

Chapter 01

Federal Wildland Fire Policy & Guidance Overview

Scope

The FWS Fire Management Handbook incorporates, by reference, all guidance in the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook](#) (Redbook NFES #2724) Chapter 1 in addition to the following FWS specific clarifications:

The FWS Fire Management Handbook is intended to be a program reference guide that documents the standards for operational procedures and practices for fire management activities in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These standards and practices are based on current Service, Departmental, and Interagency policy, and are intended to provide program guidance to ensure safe, efficient, and effective wildland fire operations.

The Fire Management Handbook is formatted similarly to the Redbook which should be familiar to all involved in fire management. To minimize duplication, the Fire Management Handbook references, instead of restating, supplemental guidance in the Redbook and other policy and guidance documents.

Policy and Guidance Affecting FWS Fire Management Operations:

Federal – DOI and FWS adhere to Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Guidance. Most documents can be found at: http://www.nifc.gov/fire_policy/index.htm including:

- *Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy January 2001*
- *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review, Final Report, December 18, 1995.*
- *National Interagency Mobilization Guide (NFES 2092).*
- *Prescribed Fire Complexity Rating System Guide (NWCG, NFES 2474, PMS 424).*
- *Prescribed Fire Smoke Management Guide (NWCG, NFES 1279, PMS 420-1).*
- *Interagency Strategy for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (June 20, 2003).*
- *NWCG PMS 310-1 Wildland Fire and Prescribed Fire Qualifications System Guide (2000).*
- *Interagency Wildland Fire Use Implementation Procedures Reference Guide.*
- *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Reference Guide (2006).*

Departmental – The FWS adheres to Departmental policy documented in the Departmental Manual and guidance transmitted through memo or email. Most Interagency policy is incorporated directly or by reference into the Departmental Manual.

Service – The [Fish and Wildlife Service Directives System](#) contains the current policy and management directives that affect the daily activities of the FWS and its employees. The Directives system consists of the FWS Manual, Director's Orders, and National Policy Issuances. The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual describes the structure and functions of the Service's organizational units, documents re-delegations of the Director's authority, and

prescribes the policies and procedures for administrative activities and program operations. We use it to communicate instructions and provide guidance in administrative and program operations. The Manual is the primary source of information on organizational structure, authority to function, policy, and general procedures. Director's Orders are limited to temporary policy, procedures, delegations of authority, emergency regulations, special assignments of functions, and initial functional statements on the establishment of new organizational units. These policies are necessarily broad and generally require management discretion or judgment in their implementation. They represent the Director's expectations of how the Service and its employees will act in carrying out their official responsibilities. These policies are often supplemented with guidance distributed by memo or email.

FWS Fire Management Handbook – The Fire Management Handbook is incorporated by reference into the Service Manual (621 FW 1) and is designed to meet the intent stated above. The Fire Business Reference Guide provides FWS standardized fire business guidance for the Fire Management Program, and contains specific business rules, definitions, and standard operating procedures to ensure consistent accounting and reporting requirements set forth by the FWS, Department of the Interior (DOI), and Congress.