

Chapter 01 Federal Wildland Fire Policy & Guidance Overview

Scope

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or FWS) Fire Management Handbook (FMH) incorporates, by reference, all guidance in the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#) (aka Redbook; National Fire Equipment System (NFES) #2724) Chapter 1 in addition to the following Service specific clarifications:

The FMH is a program reference guide that defines the implementation standards, requirements and procedures of the wildland fire management program for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To minimize duplication, the FMH references, instead of restating, interagency standards, requirements and procedures for wildland fire management in the Redbook and other policy and guidance reference documents. The Fire Management Handbook and Redbook provide guidance for implementing safe and effective fire and fire aviation operations.

The 2019 Fire Management Handbook replaces the 2018 version of this handbook.

Policy and Guidance Affecting Service Fire Management Operations:

Federal – Department of Interior (DOI) and the Service adhere to Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Guidance. Most documents can be found at the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group \(NWCG\) Website](#) including:

- *Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009).*
- *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).*
- *National Incident Management System (NIMS) Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (NWCG Publication Management System (PMS) 310-1)*
- *Prescribed Fire Complexity Rating System Guide (NWCG PMS 424, NFES 2474).*
- *Smoke Management Guide for Prescribed and Wildland Fire (NWCG PMS 420-2, NFES 1279).*
- *Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (NWCG PMS 484).*

Departmental – The Service 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 Service and its employees. The Directives system consists of the Service Manual, Director's Orders, and National Policy Issuances. The [Fish and Wildlife Service Manual](#) describes the structure

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

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14 **Service Fire Management Handbook** – The Fire Management Handbook is
15 incorporated by reference into the Service Manual (621 FW 1) and is designed to meet
16 the intent stated above.

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18 **Service Fire Business Guide** – The Fire Business Guide provides Service standardized
19 fire business guidance for the Fire Management Program, and contains specific business
20 rules, definitions, and standard operating procedures to ensure consistent accounting and
21 reporting requirements set forth by the Service, DOI, and Congress.