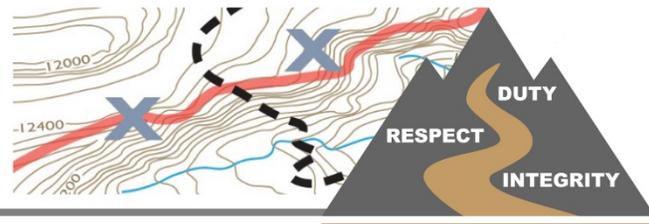


# Tactical Decision Games



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

## HAZARD RECOGNITION AND TRIGGER POINTS – LEWIS FIRE

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### INITIAL FACILITATOR INFORMATION—NOT TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

#### Author(s)

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#### Target Audience

Fire Effects Monitor (FEMO)

#### Training Objective

Given the following scenario, the Fire Effects Monitor will need to recognize hazards and set trigger points to safely mitigate the situation. The player should verbally communicate their responses to the appropriate individuals.

#### Resources Referenced

- **Lead Fire Effects Monitor, (Player Role)**
- 3 Fire Effects Monitors (FEMO)
- Redbud Wildland Fire Module
- Type 3 Helicopter
- Local Fire Management Officer

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### SCENARIO INFORMATION TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

#### Facilitator Briefing to Student(s)

Current conditions:

- Location – Sierra Nevada mountains, west side
- Date – August 16
- Time – 1130
- Temperature – 74°
- RH – 33%
- Winds – south @ 3-4
- Elevation 5,500 – 8,500 feet
- Fuels – Jeffrey pine with pockets of manzanita in the understory

- Fire size – approximately 2,000 acres
- Thunderstorm build-up is beginning to the east.

You are the Lead Fire Effects Monitor on the Lewis fire managed under a strategy other than full suppression. As the “Lewis Monitor,” you are the primary radio contact for the fire. You are currently spiked out on a ridge west of the fire and have been monitoring its progress for a week. You have a second FEMO with you and another pair spread out along the ridge to the north as lookouts. You are their supervisor. The fire has been burning for nearly a month.

Thunderstorm development has occurred the past five days to the east and is predicted to start tapering off after today. Previous thunderstorms have stayed east and have not influenced the fire. Since the fire started, the primary spread has been upslope to the east. The fire also has been gradually backing west towards Lewis Creek below the spike camp. This entire area is well within the Maximum Manageable Area (MMA).

The fire typically gets active between 1400 and 1500 each day for about 4-5 hours before laying down again after 1900. During this time single tree torching is common. The fire has not exhibited any unusual behavior nor has it made any large runs. The weather has been similar day after day with the maximum temperature in the low 80s and the minimum relative humidity in the low 20s.

The Redbud Wildland Fire Module is working along the south flank of the fire, firing out pockets as necessary north of a trail. This is in response to a Management Action Point (MAP) which is to check the fire from spreading south. You have been serving as their lookout. The Type 3 helicopter is currently taking the FMO on a recon flight.

One of your FEMOs reports that one of the backing fingers has rolled out and looks like it will reach Lewis Creek today. Take 2 minutes to develop your response to the FEMO and an update to any other appropriate individuals.

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FACILITATOR ONLY

### Facilitator “Murphy’s Law” Suggestions

The “Murphy’s Law” suggestions listed below can be added as what-ifs at any time during the scenario to raise the stress level of the leader. You can also use one of your own:

The first four what-ifs could be used as a chronological sequence. ***(These may need a Facilitator “tactical pause” to deliver the information. The Facilitator will need to move the fire perimeter to simulate growth with each tactical pause. Allow the player to respond to each “what if” before moving on to the next one.)***

- At 1200, one of the FEMOs reports to the Lead that they think there is a smoke across (west of) Lewis Creek, northeast of the spike camp.
- At 1245, the Lead Fire Effects Monitor notices the smoke column is shifting and starting to collapse.
- At 1300, the Lead Fire Effects Monitor notices the thunderclouds are starting to influence the fire.

- At 1315, the spot fire west of Lewis Creek comes to life and starts making a run towards the spike camp driven by the downdrafts.

### **Additional What-ifs:**

- The Lead Fire Effects Monitor notices a smoke below the Whiskeytown Wildland Fire Module.
- The FMO asks persistent questions while conducting his/her recon in the helicopter.
- The dispatcher calls for a fire update and logistics order.
- The Lead Fire Effects Monitor's radio battery goes dead and he/she is out of replacement batteries.

### **Facilitator's Notes**

This scenario is designed as a simulation-style TDGS but can also be used as several small seminars. The idea with this TDGS is to address the importance of recognizing hazards and setting trigger points for taking action. As such, one of the hazards was the thunderstorm buildup. One of the trigger points for moving the spike camp could have been when the fire backed into Lewis Creek. These should be mentioned if they are not brought up at the AAR. Additional points to emphasize are:

- Trigger points by nature, are set to initiate an action before an adverse situation can develop.
- By the time the fire crossed Lewis Creek, it may have already been too late for the FEMOs to move their camp.
- What were some of the indicators in the scenario? (e.g., change in the smoke column, change in fire behavior)
- Was the Lead FEMO's ability to function as a lookout compromised by various distractions?
- Did the Lead FEMO communicate effectively with his/her subordinates to get them back to the spike camp?
- Did the Lead FEMO notify the proper people (e.g., dispatcher, Strategic Operational Planner) as the events unfolded?
- Did the Lead FEMO rely on the helicopter for anything? With the thunderstorm downdrafts, how would this have affected the aircraft?

The Facilitator has the option of role playing one or more of the additional roles. This may be effective with the original dilemma to ensure the objective of the game is achieved. However, the Facilitator should take care to not play too many roles or to dominate the exercise. There should be some room for flexibility to allow the game to take unforeseen directions. Facilitators should be creative and experiment each time they put this game on based on prior experiences with this scenario.

The original scenario relates to the primary objective. The "Murphy's Law what-ifs branch into the secondary objectives. These mostly relate to the players being distracted by other people or events. The secondary objectives are best delivered by other role players. While there are no specific role playing scripts, the Facilitator can still designate other members of the group to act as the additional role players during the two minutes the player is considering their original response. The Facilitator should brief all role players on when to enter into the scenario. In this way the Facilitator can control the pace of the game and throw in what-ifs as their discretion to

keep the game flowing. As with any real life scenario, events are influenced by the personalities of the people involved. These are the unknown human factors. The Facilitator should encourage a human factor component to run its natural course as long as the players remain serious and stick to the intent of the dilemmas.

The facilitator must find the balance as to not overload the players but keep as much pressure on them as they can handle.

## AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Conduct an AAR with focus on the training objective. Use the AAR format found in the *Incident Response Pocket Guide* to facilitate the AAR. There are four basic questions in the AAR.

1. What was planned?
2. What actually happened?
3. Why did it happen?
4. What can we do next time?

TDGS shouldn't have a single solution, keep the focus of the AAR on what was done and why.

