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Route To:

Subject: Direction on Incident Management – Thirtymile Hazard Abatement Plan

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, and WO Staff Directors

As we begin another fire season, I want to emphasize my commitment to the complete abatement of hazards that contributed to the tragedy in the Thirtymile Fire. Firefighter safety is our highest priority and I want every Line Officer, Fire Program Manager, Incident Commander, and Firefighter to understand this priority and act on it immediately.

The Hazard Abatement Plan for the Thirtymile Fire has been submitted to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and is posted on the Forest Service (FS) internet at: http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/fire_new. The Hazard Abatement Plan is national in scope and all Line Officers, Fire Program Managers, Incident Commanders, and fireline supervisors must have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities associated with the abatement actions.

Please share the key direction here with all of your Line Officers, Fire Program Managers, and Incident Commanders and ensure that it is followed:

1. Incident Commanders (ICs) shall manage fatigue and ensure firefighters comply with the FS work/rest guidelines. Incident management shall plan for and ensure crews, overhead personnel, and support personnel are provided a 2-for-1 work-to-rest ratio. This means for every 2 hours of work or travel, 1 hour of sleep or rest is provided. ICs shall monitor compliance with these guidelines and document the following information in the daily record on all fires that exceed one operational period:
 - a) Descriptions of actions taken to monitor work/rest cycles;
 - b) Justifications for work shifts exceeding 16 hours with mitigation measures; and
 - c) Actions taken to ensure compliance with the guidelines.

The “Daily Shift Log” in the Toolkit Section of the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook is an acceptable method of documentation.

2. ICs shall conduct inspections on each of their fires for safety and health hazards, including compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of the Eighteen Watch Out Situations. At a minimum, these inspections shall be conducted personally by the IC on Type 3, 4, and 5 fires, and accomplished by the IC and the Safety Officers on Type 1 and Type 2 fires. These inspections shall be documented on ICS Unit Logs and included in the daily incident records. In addition, Line Officers, Fire Program Managers, and/or Safety and Health Program Managers shall conduct supplemental inspections on a minimum of 10 percent of their unit’s Type 3, 4, and 5 fires and document their inspections in the incident records.



3. ICs shall ensure personnel on their incident are only assigned to fireline positions for which they are fully qualified, unless they are assigned to training or qualifying assignments with a fully qualified mentor/coach available to monitor and assist.
4. All after-action reports, individual overhead performance evaluations, and crew evaluations shall include compliance with the Ten Standard Fire Orders and mitigation of the Eighteen Watch Out Situations. Fireline supervisors shall complete performance evaluations on all out-of-Forest crews on all Type 3, 4, and 5 fires. Include all corrective action, even if satisfactorily completed, in the documentation. Local units shall keep these records in the official files for the incident, and share them with the evaluated resource and the resource's home unit Line Officer and/or Fire Management Officer.
5. ICs shall monitor the effectiveness of planned strategies and tactics, and disengage when they cannot be implemented safely. Aggressive fire suppression activities may be reinitiated as soon as strategies and tactics are adjusted to ensure actions will be in full compliance of the Ten Standard Fire Orders and all of the Eighteen Watch Out Situations have been mitigated.

The interagency publication Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2002 provides direction relative to many of the issues involved in the Thirtymile tragedy, such as complexity analysis, IC duties and responsibilities, and transitions in management as the complexity of an incident changes. It is imperative Line Officers, Fire Program Managers, and ICs comply with the direction in this document to ensure the safety of firefighters and the public. An interim directive incorporating the direction of this document is being developed.

I ask you to make the following Code of Conduct for Fire Suppression an integral part of our agency culture. Line Officers, Fire Program Managers, and firefighters at all organizational levels shall embrace these codes, and be held accountable for compliance.

Code of Conduct for Fire Suppression:

- Firefighter safety comes first on every fire every time.
- The 10 Standard Firefighting Orders are firm...we don't break them; we don't bend them.
- All 18 Watch Out Situations must be mitigated before engagement or re-engagement of suppression activities.
- Every firefighter has the right to know that his or her assignments are safe.
- Every fireline supervisor, every fire manager, and every administrator has the responsibility to confirm that safe practices are known and observed.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, contact Jim Payne, F&AM Thirtymile Coordinator at (503) 808-2359 or jepayne@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Dale N. Bosworth

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Chief

cc:

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