



# USDA Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management Briefing Paper



Date: May 8, 2003

**Topic: Thirtymile Fire related Fire Suppression Policies**

**Background:**

Following the Thirtymile Fire tragedy, the Forest Service implemented a series of policies to improve firefighter safety and to implement the actions in the Thirtymile Accident Prevention Plan of December 14, 2001 and the Thirtymile Hazard Abatement Plan of March 26, 2002. These policies were reviewed and revised following the 2002 fire season to strengthen and clarify the direction from the Chief of the FS. The revised policies for 2003 were incorporated into the FS directives system on April 24, 2003. The paraphrased policy changes are summarized in the table below.

<b>2002 Policy</b>	<b>2003 Policy</b>
Provide firefighters training on entrapment avoidance and fire shelter deployment protocols. (1/11/02 memo)	No change. (FSM 5108. Included in <u>Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations</u> , Ch. 5)
<u>Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2002</u> provides direction.... (4/16/02 memo)	Changes the <u>Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations</u> and the <u>Incident Response Pocket Guide</u> to guidance documents. (FSM 5108)
Every fire line supervisor will be issued a “pocket card” for the fuel types on their home unit and for fuel types on an assigned unit prior to deployment. (1/11/02 memo)	Forest Supervisors will distribute Fire Danger Pocket Cards to each fireline supervisor on Type 3 – 5 wildfires. (FSM 5124.04)
Issue an <u>Incident Response Pocket Guide</u> to all fireline supervisors. (1/11/02)	No change (FSM 5108)
Prepare a complexity analysis on every fire at time of initial attack as part of size up. (1/11/02 memo)	No change. (FSM 5108. Included in <u>Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations</u> , Ch. 9)
Ensure all resources know the name of the assigned IC and announce all changes in incident command. (1/11/02 memo)	Ensure all resources on Type 3 – 5 wildland fires are informed on the name of the IC and any changes in incident command leadership. (FSM 5108. Included in <u>National Mobilization Guide 13.1</u> )
Local agency administrators convey their expectations of Type 3 – 5 ICs. (1/11/02 memo)	No change. (FSM 5130.43)
Line Officers will communicate their expectations of leadership in fire management. (1/11/02 memo)	No change. (FSM 5130.3)

<b>2002 Policy</b>	<b>2003 Policy</b>
ICs shall manage fatigue and ensure compliance with work/rest guidelines. (4/16/02 memo)	Line Officers ensure fatigue is identified and addressed. (FSM 5103.42) ICs: No change (FSM 5103.45)
Line officers and ICs have authority to supercede natural and cultural resource considerations when a potential life-threatening situation exists (5/21/02 FSM ID 2670-2002-1)	No change. (FSM 5130.43 & 5130.45)
ICs shall conduct inspections of their incident for safety and health hazards, including compliance with the 10 Std. Fire Orders... (4/16/02 memo)	No change. (FSM 5130.45)
Line Officers...shall conduct supplemental safety and health inspections on 10% of their unit's Type 3 – 5 wildfires... (4/16/02 memo)	No change. (FSM 5130.43)
ICs shall ensure personnel on their incident are only assigned to positions for which they are fully qualified... (4/16/02 memo)	Line Officers will ensure that employees are mobilized in wildland fire positions for which they are qualified... (FSM 5130.42) ICs will assign personnel to fireline positions for which they are qualified, as certified by their employing agency. (FSM 5130.45)
ICs on Type 1 – 3 wildfires shall have no collateral duties. (1/11/02 memo)	ICs on Type 1 – 3 wildfires shall have no collateral duties, except for those of unfilled command & general staff positions. (FSM 5130.43)
After-action reports shall include compliance with the 10 Std. Fire Orders... (4/16/02 memo)	Accomplish after-action reviews for all Type 3 wildland fires and selected Type 4-5 fires. (FSM 5130.44)
Complete performance ratings on all “out of Forest” crews on all Type 3-5 fires... (4/16/02 memo)	Complete performance ratings on all fireline resources from outside the “local area” on Type 3 – 5 fires... (FSM 5130.45)
ICs shall monitor the effectiveness of planned strategies and tactics, and “disengage” when they cannot be implemented safely. (4/16/02 memo)	ICs shall monitor the effectiveness of planned strategies and tactics, and immediately “delay, modify, or abandon” firefighting action on any part of a fire where they cannot be implemented safely. (FSM 5130.45)
Ensure compliance with the 10 Std. Fire Orders and mitigation of Watch Out Situations. (4/16/02 memo)	No change. (FSM 5130.45)
Ensure arriving fireline resources on wildfires have positive contact with appropriate incident personnel and receive a briefing prior to commencing work. (4/16/02 memo. Included in <u>Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations</u> , Ch. 9)	No change. (FSM 5130.45)

**Key Points:**

Remember, the policy letters of January 11, 2002 and April 16, 2002 are **no longer valid**, and the above policies for 2003 are paraphrased. Refer to FSM 5100, Interim Directives # 5100-2003-1, 5120-2003-2, and 5130-2003-3 for a full narrative of current policy, authorities, and responsibilities. These IDs can be found at the following web site: [www.fs.fed.us/fire/](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/) under the link to Thirtymile Fire Information.

Procedural guidance for implementing these policies can be found in the Incident Response Pocket Guide, the Fireline Handbook, Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations, and other guidance documents listed in FSM 5108.

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