

The Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) is designed to minimize the impact of the accident review process on land management agency personnel who may have witnessed or participated in the event where an accident occurred.

There can be a number of different investigations that are required by US Forest Service and by Federal Regulations following a fatality. The personnel assigned to conduct this data collection can become so focused on their task that they can inadvertently be insensitive to personnel involved in the incident through the interview process. The CRP is designed, as much as possible, to control access to our personnel, to avoid repetitious interviews and to make the process as painless as possible for all involved.

The CRP is implemented when there is an accident that is significant enough to warrant a Chief's level review, which normally occurs when there has been a death or when three or more persons are admitted to a hospital. This level of response will include a Learning Review Team¹, which will follow the Learning Review Guide. The Learning Review replaces the Serious Accident Investigation process and is one of several processes initiated and coordinated by the CRP. A phased approach is important to the Learning Review process and starts with the Information Collection Phase and then moves to the Sensemaking & Analysis Phase and ultimately leads to the Learning Review Board².

The CRP and Learning Review are principle-based approaches, which are designed to minimize the impact that reviews can have on the personnel who were involved in the incident while simultaneously meeting organizational and ethical requirements.

Accident prevention is the key objective of any incident study! The Chief of the US Forest Service has openly stated that information derived from any review of an incident will only be used by the agency, or agencies, for accident prevention purposes. This means that the Learning Review coordinated by the CRP will not be used as the basis for disciplinary action, or to place blame on employees.

Products and information that were the result of the Learning Review will not be used for administrative, disciplinary or legal purposes by the USFS. (Tom Tidwell, Chief, USFS)

¹ This replaces the Accident Investigation Team

² This replaces the Accident Review Board

In the past the accident reports have been used for multiple purposes - including protecting the agency from lawsuits - this practice can introduce goal conflicts. The goal of the Learning Review is to provide the agency with as clear a picture of what influenced actions and decisions as possible, this could result uncovering **hard truths** that might appear contrary to protecting the agency (the agency's document for protection from lawsuits is the Claims Investigation report, which will also be coordinated by the CRP Response Leader). Families are briefed as part of the Learning Review process and this has relieved a great deal of the tension that was created by the previous processes.

Principles of the Coordinated Response Protocol and Learning Review

- Forest Service Employees are well intentioned and work within organizational systems to meet the expectations of leadership and the system.
- Accidents and incidents can be a byproduct of complex systems, alone.
- Enhanced Accountability: 1) *Prior to incidents*, leaders and managers are responsible for knowing how the organization functions with regard to accountability and with respect to normal work. Traditional accountability is in place (see part 2 of the Learning Review Guide). 2) *After the incident*, the organization is accountable to learn from the event.
- Coordination is critical to meet the intent of the investigation, while minimizing trauma to personnel.
- Actions and decisions are consequences, not causes. The goal is to understand why actions or decisions made sense to those involved at the time. Conditions shape decisions and actions, revealing these conditions will aid the agency and agency personnel in understanding how to recognize, change and react to conditional pressures.

When Does the USFS Initiate a CRP/LR?

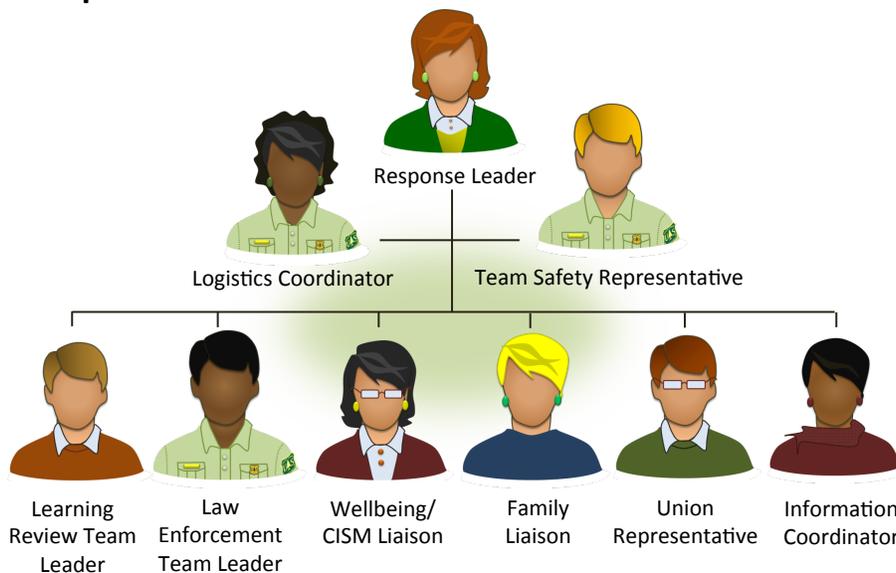
The current guidance is determined by the severity of the outcome and is based on the same direction we used for the SAI (fatality or 3 or more hospitalizations). This is negotiable, in that, the DASHO will look at each situation to determine if a CRP is warranted or if the incident can be reviewed with the Complex Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA). FLA's and the Learning Review share a common origin and philosophy. The both are focused on maximizing the learning that can result from accidents and incidents.

What is the Structure of a CRP?

CRPs coordinate a number of reviews and investigations including: Claims, Survivor Benefit reports, coroner reports and the Learning Review. In addition there is often a need to organize Critical Incident Stress Management, on-scene Law Enforcement site security, hazardous material handling, logistics and safety. The CRP uses the Response Leader position (formerly the Team Leader) to coordinate the variety of demands placed on our people and the system when accidents occur.

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Response Team Structure



Outcome may not be an accurate indication of the complexity of an event; as a result, both the CRP and the Learning Review are scalable processes, which (much like the Incident Command System) encourage expanding and shrinking the team to meet increased and decreased needs, as appropriate. Additional specialists and subject matter experts may be called, once the team is in place and begins to understand what occurred and what may be needed.

The Learning Review process is designed to produce at least two learning products, one for the field and one for organizational leadership. These products have markedly different audiences with very different needs in terms of learning. The organization has to be able to learn what happened and why it happened, so they can understand how to influence the system. This influence is normally done through rules, regulations, policy and procedures. In order to be effective, the Organizational Learning Product has to conduct the necessary staff work to

allow leadership to make an informed risk based decision. One of the major inputs into this process is derived through focus groups made up of subject matter experts (including Line Officers, academic specialists and operational personnel). This is designed to prevent reactive mitigations that will not serve the needs of the community affected by the incident.

Field Learning products go through a similar focus group analysis and sensemaking phase to determine what the “take-away” lessons are for the communities most affected by the incident. These focus groups identify ways to improve work in traditional ways, by advancing our best practices with new information. This represents ways that the field can improve their skills. Additionally this part of the process will also identify ways that field personnel can advance their expertise. Learning about the system advances expertise. This can be accomplished by examining ways that personnel can evaluate the system’s potential to do harm, which is a significant re-framing of the learning message that should help the field to identify ways to improve critical thinking skills.

The learning review is approach consists of four phases designed to enhance sensemaking and to include technical, mechanical and complex assessment of the incident being studied.

Learning Review Process

A phased approach to understanding the event and recommending changes

