Engine Operator/Driver. These positions are expected to have a current Class B driver's license with appropriate endorsements. At a minimum, the SFEO and FEO must maintain currency as Engine Boss (ENGB).

Endorsements required for the Class B CDL are:

1. Air Brakes.
2. Tank (Firefighting Vehicle with a Tank (liquid transport).
3. Emergency Vehicle Operator Training.

When the situation indicates that it would be prudent to respond to an incident with less staffing than the standard 5/0 staffing. With Forest Duty Officer approval, an engine module may operate with a minimum of 3 persons. 3/0 staffing needs to include a red carded qualified supervisor and a class B driver with endorsements as described above. If the mobilization is outside of the Forest initial attack area, the GACC must approve the reduced staffing.

(2) Handcrews

Handcrews will consist of a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 25 persons. Crews rostered as Type 1 will meet the standards for Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations. Regular scheduled days off will be coordinated between crews in order to maintain resource availability throughout the week, year-round.

(AD) The Sundowner and Santa Lucia AD crews will be trained and ready for emergency supplemental staffing. Either or both crews can be activated due to an emergency incident or to maintain Forest Draw Down needs.

(3) Helitack

Type II helicopter modules will meet the minimum staffing requirements in the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG). A minimum of 4 persons, including a HMGB supervisor and 3 HECMs are required for type II helicopters.

Helicopter modules will be available 7 days a week throughout the availability period. Daily staffing hours are 0930-1800.

The module will need to schedule a plan for continuous 7-day coverage throughout the aviation contract period. Helitack will need to adjust staffing to account for fire assignments and maintaining staffing during R&R periods. To maintain minimum staffing requirements (1 HEMG and 3 HECM), helicopter modules will need to cycle personnel through the R&R period. Some options include delaying travel for those personnel who are on days off during activation and returning key personnel ahead of the 14th day in order to stagger R&R. Personnel who return home early from assignment may be granted Administrative Leave for R&R from the Agency Administrator.

*(Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook Chapter 10_pg22)
24 Home unit AA may authorize additional day(s) off with compensation*

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

*25 to further mitigate fatigue. If authorized, home unit program funds will
26 be used.*

(4) Dozers

Dozer modules are staffed with 2 Heavy Equipment Operators and 2 Swampers. The intent is to have a minimum of 1 qualified operator and 1 swamper available 7 days a week.

(5) Patrols

Patrol units are 1 person effective. These resources are crucial to prevention, early detection, and origin and cause identification. A minimum of 1 patrol unit will remain on each district to implement the district and forest prevention plans.

(6) Air Tanker Base

Santa Maria Airtanker Base (SMATB) will operate 7 days per week during the full-service retardant contract period, estimated between mid-May to mid-November.

Normal operating hours during this time will be 0930-1800. Outside of the contract period, SMATB will operate 5 days per week - Monday through Friday. The plan of operation can fluctuate due to incidents, fire season, aircraft, administrative needs and OSCC requests.

SMATB is staffed with (4) full-time, permanent employees: (1) Airtanker Base Manager, (1) Assistant Base Manager, and (2) Airbase Technicians. SMATB staff also includes (5) temporary, seasonal employees.

Employee work schedules are based on a staffing plan which aims to meet the minimum staffing recommended in the Interagency Airtanker Base Operations Guide (IABOG).

-Minimum Staffing: Airtanker Base Manager (ATBM)+ 1 Ramp Manager (RAMP)+2 Fixed-Wing Parking Tenders (FWPT). These minimum requirements for daily staffing are positions identified as necessary to operate safely.

(7) Supplemental Staffing

The intent of supplemental personnel is to increase capacity during times of fire activity and to fill in as relief when there is a lack of qualified personnel. When it is necessary to supplement staffing either by cancellation of normal days off, activation of AD employees, or with employees from other modules, communication between the module, District Duty Officer, and Forest Duty Officer will occur ahead of time.

I. Forest Resource Draw Down – Low Fire Season

The Forest daily staffing will meet the Low Response level during 'low fire season'. This is 5 Engines, 5 Chief Officers, 1 Hand Crew, and 5 Patrols

J. Forest Resource Draw Down – High Fire Season

The Forest will maintain 10 Engines, 5 Duty Officers, 5 Patrols, 1 Crew, 1 Dozer for minimum preparedness staffing.

If resource availability is below the identified draw down levels, the Forest Duty Officer should consider ordering additional resources.

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

4. Supervisory Schedules

The District Fire Management Officer (Division Chief) and Assistant District Fire Management Officers (Battalion Chiefs) will schedule their off-duty days to provide for 7-day District Duty Officer coverage. In the event no Duty Officer is available, a “point of contact” may be designated for the District with Duty Officer Coverage to be provided by a neighboring district.

Cancellation of Scheduled Days Off

Scheduled days off will normally be taken, but under some circumstances their cancellation may be necessary. Day off cancellation will be determined by the District Duty Officer in coordination with the Forest Duty Officer.

Examples of situations, for consideration of day off cancellation are:

- 1). Active fires on or threatening the Forest.
- 2). Work force strength is depleted to the extent where Forest and District draw-down levels are not attained, or Module coverage levels from remaining personnel is not possible.
- 3). The Forest or District is in an extreme fire weather threat and supplemental staffing is necessary

5. EXTENDED STAFFING Operating Principles

Use of WFSU for non-incident support and preparedness actions is specifically designed to mitigate an extraordinary potential risk that exceeds normal preparedness capacity. This includes providing a “ready reserve” and strengthening initial attack capability in areas where large fire potential is greatest. The following principles outline the intent of the Regional Forester and are summarized from the Pacific Southwest Regional Preparedness Guidelines. They will be used to guide utilization of WFSU for non-incident support and preparedness actions on the Los Padres. All actions will be the result of coordination between District Duty Officers, Forest Duty Officer, and Dispatch.

Policy and Direction for extending staffing (Pacific Southwest Regional Preparedness Guidelines)
Funding of extended staffing, move-up-and-cover, and ordered stand-by as per FSH 6509.11g_51.11a:

Forests may extend staffing of fire resources beyond scheduled daily tours for a number of reasons. SSAGs may authorize or require it; adjacent Forests or cooperators may request it so extra resources can be immediately available for dispatch to ongoing fires or other nearby fire activity may indicate a potential need.

Support codes (P5EK5S with Forest override code) will also be used for prepositioning or when an employee is providing general fire support due to the imminent short-term threat of high fire danger, such as a predicted wind event or lightning episode, but cannot reasonably separate out time to a specific P-code or ABCD fire. (Support codes are not intended to be used for activities authorized under a severity request.)

Extending Staffing - May be authorized under the following conditions:

- (1) Fire activity on or adjacent to the Forest, ignition threats such as arson activity, fire-season holidays, opening weekend of fishing/hunting season, and during

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

other times of increased risk when abnormal fire problems are anticipated.

(2) Perceived threat from predicted wind or weather events such as Red Flag Warnings, Sundowner winds, and lightning.

(3) Resource Draw Down

District Duty Officers and the Forest Duty Officer will discuss the specific need and identify which resources are to extend. Forest Duty Officer will make the final recommendation regarding resources and staffing levels and coordinate with LPCC. For staffing levels which include 24-hour staffing, the Forest Duty Officer will seek Forest Supervisor approval. District Duty Officers are to communicate with their District Rangers to advise of the situation. Forest Duty Officer will communicate with and advise the Forest Supervisor and Deputy Forest Supervisor, regardless of augmented staffing level. Attempts will be made to coordinate and plan before 1600 so LPCC can include the extended staffing plans during the 1630 weather and predicted indices simulcast.

Staffing Patterns

Staffing level #1 - Normal Staffing Plan:

All suppression resources staffed during normal core duty hours. (930-1800 during High Fire Season)

Trigger Point: As directed by budget

Decision: None.

Staffing level #2 - Extended Staffing Plan:

Staffing outside of normally scheduled duty hours.

Suppression resources staff earlier or later as needed, not to exceed a 12-hour day. The number, type of resources, and duration of staffing will be determined at the time of implementation.

Trigger Point: Local fire activity, lightning activity, adverse weather conditions, resource draw down or unusual events (high forest usage).

Decision: Forest Duty Officer decision is based on input from District Duty Officers, NWS, and LPCC.

Staffing level #3 - 24 Hour Staffing Plan:

The number, type of resources, and exit strategy of 24-hour staffing will be determined at time of implementation. Resources assigned to 24-hour staffing will be 'assigned' to a Forest pre-position resource order. On "ordered stand-by", resources are under the control of the Forest Duty Officer and are unavailable for off-forest assignment. All resources will maintain readiness and availability for potential immediate emergency dispatch. Module Leaders will ensure work/rest guidelines and meal breaks are met and documented. In the Incident Business Management Handbook, there are 3 – 30 minute meal breaks necessary in this assignment.

Air resources will be staffed to maximize use of daylight hours (actual hours will depend on sunrise/sunset times). Appropriate additional resources will be requested in anticipation of extreme fire behavior.

Trigger Point: In an extended staffing plan, plus a combination of widespread geographic activity, geographic resource draw-down, predicted Red Flag warning or extreme fire weather threat where immediate Initial Attack is the only likelihood of averting a large devastating wildfire.

Decision: Forest Supervisor or Deputy Forest Supervisor, after recommendation from Forest Duty Officer.

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

Staffing level #4 - 24 Hour Staffing Plan +

All available LPF resources and evaluation of extended and/or 24-hour staffing for off-Forest cover resources on Forest. Resources assigned to 24-hour staffing will be 'assigned' to a Forest pre-position resource order. On "ordered stand-by", resources are under the control of the Forest Duty Officer and are unavailable for off-forest assignment. All resources will maintain readiness and availability for potential immediate emergency dispatch. Module Leaders will ensure work/rest guidelines and meal breaks are met and documented.

Trigger Point: In an extended staffing plan, plus a combination of widespread geographic activity, geographic resource draw-down, predicted Red Flag warning or extreme fire weather threat where immediate Initial Attack is the only likelihood of averting a large devastating wildfire.

Decision: Forest Supervisor or Deputy Forest Supervisor, after recommendation from Forest Duty Officer.

Definitions

Acting Chief Officer - An individual designated by the Fire Management Officer as qualified and capable of providing Chief Officer coverage on a temporary basis.

Attack - Any combination of initial attack resources (including, but not limited to: Fire Engines, Airtankers, Helitankers, Air Attack and Leadplane, and support personnel) required to contain and control wildfires.

Burning Index, Area Base - The 90% point on a 10-year frequency curve of actual burning indexes.

Burning Indexes, Actual - Burning indexes which are computed daily by the Forest ECC, based upon data provided by field observations. Actions from 1600 until 2400 each day will be based on the actual indexes.

Burning Indexes, Predicted - Burning indexes that are expected to occur the following day, based on trends of: temperature, wind, relative humidity, and fuel moisture as provided by the Fire Weather Meteorologist.

Coverage During Emergencies - Any coverage in addition to regular financed forces for presuppression purposes within the guidelines of this plan. It may be additional personnel or equipment during financed period, or the entire fire organization during the pre and post financed periods.

Examples of coverage during emergencies:

Regular fire management forces working tours in excess of their normal schedule.

Personnel working 6th or 7th day, holiday, or greater than an 8 hour day.

Off-unit personnel brought in to enhance initial attack staffing levels.

Non-fire personnel financed from other than WFPR appropriation who are temporarily assigned to Fire Management pre-suppression activities.

Coverage, Extended and/or Additional - Extended and/or additional coverage will be based on current high probability of fire starts due to incendiary fire occurrence, active fires on or adjacent to the Forest, dry lightning, sustained dry windy conditions, single digit humidity, or some other high-risk condition. Extended coverage applies to all hours outside of regular tour of duty. Additional coverage may be used within or outside of regular tour of duty hours. Generally, extended staffing will occur at the higher fire danger levels.

1) Extended and/or additional coverage will be approved by the Forest FMO or

Los Padres National Forest

Staffing and Specific Action Guide (SSAG)

Deputy Forest FMO in consultation with District Fire Management.

2) Extended and/or additional coverage may be provided by any combination of Forest Suppression and Prevention Resources.

Coverage Engine Module Staffing - Engine module staffing levels are governed by Regional and Forest policy. Specific staffing requirements are detailed in the "Management Policy" section called "Engine Module Staffing".

Detection - Any combination of lookouts, aerial and/or ground reconnaissance deployed to discover and report new fires.

Duty Officer, District - A Chief Officer, or their acting, that has the minimum qualifications of Division Supervisor (DIVS) and Incident Commander Type 3 (ICT3) and is responsible for overseeing Fire Management activities on the District.

Duty Officer, Forest - A Supervisor's Office Chief Officer, or their acting, that has the minimum qualifications of Division Supervisor (DIVS) and Incident Commander Type 3 (ICT3) and is responsible for overseeing Fire Management activities on the Forest.

LPCC – Los Padres Communication Center. Commonly referred to as "Dispatch".

Facilitating - Chief Officers and designated subordinates that coordinate and execute those Fire Management activities that fall within the scope of the Specific Action and Staffing Guide.

Fire Danger Rating Area - Measurement of variable factors effecting fire danger are gathered from one or more reporting stations, compiled and averaged for a defined area.

Fire Replacement - The activation of additional resources, to replace WFPR funded resourced committed to fires, as necessary to maintain adequate Forest presuppression capability.

Preparedness Level - The daily level of restriction imposed on prescribed burning, determined by the availability of firefighting resources. The preparedness level also applies to the seriousness of the current fire suppression situation, the higher the level, the more competition between fires for key resources.

Prevention - Fire prevention includes but is not limited to hazard and risk inspections, signing, fire prevention awareness training for grades K-6, support for Smokey Bear events, prevention enforcement, media releases, abandoned campfire patrols, media releases, information and education programs, special events for the public, and issuing burning permits.

Regular Tour of Duty - The regular daily tour of duty for initial attack and reinforcement personnel will be 0930 to 1800 (daylight savings time). The lunch period will be ½ hour. This tour is typical of the period June through October, with different hours generally authorized outside of that period.

Reinforcements – Hotshot and Type II hand crews used to supplement attack resources in the containment and control of wildfires.