

Chapter 08

Interagency Coordination and Cooperation

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 8 in addition to the following FWS specific clarifications:

Regional Fire Management Coordinators (RFMC), with the assistance of the Zone Fire Management Officer (ZFMO), are responsible for ensuring that Refuges within their Regions have appropriate initial attack response alternatives identified, coordinated and documented appropriately in the associated planning documents.

Refuge Managers/Project Leaders are responsible for arranging for appropriate initial attack response capability for all FWS units with a fire occurrence history within their zone of responsibility. This can be accomplished through any of the following means:

- FWS employees and equipment (fire funded and/or collateral duty) that meet the minimum NWCG PMS 310-1 qualification requirements for suppression response, and provide adequate capability to safely and effectively initial attack fires.
- State and local cooperating agencies with an agreement or a legal responsibility to provide fire suppression to the unit.
- Business organizations providing suppression services for a fee requiring upfront annual payment.

Considerations for utilization of State or local fire departments:

- Many fire departments or wildland fire agencies are required by law to respond to all fires in their protection area. If protection is required by law, FWS lands cannot be excluded and the FWS will not provide reimbursement for any services provided.
- Some FWS lands may lie in areas where fire protection is not required by law or where fire protection is funded through service charges. These units may establish fire protection agreements with nearby fire agencies. These agreements must be reviewed by the RFMC and warranted contracting officer as appropriate prior to approval.
- Mutual Aid Agreements were common in the past, but require that all participants contribute on a basis comparable with other participants. These agreements may no longer be appropriate where the Service lacks the capability to provide comparable assistance.

Considerations for payments of suppression service:

- Payments can only be made if there is an appropriate agreement or contract, and the flowchart below illustrates how to select when an agreement is needed and what type of agreement is needed
- Protection agreements stipulating reimbursement for actual fire suppression costs should be utilized rather than protection agreements stipulating upfront payment whenever possible

- Payments are not appropriate if the refuge lies within the jurisdiction of a local fire department that is required by law to respond to all fires within their jurisdiction.
- These agreements must be reviewed by the RFMC, warranted contracting officer and Regional Solicitor as appropriate prior to approval

Management response to wildland fire must be outlined in the unit’s Fire Management Plan, agreements, Annual Operating Plans, and local Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs).

Suppression Alternatives Flow Chart

