

Staff Ride

Resources



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

1910 Fire - Tactical Decision Games

Stand 1 Tactical Decision Game

- You are the Engine Boss of a Type 6 engine on a severity assignment in northern Idaho, a lightning storm passed through the district last night producing several new starts. In the morning, you report to the Assistant Fire Management Officer (AFMO) who will brief you in the field.
- When you meet the AFMO, smoke is visible and appears to be close to an old logging road. You estimate fire size to be anywhere from a spot to $\frac{1}{4}$ acre with minimal spread. The weather forecasts calls for a high of 80-85 degrees with a minimum RH of 25-30% and winds from the SW at 2-6 mph.
- During your briefing, the AFMO reports that there was heavy lightning in the area but there are no other incidents on this part of the district. A recon plane will be up by mid-morning and lookouts should be in place shortly. They expect several new starts, contain and secure the fire in a timely manner so that you will be available for another dispatch. The AFMO will be on patrol in the area looking for new starts and Bald Mountain lookout should have good visibility and communication.

- At 0900 you begin driving into the fire but the logging road is blocked by tank traps, you are going to have to park and hike. Before leaving the vehicle, you radio the AFMO that your crew is hiking in, self plus two, and should be there in 10 minutes. A couple minutes later Bald Mountain lookout calls the AFMO to report another smoke in the vicinity and he leaves to get a bearing on the new fire. After 15 minutes of hiking, you arrive at the fire and find that it is a 20 X 20 spot on a south facing aspect with creeping fire behavior in light fuels. Spread potential is high with a thick stand of young trees about 50 feet uphill and logging slash covering the hillside to the ridge top about a ¼ mile upslope. When you try to radio dispatch with a size up you are unable to reach them on your handheld, your only other radio is the mobile in the engine. It has been about 25 minutes since you last called dispatch and you hear them trying to reach you, but are unable to reach dispatch, the lookout, or the AFMO on any frequency.

Suggested Discussion Points

- What is your priority at this time and on what factors do you base your decision? Keep in mind policies, guidelines, and the current mission.

- How does the leader's intent provided by the AFMO affect your decision-making?

Stand 2 Tactical Decision Game

- The weather is unseasonably dry and hot for September. A lightning storm came through two days ago and sparked numerous fires on and adjacent to your district. You are the ICT4 for a 15 acre fire. Progress has been slow but steady with moderate fire behavior. The fire is located five miles southwest of the district office and the town of Percy. One mile to the northeast of the fire is a large campground located along Silver River. It is a popular rafting access point on the river with a visitor center and store.
- At 0900 the weather service issues a Red Flag Warning of low RH and gusty winds in excess of 30 mph out of the SW, taking effect around 1300 today through 1600 tomorrow. With the issuance of the Red Flag warning, you are concerned that the fire will not hold and make a push to the northeast. You feel that the only chance to hold the fire is to hit it hard with some additional ground and aerial resources before the weather event. All local resources are actively engaged and there is no word on outside resource availability.
- Have a discussion with your Duty Officer on your concerns.

Suggested Discussion Points

- As the ICT4 for this fire, what challenges and responsibilities would you face at this point? Describe some of the actions you would implement.
- What information and resources may be available to assist you in identifying and prioritizing tasks and setting objectives?

Stand 3 Tactical Decision Game

A thunderstorm last night sparked quite a few fires, three of which Prospect Peak lookout has detected in the Gold Strike Creek drainage. Little to no rain accompanied the lightning and conditions are warmer and drier than usual with ERC's at the 90th percentile. After checking in at the district office, one Type 2 IA crew and two Type 3 engines are assigned to the district AFMO. They meet at a trailhead parking lot to receive a tactical briefing and assignment. The fires are located on both sides of Gold Strike Creek. Requests are in for additional resources, they may arrive tonight or tomorrow.

Weather forecasts for the afternoon call for a high of 95 degrees with relative humidity of 18%. Winds will increase to 4-7 mph from the south.

- **Fire A:** ½ mile up canyon, ½ acre, moderate spread, E aspect, lower third of slope, 15% slope, 50 yards off a pickup negotiable two – track, heavy FM 8
- **Fire B:** 1 mile up canyon, located near ridgeline, 2/10 acre, smoldering, W aspect, 35% slope, light FM 10
- **Fire C:** 2.5 miles up canyon, 1/10 acre, moderate spread and potential, W aspect, middle of slope, 40% slope, FM 8.
- As an Incident Commander assigned to fire A, B, or C, how will or would you engage these fires?

Stand 4 Tactical Decision Game

- You are the assistant crew boss of a Type 2 IA crew. You have half of the crew with you on a one-acre fire burning on a west aspect in FM10. Winds have been steady and moderate with occasional strong gusts. There are two other fires in the area, the closest is two miles to the south in the same drainage. This fire is five acres and has been a challenge for the resources working on it.
- It is 1530 and you have three chains of line left to construct. You hear the lookout talking with the Incident Commander (IC) on the other fire. Rolling material has resulted in a number of small spots below the line. A new spot ahead of the fire is growing in intensity and has quickly grown to a half acre due to increasing and erratic winds.
- The IC makes the call to have all resources on this fire disengage and meet down on the road at their vehicles to reevaluate. The IC relays this decision to you and cautions that there could be a possibility of the fire cutting off your escape route. Your primary escape route is down to your buggies (300 yards downhill) and then 5 miles south down the main road to the guard station.
- Brief your crewmembers on your next action.

Suggested Discussion Points

- At this point, what concerns do you have? Discuss possible decisions you would make based off your concerns.
- How do experience, training, and situation affect our judgment on when to disengage?
- You decide to disengage and work your way down to the buggies and tie in with the other resources on the road. At 1.5 miles down the road you come to two large snags across the road, ash fall is like a light snow and there are small embers falling as well. Some crewmembers are agitated and nervous, you are not sure how close the fire is to you or exactly where it is burning in regards to the road. Two of the crew are from this district and inform you of an old homestead with a large meadow and creek running through it, but it is six miles to the north.

Suggested Discussion Points

- With your primary escape route possibly blocked, what information is available to you to aid in making a decision?

- Would you rely on your experience and knowledge or the experience and knowledge of others?

- As a leader, how do you maintain control of your forces in a stressful situation such as this?