



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
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## MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#009-2009

To: NWCG Executive Board

From: NWCG Chair *Brian McManis*

Date: April 13, 2009

Subject: Revisions to the Annual Operating Plans for Master Cooperative Fire and Stafford Act Agreements due to Implementation of Revised Guidance for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

The Guidance for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy was finalized February 13, 2009. Revisions to Master Cooperative Fire and Stafford Act Agreements are necessary to clarify fiscal responsibilities due to the implementation of the revised Federal Policy.

Interagency direction has been developed for incorporation into Annual Operating Plans in FY2009 Cooperative Agreements as follows:

Each Annual Operating Plan for 2009 should be updated to address how the entities will handle cost-sharing for wildland fires that spread to another jurisdiction. Entities should recognize that "Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009)" provides for a wildland fire to concurrently be managed for one or more objectives. Additionally, objectives can change as the fire spreads across the landscape, affected by changes in environmental conditions, human influence, and institutional factors. Simply stated, some portions of a wildland fire may receive a protection objective while other portions are managed for benefit, and those portions and objectives might change at some time over the duration of the event. The intent should never be to allow a wildland fire to burn onto a jurisdiction that does not want it. This requires that all parties should be involved in developing the strategy and tactics to be used in preventing the fire from crossing the jurisdictional boundary, or that all parties should be involved in developing mitigations that would be used if the fire crosses jurisdictional boundaries.

NWCG#009-2009  
Revisions to AOP for Master  
Cooperative Fire and Stafford  
Act Agreements

The Annual Operating Plan must address the following:

- The level of communication required with neighboring jurisdictions regarding the management of all wildland fires, especially those with objectives that include benefit.
- The level of communication required with neighboring jurisdictions regarding suppression resource availability and allocation, especially for wildland fires with objectives that include benefit.
- Identify how to involve all parties in developing the strategy and tactics to be used in preventing wildland fire from crossing the jurisdictional boundary, and how all parties will be involved in developing mitigations which would be used if a wildland fire does cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Jurisdictions, which may include state and private lands, should identify the conditions under which wildland fire may be managed to achieve benefit, and the information or criteria that will be used to make that determination (e.g. critical habitat, hazardous fuels and land management planning documents).
- Jurisdictions will identify conditions under which cost efficiency may dictate where suppression strategies and tactical actions are taken (i.e. it may be more cost effective to put the containment line along an open grassland than along a mid-slope in timber). Points to consider include loss and benefit to land, resource, social and political values, and existing legal statutes.
- The cost-sharing methodologies that will be utilized should wildfire spread to a neighboring jurisdiction in a location where fire is not wanted.
- The cost-share methodologies that will be used should a jurisdiction accept or receive a wildland fire and manage it to create benefit.
- Any distinctions in what cost-share methodology will be used if the reason the fire spreads to another jurisdiction is attributed to a strategic decision, versus environmental conditions (weather, fuels, and fire behavior) or tactical considerations (firefighter safety, resource availability) that preclude stopping the fire at jurisdictional boundaries. Examples of cost-sharing methodologies may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - When a wildland fire that is being managed for benefit spreads to a neighboring jurisdiction because of strategic decisions, and in a location where fire is not wanted, the managing jurisdiction shall be responsible for wildfire suppression costs.
  - In those situations where weather, fuels or fire behavior of the wildland fire precludes stopping at jurisdiction boundaries cost-share methodologies may include, but are not limited to:
    - a) each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – fire suppression efforts are primarily on jurisdictional responsibility lands,
    - b) each jurisdiction pays for its own resources – services rendered approximate the percentage of jurisdictional responsibility, but not necessarily performed on those lands,
    - c) cost share by percentage of ownership,
    - d) cost is apportioned by geographic division. Examples of geographic divisions are: Divisions A and B (using a map as an attachment);

privately owned property with structures; or specific locations such as campgrounds,

- e) Reconciliation of daily estimates (for larger, multi-day incidents).  
This method relies upon daily agreed to cost estimates, using Incident Action Plans or other means to determine multi-Agency contributions. Reimbursements can be made upon estimates instead of actual bill receipts.

All agencies are requested to provide direction to the field to implement these modifications to agreements for the 2009 western fire season. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tim Melchert at (208) 387-5887.