

31.8 - FIRE SUPPRESSION READINESS PLAN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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POLICY

The South Carolina Forestry Commission will keep its fire suppression forces at a level of readiness commensurate with the existing/projected fire danger conditions. The South Carolina Forestry Commission will also keep other fire suppression forces and cooperators advised of the fire situation as warranted.

Readiness Plans will be used to set the appropriate level of readiness for initial attack and support personnel and equipment. They will also be used to alert the appropriate overhead fire team support, serve as a guide for planning aerial detection schedules, and set priorities in work planning.

PROCEDURE

SETTING READINESS PLAN

The Unit Foresters are responsible for ensuring that the people, equipment, and facilities under their supervision are ready to meet the challenge of the existing and projected fire situation, and therefore are responsible for the operation of the Readiness Plan in their unit.

The Regional Foresters will designate a Regional Operations Officer (ROO) to monitor and coordinate the Readiness Plan.

The Readiness Plan will be set by the Unit Forester after input is received from the Supervisors, Fire Danger Rating Systems, Weather Service, etc. Readiness Plan will be set as early as possible. All personnel will continue to follow the last Readiness Plan set, until a new plan is set. **IMPORTANT:** Readiness Plans can and should be updated at any time if conditions so warrant.

Units will advise the Regional Dispatch Center daily of the Readiness Plan, as well as any interim changes.

Unit Foresters do not have to consult the Regional Operations Officer before increasing or decreasing the Readiness Plan; however, the Regional Operations Officer should be advised of any change.

The Readiness Plan will be set for each day based on the worst fire danger expected in the Unit for that day. Split Readiness Plans will not be used. This will correlate with the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) in which the "worst case" is assumed to occur at mid-afternoon when temperatures are highest and humidities lowest.

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN SETTING READINESS PLAN

Hazard - The influence of weather and fuel conditions on fire behavior.

- I. Fire Danger Ratings - an indicator of the degree of hazard on a particular day. On most days the Readiness Plan will follow the projected fire danger rating closely. NOTE: Fire danger ratings used to set the Readiness Plan will be from forecast data. Actual fire danger ratings will be calculated at the standard 1:00 p.m. EST observation.
- II. Drought/Rainfall - this measurement goes into the Fire Danger Ratings calculations, but should be given separate specific consideration.
- III. Fire Weather Forecast - as an additional indicator of hazard pertaining to such specific problems as erratic fire behavior, atmospheric instability, frontal passage, safety, etc.
- IV. Season of the year - very important in regard to fuels in that hazard is higher when fuels are cured than during the summer months. Partially reflected through "greenness factor."

Risk - The chance of a fire(s) starting that requires suppression. Consideration should be given to recent and historic fires occurrence, ignition component, activities of people, etc. Example: more fires occur on Saturday than on Monday.

Capability - Readiness Plans are designed on the assumption that the full capability of the Fire Suppression Organization is available; consequently, the Readiness Plan must be increased when any loss of capability occurs. A reduction in capability occurs when units are not operational; personnel are sick, exhausted or otherwise not available for fire duty.

During fire season, from February through April, Region and Dispatch personnel should limit scheduling extended leave of three or more days, since such leave may have to be cancelled during periods of increased fire activity in order to ensure adequate fire dispatch capability.

READINESS PLANS ACTIVITIES

Readiness Plan 1 - Fire Danger NONE

- A. Mandatory activities:
 1. Wardens and Forestry Technicians I work regular duty schedule and must carry or have agency cell phone available - Refer to the Warden and Forestry Technician I Readiness Plan Duties section, Duty Status Definitions.
 2. Region Personnel (Forestry Technicians II & III, Project Foresters, Unit Foresters, Assistant Regional Foresters, Regional Foresters, and Pilots) - must carry or have agency cell phone available and work regular schedule.
 3. Columbia Personnel – Fire Duty Officer must carry or have agency cell phone available.
 4. Air Patrol coordinated and scheduled by Regional Operations Officer (ROO) and Assistant Regional Forester.
- B. Permissible activities-regular duties. Supervisors are encouraged to manage/balance their personnel's 40 hour work week to minimize the accrual of compensatory time and to require use of compensatory time previously accrued.

Readiness Plan 2 - Fire Danger LOW

- A. Mandatory activities:
1. Wardens and Forestry Technicians I work regular duty schedule and must carry or have agency cell phone available - Refer to the Warden and Forestry Technician I Readiness Plan Duties section, Duty Status Definitions.
 2. Region Personnel (Forestry Technicians II & III, Project Foresters, Unit Foresters, Assistant Regional Foresters, Regional Foresters, and Pilots) - must carry or have agency cell phone available and work regular schedule.
 3. Columbia Personnel – Fire Duty Officer must carry or have agency cell phone available.
 4. Air Patrol coordinated and scheduled by Regional Operations Officer (ROO) and Assistant Regional Forester.
- B. Permissible activities-regular duties. Supervisors are encouraged to manage/balance their personnel's 40 hour work week to minimize the accrual of compensatory time and to require use of compensatory time previously accrued.

Readiness Plan 3 - Fire Danger MODERATE

- A. Mandatory activities.
1. Wardens and Forestry Technicians I work regular duty schedule and must carry or have agency cell phone available - Refer to the Warden and Forestry Technician I Readiness Plan Duties section, Duty Status Definitions.
 2. Region Personnel (Forestry Technicians II & III, Project Foresters, Unit Foresters Assistant Regional Foresters, Regional Foresters, and Pilots) - must carry or have agency cell phone available and work regular schedule.
 3. Columbia Personnel – Fire Duty Officer must carry or have agency cell phone available.
 4. Air Patrol coordinated and scheduled by Regional Operations Officer (ROO) and Assistant Regional Forester.
- B. Permissible activities:
1. Supervisors are encouraged to manage/balance their personnel's 40 hour work week to minimize the accrual of compensatory time and to require use of compensatory time previously accrued. Unit Forester must be consulted before extended leave is granted to Unit Personnel.
 2. Activities of all fire personnel must not lessen fire dispatch capability.

Readiness Plan 4 - Fire Danger HIGH

- A. Mandatory activities
1. Wardens and Forestry Technicians I and must carry or have agency cell phone available and "on duty" or "on call" for fire dispatch - Refer to the Warden and Forestry Technician I Readiness Plan Duties section, Duty Status Definitions.
 2. Region Personnel (Forestry Technicians II & III, Project Foresters, Unit Foresters, Assistant Regional Foresters, Regional Foresters, and Pilots) - must carry or have agency cell phone available and work regular schedule or "on call" for fire dispatch.
 3. Columbia Personnel - Fire Management Staff must carry or have agency cell phone available, Communications Director or his designated PIO must carry or have agency cell phone available for incident support.

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4. Air Patrol coordinated and scheduled by Regional Operations Officer (ROO) and Assistant Regional Forester.
5. Cooperators/RFD's - Weather, Readiness and NFDRS data relayed to all concerned parties. Advise of needed assistance etc.
6. Advise news media of fire situation and danger as warranted. Staff Information Officer positions. Ensure Communication and Public Information staff are aware of fire situation.
7. If available, immediately dispatch 2 suppression units to fires in locations of high risk/loss potential and consider such in locations of moderate risk/loss potential. Risk priority is as follows:
 - a. Life and property,
 - b. young plantations,
 - c. well-stocked young natural pine stands,
 - d. high value public use areas, and,
 - e. large areas of other well-stocked stands.
8. Pre-position units as warranted.
9. State Forester, Deputy State Forester, Forest Protection Staff, and Region/Unit Staff consider use of Red Flag Alert or Burning Ban.
10. ROO requests Columbia Duty Officer to alert IMT/Overhead/additional resources for possible dispatch to large and/or multiple fire situations.
11. Alert Regional support teams for possible dispatch.

B. Permissible activities:

1. Leave only on a limited basis. Regional Forester must be consulted before extended leave is granted to Unit personnel.
2. Activities of all personnel must not lessen fire dispatch capability.

Readiness Plan 5 - Fire Danger **EXTREME**

A. Mandatory activities

5. Wardens and Forestry Technicians I must carry or have agency cell phone available and are "on duty" or "on call" for fire dispatch - Refer to the Warden and Forestry Technician I Readiness Plan Duties section, Duty Status Definitions.
6. Region Personnel (Forestry Technicians II & III, Project Foresters, Unit Foresters, Assistant Regional Foresters, Regional Foresters, and Pilots) - must carry or have agency cell phone available and work regular schedule or "on call" for fire dispatch.
7. Columbia Personnel - Fire Management Staff must carry or have agency cell phone available. Communications Director or his designated PIO must carry or have agency cell phone available for incident support.
8. Air Patrol coordinated and scheduled by Regional Operations Officer (ROO) and Assistant Regional Forester.
9. Cooperators/RFD's - Weather, Readiness and NFDRS data relayed to all concerned parties. Advise of needed assistance, etc.
10. Advise news media of fire situation and danger as warranted. Staff Information Officer positions. Ensure Communication and Public Information staff are aware of fire situation.

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11. If available, immediately dispatch 2 suppression units to fires in locations of high risk/loss potential and consider such in locations of moderate risk/loss potential. Risk priority is as follows:
 - a. Life and property,
 - b. young plantations,
 - c. well-stocked young natural pine stands,
 - d. high value public use areas, and,
 - e. large areas of other well-stocked stands.
12. Pre-position units as warranted.
13. State Forester, Deputy State Forester, Forest Protection Staff, and Region/Unit Staff consider use of Red Flag Alert or Burning Ban.
14. ROO requests Columbia Duty Officer to alert IMT/Overhead/additional resources for possible dispatch to large and/or multiple fire situations.
15. ROO alerts Regional support teams for possible dispatch.
16. ROO requests maximum assistance from cooperators and maximum fire prevention assistance from media.

B. Permissible activities:

1. Leave only on an emergency basis.
2. Activities of all personnel must not lessen fire dispatch capability.

Warden and Forestry Technician I Readiness Plan Duties

Duty Status Definitions

- a. Off Duty - Defined as non-working status such as when employee is on approved leave, regular day off, or holiday observance. Location and contact information may be required. A scheduled "off duty" day begins at 0800 and ends at 0800 the next day.
- b. On Call - "On call" status is not work hours. Employees in "on call" status must be able to return to "on duty" status within thirty (30) minutes or up to one (1) hour with prior approval from his/her supervisor. (Supervisor must contact Dispatch Center if "on call" status is changed).

When notification is received from the Dispatch Center, an employee is required to immediately establish contact and inform the Dispatch Center when he/she will be back "on duty". Work hours begin when an employee is at his/her duty station and contacts the appropriate regional dispatch center to report he/she is preparing to dispatch to a fire. Once back "on duty" the employee has 10 minutes to be rolling to the fire.

Employees are considered to be "on call" when not scheduled to be "off duty" or "on duty".

- a. On Duty - Defined as working hours. A scheduled "on duty" day for Wardens and Forestry Technician I's begin at 1000 and ends at 1800.

When initially contacted, employee is required to immediately establish contact with the Dispatch Center. Once the employee has established contact with the Dispatch Center, the employee has 10 minutes to be rolling to the fire.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL FIRE DANGER RATING SYSTEM AND READINESS PLAN

A. Fuel Model C will be used for calculations at Oconee, Whitmire, Long Cane, Fort Jackson, SRS North, and Carolina Sandhills weather stations. The Burning Index/Readiness Plan relationship is as follows:

| Burning Index | Readiness Plan |
|---------------|----------------|
| 0 - 1 | 1 |
| 2 - 5 | 2 |
| 6 - 13 | 3 |
| 14 - 28 | 4 |
| 29 | 5 |

B. Fuel Model Q will be used for calculations at SRS South, Congaree, Marion, Walterboro, Witherbee, and Wambaw weather stations. The Burning Index/Readiness Plan relationship is as follows:

| Burning Index | Readiness Plan |
|---------------|----------------|
| 0 - 11 | 1 |
| 12 - 22 | 2 |
| 23 - 43 | 3 |
| 44 - 64 | 4 |
| 65 + | 5 |