

P.L.O.W.S.

An alternative to the After Action Review
found in the IRPG

What is P.L.O.W.S. and Why use it?

- ▶ P.L.O.W.S. was created and implemented by the Ruby Mountain Hotshots during the 2011 fire season as an alternative to the After Action Review (AAR) that is found in the Incident Response Pocket Guide. Typically when the standard AAR format is used the participants answer the questions before they are asked. When it comes time to ask the second or third questions, everyone loses interest because the questions have already been covered. For this new method, all of the information included in the IRPG regarding an AAR is still relevant with the exception of the questions. Instead of asking the four questions listed in the IRPG, the five topics of P.L.O.W.S. are used.

AAR Key Points

- ▶ The climate surrounding an AAR must be one in which the participants openly and honestly discuss what transpired, in sufficient detail and clarity, so everyone understands what did and did not occur and why.
 - ▶ Most importantly, participants should leave with a strong desire to improve their proficiency.
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AAR Key Points Cont.

- ▶ An AAR is performed as immediately after the event as possible by the personnel involved.
 - ▶ The leader's role is to ensure skilled facilitation of the AAR.
 - ▶ Reinforce that respectful disagreement is OK. Keep focused on the *what*, not the *who*.
 - ▶ Make sure everyone participates.
 - ▶ End the AAR on a positive note.
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AAR Questions

- ▶ What was planned?
 - ▶ What actually happened?
 - ▶ Why did it happen?
 - ▶ What can we do next time?
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AAR Answers from a tired firefighter that wants to go eat.

- ▶ What was planned?
 - Contain the left flank of the fire with direct attack.
 - ▶ What actually happened?
 - We contained the left flank of the fire with cold-trail check-line.
 - ▶ Why did it happen?
 - Because we made it happen.
 - ▶ What can we do next time?
 - Remember what we did and do it again.
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P.L.O.W.S.

- ▶ Plan
 - ▶ Leadership
 - ▶ Obstacles
 - ▶ Weaknesses
 - ▶ Strengths
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Plan

- ▶ State the plans that were in place. Follow up by asking any relevant questions.
 - Did everybody know what the plan was?
 - Was the plan sufficient to accomplish the objectives?

Leadership

- ▶ What leadership was in place?
- ▶ Was the chain of command clear?
- ▶ Was Leader's Intent communicated and sufficient?

The intent of this is to make sure that everyone knows what the chain of command was. Often times at the crewmember level, firefighters are fully involved in other duties and they are not the ones who are interacting with different positions within the ICS system.

Obstacles

- ▶ What obstacles were encountered and how were they mitigated?

Weaknesses

- ▶ What were weaknesses that should be improved upon?
 - ▶ How will they be improved?
 - ▶ Is follow-up action required?
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Strengths

- ▶ What were strengths that should be sustained?
- ▶ How will they be sustained?

Questions?

