

Chapter 11

Incident Management

The Service Fire Management Handbook incorporates, by reference, all guidance in the [Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#) (Redbook, NFES #2724) Chapter 11 in addition to the following Service specific clarifications:

Wildland Fire Management Standards

Every wildland fire on or threatening our lands will receive a management response.

Wilderness Wildfires - Wildfires in the wilderness or other special reserve areas will be managed as identified in the approved Fire Management Plan and applicable land management plans (i.e. Wilderness Plan, CCP etc.) Line officers may authorize the use of all suppression methods, tools, and equipment, including motorized equipment, in wilderness areas or proposed wilderness areas. Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA) will be used to determine wilderness values and objectives. The MRA will be completed prior to a wildfire occurring in order to determine what, if any, types of motorized equipment, retardant, etc. will be permitted within the wilderness. This analysis will be attached as an appendix to the Fire Management Plan.

Contracts and Cooperative Agreements - Develop contracts and cooperative agreements to provide the primary backup suppression capacity on our lands whenever possible. Exercise care to ensure that such agreements and contracts are cost effective and provide adequate protection to our resources. The Division of Contracting and General Services and/or the Solicitor's Office will review them for legal sufficiency. An explanation of contracts and other types of agreements is in the Fire Management Handbook.

Non-Fire Funded Suppression- For field stations that do not have fire-funded personnel, it is expected that each field office with wildfire will maintain a minimal initial attack capability using field office staff that meet training and physical fitness requirements for wildland fire suppression or have current agreements in place for suppression responsibility by another agency. It does not include field offices in the following categories:

- Field offices that have fires posing little or no threat of resource loss;
- Alaska refuges, the Alaska Fire Service and its cooperator, the State of Alaska, provide wildland fire suppression services.

Air Quality and Smoke Management

Clean air is a primary natural resource value in all Fish and Wildlife Service units. Fire management activities which result in the discharge of air pollutants (e.g., particulates, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants from fires) are subject to, and must comply with, all applicable Federal, state, interstate, and local air pollution control requirements, as specified by Section 118 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7418). These requirements are the same substantive, procedural, and administrative requirements (See [561 FW 2](#)) that apply to a private person or other non-governmental entity. The protection of these resources must be given full consideration in fire management planning and operations.

Coordination with a state or states air regulatory office is required during the development of resource and fire management plans in order to determine procedures for compliance with state air quality regulations. The Service Air Quality Branch (AQB) should be contacted on the proper procedures for obtaining coordination with the state or states in which the refuge is located, or when notified by the state that an air pollution violation has occurred.

At the time the draft Fire Management Plan is sent to the regional office for review, the regional office will determine if the smoke management portions of the plan will be sent to the AQB for review and comment. A copy of the comments from the AQB will be returned to the region and will be forwarded to the refuge with the regional comments. When the draft Fire Management Plan is in the region for review, the Regional Fire Management Coordinator will ensure that the air quality coordinator reviews the smoke management portion of the plan and the comments from AQB before they are returned to the refuge. A copy of the air quality section(s) of the approved Fire Management Plan will be sent to the AQB.

The [Smoke Management Guide for Prescribed and Wildland Fire 2019 Edition](#) (PMS 420-2, NFES 1279), is the Service's primary technical reference and should be referenced when developing and implementing wildland fire management plans. Other useful geographical and activity specific publications are:

- [Southern Forestry Smoke Management Guidebook](#). Mobley et.al., USDA Forest Service GTR SE-10, December, 1976. A very detailed and comprehensive book but written specifically for the Southern States. It is an excellent reference for principles of smoke management. The abbreviated principles listed below are from this publication.
- [Principles of Smoke Dispersion from Prescribed Fires in Northern Rocky Mountain Forests](#). W.R. Beaufait and O.P. Cramer, USDA Forest Service, Division of Fire Control, Northern Region, Missoula, Montana, August 5, 1969 (revised January 15, 1972). This publication covers the subject well but is confined to the Northern Rocky Mountains.
- [Slash Smoke Management Guidelines](#). Office of the State Forester, Salem, Oregon, September 11, 1969. An excellent publication, though limited to slash burning and to the State of Oregon.
- Other useful publications can be found at the NIFC Smoke management website: http://www.nifc.gov/smoke/smoke_publications.html.

Post Wildfire Activities

Service policy augments Department of the Interior emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation policy and program guidance found in [Departmental Manual 620 DM 7](#), and the [Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response](#) and [Burned Area Rehabilitation](#) Guidebook.

Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability - Plan preparation, review, approval, and implementation require immediate action and span multiple program responsibilities and disciplines as summarized below:

- Plan preparation - Refuge Manager
- Plan review
 - Compatibility and compliance review - Refuge Manager

- Fiscal and policy review – Regional Fire Management Coordinator / National Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation Coordinator
- Plan approval
 - < \$500,000 - Regional Director
 - ≥\$500,000 – Chief, Branch of Fire Management
- Plan implementation - Refuge Manager
 - Plan implementation oversight - Refuge Supervisor
- Program budget tracking and accountability - Chief, Branch of Fire Management
 - National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) planning and initial project entry – National Burned Area Emergency Response Coordinator

Planning - Emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments may be described in a single plan. The Emergency Stabilization Plan will specify only emergency activities and treatments carried out within one year plus 21 days of the fire’s ignition date. Plans must be completed within 21 days after the fire’s ignition date. If additional time is needed, extensions may be negotiated with the Chief, Branch of Fire Management. If ES treatments cannot be completed within the initial 1 year period, the Director, US Fish and Wildlife Service may grant an extension of the time period to December 31 of the second year following the ignition date. The extension will only be considered if climatic conditions in the 1st year precluded completion of the planned work. The Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan will specify non-emergency activities and treatments which are compatible with approved unit management plans and can be accomplished within 5 years plus 21 days after the fire’s ignition date. The expectation is that BAR activities and treatments be completed within 3 years plus 21 days after the fire’s ignition date. A unit may complete a full 5-year plan, but years 4 and 5 will be a lower priority for funding compared to other plans that are within years 1-3 plus 21 days after the fire’s ignition date. Data entry into the NFPORS Restoration and Rehabilitation module is also required. Burned Area Emergency Response (emergency stabilization) and Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan templates are provided.

- [Burned Area Emergency Response \(emergency stabilization\) Plan template and examples](#)
- [Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan template and examples](#)

Plan Review and Approval - Project leaders submit electronic copies of completed plans to the RFMC and National Burned Area Emergency Response Coordinator (NBAERC) for concurrent and coordinated technical, fiscal and policy review. The RFMC presents the plan and RFMC/NBAERC approval recommendations to the Regional Director for approval. Following Regional Director’s approval, the NBAERC presents plans with estimated costs > \$500,000 to the Chief, Fire Management Branch for final approval.

Funding - Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation funding guidance should be referenced when developing and implementing an Emergency Stabilization and/or Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan. The FireCode will be used to establish the cost structure for all post fire recovery projects. The appropriate cost structure will be activated only after plan and funding approval. Consideration of additional Emergency Stabilization or Burned Area Rehabilitation funding beyond the first year requires monitoring results documented in the Annual Accomplishment Report (see Reporting Requirements below).

- Emergency Stabilization funding is provided for no more than 3 years plus 21 days after the fire’s ignition date. Treatments must be completed within 1 year plus 21 days after the fire’s ignition date unless an extension has been approved. Treatments intended to improve watershed functionality completed in the first year plus 21 days that failed may be repaired or replaced within 3 years plus 21 days after the fire’s ignition date. Emergency Stabilization funding cannot be used to continue seeding, plantings and invasive plant treatments beyond 1 year plus 21 days after the fire’s ignition

date. Continued treatment funding beyond 1 year plus 21 days after the fire's ignition date requires an approved plan amendment including monitoring documentation justifying the additional funding request. Data entry into the NFPORS Restoration and Rehabilitation module is also required. Emergency stabilization plans and expenditures will conform to standards in the [Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response Guidebook](#) in some emergency situations.

- Burned Area Rehabilitation funding is provided in one-year increments for no more than five years following 21 days after the fire's ignition date. Obligating funds in one fiscal year for use in another should only be done when there is not sufficient time to initiate and complete the contracting necessary to begin treatment work identified in an approved plan. All burned area rehabilitation projects or treatments are funded on a priority basis as established by the Service. If necessary, the selection of activities and treatments on prior-year fires will occur shortly after the start of each fiscal year. Funding will be distributed when the Interior Appropriation bill or other appropriate budget legislation is signed into law and the Department transfers funding to the Service. Burned area rehabilitation plans will conform to standards in the [Interagency Burned Area Rehabilitation Guidebook](#).
- BAR plan development is contributed by the local unit. BAR funds will not be used to develop a BAR plan.
- Permanent staff will not be reimbursed for their time from BAR funds. These items should be entered into the BAR plan as contributed costs.
- Refuge vehicle use will not be reimbursed for BAR work. These items should be entered into BAR plans as contributed costs.
- Vegetative BAR treatments are always a higher priority for funding than the replacement for minor assets.
- Treatments and activities in plans will no longer be mixed. They must have their own specification form but show linkages between treatment specifications and monitoring specifications.
- Year 3 and 4 approved requests will generally be lower priority than Year 1-3 requests.
- Minor asset requests are not considered in years 4 and 5 approved.

Budget Allocation - The Branch of Fire Management will budget and allocate available Emergency Stabilization or Burned Area Rehabilitation funds based on information in the approved plan by:

- The original FireCode assigned during suppression efforts will be utilized within the cost structure for the approved plan
- Establishing a FireCode compatible cost structure for the approved plan
- Initiating the budget allocation process based on fiscal year funding needs identified in the approved plan.
- Notifying (via e-mail) the regional fire management and budget offices of the funding allocated.
- The region or host unit will establish the appropriate cost structure using the host unit Cost Center.

Reporting Requirements - A Burned Area Emergency Response (emergency stabilization) and/or Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan Annual Accomplishment Report is required to receive continued funding in years two and three. The reports are archived in the field unit's project files and electronic copies are sent to the RFMC and the Branch of Fire Management in Boise, Idaho, no later than September 15th each fiscal year.

- The Annual Accomplishment Report is in two parts. The first part is a written narrative which will contain a project summary and document the actual initiation and completion date, actual accomplishments, implementation actions and costs, and treatment effectiveness monitoring results for each approved treatment and activity identified in the Burned Area Emergency Response (emergency stabilization) and/or Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan. The second part of the report will be entering treatment and activity completion information into NFPORS.

- Final Accomplishment Report-The Burned Area Emergency Response (emergency stabilization) and/or Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan Final Accomplishment Report will report overall actions taken in sufficient detail to document all accomplishments, implementation costs and monitoring results. The report(s) are archived in the field unit's project files and electronic copies are sent to the RFMC and the Branch of Fire Management in Boise, Idaho, no later than 3 years and 60 days following the fire's ignition date. The reports will be posted to the [DOI sharepoint site](#):

