

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence 2020-48

September 15, 2020

To: National Multi Agency Coordinating Group Participating Agencies

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)

Subject: National Large Fire Support Need, and Request to Extend Fire Resources and Staffing

Nationally we remain at Preparedness Level 5 with very high competition for almost every type of resource. Numerous incidents are occurring in multiple Geographic Areas that have caused loss of life, have burned structures, are causing evacuations, and are threatening large communities and key infrastructure. Many of these incidents will take weeks to months to manage to conclusion. The resulting high demand for federal, state, tribal, local and contract resources has resulted in limited national availability of critical resources, which is likely to continue. There are three Geographic Areas in Preparedness Level 5 (Northern California, Pacific Northwest, and Southern California) and two others (Great Basin and Northern Rockies) at Preparedness Level 4.

National Guard resources including crews, aviation, and miscellaneous support are currently mobilized in multiple Geographic areas. Department of Defense aviation and ground resources are currently mobilizing or already providing support over the last several weeks. Additionally, crews, engines, and mid-level fire-line management personnel from Canada are continuing to mobilize and provide support.

Based on fuels conditions, weather forecasts, and the National Wildland Fire Significant Fire Potential Outlook, it is likely that resource availability will continue to be severely limited nationally through the month of September and well into the fall. However, for many of our wildland firefighting resources their planned staffing commitment and availability period is quickly coming to an end in the coming weeks. This will further impact availability of Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC), smokejumpers, wildland fire modules (WFM), engine modules, aviation personnel including helitack, dispatchers, Incident Management Team members, and many other single resource and support resources.

The NMAC is requesting the assistance from all agencies to actively engage in conversations with their respective units, Line Officers, leadership, and personnel to request their support to continue to be available for fire assignments until the Preparedness Level decreases and the high demand for wildland firefighting resources subsides. The NMAC can at the appropriate time, indicate when our demand is no longer critical. This request is made with the consideration that all individuals are mindful of their fitness level, both mentally and physically, to continue to go on assignments. We recognize how much resources have worked in this intense fire and COVID environment for the last several months already.



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NMAC requests that all agencies consider some of the following examples of what can be done to continue to support wildland fire response:

- Consult with your agency wildland fire leadership for available funding options for extending employee tours of duty.
- Crewmembers and their leadership from IHCs, Type 2 Initial Attach (IA), and Type 2 hand crews can combine with other crews to meet agency standards for a type 2IA and 2 crews. Another option is to simply roster and staff (with the appropriate leadership) as a fire suppression module with 5-10 individuals with appropriate leadership to maintain span of control. Making Crew Boss qualified personnel available will be critical for this to succeed.
- Smokejumpers, helitack crewmembers, and all other aviation personnel that are no longer attached to an available aircraft can also join others to configure as a hand crew (type 2IA or 2), as a fire suppression module, or make themselves available for single resource assignments.
- Incomplete Engine modules can combine with others to meet respective agency standards, and/or be augmented with other available personnel.
- IMTs that are discontinuing for the season (many of our Type 2 IMTs), can work with their Geographic Area Coordinating Groups to combine IMTs together to meet agency standards. Additionally, IMT members without a rostered IMT are encouraged to serve in other single resource capacities.
- In addition to the configuration options previously identified, all employees of all employment tours of duty are encouraged to make themselves available for single resource assignments when not serving in other critical roles.
- Finally, Federal seasonal and career seasonal personnel may extend to be considered for single resource assignments and/or to augment staffing of hand crews, fire suppression modules, engines, etc. Please see the attached memorandums from the Department of the Agriculture (DOA) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) verifying the authority to exceed Temporary Hire time limits. Please note that the extension of personnel time does not have an impact on Temporary Hire time limits for 2021.



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This memorandum is in alignment with the attached DOI and DOA memorandums Wildland Fire and Emergency Response. We ask that personnel and resources work with their respective local dispatch centers and unit level fire management to configure and status as the proper resource accordingly.

Thank you again for your efforts and contributions to the national response to wildfires.

/s/ Joshua Simmons
Chair, NMAC

Attachments:

- *Chief's Letter for Wildland Fire Resources
- *Memo from the Secretary re 2020 Support for Wildland Fire and Emergency Response 8.25.2020
- *USDA Fire Exception Approved
- *Request for Exception to the General Time Limits for Temporary Employment_ OPM Approval
- *Exception to the General Time Limits for Temporary Employment Limited Approval
- *Exception to the General Time Limits for Temporary Employment Approved OPM Occupational Series Seasonal Positions

