

# WILDLAND FIRES STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

DATE APPROVED: SEPTEMBER 2007

## I. Scope

This standard is to regulate the management of incidents involving ground cover in the wild-land / urban interface.

## II. Definitions

- A. Aerial Fuels: Upright fuel over 6 feet high.
- B. Backfiring: Intentionally setting fire to fuels inside the control line to reduce fuel and contain a rapidly spreading fire.
- C. Black: The area where the fire has burned.
- D. Cat line: A fire line constructed by a bulldozer.
- E. Control line: A term used for all constructed or natural fire barriers used to control a fire.
- F. Crown fire: Any fire that advances from top to top of trees or brush.
- G. Finger: Long narrow strips of fire extending from the main fire.
- H. Fire line: The part of a control line that is scraped or dug down to mineral soil.
- I. Fire perimeter: The entire length of the outer edge of the fire.
- J. Flank: The sides of a wild-land fire.
- K. Green: Area of unburned fuel next to the burning fuels.
- L. Head of a fire: The most active part of a wild-land fire.
- M. Heavy fuels: Fuels of large diameter, such as logs, snags, and large tree limbs. These ignite slowly and burn slowly but produce a large amount of heat.
- N. Heel: The rear of a wild-land fire.
- O. Islands: Unburned areas inside the fire perimeter.
- P. Mop-up: After the fire has been controlled, all actions required to make the fire "safe." This includes trenching, falling snags, and checking all control lines.
- Q. Origin: The area where the fire started.
- R. Perimeter: The distance around the outside edge of the burning or burnt area.
- S. Rear of fire: The portion of a fire opposite the head. The slowest burning part of a fire.
- T. Spot Fire: Caused by flying sparks or embers landing outside the main fire.
- U. Subsurface Fuels: Roots, peat, duff, and other decomposed organic matter.
- V. Surface Fuels: Needles, twigs, grass, field crops, and brush up to 6 feet high.

W. Volume: The amount of fuel in a given area.

X. Wild-land / urban interface: Where native vegetation comes in contact with structures and other man-made fuels.

### **III. Operational Procedures**

- A. Direct attack: Personnel and resources work close to the fire's edge and put it out there. Best to use on small, slow moving fires with light fuels.
- B. Indirect attack: Uses natural barriers and backfiring.
- C. Parallel attack: Made by hand crews and bulldozers when intense heat or fire spread precludes direct attack. Back off 5 to 50 feet and parallel to the flank.

### **IV. Safety Precautions**

- A. The level of protective clothing to be used shall be determined by the incident commander but shall include as a minimum:
  - 1. Department-issued helmet, gloves, pants and shirt, hood, and boots.
- B. Eye and respiratory protection shall be worn as conditions warrant.
- C. EMS personnel shall closely monitor all personnel to prevent heat exhaustion, dehydration, etc. A rehab sector shall be established whenever appropriate.
- D. Standard fire orders:
  - 1. Keep informed of weather conditions.
  - 2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
  - 3. Base your actions on current and expected fire behavior.
  - 4. Plan escape routes for everyone and make them known.
  - 5. Post a lookout when there is possible danger.
  - 6. Be alert, keep calm, think clearly, and act decisively.
  - 7. Maintain good communications at all times.
  - 8. Give clear instructions and be sure they are understood.
  - 9. Maintain control of your personnel at all times.
  - 10. Fight the fire aggressively, but provide for safety first.
  - 11. On grass fires, fight the fire from the burned area whenever possible.
  - 12. Guard against getting your apparatus stuck in soft terrain. As a general rule, structural engines should not leave the roadway.