

PNWCG Resource Allocation Strategies

March 16, 2010

Resource allocation strategies have been developed to further define guidance for the allocation of wildland fire resources in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) when resource shortages or extraordinary situations exist.

The current strategies of pre-positioning, reallocation and lend/lease of resources have been further defined and standardized for use within the PNW. Two new strategies, Regional Surge Task Forces (STF) and IMT Reserves, have been created to supplement our current resource allocation strategy during periods of critical resource shortages.

Lend/Lease

Definition

An agreement between IMT's to allow for the use of their assigned resources on another incident for a short-term mission (generally not to exceed one to three operational periods; validated each day).

Description

The lend/lease strategy fills a critical short term operational need between incidents in close proximity. This allows Incident Commanders (ICs) to share resources, to increase efficiencies, and to simplify the process.

Implementation Procedures

- Resources will be identified by the sending Incident Commander during the 0730 Northwest Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NW MAC)/IC /Area Command (AC) coordination call and validated daily.
- Resources are not reassigned in ROSS. However, it is critical that documentation is required in the remarks section to allow for payment of resources from the appropriate code.
- Lend/lease contract resources previously inspected by sending unit should not be re-inspected by receiving unit.
- Finance Chiefs will coordinate to ensure costs are included in the receiving incident data base as a line item, not actual posted time. (No resource order will be generated so no new resource number.) If State employees or resources are used the Finance Chief will notify the appropriate state business lead so that a state accounting code can be developed for payment. This code will be used by the State and is NOT the fire code already assigned to the incident.
- ISuite entry will read "Resource loan from incident xx"
- Resource will not be moved in ISuite; the original incident will post time using the incident charge code from the receiving fire.
- Length of assignment will not be affected by lend/lease – all days count toward the original assignment length.
- All standard documentation (excess shift length, CA1, etc.) will be done by receiving incident and sent to sending incident.

Pre-Position

Definition

Mobilization of a resource(s) by specific type and number, to a defined location, in advance of an anticipated increase in initial attack/extended attack workload.

Description

Pre-identified resources are made available for prompt response within the geographic area. Authority to mobilize these resources rests with the Northwest Coordination Center (NWCC) in concurrence with NW MAC. Resources could be hosted at other incidents, at a local unit, or held in staging. These resources will provide the capability to enhance current initial/extended attack capability.

Implementation Procedures

NWCC Emergency Operations Manager decides to pre-position resources and contacts the local Center Manager who will be hosting the resources.

- Type and mix of resources will be determined by NWCC Emergency Operations Manager in concurrence with the appropriate NW MAC representative(s) or designate(s).
- Orders will be placed by the host unit in ROSS and could be filled from within the Geographic Area or through the National Interagency Coordination Center.
- The authority to reassign the pre-positioned resources rests with NWCC.
- During the 0730 NW MAC/IC/AC coordination call and the 1000 dispatch center managers coordination call the NWCC Emergency Operations Manager will communicate the availability of the pre-positioned resources.
- Pre-positioned resources are considered to be staged and compensated when the criteria of IIBMH is met. This means being held at a specific location and not at their home. An agency representative must be available to certify and sign for time worked.
- Cost for pre-positioned resources will be borne by the benefitting agencies according to Pacific Northwest Coordinating Group (PNWCG) agreement as part of the NW Annual Operating Plan.

Resource Reallocation

Definition

Reallocation refers to already allocated resources that are being reassigned to another, higher priority, incident or mission. For comparison, allocation refers to the act of assigning to an incident, resources that were previously unassigned.

Description

The purpose of this reallocation strategy is to create an interagency decision model that will be used when necessary to reallocate scarce resources between on-going large incidents, new or emerging incidents, and initial attack. The strategy recognizes that reallocation decisions are best made within daily incident planning cycles and that the appropriate individuals must be involved and notified.

Resource reallocations will generally be implemented when there are no other alternatives. The NW MAC will make command decisions as necessary to avoid lengthy negotiations.

Delegation of Authority

During critical fire seasons, Regional/State Agency Administrators provide the NW MAC (in coordination with the NW MAC Chair) with a delegation of authority to act on their behalf. This authority includes incident prioritization, the ability to direct, control, allocate, and reallocate wildland fire resources among sub-geographic area MACs, Area Commands, and Incident Management Teams. (Reference NW MAC Operations Handbook, June 2009.)

The NW MAC Coordinator may authorize reallocation when time is critical.

The Resource Reallocation Decision

In day to day operations, NWCC and the local Emergency Operations Center's (EOC's) retain the authority to allocate and reallocate resources through interagency agreements and delegations of authority. As large fire incidents develop across a spectrum of complexities and wildland fire agencies, authority over incident prioritization and the allocation and reallocation of resources is reserved for MAC groups at the national, geographic, and sub-geographic levels. Incident priorities are coordinated between MAC groups and ICs and through objectives established for each incident by the Agency Administrators and ICs.

The Reallocation Process

Reallocation decision protocols are built along the daily planning cycle starting with the 0730 NW MAC conference call with Area/Incident Commanders that identifies critical needs. (The numbered paragraphs correspond to numbers shown within Figure 1 – Reallocation Process Diagram.)

1. The local agency administrator defines the incident objectives documented in the WFDSS/WFSA and in the delegation of authority to the Area Commander / Incident Commander
2. Based on these objectives the IC develops a strategy and associated tactics which in turn defines the resources needed. The IC communicates critical resource needs to the NW MAC usually through the ICS-209, the Incident Priority Worksheet (IPW), and daily morning conference call (0730). ICs need to provide the information on specific objectives in enough detail to allow the MAC to assess tradeoffs of reallocation decisions.
3. The NWCC Emergency Operations Manager will ensure that “everything has been wrung out of the system” before recommending a resource reallocation by the NW MAC.
4. The priority of an incident, as determined by NW MAC, may not always equate to the “mission priority” for a scarce resource which will be considered in the reallocation process. Several areas of consideration have been identified for NW MAC to take into account while developing the rationale for a possible resource reallocation. This rationale should be well documented and transparent to the fire management community.
5. The NW MAC, when evaluating the rationale for a reallocation, may decide that reallocating resources does not meet their strategic objectives. In this case no reallocation negotiation actions are initiated and the decision will be communicated to the requesting AC/IC.
6. NW MAC, in conjunction with the NWCC Emergency Operations Manager, will identify incidents as possible candidates from which to acquire critical resources. The NW MAC coordinator will decide whether to pursue negotiations or to make a command decision to reallocate resources. If the decision is to proceed directly to a “reallocation decision,” then the MAC chair will be contacted for concurrence and the MAC agency representative will be notified.

7. If the decision is to negotiate for resources, the NW MAC coordinator will communicate with the area command or incident management team representative (AC, IC, Deputy IC or designated representative) and the NW MAC agency representative (if necessary).
8. Any decision to reallocate resources will be documented within the MAC decision document and shared with the appropriate stakeholders.
9. If an incident management team is asked or directed to give up resources, every effort should be made to give the IC sufficient time to modify strategies and associated tactics prior to the incident planning meeting at 1600. Therefore, the IC will be notified of any reallocation of resources no later than 1400 hours.
10. If the situation warrants, resources will be reallocated by NW MAC command decision in place of negotiations.
11. In the event of a command decision with no negotiations, the NW MAC will conduct an After Action Review (AAR) to evaluate the effects on incident planning and execution to document the measure of success.

Reallocation Process

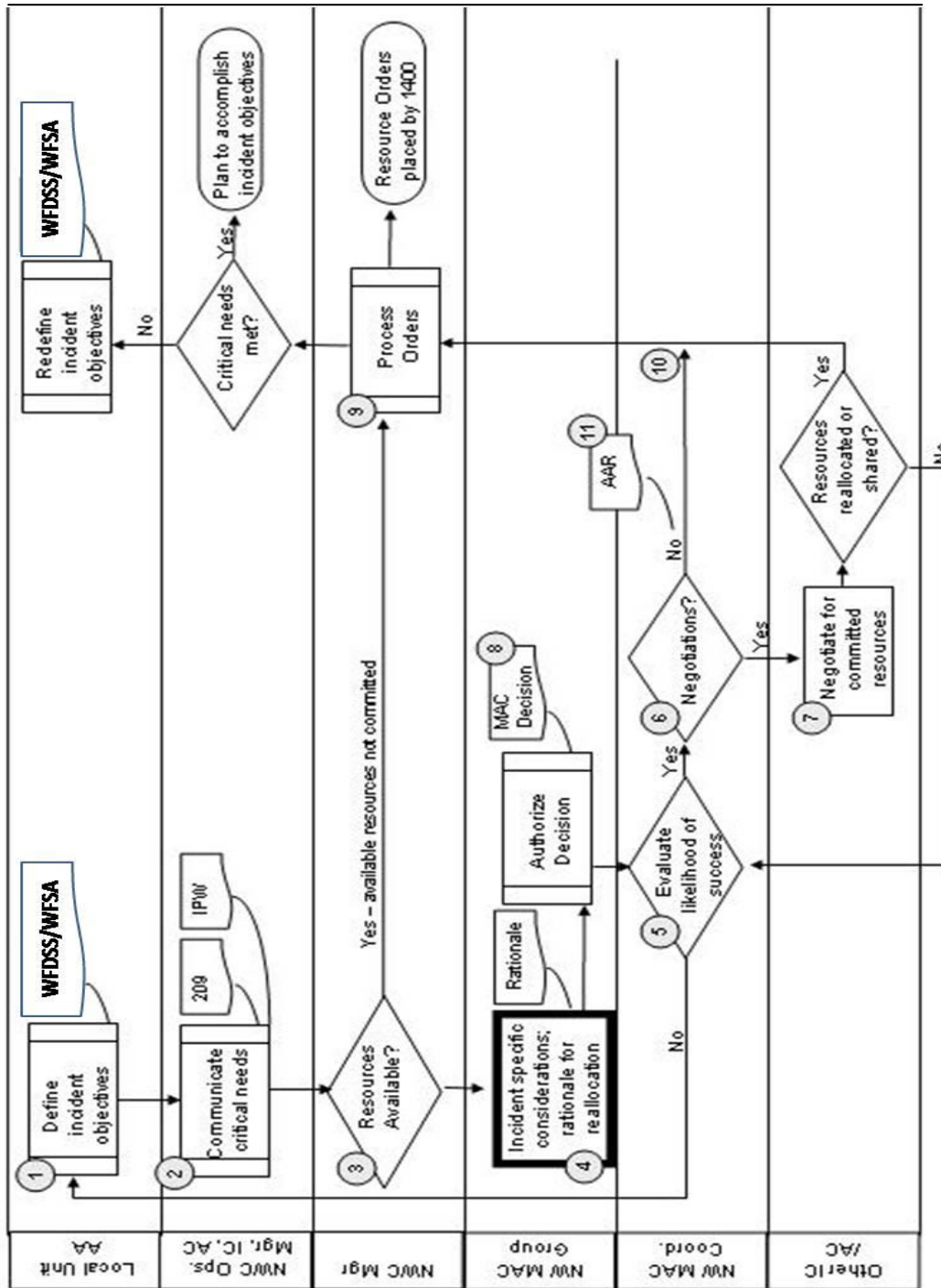


Fig. 1: Process diagram with numbers corresponding to allocation process narrative.

Implementation Procedures

- The appropriate NW MAC representative(s) will be responsible for communicating the resource reallocation strategy to the local unit agency administrator.
- NWCC Emergency Operation Manager will communicate reallocations with affected Expanded Dispatch Supervisors and Center Managers.
- NWCC Emergency Operations Manager will ensure “Release Authorization” is attached to resources identified for reallocation in ROSS (This ROSS feature ensures resources are held on their current assignment until authorized for reassignment in ROSS by NWCC).
- The receiving dispatch office will place a ROSS order for the reallocated resources. The sending incident will reassign (in ROSS) those resources to the new incident.
- Reallocated resources should have at least 6 days remaining before they “time out”.
- Length of assignment will not be affected by reallocation – all days count towards original assignment length.
- Resources should be closed out in ISuite by the sending incident and re-entered into ISuite at the receiving incident with their new numbers.
- The receiving incident pays reallocated resource travel to that incident. The sending incident pays for any mandatory days off taken before the new assignment starts.

Incident Management Team (IMT) Reserve

Definition

A reserve of resources assembled and mobilized to support the deployment of an IMT on a new large incident. This IMT Reserve is timed to arrive with the IMT on the incident.

Description

Every IMT requires a certain base capability to address basic WFDSS/WFSA objectives. A reserve of resources will be identified to deploy as an IMT Reserve when an IMT is ordered. The package generally consists of the following resources, and can be modified on a case by case basis:

- One staffed standard category T2 or T3 helicopter, five engines and eight T2 crews.

IMT Reserve resources may be reallocated from other incidents, drawn from local units, or from outside the geographic area.

Implementation Procedures

- Reallocated resources will follow the NW MAC reallocation process as outlined in the NW MAC Resource Reallocation Strategy. Unassigned or pre-positioned resources will follow standard procedures.
- NWCC Emergency Operation Manager will communicate the mobilization of the IMT Reserve components to the sending and receiving Expanded Dispatch Supervisors and Center Managers.
- NWCC Emergency Operations Manager may require “Release Authorization” by NWCC in ROSS to resources currently assigned. (This ROSS feature ensures resources are held on their current assignment until authorized for reassignment in ROSS by NWCC).
- IMT Reserve resources should have at least six days remaining before they “time out”.

- Resources currently assigned will continue to be utilized and charge to their assigned incident until reassigned to an emerging incident.
- Resources will be assigned to their new assignment in ROSS.
- Once assigned, the IMT Reserve resources are entered in ISuite and remain on that incident until released.
- Travel is paid by the receiving incident.
- This will not be considered a new assignment for determining length of assignment. All days in staging or travel between incidents will count as days worked.

Regional Surge Task Force

Definition

Surge Task Forces (STF) are pre-identified mobile suppression units with overhead that can effectively and efficiently implement special mission operations in a short time (one to four days.) A requesting unit will identify their mission critical needs and request a STF to address those needs. The configuration of a STF may vary depending on the need and whether it is supporting initial attack or large incidents. Resources that populate the STF may be unassigned, reassigned, requested from outside the Geographic Area, or reallocated.

Description

The purpose of a Regional STF is to provide the capability to accomplish a specific high priority mission on an incident. This strategy employs the use of task forces generally composed of Type 1 resources allocated and deployed strategically by NW MAC. The resources will remain under the control of the NW MAC and will move together from mission to mission between incidents and complexes within the Geographic Area.

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

- 1) Specific tasking or mission to be accomplished (complex burnout operations, critical line construction under difficult conditions, provide air resources and personnel for initial preparation for IMT aviation operations, etc.)
- 2) Achieving incident objectives would change the character of the fire: prevent a mega-fire, prevent a fire from increasing in complexity and becoming a bigger resource sink, or move a fire to a mop-up and patrol status and free up resources.
- 3) Number of days needed to complete the mission.
- 4) Probability of success.
- 5) Consequence of not receiving STF.

Possible ground operations Surge Task Force configurations may include but are not limited to:

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

Possible air operations Surge Task Force configurations may include but are not limited to:

- Timber-ATGS with platform (Chief of Party), 1-T3 helicopter, 1-T1 limited helicopter, HEB1, 3-HMGB, and 5-HECM.
- Desert-ATGS with platform (Chief of Party), 1-T2 standard helicopter, 2 single engine air tankers, HEB2, 2-HMGB, SEMG, and 8-HECM.
- Mixed-ATGS with platform (Chief of Party), 1 T-3 helicopter, 1 T2 limited helicopter, HEB2, 2-HMGB, and 5-HECM.

An example of a completed Surge Task Force Request Form is shown below:

Surge Task Force Request			
Incident Name:			
Mission task and how it is tied to incident strategy:			
The incident has spent the last 4 operational periods 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 operational periods			
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.			
This form is available at http://www.nwccweb.us/admin/nw_mac.asp			

Implementation Procedures

- The request for a Surge Task Force 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.

- NW MAC will contact Area Command or an Incident Management Team Representative (AC, IC, Deputy IC or designated representative) to negotiate a draw on resources to be reallocated to an STF. Communication will follow the NW MAC reallocation process.
- The agency representative for NW MAC will contact local agency administrator prior to reallocation to inform them of the formation of the STF.
- STF resources will typically have a commitment of only 1-4 days per incident.
- NW MAC will notify ICs of STF availability during the 0730 NW MAC/AC/IC coordination call.
- NWCC Emergency Operation Manager will communicate the STF status to the affected Dispatch Center Managers.
- Resources will be assigned to NW MAC STF and not to individual incidents either in ROSS or incident ISuite. NWCC may demob resources within the surge task force at its discretion.
- NW MAC will retain oversight for the STF: check in, demob, billeting, fire time, and all associated incident documentation, etc. All standard incident documentation (excess shift length, CA1, etc) will be done by receiving incident and sent to NW MAC.
- All incident assignments will be noted in the documentation section of ROSS. This will allow the various agencies to pay for resource use from the appropriate incident code.
- ISuite will be used by NWCC to post time and process payments for all surge resources regardless of mission. Resource time will be posted to the appropriate cost code for the daily mission. Accruals will be done by NWCC.
- If State employees or resources are used the appropriate state business lead will be notified so that a state accounting code can be developed for payment. This code is for use by the State only and is NOT the firecode already assigned to the incident.
- Individual incidents will be contacted daily with a “lump sum/single line item” cost for that day to their incident (ISuite entry will read “Surge Task Force # x”).
- Travel will be paid by the receiving incident.
- This will not be considered a new assignment for determining length of assignment. All days in staging or travel between incidents will count as days worked.
- Cost for STF when unassigned will be borne by the benefitting agencies according to a PNWCG pre-season agreement.