

Standard Operating Guidelines

Guideline 404.0 Brush, Grass & Field Fires (Wildland Fires)



Purpose:

Fighting fires in open fields and in wooded areas are dangerous for firefighting personnel. There are numerous hazards associated with these types of fires. The purpose of this guideline is to establish general operations when operating at Brush, Grass, & Field fires (Wildland Fires).

Guideline:

The use of the incident management system is paramount to the effective outcome of any incident and will be used on these types of fires.

Upon arrival of the first unit, the officer of that unit will perform a size up of the fire. and call for additional resources as necessary. The officer shall establish command and shall remain in charge of this fire until relieved by a higher ranking officer.

Exception:

In the case where Truck 28 is the first to arrive the officer needs to make the appropriate size up and call for additional resources, but then pass command to the officer of the next arriving unit. i.e. Engine 21 or responding Chief's. The next arriving officer shall then assume command upon arrival.

Command must maintain an awareness of: weather, fuel, and topography. Brush fires often present a large area of rapidly spreading fire. The critical decision is often where to attack the fire to the best advantage. The basic brush fire philosophy is to aggressively stop the forward progress of fire whenever possible. Protection of exposures is the primary goal when immediate control is not possible.

A direct water attack is the fastest control evolution available to counteract wildfire spread. Clearly, some situations will not support this possibility. Command must be prepared to readjust and develop a defensive strategy to protect exposures while allowing the fire to burn to a location better suited for control. In these cases, it may be best to use vehicle access to position apparatus to protect exposed structures and allow the main body of fire to pass by. When water is in short supply, it is usually most effective when applied to burning material instead of wetting fuel in advance.

Responding Units and Personnel

Safety

Personal safety is paramount for any incident. Heat is a major safety problem and all personnel should be kept well hydrated. Wildland fire fighting is a physically demanding operation and members should be fit and prepared mentally for a very hot, fast moving,

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and dangerous environment. All firefighters responding to these types of fires shall wear full turn out gear and shall wear safety eyewear and activate their individual PASS devices.

Wildland fires are fast moving and extremely dangerous. These scenes require that all personnel understand these basic wildland fire fighting orders.

1. Size-up! - Base all actions on current and expected behavior.
2. Pay attention! - Know what the fire is doing at all times.
3. Have escape routes. - Officers should identify them and make sure the crew knows about them.
4. Maintain good communications. - Between Command, Sectors and Crews.
5. Give clear instructions and follow the order model to ensure they are understood.
6. Maintain control of personnel. - Officers must account for all crew members at all times.
7. Remember safety first. - fight fire aggressively but safely.
8. Be alert. - keep calm, think clearly, and act decisively.

Wildland fires demand that Officers maintain a high level of awareness regarding crew accountability. Crew members can easily become spread out and not visible. Officers must maintain communication with and control over crew members to ensure a safe operation. Wildland fire fighting will still employ the buddy system. Watch out for each other.

Suppression

Fire units entering the fire area shall enter into the burned area of the fire. Grass Unit(s) will try and make the head end of the fire to stop its forward progress. Walk-in personnel will don water paks and fire brooms as necessary and enter into the burned area and begin attack on the flanks from the head end of the fire and develop a fireline towards the head end.

Once the head end of the fire has been successfully knocked down, Grass Units(s) will begin to knock down and extinguish the outer perimeter of the fire from the burned side. As this is being accomplished the walk-in personnel will follow up and mop up any remaining fire.

Note:

Safety is crucial at this point as smoke from the fire may obscure firefighting personnel from sight of the truck. Officers and Truck 28 personnel must be in contact with one another and Officers must stay in contact with their respective crew members.

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Support and Staged Personnel

Additional units and personnel will stage in those areas established by command and be at the ready to deploy when called upon.

A rehab section will be established in accordance with the Rehab SOG.