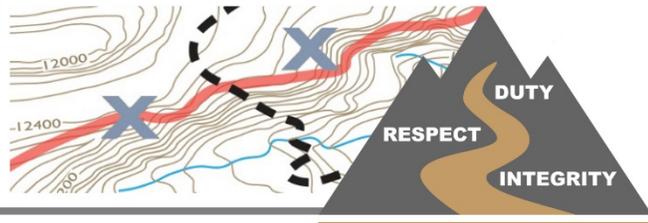


Tactical Decision Games



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

MAINTAINING CONTROL – VALLEY PRESCRIBED FIRE

INITIAL FACILITATOR INFORMATION—NOT TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Author(s)

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Target Audience

Burn Bosses, Firing Bosses, Firing Team Leader (to adapt the game for lesser experienced players at the FFT1 level)

Training Objective

Given the following scenario, various Supervisors will be confronted with a situation where they lose control of their resources. Players should verbally communicate their responses to the appropriate individuals.

Resources Referenced

All resources are optional; it is up to the Facilitators discretion, experience and ability to facilitate a TDGS as to how many resources and role players will participate.

- **Burn Boss Type 2 (minimum), Firing Boss, Firing Team Leader (FFT1 preferred) (all Player Roles)**
- Holding Boss
- Type 1 Crew Superintendent
- Duty Officer
- 2 Type 3 Engines
- Replacement Firing Boss
- Replacement Firing Team Leader

SCENARIO INFORMATION TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Facilitator Briefing to Student(s)

Burn Specifications

- Size – total burn = 375 acres; segment 1 = 45 acres
- Fuel Models – 8, 9 and 10 (coniferous timber)
- Topography – south facing slope, 30% average, 6800-7600 feet
- Objectives – reduce dead and down in all size classes by 60-80%; limit mortality to <10% in trees >12 inches DBH

Prescription

- Temperature – 40-80°
- RH – 20-80%
- Winds – 0-8 mph, any direction
- 1 hour fuel moisture – 4-12%

Current Conditions

- Date – October 15
- Time – 1000
- Temperature – 54°
- RH – 52%
- Winds – upslope @ 2 mph
- 1 hour fuel moisture – 9%

You are the _____ on the Valley Prescribed Burn. This is the first day of a multi-day project. You gave your briefing and all the parameters are in prescription. Despite fuel conditions being on the drier end, you and your overhead are confident the burn can be successfully completed. All items on your go/no go checklist were a “go” and you are ready to proceed with the test burn. The objective today is to ignite Segment 1, 45 acres, which will form part of the blackline for the balance of the unit.

You contact your _____ and tell him/her to go ahead and proceed with the test burn. He/she briefs the Firing Team Leader and the firing team. You are not sure how it happened, but shortly after the burning started there were 6-10 burners running drip torches in what appeared to be different directions. Within minutes there is a large amount of fire on the ground which you estimate to be around two acres. Trees are torching (which is an unwanted fire effect) and no one appears to be in control of the firing.

Take 2 minutes to develop your response to this situation keeping in mind that not all of the igniters will have radios.

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:

Burn Boss

- You had to inform the dispatcher that you were shutting down the test burn. The Duty Officer gets on the radio and wants an explanation why you are shutting the burn down.
- A spot fire is detected due to torching from the test burn which will tie up holding resources and prevent you from continuing to burn.
- Burning has continued and at 1200 the burn pattern is leading to unwanted scorching of trees that are highly visible near a popular road. Reconfiguring the firing team stagger could fix the situation but will you have to override the original directions of the Firing Boss.

These next two what ifs may need a Facilitator “tactical pause” to alter the scenario (e.g., “it is now 1300 and the Burn Boss replaced the Firing Boss with a new individual...”).

Allow the player to respond to each event.

- By 1300, you realize that the Firing Boss doesn’t really know his/her job. You feel a need to step into the operation and make an overhead change.
- At 1400, the new Firing Boss tells you they are not comfortable doing the operation. They feel overwhelmed and suggest you plug the original Firing Boss back in the organization.

Firing Boss

- The Burn Boss starts reconfiguring your firing team stagger without talking to you.
- The Firing Team Leader informs you he/she cannot account for one of the burners. This person does not have a radio.
- You give instructions to your Firing Team Leader and they become insubordinate because they don’t agree with you.

These next two what ifs may need a Facilitator “tactical pause” to alter the scenario (e.g., “it is now 1300 and the Burn Boss replaced the Firing Boss with a new individual...”).

Allow the player to respond to each event.

- By 1300, you realize that the Firing Team Leader doesn’t really know his/her job. You feel a need to step into the operation and make a personnel change.
- At 1400, the new Firing Team Leader tells you they are not comfortable doing the operation. They feel overwhelmed and suggest you plug the original Firing Team Leader back in the organization.

Firing Team Leader

- One of your igniters reports that they lost their radio.
- One of your igniters asks you a question about the burn pattern that you don't know the answer to.
- You give instructions to one of your igniters and they become insubordinate because they don't agree with you.
- You can't account for one of the igniters. This person is without a radio.
- You receive instructions from the Type 1 Crew Superintendent who is your normal boss. These instructions directly conflict with what you were told to do by the Firing Boss.

Facilitator's Notes

The scenario in this TDG is the same for each of the three overhead positions. Their responses will vary depending on where they are within the chain of command. ***The facilitator should pick which overhead position will be the player (depending on the experience level of the players) each time this scenario is run.*** The TDG is designed for only one individual to be the player at a time.

The idea with this TDG is to put the prescribed burn overhead into a situation where they lose control of their resources. There is also a secondary issue of not becoming distracted by outside people or events. It is important to emphasize that with the liability related to prescribed burning, having strict control over one's resources cannot be overstated. All it takes is one errant burner to change the fire situation rapidly. It's possible for individuals to let their guards down, due to the nature of prescribed burning versus suppression incidents. This is important to recognize so corners are not cut with the standard fire orders.

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 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 using the scripts below. The facilitator should 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 role playing scripts are intended to allow the role players flexibility to add a human factor component throughout the game. The facilitator should encourage this to run its natural course as long as the players remain serious and stick to the intent of the dilemmas.

Role player scripts have been provided in the amendment section to assist the facilitator with role player prompting.

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.

- What was planned?
- What actually happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What can we do next time?

The key items to consider in the AAR are:

- **Losing control of resources at any level of the chain of command has an influence all the way to the top.**
- Which fire order number is maintaining control related to?
- Why is it important to maintain control of your resources?
- What did each of the overhead players consider when trying to correct the situation?
- How did the overhead players feel when confronted with potentially difficult situations?
- Did any of the players feel overwhelmed?

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

Role Player Scripts

Role Player: Burn Boss

You are the Duty Officer and have just been informed by the dispatcher that the Burn Boss shut down the test burn shortly after beginning. You contact the Burn Boss by radio and want to know what is going on up there and why he/she shut the test burn down.

You are the Holding Boss. After the test burn, you inform the Burn Boss that you have a spot fire that will tie up one engine and a squad of firefighters to grid for more. You are no longer comfortable with continuing the burn.

You are the Firing Boss and the Burn Boss just reconfigured your firing team without consulting you. You contact him/her on the radio and are extremely upset.

You are the Firing Boss and at 1300 the Burn Boss informed you that he/she is replacing you with another individual. You confront the Burn Boss on playing favorites and disagree with his/her decision to relieve you. You demand an explanation.

You are the second Firing Boss and you feel uncomfortable with your assignment. At 1400 you talk to the Burn Boss face to face and request that he/she rotate you out and put the original Firing Boss back in.

Role Player: Firing Boss

You are the Firing Team Leader. You radio the Firing Boss and inform him/her that you cannot locate one of your igniters. This igniter doesn't have a radio. You don't know what to do and ask for guidance.

You are the Firing Team Leader. You have just been given instructions over the radio by the Firing Boss that you completely disagree with. You radio back that that plan won't work and that you are refusing to carry out the instructions.

You are the Firing Team Leader. At 1300, the Firing Boss informed you that he/she is replacing you with another individual. You confront the Firing Boss on his/her decision to relieve you. You are devastated and beg to be allowed to continue to avoid embarrassment.

You are the second Firing Team Leader; you feel uncomfortable with your assignment. At 1400, you talk to the Firing Boss face to face and request that he/she rotate you out and put the original Firing Team Leader back in.

Role Player: Firing Team Leader

You are an igniter. You tell the Firing Team Leader face to face that you lost your radio. You are in a panic and request permission to go back into the burned area to look for it. You plead to the Firing Team Leader to not mention this to anyone.

You are an igniter. You are confused about the burn pattern and why you are burning in this way which is having questionable fire effects. You want to know how the specific burn objectives relate to the prescription parameters and how the fire intensity BTUs are being measured to ensure those objectives are being met.

You are an igniter. You have just been given instructions face to face by the Firing Team Leader that you completely disagree with. You refuse to carry out the instructions and accuse the Firing Team Leader of incompetence.

You are the Type 1 Crew Superintendent. You give the Firing Team Leader instructions that completely conflict with those of the Firing Boss. You don't expect to take no for an answer from the Firing Team Leader because that person normally works for you.

You are the Firing Boss. You demand to know why the Firing Team Leader just changed the ignition pattern and who told them to do such a thing. You scold the Firing Team Leader over the radio.