

2. Wildland Fire Management Terminology

***Key terms used in wildland
fire management defined.***

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The following terminology is pertinent to wildland fire management. A more comprehensive listing of wildland fire terminology may be found in: Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations; “Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy Implementation Procedures Reference Guide” page 11 Definitions; and in “Integration of Wildland Fire Management into Land Management Planning, a Desk Guide,” page GI-1 Glossary.

These are the standard definitions found at the National Wildfire Coordination Group web site:

- ***agency administrator*** - The official responsible for administering policy on an area of public, private or tribal land and having full authority for making decisions and providing direction to the incident management organization.
- ***agency representative*** - The individual assigned by an assisting or cooperating agency or organization who has been delegated authority to make decisions affecting that agency's or organization's participation in managing the incident.
- ***appropriate management response*** - Specific actions taken in response to a wildland fire to implement protection *and* fire use objectives. (The concepts of confine, contain, and control should still be considered as viable TACTICS applied to suppressing unwanted wildland fires. Those terms, however, should not be confused for, or referenced to wildland fire management STRATEGY.)
- ***area command*** - An incident command system organization lead by an area commander assigned to manage multiple incidents, each in turn managed by a separate incident commander and incident management team. Also referred to as area command authority (ACA). Area command sets overall strategies and incident priorities and coordinates the activities of the IMTs assigned to it.
- ***assisting agency*** - An agency or organization providing personnel or other resources to the agency with protection responsibility to directly support incident management objectives.
- ***command staff*** - In an incident management team organization, the positions of information officer, safety officer, and liaison officer, who report directly to the incident commander. See also, general staff.
- ***confine*** - Use of tactical actions to manage a fire within a predetermined area or perimeter, usually defined by geographic features.
- ***contain*** - A tactical point at which a fire's spread is stopped by and within specific features, constructed or natural; also, the result of stopping a fire's spread so that no further spread is expected under foreseeable conditions. For reporting purposes, the time and date of containment.
- ***control*** - To construct fireline, or use natural features to surround a fire and any spot fires therefrom and reduce its burning potential to a point that it no longer threatens further spread or resource damage under foreseeable conditions. For reporting purposes, the time and date of control.
- ***cooperating agency*** - An agency providing assistance, other than direct tactical support, to support incident management objectives; e.g. American Red Cross, local law enforcement.
- ***direct attack*** - A method of wildland fire suppression where control lines are constructed next to or very close to the main fire edge.

- ***extended attack*** - That phase of wildland fire management when initial attack resources are no longer capable of achieving the objectives (usually control) set for the incident, and additional resources and overhead are committed; generally extending incident activities into another operational period.
- ***fire management plan*** - A strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland fire and prescribed fire and documents the fire management program in the approved land use plan.
- ***fire use*** -
- ***general staff*** - In an incident management team organization, the positions of planning section chief, operations section chief, finance section chief, and logistics section chief. See also, command staff.
- ***incident*** - An occurrence or event, either natural or person-caused, which requires an emergency response to prevent loss of life or damage to property or natural resources.
- ***incident action plan*** - Usually a written document which outlines objectives reflecting the overall strategy for managing the incident; includes identification of tactical resources and assignments plus numerous attachments which provide direction and important information for management of the incident during one or more operational periods.
- ***incident commander*** - The individual responsible for direct management of all incident operations; the leader of an incident command team.
- ***incident command system (ICS)*** - The combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organization structure with responsibility for the management of resources to effectively accomplish objectives determined for an incident.
- ***indirect attack*** - A method of wildland fire suppression where control lines are located at some distance from the main fire edge, sometimes using natural features, and the intervening fuel is burned out.
- ***initial attack*** - An aggressive suppression action consistent with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected.
- ***jurisdictional agency*** - The agency having legal responsibility to administer lands within a specified geographic area or location.
- ***kind*** - A classification of resources in the incident command system which refers to function; e.g. hand crew, helicopter, engine, dozer.
- ***multi-agency coordination group (MAC)*** - A group of agency administrators or their delegated representatives who have the responsibility and authority to make decisions to implement policy and coordinate the activities of the different agencies in support of their emergency operations.
- ***objective*** - A concise, time-specific statement of measurable, planned results that respond to preestablished goals. An objective forms the basis for further planning to define the steps to be taken and the resources to be used in achieving identified goals.
- ***operational period*** - A defined time period, e.g. 0600 to 1800 hours, in which a specific set of objectives are established for managing incident activities and for which specific resources and personnel are assigned to those activities; also referred to as a "shift."

- **overhead** - Personnel assigned to supervisory or management functions in the incident command organization; e.g. command and general staffs, directors, supervisors, and unit leaders.
- **preparedness** - Activities that lead to a safe, efficient, and cost effective fire management program in support of land and resource management objectives through appropriate planning and coordination.
- **protection agency** - The agency with responsibility and authority to provide fire prevention, detection, and suppression activities in a specified area.
- **resources** - Personnel and major items of equipment available or potentially available to be assigned to incidents. Resources are described in the incident command system by kind and type.
- **strategy** - A plan or direction selected through a decision-making process to guide wildland fire management actions to meet protection and fire use objectives.
- **suppression** - A management action intended to extinguish a fire or alter its direction of spread.
- **tactics** - Specific actions employed to implement and achieve objectives set forth by the chosen strategy.
- **type** - A classification of resources in the incident command system which refers to capability. Type 1 is generally considered to be more capable than Types 2, 3, or 4, respectively, due to size, power, capacity, or in the case of incident management teams, experience and qualifications.
- **unified command** - A structure of the incident command system which provides for each agency with jurisdictional responsibilities to participate in joint management of the incident through a common set of objectives.
- **values to be protected, or values at risk** - A relative estimate, or known measure of worth of resources and property exposed to a chance of loss or damage from wildland fire; those resources or property specified, e.g. watershed, air quality, timber production, wildlife habitat.
- **wildland fire** - Any nonstructure fire, other than prescribed fire, that occurs in the wildland. This term encompasses fires previously referred to as *wildfires* and *prescribed natural fires*.
- **wildland fire situation analysis** - A decision-making process which evaluates alternative management strategies against selected safety, environmental, social, economic, political, and resource management objectives as selection criteria.
- **wildland fire suppression** - An appropriate management response to wildland fire that results in curtailment of fire spread and eliminates all identified threats from a particular fire. All wildland fire suppression activities provide for firefighter and public safety as the highest consideration, but minimize loss of resource values, economic expenditures, and/or the use of critical firefighting resources.