



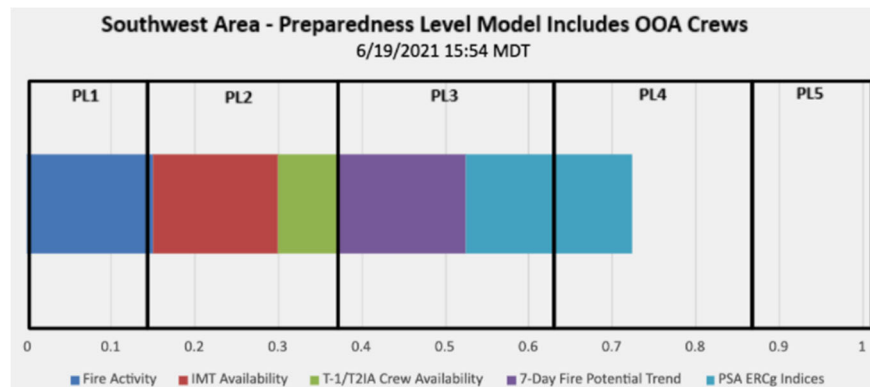
Southwest Area Preparedness Level Plan

Last Update: March 2022

Preparedness Level Definition

Preparedness Level (PL) is a measure of wildland firefighting workload vs. capacity that is evaluated and determined at national, Geographic Area, and sub-Geographic Area levels to ensure that firefighting resources are available to respond to new incidents. PL ranges from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level. As fire activity, fire potential, and the commitment of firefighting resources increase so does the PL and the potential for fire business workload to exceed firefighting capacity. As the PL increases, so does the need to increase firefighting resource capacity and provide strategic oversight for resource utilization.

Southwest Area Preparedness Level Evaluation



Preparedness Level (PL) in the Southwest is evaluated based on a two-tiered approach that uses five measurable elements:

- **Tier 1 - What is occurring?** This includes measuring ongoing fire business workload such as fire activity and availability of Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and Type 1 and/or T-2IA Crews.
 - **Element 1:** Current fire activity (contributing to resource utilization)
 - **Element 2:** Incident Management Team (IMT) availability
 - **Element 3:** Type 1 and Type 2IA crew availability
- **Tier 2 - What could occur?** This includes assessing the potential for new fire business workload based on the forecast 7-Day Significant Fire Potential and observed fire danger indices within individual Predictive Service Areas (PSA's).
 - **Element 4:** 7-Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook/Trend by PSA
 - **Element 5:** Current fire danger values (ERCg) by PSA

These elements have a proportional contribution to PL based on importance and are scored using one of five rating classes (Minimum through Maximum/Extreme) that are assigned on an ongoing basis within the [SWA PL Calculator](#). The individual, weighted element rating scores are then summarized mathematically to create a total PL score between zero (PL1) and one (PL5). Specifics on how to use the SWA PL Calculator are kept on file within SWCC.

Preparedness Level Descriptions and Activities

Preparedness Level 1

Description - Conditions are not conducive for frequent large fire growth in most of the geographic area. Fire resource staffing is adequate.

Preparedness Level 2

Description - Resources within local dispatch areas are adequate. Potential exists for some mobilization of additional resources from other local dispatch areas. Some minor support to the National Response Plan may be occurring. If conditions of preparedness level are no longer accurate, consider moving to a lower or higher preparedness level.

When in Preparedness Level 2, the following are items to be considered by the SWCC, including but not limited to:

- ✓ Ensure communication equipment is prepositioned at each cache before the onset of fire season.

Preparedness Level 3

Description - Resources within some local dispatch areas are short, requiring frequent mobilization of additional SW and national resources. Large fires are occurring frequently and the potential for IMT mobilization is regularly present. Fire behavior is generally moderate to high and is of concern to local agencies and fire managers. If conditions of preparedness level are no longer accurate, consider moving to a lower or higher preparedness level.

When in Preparedness Level 3, the following are items to be considered by the SWCG and the SWCC including but not limited to (in addition to items in PL2):

- ✓ Prepare for the activation or deactivation of MAC Group. Identify or release MAC Coordinator, support specialists, and decision support needs.
- ✓ Ensure resource response capability in coordination with the SWCG or designated duty officer.
- ✓ Monitors agency implementation of fire restrictions and closures throughout the Southwest Area

Preparedness Level 4

Description - Resources are frequently being mobilized in most dispatch areas; initial attack is unsuccessful daily. Aviation resources are important to success. Some dispatch areas are extremely busy and IMT fires occurring regularly. Resources have to be actively managed and agencies consulted regularly. Fire behavior is generally high to extreme; threats to life and property may be high and is of concern to local agencies and fire managers. If conditions of preparedness level are no longer accurate, consider moving to a lower or higher preparedness level.

Management Direction/Consideration

Agencies wishing to proceed with an incident strategy other than full suppression will notify and coordinate with the SWCG. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

If the agency decides to implement, incident strategies must consider the short and long-term resource requirements for all new and existing wildland fires (planned and unplanned) to ensure efficient resource utilization for identified priorities.

Prescribed fire application can be continued or be initiated if the proposed action is approved by an agency at the regional or state office level. This approval must be based on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on area resources and activities, and include feedback from the SWCG. The SWCG provides information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a prescribed fire application. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

When in Preparedness Level 4, the following are items to be considered by the SWCG and the SWCC (in addition to items in PL3):

- ✓ Activate the MAC group to assist the SWA in resource allocation.
- ✓ Actively manage IMT assignments within the SWA to include staging out of area IMTs.

Preparedness Level 5

Description - Fire resources throughout the SW Area are fully committed. Higher level of initial attack is unsuccessful. Use of aviation resources are critical for success. Numerous dispatch areas are at full operational level. Most or all SW IMTs are in use. Fire behavior is generally high to extreme; threats to life and property may be high and is of major concern to local agencies and fire managers. If conditions of preparedness level are no longer accurate, consider moving to a lower preparedness level.

Management Direction/Consideration

Agencies wishing to proceed with an incident strategy other than full suppression will notify and coordinate with the SWCG. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

If the agency decides to implement, incident strategies must consider the short and long-term resource requirements for all new and existing wildland fires (planned and unplanned) to ensure efficient resource utilization for identified priorities.

Prescribed fire application can be initiated or continued if the proposed action is approved by an agency at the regional or state office level and local resources are available to carry out the application without additional outside resource needs. This approval must be based on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on area resources and activities, and include feedback from the SWCG. The SWCG provides information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a prescribed fire application. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

When in Preparedness Level 5 the following are items to be considered by the SWCG and the SWCC (in addition to items in PL3 and PL4):

- ✓ Higher level of MAC Group engagement may be necessary to assist the SWA in resource allocation.
- ✓ Adds Military or National Guard Liaison to MAC Group if military or national guard is activated
- ✓ Considers establishing MAC and FEMA representative relationship
- ✓ Considers contacts/involvement with state-level Homeland Security Departments