

**OHIO EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN
EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION #4 - FIREFIGHTING**

Tab C – FIRE SEASON OPERATIONS PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this Tab is to establish guidelines for fire season preparedness and response activities.

B. The Lead Agency for Tab C – Fire Season Operations Plan is the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry

C. Authority ORC Chapter 1503

D. References

The Wildfire Management Manual was used as a primary reference for this Tab.

E. Resources

Fire/Law Program Administrator
Rural Fire and Training Coordinator

II. SITUATION

A. This plan will put into practice the concept of incident management and greatly assist in requesting and managing when the use of non-local resources is required. Use of planning levels to guide expected levels of preparedness and response is a commonly accepted practice for wildland fire management agencies. The purposes of these planning levels are:

1. To identify the level of wildland fire activity, severity and resource commitment within the Division of Forestry;
2. To identify actions to be taken by the Division of Forestry to ensure an appropriate level of preparedness and readiness for the existing and potential situation;
3. And to modify or curtail Division of Forestry activities when essential to ensure preparedness or in response to severe fire situations.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Fire Management Staff (Columbus) will monitor the state fire situation and determine the planning level for the Division. This operational plan document will be updated as necessary.

A. Planning Level I

At this level, forest units are having fires but are able to manage them using forest or district resources. No movement of resources from District to District is occurring. Fires are occurring on a daily basis and are contained and controlled within one operational period. FEMA declaration is possible.

Operations:

1. Operations will occur according to normal procedures. Forest units should handle their local fire load and any resources supplementing forest units should come from within the district.
2. During times that a red flag warning or watch is issued for a weekend, holiday, or other normally scheduled day(s) off, district managers may use stand-by pay per article 13.12 of the labor contract. Stand-by would normally be scheduled for those peak periods of expected fire activity.
3. Costs of individual fires need to be tracked as well as the potential threat to structures or other improved property. This data is necessary if a request is made for a FEMA declaration or the division requests emergency funds from the controlling board to help defray suppression costs.
4. The forest or district handles all support of the resources assigned to fires.

B. Planning Level II

At this level, forest units and districts are having several consecutive days of multiple fires or fires begin to burn and require suppression support for more than one operational period. Requests are being made at the District level to bring in more resources from other Districts and areas of the Division. The number of fires increases to the point some fires are under staffed or not staffed at all. Fires are threatening structures and other improved properties. The use of air resources to aid in the suppression efforts may have begun. FEMA declaration is possible.

Operations:

1. At this level the fire protection area will be broken into one or more branches with management teams assigned to coordinate all suppression activities within the activated branch or branches.

2. The management team will consist of a minimum of an Incident Commander, Planning/Logistics/Finance Chief, and Task Forces Leaders.
3. The number of personnel assigned to the branch will be adjusted according to need and at the direction of the Incident Commander.
4. Costs of individual fires or complexes of fires need to be tracked as well as the potential threat to structures or other improved property. This data is necessary if a request is made for a FEMA declaration or the division requests emergency funds from the controlling board to help defray suppression costs.
5. The Incident Commander will be delegated the authority for command of fire suppression activity within the branch by the District Forester(s).
6. Unified command will be established with the United States Forest Service, Wayne National Forest in areas of intermingled state and federally protected land to allow effective sharing of resources and prevention of effort duplication.
7. All resource ordering and incident status information will be coordinated through the Fire Management or State Forest Sections or their representatives.
8. The support of all resources assigned the branch will be the responsibility of the incident management team.
9. Personal Services contracts with former Division employees are used as well as contracts for air support and equipment needs.
10. The Incident Management Team will work with the county Emergency Management Agencies to help facilitate logistical and planning needs for the branch.
11. Branch communications plans will be developed and implemented by the Incident Commander

C. Planning Level III

At this level there are multiple branches established throughout the fire protection area. FEMA declarations may have occurred on fires in the state. All resources of the Division of Forestry are assigned and there is need to request more from other Divisions and Departments within the state. The Middle Atlantic Compact states are contacted to see if they have resources available to assist.

Operations:

Same as Planning Level II - A fully qualified Cost Unit Leader is assigned to each branch to ensure proper cost tracking occurs. This position will most likely be brought in from out-of-state to ensure all costs associated with FEMA declarations are claimed and proper documentation of costs associated with the entire operation are captured.

D. Planning Level IV

All resources from within the state have been assigned and more resources are needed to address the fire situation. Multiple FEMA declarations may have been approved.

Operations:

Same as Planning Level III - Middle Atlantic Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact is activated Resources will be requested from out-of-state through the Ohio Interagency Coordination Center.

IV. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Branch Incident Commander

1. Ensure resources assigned are housed, fed and logistical needs are met.
2. Track costs associated with incidents occurring within branch
3. Direct operations of branch and conduct strategy meetings as needed.
4. Ensure safety receives priority consideration in the development of branch plans.
5. Assess incident situation.
6. Determine the need for and supervise Command and General Staff.
7. Develop and approve the Incident Action Plan. At minimum ICS 201, ICS 203 and ICS 204's need to be part of the plan.
8. Approve and place requests for additional resources and requests for release of resources.
9. Ensure an ICS 209 is completed each day and forwarded to fire staff.
10. Establish and direct task forces to ensure suppression efficiency. The Incident Commander should supervisor the Operations section unless an Operations Section Chief is assigned.

B. Logistics/Planning/Finance Section Chief With possibly one-or-more persons filling role

1. Obtain briefing from Incident Commander
2. Conduct planning meetings.
3. Responsible for the production of the Incident Action Plan.
4. Keep track of resources and incident status.
5. Ensure normal Division of Forestry information collection and reporting requirements are met.
6. Determine and implement the method of feeding of resources to best-fit incident.
7. Order, purchase, receive, store, assign, and maintain inventory of supplies needed for the incident.
8. Provide sleeping facilities for resources.

9. Ensure personnel and equipment time recording documents are prepared daily for cost tracking purposes.
 10. Supervise cost unit leader, logistics, and planning personnel when assigned.
- C. The Division of Forestry internally maintains rosters of names to fill the following positions:
1. Incident Commander
 2. Logistics / Planning / Finance Section Chiefs
 3. Task Force Leaders
 4. Expanded Dispatch /Columbus Support
 5. Logistics / Planning / Finance Support
 6. Non-State Forest Personnel Firefighter Qualified
 7. Other Red Carded State Employees

V. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ESF-4 – TAB C

FEMA Fire Suppression Assistance Summary

A. Definition

When a fire or fires threaten destruction that would constitute a major disaster the FEMA Associate Director (AD) may authorize Federal assistance under the Stafford Act. Assistance may include grants, equipment, supplies, and personnel.

B. Types of Fire

Suppression of any fire on public or privately owned forest or grassland that threatens a significant number of structures or other improvements. The fire must be the responsibility of the State or a local fire department.

C. Declaration Process

The Division of Forestry determines the need for request. The criteria for a request are least 20 structures threatened by a fire or complex of fires that has the potential to burn together into one large fire.

The Division of Forestry alerts the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, which will coordinate with the Governor to make the request to FEMA. This initial request by Ohio EMA may be a telephone request, followed by a formal letter from the Governor's Office.

If approved, FEMA will notify the Governor and in turn Ohio EMA. Approval will be based on information provided by the Division, EMA, and the Principal

Advisor. The Principal Advisor is a Forest Service representative that will make recommendations to FEMA and assess the situation to verify a declaration is needed.

D. Reimbursement Rates

Seventy (70%) per cent of costs (70% Federal / 30% State) when an eligible fire exceeds the 1999 floor cost of \$26,435 or 100% Federal share if the State's out-of-pocket expenses exceed twice the average fiscal year cost of \$528,697.

E. Cost Eligibility

1. Expenses to provide field camps and meals and personal comfort and safety items.
2. Reasonable state rates for use of publicly owned equipment for eligible fire suppression work.
3. Reimbursement to State for reasonable cost billed by Federal Agency.
4. Cost for lost or expended tools, materials, supplies, and equipment – less reasonable insurance.
5. Mobilization / Demobilization costs directly related to Federal fire suppression assistance provided through FEMA.
6. Eligible cost of local government fire-fighting organizations – when reimbursed by the State through an existing mutual agreement.
7. State costs for suppressing fire on Federal land when State is responsible, based on cooperative agreement, without reimbursement. This is exception to FEMA policy and accommodates State action involving co-mingled Federal / State and privately owned forest or grassland.