

COLFAX COUNTY WILDFIRE RESPONSE PLAN

August 2004

The potential for a catastrophic fire in Colfax County's forested areas remains an ever-present danger. The potential for rapid, large fire growth in the urban interface presents ongoing public safety concerns. The following Wildfire Incident Management plan shall be implemented as standard operating procedure by; Colfax County Fire Marshall, all Rural Fire Protection District Chiefs and their Fire Officers.

WILDLAND FIRE NOTIFICATION

Immediate notification of all wildland fires within Colfax County shall be made to the Colfax County E9-1-1. This includes all wildland fires spotted and reported by resource protection agencies, District fire departments or the public to the local State and federal wildland fire notification center.

The Colfax County E9-1-1 shall notify the district State forestry division of all reported wildland fires within Colfax County.

WILDLAND FIRE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

An Incident Commander (IC) is defined as the Colfax County designated Chief Fire Officer, a County Rural Fire Protection District Chief or it's acting Chief Officer, a State or Federal employee assigned/assuming the position of Incident Commander.

All on-scene Incident Commanders (IC) on wildland fires occurring within Colfax County that threaten public safety, infrastructure or private property shall establish and maintain operations under the NIMS ICS/UC Unified Command Incident Management System.

Colfax County fire resources dispatched by the Colfax County E9-1-1 ECC on wildland fire incidents shall establish ICS/UC (Unified Command). The first due County Incident Commander (IC) shall have primary responsibility for responder safety, public life-safety, incident assessment, suppression tactics, on-scene coordination (direction and control) of County resources.

Wildland fire suppression and any mitigation actions taken within a 200' radius of structures (improvements) shall be a unified fire command decision, and all actions taken shall be coordinated with Colfax County fire resources, who will work directly with property owner(s) making unified mitigation decisions when available, or make the necessary mitigation decisions based on imminent threat implied consent for the Colfax County property owner.

The first due (first on scene) County Incident Commander shall maintain ICS/UC Unified Command until transition to the Colfax County Chief Fire Officer or the Colfax County IC Team occurs, or the wildland fire incident is contained.

The Colfax County Fire Marshall, IC, or any County Rural Fire Protection District Chief or their acting Chief Officer may transition Incident Command to State or federal government agencies having wildland fire suppression responsibility within Colfax County when, in his/her best informed judgment, the threat to public safety, infrastructure and private property has been mitigated.

All Colfax County fire resources dispatched and mobilized by the Colfax County E9-1-1 shall focus on the delivery of safe, effective, rapid initial attack and containment within or contiguous to Colfax County's urban interface and intermix areas in an ongoing effort to prevent major wildland fires from developing.

INDEMNIFICATION

All Colfax County fire personnel and resources shall remain the responsibility of Colfax County. Any and all liability incurred as a result of Colfax County wildland fire suppression operations, including fire personnel safety, shall remain the sole responsibility of Colfax County.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The appropriate State or federal wildland protection agency shall be held financially accountable for wildland fire suppression and containment costs incurred by Colfax County for services rendered on escaped wildland fires within classified forested lands that threaten public safety, infrastructure and/or private property.

STANDARDS AND POWERS

Where applicable, NFPA-1 standards chapter 17, Wildland Urban Interface will apply. (Copy attached)

Where applicable, The Fire Chiefs Handbook's article 18, Powers of Municipalities and 4-37-1 Counties; Powers; Ordinances will apply. (Copy attached)

CLARIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS

There appears to be varying interpretations within the federal agencies regarding the application of 310-1 qualification/certification standards to local, non-federal resources, particularly during initial attack. The following points summarize NWCG policy.

The 310-1 qualification/certification standards are mandatory only for national mobilization of wildland fire fighting resources.

During initial attack, all agencies (federal, state, local and tribal) accept each other's standards. Once jurisdiction is clearly established, then the standards of the agency(s) with jurisdiction prevail.

Federal and State agencies should determine with their local and tribal agency partners, the qualification/certification standards that will apply to the use of local, non-federal and state firefighters during initial attack.

The Geographic Area Coordinating Groups should determine the application of 310-1 qualification/certification standards for mobilization within the geographic area.

On a fire where a non-federal agency is also an agency with legal jurisdiction, the standards of that agency apply.

17.1 General.

The planning, construction, maintenance, education, and management elements for the protection of life and property from wildfire shall comply with **NFPA 1144**, *Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire*, and Chapter 17.

17.2 Plans.

The plans for construction and development within the wildland urban interface shall be submitted to the AHJ for review and approval.

17.3 Wildland Fire-Prone Areas.

17.3.1* Safeguards. Safeguards to prevent the occurrence of fires and to provide adequate fire protection and mitigation measures in hazardous fire areas shall be provided and maintained in accordance with Section 17.3.

17.3.2* Permits and Approvals. Permits for use of hazardous areas shall not be issued when public safety would be at risk, as determined by the AHJ. (See *1.12.19 for additional requirements for permits.*)

17.3.3 Restricted Entry.

17.3.3.1 The AHJ shall determine and publicly announce when hazardous fire areas shall be closed to entry, and when such areas shall again be opened to entry.

17.3.3.2 Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted to enter or remain in closed hazardous fire areas.

17.3.3.3 Signs. Approved signs prohibiting entry by unauthorized persons shall be placed on every closed area and access point.

17.3.4 Use of Flammable Materials and Procedures.

17.3.4.1 Smoking. Lighting, igniting, or otherwise setting fire to any smoking material shall be prohibited unless within structures or smoking areas approved by the AHJ. (See *Section 10.10 for additional requirements on smoking.*)

17.3.4.2 Tracer Bullets, Tracer Charges, Rockets, and Model Aircraft.

17.3.4.2.1 Tracer bullets and tracer charges shall not be possessed, fired, or caused to be fired into or across hazardous fire areas.

17.3.4.2.2 Rockets, model planes, gliders, and balloons powered with an engine, propellant, or other feature liable to start or cause fire shall not be fired or projected into or across hazardous fire areas.

17.3.4.3 Explosives and Blasting. Explosives shall not be possessed, kept, stored, sold, offered for sale, given away, used, discharged, transported, or disposed of within hazardous fire areas except as permitted by the AHJ. (See *Chapter 65 for additional guidance.*)

17.3.4.4 Fireworks. Fireworks shall not be used or possessed in hazardous fire areas unless permitted by the AHJ. (See *Chapter 65 for additional guidance.*)

17.3.4.5 Apiaries. Lighted and smoldering material used in connection with smoking bees shall not be allowed in or upon hazardous fire areas except by permit from the AHJ.

17.3.4.6 Open-Flame Devices.

17.3.4.6.1* Welding torches, tar pots, decorative torches, and other devices, machines, or processes liable to start or cause fire shall not be operated or used in or upon hazardous fire areas, except by permit from the AHJ.

17.3.4.6.2 Flame-employing devices, such as lanterns or kerosene road flares, and fuses shall not be operated or used as a signal or marker in or upon hazardous fire areas unless at the scene of emergencies or railroad operations. (See *Chapter 16 and Chapter 65 for additional guidance.*)

17.3.4.7 Outdoor Fires.

17.3.4.7.1* Outdoor fires shall not be built, ignited, or maintained in or upon hazardous fire areas, except by permit from the AHJ.

17.3.4.7.2 Permanent barbecues, portable barbecues, outdoor fireplaces, or grills shall not be used for the disposal of rubbish, trash, or combustible waste material. (See *Section 10.11 for additional guidance.*)

17.3.4.8 Incinerators and Fireplaces.

17.3.4.8.1 Incinerators, outdoor fireplaces, permanent barbecues, and grills shall not be built, installed, or maintained in hazardous fire areas without prior approval of the AHJ.

17.3.4.8.2 Incinerators, outdoor fireplaces, permanent barbecues, and grills shall be maintained in good repair and in a safe condition at all times.

17.3.4.8.3 Openings in incinerators, outdoor fireplaces, permanent barbecues, and grills shall be provided with an approved spark arrester, screen, or door.

17.3.4.9 Spark Arresters. Chimneys used in conjunction with outdoor fireplaces, barbecues, incinerators, or heating appliances in which solid or liquid fuel is used, upon buildings, structures, or premises located within 10 ft (3.05 m) of hazardous vegetation shall be provided with a spark arrester in accordance with Section 8.7 of NFPA 1144, *Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire*.

17.3.5 Clearance of Brush and Vegetative Growth.

17.3.5.1 Electrical Transmission Lines.

17.3.5.1.1 Clearance of brush and vegetative growth from electrical transmission and distribution line(s) shall be provided and maintained in accordance with 17.3.5.1.

17.3.5.1.2 A combustible-free space around poles and towers shall consist of a clearing of not less than 10 ft (3.05 m) in each direction from the outer circumference of the pole or tower during such periods of time as designated by the AHJ.

17.3.5.1.3 Trimming Clearance.

17.3.5.1.3.1 At the time of trimming, clearances not less than those established by Table 17.3.5.1.3.1 shall be provided.

Table 17.3.5.1.3.1 Minimum Clearances between Vegetation and Electrical Lines at Time of Trimming

Minimal Radial Clearance from Conductor

Line Voltage

ft

m

2400–72,000

4

1.2

72,001–110,000

6

1.8

110,001–300,000

10

3.0

300,001 or more

15

4.6

17.3.5.1.3.2 The radial clearances in Table 17.3.5.1.3.1 are minimum clearances that shall be established at time of trimming between the vegetation and the energized conductors and associated live parts.

17.3.5.1.4 Clearances not less than those established by Table 17.3.5.1.4 shall be maintained during such periods of time as designated by the AHJ.

Table 17.3.5.1.4 Minimum Clearances between Vegetation and Electrical Lines to Be Maintained

Minimum Clearance

Line Voltage

in.

cm

750–35,000

6

15.2

35,001–60,000

12

30.5

60,001–115,000

19

48.3

115,001–230,000

30.5

77.5

230,001–500,000

115

292

17.3.5.1.4.1 The site-specific clearance achieved, at the time of pruning, shall vary based on species' growth rates, the utility company specific trim cycle, the potential line sway due to wind, line sway due to electrical loading and ambient temperature, and the tree's location in proximity to the high voltage lines.

17.3.5.1.4.2 The AHJ shall establish minimum clearances different than those specified by Table 17.3.5.1.4 when evidence substantiating such other clearances is submitted to the AHJ and approved.

17.3.5.1.5* Electrical Power Line Emergencies. During emergencies, the utility company shall perform the required work to the extent necessary to clear the hazard.

17.3.5.2 Structures.

17.3.5.2.1 Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating, or maintaining buildings or structures in, upon, or adjoining hazardous fire areas, and persons owning, leasing, or controlling land adjacent to such buildings or structures, shall maintain an effective defensible space in accordance with NFPA 1144, *Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire*.

17.3.5.2.2 Where required by the AHJ because of extra hazardous conditions, additional areas shall be maintained to include additional defensible space from buildings or structures, trees adjacent to or overhanging a building shall be maintained free of deadwood, and the roof of a structure shall be free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.

17.3.5.3 Roadways. Areas within 10 ft (3 m) on each side of portions of highways and private streets shall be cleared of combustible vegetation and other combustible growth. Single specimens of trees, shrubbery, or cultivated ground cover such as green grass, ivy, succulents, or similar plants used as ground covers, shall be permitted to be exempt provided that they do not form a means of readily transmitting fire.

17.3.6 Unusual Circumstances. The AHJ shall determine that difficult terrain, danger of erosion, or other unusual circumstances could require additional safeguards.

17.3.7 Fire Roads, Firebreaks, and Emergency Access.

17.3.7.1 The provisions of 17.3.9, NFPA 1141, *Standard for Fire Protection in Planned Building Groups*, and NFPA 1144, *Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire*, shall be used to determine the design, clearances, and provisions for emergency access (ingress and egress).

17.3.7.2 Unauthorized vehicles shall not be driven upon fire roads or firebreaks. Vehicles shall not be parked in a manner that obstructs the entrance to a fire road or firebreak.

17.3.7.3 Radio and television aerials, guy wires, and other obstructions shall not be installed or maintained on fire roads or firebreaks unless the vertical clearance is sufficient to allow the movement of fire and emergency apparatus.

17.3.7.4 Motorcycles, motor scooters, and motor vehicles shall not be operated within hazardous fire areas, except upon clearly established public or private roads.

17.3.8 Tampering with Fire Safety Equipment. See Section 10.8 for requirements on tampering with fire safety equipment.

17.3.9 Maintenance. See Section 10.4 for requirements on maintenance.

ARTICLE 18

POWERS OF MUNICIPALITIES (Fire Chiefs Handbook)

3-18-11. Fire prevention and protection; insurance for volunteer firemen. A. A municipality may by ordinance: (1) adopt regulations for the prevention of fire; (2) regulate and prevent the carrying on of manufactories dangerous in causing and promoting fires; (3) prohibit the deposit of ashes in unsafe places; (4) cause any building or enclosure which is in a flammable state to be placed in a safe condition; (5) regulate and prevent the storage and transportation of any combustible or explosive material; and (6) regulate and prevent the use of illuminating flames and the building of bonfires. B. A municipality may: (1) provide proper means for protection from fire; (2) erect fire stations and provide facilities and implements for the extinguishment of fires; and (3) provide for the use and management of fire stations, facilities and implements for extinguishing fires by a volunteer fire department, paid fire department or partially paid and volunteer fire department. C. A municipality having an organized volunteer fire department may purchase with money from the fire fund an accident policy from any insurance company authorized to do business in New Mexico. The accident policy shall provide for the payment to any volunteer fireman a suitable sum for injuries and a gross sum of not less than two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for death caused in the course of his duties as a volunteer fireman.

4-37-1. Counties; powers; ordinances. (Fire Chiefs Handbook)

All counties are granted the same powers that are granted municipalities except for those powers that are inconsistent with statutory or constitutional limitations placed on counties. Included in this grant of powers to the counties are those powers necessary and proper to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity and improve the morals, order, comfort and convenience of any county or its inhabitants. The board of county commissioners may make and publish any ordinance to discharge these powers not inconsistent with statutory or constitutional limitations placed on counties.

Adopted this 24th day of August, 2004

Board of County Commissioners
Colfax County, New Mexico

By: _____
It's Chairman

Attest _____
Clerk of the Board