



National Wildfire Coordinating Group

National Interagency Fire Center
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MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#015-2013

To: NWCG Executive Board

From: NWCG Chair *Auter Bidabwan*

Date: December 17, 2013

Subject: Adoption and Release of the Risk and Complexity Assessment

Historically, the Complexity Analysis (CA) and the Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA) have been used by NWCG member agencies to determine incident complexity and what level of incident management organization is needed. Because two different tools were in use, and because neither tool adequately addressed the full range of incident management objectives (i.e. full suppression to incidents managed for resource benefit), NWCG identified a need to re-evaluate how incident complexity and organizational needs are determined.

In May 2012, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) tasked the Operations and Workforce Development Committee (OWDC) with evaluating the Organizational Needs Assessment and Complexity Analysis to determine if the two processes could be combined into a single process. This tasking was subsequently included as one of the tasks in the Evolving Incident Management (EIM) Strategic Implementation Plan to ensure changes to the CA/ONA were in alignment with how IMTs would be managed in the future.

The OWDC determined that a single process could be developed, and created the Risk and Complexity Assessment (RCA) as a result of that tasking.

The Risk and Complexity Assessment was developed by a group of national and field-level personnel and field-tested during the 2013 fire season, and is based on elements of the previously used Organizational Needs Assessment and Complexity Analysis.

The RCA is designed to quickly and easily evaluate the risk and complexity of a given incident and recommend a management organization. The RCA also provides users with the ability to make notes and document mitigations for elements identified as moderate or high complexity/risk, and provides the ability to document decisions. Common complexity indicators for wildland fire incidents are also provided to assist incident commanders and fire managers. The RCA is designed so that it may be completed on paper, and the information may be easily transferred into WFDSS.

The current release of the RCA recommends incident management organizations based on 5 incident types (Type 5 through Type 1). When the NWCG Evolving Incident Management effort fully transitions to 3 levels of incident management organization: initial attack (Type 5/4), extended attack (Type 3), and complex (Type 2/1), the RCA will be updated.

The NWCG Risk and Complexity Assessment will replace the NWCG Complexity Analysis and NWCG Organizational Needs Assessment beginning in January, 2014. The Risk and Complexity Assessment will replace the Incident Complexity Analysis in the PMS 210 *Wildland Fire Incident Management Field Guide* at the next revision. The RCA is also available at: <http://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/products/pms210.pdf>.

NWCG member agencies are encouraged to adopt and utilize the RCA when evaluating incident risk and complexity and determining the appropriate level of incident management organization.

Attachment: Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment

cc: NWCG PMU Staff; Mark Jones, Chair, OWDC