



Southwest Area Complex Incident Management Team Operating Guide

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Mission Statement of Southwest Area Complex Incident Management Teams

The mission of the Southwest Area (SWA) Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMT) is to provide Agency Administrators with organized, highly-skilled, and qualified personnel to implement land management-based objectives on incidents, especially wildfires. All-risk incidents will be supported as appropriate. Ensuring firefighters and public safety will be the highest priority.

Relationships among Agency Administrators, SWCG, and SWA CIMTs

SWA CIMTs work for Agency Administrators as outlined in their delegation of authority from the affected Agency Administrator(s). SWA Incident Commanders (IC) and their CIMTs are selected by the Southwest Coordination Group (SWCG). The SWCG provides direction, guidance, and oversight for all CIMTs in the SWA.

SWCG members or delegated representatives reserve the authority to attend in-briefs and closeouts as part of their authority and responsibility for managing the CIMTs in the SWA.

SW Agency Administrators, SW Fire Managers, and the SWCG recognize the valuable service provided by members of SWA CIMTs. The work done on incidents cannot be accomplished by individual agencies or groups and requires effective interagency actions and relationships to be accomplished.

Southwest Area Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization

These principles and guidelines supplement the information provided in the Southwest Area Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization, Chapter 20, Overhead and Teams, and the guidance in this document, apply to all SWA Interagency CIMTs.

Safety

- The SWCG and agency administrators are committed to safe and mindful actions by all personnel involved in fire and incident management.
- The commitment and accountability for safety are the responsibility of all firefighters, CIMT members, and agency administrators.
- The Delegation of Authority, Incident Action Plans, Wildland Fire Decision Support System, and related activities must reflect this safety commitment.
- Incident Commanders (ICs) shall ensure that safety considerations are discussed and mitigated at all operational briefings, that safety briefings are occurring throughout the incident organization, and that safe actions are implemented.
- Individuals must be personally committed, responsible, and accountable for their performance.
- Only individuals with qualifications documented on their incident qualification card

will be assigned to incidents.

- The Agency Administrator or representative, and SWCC Center Manager, will be notified immediately if any serious accident, injury, or fatality occurs.
- SWCG expects all CIMT members to voice any safety concerns .
- No CIMT member shall be supervised directly by a relative . All CIMTs will ensure that employees are provided a safe work environment free from any form of harassment or hostile work conditions. The highest standards of ethics and conduct will be maintained.

Team Oversight

- Oversight and coordination of the CIMTs are provided collectively by the SWCG. At higher National preparedness levels, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) provides specific direction, guidance, and coordination. CIMT activities and availability are coordinated through the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC).
- Following each assignment, Incident Commanders (ICs) will provide the following documentation to the SWCC Center Manager and SWCG Chair.
- Evaluation of team by the host Agency Administrator.
- Information on any mobilization issues.
- ICs will provide information to the SWCG Chair if unusual events or controversies develop.
- Individual performance or conduct issues should be directed to the respective agency representative on SWCG. This is to ensure agencies promptly address performance/ conduct issues and to ensure the SWCG and ICs have documentation on specific individuals during the CIMT selection process for the following year.
- ICs will meet with the SWCG to conduct a post-season After-Action Review (AAR) each Fall to discuss and identify best management practices and any issues identified for management action.
- A Geographic Area Team Meeting will be held before each fire season to orient and train team members, develop team cohesion, and develop standard operating procedures for the team(s). The SWCG will provide updated direction, guidance, and expectations at the Team Meeting. If Agency Administrators have best management practices, issues or concerns they would like covered, they are encouraged to communicate in advance through any representative on the SWCG. Individual CIMTs may elect to conduct a separate meeting as needed. Reference the SWCC website for the current SWCG member list.
- SWA CIMTs roster configurations and Priority Trainee usage can be found in the [Southwest Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization \(Chapter 20\)](#).
- Training Specialists (TNSP) are responsible for documenting each assignment for a Priority Trainee including: PTB percentage completed and ensure completion of a Performance Evaluation. A copy of the trainee documentation package will be

- included in the incident documentation package and sent to the GATR.
- The SWCG may assist SWA CIMTs with the purchase of essential items to manage the teams, through individual SWCG member agency purchase support. Such purchases must be coordinated well in advance due to different agency purchase regulations. For larger purchases, such as capital equipment, requests may be brought forward to the SWCG to determine if/how they can be purchased.
 - Items such as overhead gear bags, T-shirts, briefcases, magnets, caps, stickers, mugs, etc. cannot be purchased by the SWCG.
 - Each CIMT is allowed a minimum of \$5000 worth of purchases from their sponsor(s).
 - SWA CIMTs should coordinate with the following SWCG Agency Representatives for their needs:
 - Team 1 – USFS
 - Team 2 – BLM NM/AZ DFFM
 - Team 3 – BLM AZ
 - Team 4 – FWS/BIA Western
 - Team 5 – BIA Southwest/BIA Navajo/NMS
 - Buying Teams - NPS

Southwest Incident Commander Committee (SWICC)

The mission of the SWICC is to serve the SWCG as a body of resident experts, providing advice, and developing recommendations, processes, and procedures to improve the consistency and performance of the SWA CIMT operations.

The SWICC will be comprised of the Incident Commanders, Deputy Incident Commanders, and Trainee Incident Commanders assigned to the SW CIMTs. The objectives of the SWICC are as follows, but not limited to: Serve as a standing advisory committee of practicing experts to provide timely advice to SWCG on all incident management-related issues.

- Identify, analyze, and develop recommendations, processes, and procedures to resolve incident management-related issues as directed by SWCG.
- Serve SWCG as a formal source of advice and counsel on the validity and applicability of proposals from other formal groups that have a direct or indirect effect on incident management. Specifically, this Committee will receive direction and report to the SWCG
- Specific CIMTs will be responsible for coordinating the annual Incident Management Team Meeting (via a rotation to include the agenda , logistics, and ensuring advanced notice is given to the SWCG Agencies for the meeting approval and procurement needs.
- The SWCG MOU and Operating Guide for the establishment of the SWICC,

Chair/Vice-Chair requirements, rotation, and roles and responsibilities can be found on the SWCC website, Committees page.

Selection of Incident Commanders

When a vacancy exists, it will be advertised by the SWCG through the SWCC. Written nominations for Incident Commanders (ICs) will be collected by the SWCC Center Manager. The SWCG will review all nominations and select the new ICs.

- Each nomination will be submitted on the SW IC Nomination Form and will be accompanied by a supplemental questionnaire and interviewed by the SWCG..
- Selected ICs will serve a three-year term, contingent on satisfactory performance. The outgoing IC will serve as the team IC until the new team roster is finalized in December.
- In the event an IC cannot complete their tenure, the SWCG will appoint an interim IC to complete that fire season.
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- ICs and Deputies for SWA CIMTs must be regular, agency employees (per National Policy) and sponsored and represented by an SW Agency that is a signatory to the SWCG MOU. Deputy ICs must apply through ICAP and be approved by the SWCG in December each year. Alternate ICs and must be regular agency employees, per national policy, and must also be current in their CIM qualifications.
- If a SW IC, Deputy, or approved Alternate, is not available to take their team on an incident, then a current IC or Deputy from another SW CIMT may take that team if reasonable transition arrangements are made. Any other substitute ICs must be approved by the SWCG or the SW CIMT will be removed from the rotation.
- Trainee ICs are encouraged to apply to the Priority Trainee advertisement that occurs in November each year; however, any SWA IC Trainees that do not apply will be included for assignment opportunities.

Selection of Team Members

Nominations for CIMT members within the SWA are the responsibility of the individual and supervisor. Nominations shall be submitted to the SWCC through the ICAP process as identified in the application announcement.

- Each position on the team(s), except the IC(s), is required to re-apply each year.
- Each ICAP application must be signed by the employee, and approved by the supervisor stating that he or she will make the necessary commitment to meet the National and GACC schedule, assignments, and meetings.
- Applicants should identify their preference of CIMTs they would like to serve on.
- No primary member shall be on multiple rosters. The SW Operations Committee and ICs will meet in December to discuss proposed team rosters for the CIMTs.

SWCG input will be sought immediately during or following that meeting before the rosters are approved and posted.

- A letter of expectation from the SWCG will be prepared for Southwest ICs. This letter will clearly express the expectation the SWCG has of the IC and what the IC can expect of the SWCG. This letter will be reviewed and signed by the Chair of the SWCG and the IC at the CIMT Meeting.
- In selecting primary team members and trainees, the ICs and SWCG Operations Group will strive for the best possible mix of highly qualified and diverse agency candidates, which may require some adjustments within initial team selections.
- Candidates must meet all prerequisites for training, experience, and physical requirements. Failure to meet all qualification requirements will preclude selection.
- A broad-based diversity of agencies, experience, and skills are sought for the most flexible, adaptable, and balanced teams.
- Each IC will develop a succession plan to outline how training and assignments will be utilized to ensure qualified individuals are being prepared to fill future team vacancies. This succession plan will be presented to the SW Coordination Group Chair at the CIMT Selection Meeting.
- The following guidelines will be used by the SWCG and ICs when prioritizing the selection of CIMT members:
 1. Agency employees (includes Federal, State, permanent FD/local agency, tribal employees) within Southwest Area.
 2. Federal/State Agency employees from outside the SWA.
 3. Federal/State ADs and Fire Department supplemental employees within the SWA.
 4. ADs and other non-federal employees from outside the Southwest Area (case by case basis).
 5. Member with late or no application in ICAP (must get confirmation of supervisory approval and provide the SWCG a Provisional Application).
- If an AD is selected for a primary position, the IC is responsible for addressing that in the succession plan.
- Out of GACC team members will be considered if no qualified SW agency candidates are available. Out of Geographic Area, applicants must have the approval of the Geographic Area that they reside in. The SWCC Center Manager will gather any out of area selectees and submit them to the appropriate Geographic area for approval.
- Priority Trainees are identified each year through the Southwest Priority Trainee Program application process. This list is distributed and each CIMT is expected to use up to 10 personnel identified on this list (subject to Agency Administrator approval).
- After SWCG Operations Committee and SWCG approval, SWCC will work with the

ICs to publish a final roster of team membership. The roster will follow guidelines in the Southwest Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization. If critical positions cannot be filled on an CIMT, the SW SWCG will evaluate the status of the CIMT.

Team Configuration and Mobilization for Incidents

All information related to CIMT configuration, rosters, rotation, and mobilization information can be found in the [Southwest Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization](#) Chapter 20.

IC Tenure Dates

The normal tenure of SW Incident Commanders for a specific CIMT shall be 3 years.

Work/Rest Guidelines

- Agency Administrators and ICs are responsible for ensuring that CIMTs comply with established work/rest and length of assignment guidelines.
- Guidelines for work/rest and assignment length can be found in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)*, [Chapter 7](#).

Financial Management

- ICs and Agency Administrators are responsible for ensuring that incident finance and property management are consistent with interagency and agency policy.
- Durable and non-consumable property purchased on an incident must be turned over to the host unit at the end of the incident.

Serious Accident, Entrapment, and Shelter Deployment Reporting and Investigation

Responsibilities for ICs and Agency Administrators are found in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Operations (Red Book)*, [Chapter 18](#).

Stand-down Policy

It is the policy within the Southwest Area to standdown CIMTs when there are substantial factual indications of specific findings of a serious breach of conduct or a high level of concern with entrapment, shelter deployment, serious injury, or fatality situations. If this initial standdown occurs, the SWCG will determine the merits of a continued standdown within 72 hours of the initial determination. Standdowns are not intended to place blame, but to take that CIMT out of the rotation until preliminary findings indicate the direction of investigation or actions needed to make the team whole again.

- CIMT members may need to be available to investigators, or individual team members may need stress counseling. If the CIMT's performance is not a contributing factor in the preliminary findings, then the CIMT may be placed back

into rotation upon discussions with the IC. The SWCG will work closely with the appropriate agency, IC, and the investigation team to expedite investigation work and the completion of preliminary and final reports.

- Initial findings should be presented to the Agency Administrator and the SWCG Chair within 72 hours of the activation of the investigation. The Chair will pass on findings as appropriate and consult with SWCG members. The final report will be completed and presented to the SWCG per the specific agency's accident investigation policy.
- If an CIMT receives an “unsatisfactory” or “needs to improve” rating, the IC will immediately notify the SWCG Chair. The SWCG will be convened to come to a resolution or corrective action with the IC before the CIMT can be assigned. The SWCG will determine if the situation is serious enough to require a stand-down of the team and will notify SWCC/NICC of team status.
- The SWCG will be the resolution group for complaints, issues, and questions of performance by CIMTs on assignments. Usually, the SWCC Center Manager will be the receiver of any issues, and these will be passed on to the SWCG Chair for timely discussion/action by the SWCG. The SWCG will attempt to resolve the issue(s) with the CIMT.

Southwest Area In-Briefing for out of GACC CIMTs

SWCG/SWCC briefer(s) should highlight the following items during the general in-briefing for any out of GACC CIMT. A briefing guideline can be found in the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Operations - Red Book, Appendix D](#).

- Appendix IV - SWA CIMT Operating Plan (this document).
- [Southwest Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization](#)
- Predictive Services Outlook and any related Fire Behavior information
- SWA ICS-209 reporting procedures and times.
- State smoke reporting procedures.
- SW MAC Group call times and protocols, including instruction on IC call reporting form/procedures.
- SWA Interagency Directory Access
- Communication Advance Team (CAT) contact information

