

NPS Fire Management Plan Appendices: Frequently Asked Questions

Annual Delegation of Authority:

1. What is the purpose of the Annual Delegation of Authority?

Many fire program related duties are the responsibility of the agency administrator (Park Superintendent) as described in our agency policy. The Delegation of Authority from a Park Superintendent to the Fire Program Manager formally delegates those responsibilities from the Superintendent to the FMO.

2. What needs to be included in an annual Delegation of Authority?

Only those tasks/duties that are the responsibilities of the Superintendent by our agency policy need to be formally delegated to another party, in this case the FMO. The Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations (Redbook) contains an example annual delegation of authority in Appendix C. Some units will opt to include other program responsibilities in this document as a tool to clearly communicate expectations related to fire program management.

3. Does the annual Delegation of Authority need to have signatures?

The Delegation of Authority from the Superintendent needs to be signed by both the Park Superintendent and the Park/Zone Fire Management Officer, or individual receiving the delegated authority. The DoA is valid for a year. Should either of the signatories vacate their positions over that time a new DoA may be prepared but is not required until the following year.

4. Can the Delegation of Authority cover multiple years?

No, the Delegation document is an annual requirement to ensure currency.

5. Can the Delegation of Authority cover multiple park units?

Generally, a Delegation of Authority is prepared for each park unit. In those cases where multiple parks are managed together administratively (i.e. same Superintendent and FMO) a single delegation could cover those multiple units.

6. Can a Delegation of Authority be directed to another agency?

In those rare instances where a park unit does not share a fire management organization among park based, zone/cluster or NPS regional fire staff and the program is truly managed by another agency, a Delegation of Authority from the Park Superintendent to the authorized official needs to be completed.

7. Is a Duty Officer Delegation of Authority a required FMP Appendix?

Park Superintendents must provide a written wildland fire Duty Officer delegation to all NPS and interagency partner duty officers to cover fire season Duty Officer needs for a park. This document IS NOT a required FMP appendix.

Interpark Agreement:

1. Is the Inter-Park Agreement required?

No, the Inter-park agreement (IPA) is no longer an NPS required FMP appendix, however NPS regions may opt to require it of park programs that have fire management services provided through a Zone, Cluster, or Regional Office staff not located at or solely dedicated to that park unit. Refer to your Regional Fire Planner for guidance as to if your region requires the use of IPAs to cover these instances.

2. What is the purpose of an Inter-park Agreement?

The Inter-park agreement is an agreement between Superintendents of multiple parks that share a fire management organization. Its purpose is to document the agreed upon distribution of duties and responsibilities among several park/zone staff for the appropriate management of a units fire program.

3. What needs to be covered in an Inter-park Agreement?

The Inter-park agreement outlines services that a shared fire staff provide to each unit in the cluster/zone along with defining the roles and responsibilities of key park staff (Superintendent, wildland fire coordinator, resource managers) in support of various fire program activities.

4. Can an Inter-park Agreement cover more than one year? Can an Inter-park Agreement cover multiple units (an entire park zone/cluster)? Does the Inter-park Agreement need to be a signed document?

Regions that choose to require an IPA will issue regional specific guidance on these components.

Agreements (Interagency/Cooperative/Local):

1. Which agreements are required to be included as appendices to the FMP?

Reference Red Book Chapter 8, Interagency Coordination and Cooperation for definitions of various agreement types. National interagency and state-level Master Cooperative Fire Management Agreements do not need to be included in your park's FMP appendices. Any local unit fed-to-fed Interagency Agreements that support your program need to be current, signed, and included with your FMP. Any signed local/sub-regional agreements and/or annual operating plans that you utilize in support of your park fire program needs to be included as an FMP appendix. In the case where a cooperator will not sign the agreement, a letter to files will be drafted which acknowledges the lack of cooperator signature and any rationale, if given.

Preparedness Documents:

1. Which of the Preparedness documents are required in an FMP?

All park units with wildland fire-funded staff that are duty stationed at their location require the following preparedness documents at a minimum: Preparedness Plan, Staffing Plan, and an Initial Response Plan.

All parks with burnable vegetation (i.e. they require a Fire Management Plan) are required to have both a Preparedness Plan and an Initial Response Plan at a minimum.

2. What level of analysis is required to support the required Preparedness documents?

Due to the wide range of NPS fire program complexities, many levels of weather and fire occurrence analysis can be adequate to inform preparedness document action thresholds. The highest complexity fire programs should base their actions on an analysis such as what is included in a Fire Danger Operating Plan or FDOP. An FDOP is typically completed for an area larger than any one unit and includes groups of weather stations appropriate for summarizing fire conditions over a sub-geographic area – a Fire Danger Rating Area (FDRA). Climatological analysis is bolstered by including fire business thresholds related to multiple fire events and large fire occurrence to establish critical decision breakpoints which are subsequently incorporated into the various preparedness documents required of a park's fire program.*

**There is an FDOP template referenced in the Red Book, Chap 10. The template is not mandatory; however, it includes all of the required elements of an FDOP as established in the Red Book.*

In instances where this level of analysis would not be statistically feasible due to a low instance of fire occurrence, the minimum requirement is to base decision breakpoints on a straightforward climatologic analysis on a representative fire weather station with at least 10 years of data that meets interagency standards outlined in PMS 426-3. The climatological analysis will establish 5 levels at the following breakpoints - 22.5%, 45%, 90%, and 97%.

3. What's the difference between each of these preparedness documents?

See the short description that follows for each document. These are further described in various policy references (RM-18, Chapter 5; Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, Chapter 10, "Preparedness Level Plans"; and various NWCG Fire Danger standards and curriculum).

4. What's in a Preparedness Level Plan?

Preparedness Plans establish 5 discrete levels describing significant management actions undertaken to respond to increasing or decreasing fire activity and seasonal conditions. These actions apply to several park staff such as Park Superintendents, FMOs, Duty Officers, Dispatch Center Managers, etc. and can include assuring readiness of unit or area support functions (information, cache/logistics, dispatch, resource staff), discussion on prevention patrols, fire restrictions and/or closures, and situational briefings to staff. Preparedness Levels are often determined from a combination of inputs (a fire danger index value, fire activity level, and local resource commitment) and are designed to be less reactive to short duration changes to the fire environment. Even a park with no fire funded staff has actions they can take based on the units Preparedness Level, especially regarding communicating the area fire conditions to the public and sharing interagency fire prevention or restriction messaging.

5. What's in a Staffing Plan?

A Staffing Plan describes generally internal fire operational decisions in response to changing fire danger. The unit chooses the number of staffing levels appropriate for their local situation, although 5 or 6 distinct levels is most common. Breakpoints derived from a combination of climatology and fire business are most effective at informing the Staffing Level distinction. Often an external element or high -risk trigger (lightning, hot/dry/windy weather, Red Flag Warning, special events drawing larger than average crowds or likely to increase the potential of human caused fires) is identified in the plan that will bump up your daily staffing one level. If this additional element moves the unit up to staffing level 4 or 5 according to the approved Staffing Plan, budget authority exists to open a "Step Up" account to cover these unprogrammed actions.

See RM-18, Chapter 5, NPS, NPS Wildland Fire & Aviation Budget Rules, and the Red Book for detailed description of the appropriate use of Step Up accounts.

6. What's in an Initial Response Plan?

Initial Response Plans identify the park unit's response to an unplanned ignition, it may be unit-wide or differ based on the fire start's geographic location or relation to an established FMU in the Fire Management Plan. These response plans are frequently managed by the unit's assigned dispatch center and are organized as "Run Cards" to ensure a sufficient minimum response is initiated while notifications are undertaken.

An Initial Response Plan identifies what resources are called in the case of a fire start (even if it is as simple as calling 911 to initiate a local cooperator response), actions taken to ensure public and employee safety, and notifications to be made within the park/zone organizations.

7. How do these relate to a Fire Danger Operating Plan?

A Fire Danger Operating Plan typically informs the decision points contained in each of these preparedness documents through an analysis of weather and fire occurrence data. An FDOP may also elaborate on multiple associated preparedness documents or actions; including Fire Prevention or Restriction Plans, Pocket Cards, a Response Level analysis to further inform the Initial response actions, and how the units Adjective Fire Danger Rating is derived.

8. Do the Preparedness planning documents need to be signed?

No, these documents can and often do include signature pages, but signatures are not an NPS requirement. They will be reviewed annually along with the rest of the FMP. A current signature on the FMP includes approval of these documents.

9. What do I do with FMP required and conditional appendices once they are complete and signed?

Current and complete FMP appendices must be sent to the Regional Fire Planner for review and upload to the FMP repository and SharePoint site. [Wildland Fire A123 - WF FMP Tracker - WASO Testing \(sharepoint.com\)](#)