

Briefing Paper

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State Forestry's Role in Collaboration with U.S. Fire Administration-sponsored Type 3 All-Hazard Incident Management Teams

A briefing paper from the National Association of State Foresters
prepared by the Forest Fire Protection Committee



Background

Since 2003, the U.S. Fire Administration, under the direction of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD 5) and HSPD 8, has been responsible for the Type 3 All-Hazard Incident Management Team (IMT) Technical Assistance Program. The program includes All-Hazard Incident Management Team Training (O-305), field mentoring, position-specific training and task books that match National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) competencies. Since the inception of this program, Type 3 IMTs have been shadowing Type 1 and 2 IMTs to gain valuable experience and enhance response capability. Currently, there are approximately 70 Type 3 IMTs developed nationally with the intent to build more.

NASF recognizes the need to build and sustain intergovernmental wildland fire suppression capacity and encourages State Foresters to work toward increasing capacity for training, certifying credentials and mobilizing local resources for wildland fire. Improving state forestry agency collaboration with All-Hazard Type 3 IMTs for wildland fire support and all-hazard response can contribute to this effort. Currently state forestry's interaction with USFA All-Hazard Type 3 IMTs varies and is related to the all-hazard role of the individual forestry agencies.

The NWCG has recognized the need to better leverage resources from the all-hazard community to support wildland fire incidents and build all-hazard response capability. In addition, the 2009 Quadrennial Fire Review states, "a more interactive and robust approach enabling fire agencies to work more effectively with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and state and local community emergency response forces will be needed."

NWCG Pilot Program

As a result, the NWCG has established an oversight team to address issues related to all-hazard IMT's and to conduct a pilot program in 2010. The intent of the USFA All Hazard IMT3 Pilot Program will be to provide recommendations on potential integration of all-hazard resources in support of wildland fire incidents. Additionally, the pilot will validate the required training being conducted by FEMA to ensure the members of the USFA Type 3 IMTs have the baseline capabilities to work as "trainees" in the field. NASF has two representatives on the oversight team.

The goal of the NWCG-sponsored pilot is to evaluate the FEMA/USFA program as a nationally validated and endorsed program to be utilized for national deployment in support of wildland fire incident management teams or other national mobilizations under Emergency Support Function #4 (firefighting) or other auspices.

Key Points

- It is important to recognize that the intent is to not have the FEMA/USFA program qualify or endorse state and local resources to manage wildfire incidents independently. This would require meeting the National Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1); rather, it is to help boost resource availability to support large-scale incidents.
- This effort will enable the wildland and the all-hazard communities to work more effectively to enhance the national response capability.
- Concerns brought up by NASF-member fire chiefs, managers and supervisors:
 - Barriers associated with establishing agreements for mobilization of the all-hazard Type 3 teams
 - Potential liability issues with state sponsorship as agency having jurisdiction
 - Added workload to administer databases and coordinate mobilizations in IQS and ROSS. For the pilot project, USFA staff is committed to provide this capability through the Department of Interior Emergency Interagency Coordination Center.
 - NWCG training equivalency and recognition by DHS to support state and local government reimbursements
 - FEMA instructor qualification prerequisites need to be more rigorous

Commitments and Expectations

NASF formally supports the USFA All Hazard IMT3 Pilot Program and encourages each state to:

- Build intergovernmental wildland fire suppression capacity by supporting the pilot program and other initiatives such as the Skills Crosswalk for Structural Firefighters.
- Facilitate shadowing assignments for Type 3 IMT personnel with state/local IMTs.
- Qualified state personnel are encouraged to mentor and sign off on USFA task books, following the guidelines established in the National Wildland Fire Qualification system Guide (PMS-310-1), whether all hazard response personnel are assigned under the pilot program or not.
- Seek funding via grants for state coordinator positions to administer databases and coordinate mobilizations in IQS and ROSS.