



**United States Department of the  
Interior**  
**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
**Fire Management Branch**  
**National Interagency Fire Center**  
**3833 South Development Avenue**



Refer to: BFM2021006

**January 1, 2021**

Memorandum

To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators  
From: Chief, Branch of Fire Management  
Subject: 2021 FWS Fire Management Handbook Release

The FWS (Service) Fire Management Handbook (FMH) has been updated for 2021. This version replaces the 2020 FMH. Printed copies of the 2021 FMH will not be distributed but may be downloaded from: <https://www.fws.gov/fire/handbook/>

The FMH supplements Federal, Departmental and Service policies, and is intended to serve as a program reference guide. The FMH documents the standards for operational procedures and practices for fire management activities within the Service to ensure safe, efficient and effective wildland fire operations.

The FMH is formatted similarly to the [Interagency Standard for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#), commonly known as the Redbook. To minimize duplication, the FMH contains supplemental guidance tiered from the Redbook and other common sources. All policy references are linked in the FMH.

Significant changes to the 2021 FMH include:

**All Chapters:**

- Matched formatting to Redbook and added line numbers.
- Replaced Fishnet links with [Fire Management SharePoint](#) site links.

**Chapter 9 – Planning:**

- Removed dated information and clarified to bring the chapter in line with the Redbook.
- Added a paragraph about Wildfire Response Plan.

**Chapter 11 – Incident Management:**

- Updated ES & BAR policy language.

**Chapter 13 – Training and Qualifications:**

- Added Do What's Right training requirements.

**Chapter 17 – Fuels Management:**

- Updated PL 4 & 5 guidance.

The FMH will be updated annually in January to coincide with the annual updates to the Redbook. Please contact your regional representative to the FWS National Fire Operations and Safety Team (NFOST) if you have suggestions for improving the FMH.

cc:

Regional Chiefs, National Wildlife Refuge System  
Chief, Division of Natural Resources  
Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System  
Staff, Branch of Fire Management