

Department of the Interior Fire Management Teams

May 1, 1980

INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Interior is dedicated to the goal of managing our most serious and costly fire emergencies with our best qualified fire experts. The Departmental Fire Management Team concept is a positive effort to accomplish this goal. Since its beginning in 1971 it has proven to be a system which is available to all agencies and which has substantially improved our fire suppression program and reduced the costs.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FIRE MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERSHIP 1980

TEAM COORDINATOR – Gail Elliott, BLM, BIFC

FIRE BOSS – Kay Johnson, BLM, Anchorage
LINE BOSS – Jack Lewis, BLM, Anchorage
NIGHT LINE BOSS – Dave Liebersbach, BLM, Anchorage
PLANS CHIEF – Gerald Timmons, BLM, Fairbanks
SERVICE CHIEF – Roger Trimble, BLM, Fairbanks
FINANCE CHIEF – Don Mueller, BLM, Anchorage
SAFETY CHIEF – Dick Malchow, BLM, Fairbanks

FIRE BOSS – Bob Webber, BLM, BIFC
LINE BOSS – Ted Rex, NPS, Rocky Mtn National Park
NIGHT LINE BOSS – Ken Butler, BIA, Fort Apache
PLANS CHIEF – Chuck Priest, BLM, Boise
SERVICE CHIEF – Roger Erb, BLM, Marana
FINANCE CHIEF – Jack Dunn, BLM, Vale
SAFETY CHIEF – Mike Dimmick, BLM, BIFC

FIRE BOSS – Larry Laird, BIA, Fort Apache
LINE BOSS – Charley Castro, NPS, Sequoia Kings
NIGHT LINE BOSS – Larry Newman, BLM, Missoula
PLANS CHIEF – John Russell, BLM, BIFC
SERVICE CHIEF – Bob Moline, BLM, Shoshone
FINANCE CHIEF – Norm Clark, NPS, Grand Canyon
SAFETY CHIEF – Juan Callao, BLM, Boise

FIRE BOSS – Bob Sellers, NPS, BIFC
LINE BOSS – Tom Black, NPS, Yellowstone
NIGHT LINE BOSS – Merle Becker, BIA, Flathead
PLANS CHIEF – John Black, BLM, BIFC
SERVICE CHIEF – Rick Gale, NPS, Grand Canyon
FINANCE CHIEF – Jeff Mann, USFS, Missoula
SAFETY CHIEF – Don Cross, NPS, Yosemite

• NPS • BIA • F&WS • BLM

USING DEPARTMENTAL FIRE MANAGEMENT TEAMS ON MAJOR FIRES

WHAT ARE THE DEPARTMENTAL FIRE MANAGEMENT TEAMS?

They are the Department of the Interior's Finest! They are teams composed of an interagency mix of the best qualified fire suppression personnel from Interior agencies having fire suppression responsibilities. These agencies are the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and Fish & Wildlife Service. Team members from agencies outside the Department of the Interior are assigned to the teams when such membership meets program needs.

HOW ARE THE TEAMS ORGANIZED?

The Department of the Interior has four Departmental Fire Management Teams. All four teams can function as Class I Project Fire Teams (Project Teams). These teams are composed of a Fire Boss, Line Boss, Night Line Boss, Plans Chief, Service Chief, Finance Chief, and Safety Chief. In addition, three of the Departmental Fire Management Teams have the qualifications to perform as General Headquarters (GHQ) Teams. The GHQ Teams include a Fire Manager, Plans Coordinator, and Service Coordinator. Other support groups and specialists are assigned to both kinds of teams, depending upon the specific needs of the assignment.

HOW ARE THE TEAMS USED?

GHQ Teams are assigned to manage unusual, complex, or disaster type fires. Typical GHQ Team assignments could be extremely large fires divided into zones, or a complex of large fires in one general area. A fire situation of GHQ complexity often involves several federal, state and private land ownerships and protection jurisdictions.

GHQ Teams direct and coordinate fire suppression efforts. When people, supplies, and equipment are scarce, a GHQ Team determines priorities between zones or fires in its assigned area. Several Project Teams may be supervised by a GHQ Team.

Class I Project Fire Teams are primarily concerned with direct management of the suppression action. They are generally assigned to large or complex fires where the need for qualified overhead has exceeded the local organization's capabilities. The Project Teams are able to apply many years of experience and training to unusual situations. Their use by local agencies releases initial attack forces to return to their normal protective duties.

The existence of the Project Teams and GHQ Teams enables the Department of the Interior to assign its best qualified people to the most demanding situations.

TO WHOM ARE THE TEAMS RESPONSIBLE?

Management of the Departmental Teams is coordinated by the Departmental Team Coordinator, Boise Interagency Fire Center (BIFC) at Boise, Idaho, until they reach the site of their fire assignment. During the fire assignment a team answers to the local Line Official in charge of the lands involved. Once the team is released from an assignment it is again responsible to the Team Coordinator.

HOW ARE TEAM MEMBERS SELECTED?

All participating agencies annually submit the names of qualified personnel who will be available for fire assignments. All team members are Class I qualified under the National Interagency Fire Qualification System. The Department of the Interior's Fire Coordination Committee (IFCC) selects the individuals who will make up the teams from recommendations prepared by the Team Coordinator. The IFCC attempts to create a mix of agency representation on each team.

HOW IS A TEAM ORDERED?

When a Line Official determines the situation is beyond local capabilities, he places the order for a team through his agency's chain of command. The order is relayed to the Team Coordinator at BIFC by a fire order placed with the BIFC Logistic Support Office. A team is activated only when it can be used effectively. BIFC assembles the team members and arranges for their delivery to the assignment site and return to home duty stations. Team members are expected to arrive at the nearest airport in the fire area 6-10 hours after an order is received at BIFC.

WHAT DO TEAMS DO?

The requesting official meets with the team immediately upon its arrival and gives a comprehensive briefing of the fire situation, including resource values, tactical restrictions, ecological and political concerns and any other items which might influence strategic and/or tactical decisions. During this briefing an explanation of the authority delegated to the team by the local Line Official is emphasized.

A knowledgeable representative of the Line Official is assigned to the team as a Resource Advisor and Liaison Officer to maintain and ensure constant communications between the team and the Line Official. Nevertheless, the team needs direct contact with the Line Official, who periodically visits the headquarters of the team during the course of its assignment. It is necessary that he satisfy himself that the team is performing suppression actions according to his directions and ensure that local political problems do not detract from the team's fire suppression mission.

At the conclusion of the team's assignment, the Line Official conducts a critique to be assured that all required suppression actions and obligations have been met. At that time he receives all fire records in a final fire package, and presents the team members with his verbal evaluation of their performance. Written performance evaluations and the critique reports are sent to the Team Coordinator within 30 days.