



**Northwest MAC Group**  
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To: Agency Administrators  
Incident Commanders  
Fire Management Officers  
Dispatch Center Managers

Date: August 7, 2009

Subject: Northwest MAC Resource Allocation Strategic Direction

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance for the allocation of wildland fire resources in the Pacific Northwest when shortages or extraordinary situations exist. This is being distributed in draft format so that we can receive feedback, edits or comments from those affected by its implementation. Weather developments and resource depletion can challenge our capacity to respond to incidents. The goal and desired result, in addition to effective initial attack, is to provide resources for deployment on new large fires, or to accomplish specific missions. We will continue to manage fire with all available resources and not unnecessarily hold resources in staging that could be utilized on the fireline. As circumstances evolve, this will require us to examine and possibly revise tactical options that sustain our firefighting capacity and protect critical community assets.

### **Strategy**

Building upon experiences and lessons learned from past fire seasons and successful approaches utilized in other geographic areas, our intent is to implement a “timeless” strategy that could be used throughout the season, regardless of Preparedness Level. This strategy will provide a solid foundation for resource allocation but will maintain flexibility as it evolves.

### **Base Capability Reserve**

Considering the assumption that every Incident Management Team (IMT) requires a certain base capability that it can depend upon to address basic WFDSS/WFSA objectives, a reserve of resources will be (when necessary) identified to deploy as a “starter system” when an IMT is ordered. The package may consist of the following resources, but could vary depending on fuel type or terrain:

- One staffed T1, T2 or T3 helicopter; five engines; and eight T2 crews.

The NW MAC Group (as necessary) will identify the incidents that would supply resources to the Base Capability Reserve. Resources would need to have a minimum of 6 operational shifts remaining, when committed.

### **Regional Surge Taskforce**

The purpose of a Regional Surge Taskforce is to provide the capability to accomplish a specific high priority task on an incident where we can and need to make a difference. This tactic employs the use of Task Forces generally composed of mobile Type 1 resources allocated and deployed strategically by NW MAC. The resources move together from assignment to assignment between incidents and complexes within the Geographic Area.

A Surge Taskforce would be assigned to specific missions based on the following criteria:

- 1) specific tasking or mission to be accomplished;
- 2) effect on achievement of incident objectives;
- 3) number of days needed to complete the mission;
- 4) probability of success.

The request for a Surge Taskforce would be recommended by the IC and the Agency Administrator. The request should generally be submitted at least 2 days in advance of its need on the incident. (See Sample 1 attached)

Surge Taskforces are pre-identified mobile suppression units with overhead that can effectively and efficiently manage special mission operations in a short time, 1 to 4 days. A requesting unit will identify these specific needs and request a group to address those needs. The configuration of a Surge Taskforce would vary depending on the need and whether it was supporting initial attack or large incidents. Resources to populate the group may be reassigned from existing incidents or requested from outside the GACC.

Possible Surge Taskforce configurations *may* include but are not limited to:

**Ground** operations:

- 1-Division Supervisor/Incident Commander T3 (Chief of Party)
- 1-Task Force Leader
- 2-Interagency Hotshot Crews
- 2-Type 2IA Crews

Examples of these assignments:

1. Complex burnout out operations.
2. Critical line construction under difficult conditions.

**Air** operations:

- Timber- Air Tactical Group Supervisor with platform (Chief of Party), 1- T3 helicopter, 1-T1 limited helicopter, Heli-base Manager 1, 3-Helicopter Manager Single Resource, and 5-Helicopter crewmembers.
- Desert- Air Tactical Group Supervisor with platform (Chief of Party), 1-T2 standard helicopter, 2 Single engine air tanker, Heli-base Manager 2, 2-Helicopter Manager Single Resource, Single engine air tanker manager, and 8-Helicopter crewmembers.
- Mixed- Air Tactical Group Supervisor (Chief of Party), 1-T3 helicopter, 1-T2 limited helicopter, Heli-base Manager 2, 2-Helicopter Manager Single Resource, and 5-Helicopter crewmembers.

Examples of these assignments:

1. Provide air resources and personnel for initial preparation for IMT aviation operations.
2. Support critical burnout operations.
3. Special transportation needs.

### **Keys to Success of Surge Taskforce**

- Leadership/Communication – Chief of Party for the Surge Taskforce must be an individual with good interpersonal skills and sound operational experience. It is vital that the Chief of Party coordinate with the Incident Management Team, incident host unit, NW MAC support and have a clear understanding of mission objectives and timeframes.
- Ordering/Logistics – Orders for the Surge Taskforce will follow normal established resource ordering procedures in accordance with the Northwest Geographic Mobilization Guide. NW MAC will retain oversight for the Surge Taskforce; check-in/demob, billeting, and fire time documentation will need to remain flexible for mobility of the resources.

## **Communication**

MAC Agency Representatives would be responsible for communicating the Base Capability Reserve and Surge Taskforce strategies to AA's and FMO's. AA's may then wish to inform cooperating partners and elected officials as they determine necessary. Agency Representatives would also provide assistance with WFDSS development for new starts. This will assure that strategies and objectives outlined in the WFDSS are realistic and obtainable given the probable availability of resources.

## **Flexibility**

We will need to revise tactics and objectives as we face new challenges. Aircraft have been essential to our firefighting efforts, but preventative maintenance and crew recuperation are extremely important. The role of air resources may be limited for some incidents. As we explore the strategies needed throughout the fire season, we will require realistic approaches, based on what is available. AA's and IC's may need to revise mop-up standards, defer rehab plans, or change suppression objectives to free up crews and resources for reallocation by NW MAC.

We intend to finalize this strategic direction for use beginning in 2010, while looking for opportunities to test it in 2009. Please share it widely and respond with any comments or suggestions to your PNWCG/MAC Representative.

/s/ Paul Bell

PAUL BELL  
NW MAC Chair

cc: NW MAC Representatives  
Lyle Carlile, NW Liaison, NMAC  
Kim Christensen, Manager, NICC

Sample 1:

**48 hour Surge Taskforce request considerations:**

1. Number and type of resources.
2. Mission task and how it is tied to incident strategy.
3. Days needed to accomplish task.
4. Probability of task success.
5. Consequences of Unable to Fill (UTF) package.

<b>48-hour Surge group request considerations:</b>			
<b>Type of Resource</b>	<b># of Resources</b>	<b>Type of Resource</b>	<b># of Resources</b>
IHC	2		
T2 IA Crews	2		
DIVS/ICT3	1		
TFLD	1		
FIRB	1		
FALC	2 sets		
FELB	1		

**Mission task and how it is tied to incident strategy:**

The incident has spent the last 4 shifts preparing 3 divisions for burnout of critical portion of line. Division will be ready to implement burnout in 48 hours. The section to be burned is approximately 6 miles of hand and dozer line in steep terrain with poor access. Approximately 1 mile of burnout piece contains mid-slope fire-line. Favorable weather forecast including wind direction and RH are forecast for the next 5 days. Following that a cold front passage is predicted.

**Days needed to accomplish task**

3-4 shifts

**Probability of Success (%)**

65% success chance to implement and hold burnout operation

**Consequence of not filling request**

Divisions will back off two drainages to contingency ridge (paved FS road 55 main route through forest) and burnout from that location. Fire will increase in size 7000 acres and will require closure of FS road 55 (critical access route to several small communities) for 5-7 days.