

Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

ESF Coordinator:

Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

Primary Agency:

Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

Support Agencies:

Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Homeland Security
Department of the Interior
Department of State
Environmental Protection Agency

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4 – Firefighting provides Federal support for the detection and suppression of wildland, rural, and urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, an incident requiring a coordinated Federal response for assistance.

Scope

ESF #4 manages and coordinates firefighting activities, including the detection and suppression of fires on Federal lands, and provides personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of State, tribal, and local agencies involved in wildland, rural, and urban firefighting operations.

Policies

Priority is given to 1) life safety (firefighters and the public), and 2) protecting property and the environment, in that order.

Processes and procedures established by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) in the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide* and the *Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook* are followed, in accordance with the *National Incident Management System (NIMS)* and the *National Response Framework (NRF)*.

National support is accomplished through the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, ID. All support provided by the NICC will be coordinated with the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC).

Coordination with and support of State and local fire suppression organizations is accomplished through the State Forester, State Fire Marshal, State emergency management agency, or other appropriate State agency and/or tribal fire suppression organizations operating under the Incident Command System (ICS) element of the *NIMS* Command and Management component.

The coordinator for ESF #4 is the Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Forest Service, at the headquarters level. For operations that occur in the State of Alaska, operational lead for firefighting response is the Department of the Interior (DOI)/Bureau of Land Management.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

General

ESF #4 manages and coordinates Federal firefighting activities. This function is accomplished by mobilizing firefighting resources in support of State, tribal, and local wildland, rural, and urban firefighting agencies.

Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

ESF #4 uses established firefighting and support organizations, processes, and *NIMS* procedures as outlined in the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide*. Responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs lies primarily with the local Incident Commander.

States have the option of requesting interstate and intrastate firefighting assistance and resources, both utilizing existing agreements. Intrastate resources would be requested under local or statewide mutual aid and assistance agreements. Interstate resources, including National Guard firefighting resources from other States, would be requested through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, other compacts, or State-to-State mutual aid and assistance agreements.

Requests for Federal assistance in obtaining firefighting resources for incidents other than wildland fires are transmitted from the Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) or Joint Field Office (JFO) ESF #4 representative to the appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC). For wildland fire incidents, requests for assistance in obtaining firefighting resources are submitted as per the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide* to the GACC and coordinated with the JFO. For resources beyond those available within the geographic area, the requests are sent to the NICC in Boise, ID, by the Geographical Area Coordinator. The NICC contacts the national ESF #4 coordinator in the event of national-level shortages or unavailability of needed resources.

All Federal military personnel and resources for firefighting and incident management activities will be requested through the NICC in coordination with the Defense Coordinating Officer and the NRCC.

Shortages of critical resources are adjudicated at the lowest jurisdictional level. If needed, resolution would begin at the JFO, then progress to the NRCC, and then to the Domestic Readiness Group (DRG).

Actual firefighting operations are managed under the ICS element of the *NIMS* Command and Management component.

Situation and damage assessment information is transmitted through established channels and directly between the headquarters-level and regional-level response support structures according to *NIMS* procedures.

ORGANIZATION

ESF #4 has a parallel structure at the national and regional levels.

Headquarters-Level Response Support Structure

The USDA Homeland Security Office represents the USDA/Forest Service on the DRG.

The ESF #4 coordinator operates under the direction of the Assistant Director for Partnerships, Fire and Aviation Management, USDA/Forest Service. Assistance is provided as necessary by the USDA/Forest Service and DOI Fire Directors at the NIFC.

The USDA/Forest Service Disaster and Emergency Operation Branch Chief serves as the ESF #4 coordinator. The ESF #4 coordinator or representative reports to and is a member of the NRCC, when activated. This position is the link to the National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at USDA/Forest Service Headquarters.

Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

The national ESF #4 coordinator, through the NRCC, provides subject-matter expertise to the DRG and to other departments/agencies at the headquarters level. Based on recommended Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requirements, ESF #4 may be operational on a 24-hour basis.

While operational, ESF #4, through the NRCC, provides subject-matter expertise as needed to FEMA and other ESFs. Supporting agencies have representatives available at the NRCC or by telephone or pager on a 24-hour basis while ESF #4 is operational.

The NICC provides national logistics support and mobilization of resources.

Regional-Level Response Support Structure

The regional/area ESF #4 coordinator provided by the USDA/Forest Service regional/area office coordinates Federal firefighting response support. The regional ESF #4 coordinator is responsible for establishing and maintaining coordination with the national ESF #4 coordinator, regional support agencies, regional FEMA officials, and the JFO.

While operational, ESF #4, through the RRCC/JFO, provides subject-matter expertise as needed to FEMA and other ESFs. Supporting agencies have representatives available at the RRCC/JFO or by telephone or pager on a 24-hour basis while ESF #4 is operational.

GACCs provide regional firefighting response, mobilization of resources, and logistics support.

Notification

Upon notification of a potential or actual event requiring ESF #4 response, the national ESF #4 coordinator notifies the regional/area ESF #4 coordinator(s), the NICC, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), and the DOI Departmental Emergency Coordinator.

ACTIONS

Preincident

National preparedness levels for wildland fire suppression planning are established by the National Multiagency Coordinating Group (NMAC) in the *National Interagency Mobilization Guide*. When competition for wildland fire resources occurs, the NMAC will establish wildland fire priorities, making decisions on resource allocations.

Incident

Initial Response Actions: The national ESF #4 coordinator or representative:

- Reports to the NRCC within 2 hours of notification.
- Establishes communication links with support agencies, the USDA Emergency Operations Center, the National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at USDA/Forest Service Headquarters, and USDA/Forest Service Assistant Director – Operations at the NIFC.
- Establishes communication links with the regional/area ESF #4 coordinator(s).
- Obtains an initial fire situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures; determines the appropriate management response to meet the request for

Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

assistance; and obtains and distributes, through appropriate channels, incident contact information to emergency responders mobilized through ESF #4.

- Analyzes each request before committing people and other resources; ensures employees will be provided with appropriate vaccinations, credentials, and personal protective equipment to operate in the all-hazard environment to which they are assigned; and ensures that all employees involved in all-hazard response will be supported and managed by an agency leader, agency liaison, or interagency Incident Management Team.
- Ensures that an all-hazard incident-specific briefing and training are accomplished prior to task implementation. This preparation will usually occur prior to mobilization where incident description, mission requirements, and known hazards are addressed. Key protective equipment and associated needs for tasks that employees do not routinely encounter or perform will be identified.

Postincident

Continuing Response Actions: The national ESF #4 coordinator or representative:

- Obtains, maintains, and provides incident situation and damage assessment information through established procedures.
- Coordinates incident resource needs, and determines and resolves, as necessary, issues regarding resource shortages and resource ordering issues.
- Maintains close coordination through the NRCC with the DRG, RRCC, support agencies, NICC, and JFO.
- Maintains a complete log of actions taken, resource orders, records, and reports.

Recovery

Federal firefighting support is primarily a response function. Efforts should be made to ensure that firefighting resources are managed and utilized appropriately so they can be available for life saving, incident stabilization, and property protection assignments. Otherwise, the Nation's capability to respond to new emergencies may be compromised.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ESF Coordinator/Primary Agency: USDA/Forest Service

- Provides qualified representatives to serve as ESF #4 coordinators at the national and regional/area levels.
- Provides support personnel at the NRCC and RRCC/JFO levels.
- Requests assistance from supporting agencies as necessary to accomplish ESF #4 responsibilities.
- Provides logistics support through the GACC and/or NICC for mobilizing resources for firefighting.

Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

- Assumes full responsibility for suppression of wildfires burning on National Forest System lands and joins in a unified command with the local jurisdiction on incidents threatening National Forest System lands.
- Provides and coordinates firefighting assistance to other Federal land management, State forestry, tribal, and local fire organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the *NRF*.
- Arranges for direct liaison with State emergency operations centers (EOCs), local EOCs, and fire chiefs in the designated area, as appropriate, to coordinate requests for firefighting assistance in structural or industrial fire detection, protection, and suppression operations.
- Provides information to the Planning Section at the incident and the JFO as assessments of fire-caused damages are obtained.

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Agency	Functions
Department of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides fire/weather forecasting as needed from the NIFC in Boise, ID, or from a nearby National Weather Service Forecast Office under the terms of existing interagency agreements. • Provides urban and industrial hazard analysis support through the Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. • Provides fire/weather support under the terms of the <i>National Agreement for Meteorological Services in Support of Agencies with Land Management and Fire Protection Responsibilities</i>. • Provides forecasts of the dispersion of smoke in support of planning and response activities.
Department of Defense (DOD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes full responsibility for firefighting activities on DOD installations. • Supports firefighting operations on nonmilitary lands with personnel, equipment, and supplies under the terms of the current interagency agreement between DOD, USDA, and DOI, including the arrangement of liaisons as required. <p>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Provides contracting services through ESF #3 – Public Works and Engineering to urban and rural firefighting forces to obtain heavy equipment and/or demolition services as needed to suppress incident-related fires.</p>
Department of Homeland Security	<p>Federal Emergency Management Agency/U.S. Fire Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides subject-matter experts/expertise regarding structural/urban/suburban fire and fire-related activities. • Maintains a representative at the NIFC to assist with national coordination. <p>U.S. Coast Guard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides marine firefighting assistance as available, commensurate with each unit's level of training and the adequacy of available equipment. • Has the responsibility and direct authority for safeguarding ports and may exercise Federal control over vessels, ports, and harbors and waterfront facility operations and vessel movements as deemed necessary.

Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

Agency	Functions
Department of the Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes full responsibility for fighting wildfires burning on lands within its jurisdiction. • Assists the USDA/Forest Service in managing and coordinating firefighting operations. • Provides firefighting assistance to other Federal land management organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the <i>NRF</i>.
Department of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As requested, DOS coordinates with foreign governments on identification and movement to the United States of assets and resources for firefighting assistance. • Coordinates with foreign states concerning offers of support, gifts, offerings, donations, or other aid.
Environmental Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides technical assistance and advice in the event of fires involving hazardous materials. • Provides assistance in identifying an uncontaminated, operational water source for firefighting. • Provides assistance in identifying critical water systems requiring priority restoration for firefighting. • Provides technical assistance on issues concerning the impacts of firefighting chemicals on wastewater treatment facilities.
Other Organizations	<p>State forestry organizations in most States are responsible for wildland firefighting on non-Federal lands. States may assist other States in firefighting operations and may assist Federal agencies through agreements. Private-sector resources are mobilized through standard contract procedures.</p>