

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Incident Information Protocols
2017**



Texas A&M Forest Service

Incident Information Procedures

Approved by:

Director

Date

Reviewed by:

Associate Director, Forest Resource Protection

Date

Prepared by:

Communications Manager

Date

Table of Contents

Overview	4
Background	4
Extended Initial Attack	5
Long Duration Incidents	6
Delegation of Authority	6
IMTPIO Responsibilities	6
Overview of TFSCM Responsibilities	8
TFS Information Center	8
Incident Updates, News Releases and Media Advisories.....	9
Social Media.....	9
Media Interviews	10
Media Access	10
Media Helicopter Access.....	10
Elected Officials.....	11
Community Relations	12
Coordination with Law Enforcement.....	12
Internal Reporting Requirements.....	12
Attachments	13
Attachment A: TFS Communications Contact Information.....	14
Attachment B: Letter of Intent, Delegation of Authority	15
Attachment C: Public Information Officer Incident Information Handout.....	15
Attachment D: Media Fire Guide: Safely covering wildfires in Texas.....	15
Attachment E: Texas Government Facts	15
Attachment F: Regional Fire Coordinators.....	19
Attachment G: 2017 Wildfire Season Communications Themes	20
Attachment H: Digital Image Standards	22
Attachment I: Useful Links	23

Overview

These procedures provide general guidance to the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) Incident Information Organization: TFS Communications Office (TFSCO) staff, Agency Administrators, and incoming Incident Management Team PIOs. The primary goal is to establish a response framework for the information function when IMTs are activated.

Background

Texas is divided into seven branches for administration and emergency response: Central, East, North, Northwest, South, South-Central and West Branch. Each branch is broken into Regional Fire Coordinator (RFC) regions (Attachment D). The RFC serves as the liaison for fire departments and is responsible for the TFS fire program in their area.

Due to the heavier fuel models and the limitations of local fire departments, TFS fills a major role in initial attack in the forested areas of the East Branch. The East Branch is broken into three local dispatch areas: Linden lindendispatch@tfs.tamu.edu, Henderson hendersondispatch@tfs.tamu.edu and Livingston livingstondispatch@tfs.tamu.edu.

In western Texas, requests for state assistance are made by the county judge to the Department of Public Safety. There are no permanent dispatch offices in West Texas. Contacts include:

dispatchcoordinator@tfs.tamu.edu
eoc@tfs.tamu.edu
AbileneDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
AmarilloDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
ChildressDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
FortStocktonDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
FredericksburgDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
pgates@tfs.tamu.edu
GranburyDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
greenvilledispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
imtdispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
KingsvilleDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
LaGrangeDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
LubbockDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
McGregorDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
MidlandDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
SanAngeloDispatch@tfs.tamu.edu
woodvilledispatch@tfs.tamu.edu

TFS support to initial attack (IA) efforts range from single, short duration events (less than one burning period) to multiple starts over several days or months. An Incident Management Team (IMT) may be activated to support extended IA efforts. Long duration fires (several burning periods) are becoming more common and may be managed by an IMT(s). The Incident Command Post for these IMTs are determined on a case by case basis.

TFS has an active fire prevention program with well-established community relationships. Many prevention personnel are qualified PIOs and support IA and IMT information efforts.

Extended Initial Attack

The following procedures are recommended during an extended IA prior to activation of a Type 1 or Type 2 IMT:

- The EOC is not staffed to respond to media or public inquiries; they refer all calls to the on-call TFSCS or TFS Information Center, if activated. (EOC telephone number is unpublished and confidential --- DO NOT RELEASE!)
- The TFS Communications Office serves as the State Public Information Officer, and also as the Team PIO when IMT is not stood up. Routine media and public inquiries during normal business hours are handled by the TFS Communications (TFSCO) staff:
 - Communications Specialist (TFSCS) Phillip Truitt, ptruitt@tfs.tamu.edu 979-255-0591 (C), 979-458-6605 (O)
 - Communications Specialist (TFSCS) Shylo Adams, sadams@tfs.tamu.edu 979- 324-0708 (C), 979-458-6619 (O)
 - Communications Manager (TFSCM) Linda Moon, lmooon@tfs.tamu.edu 979-450-1160 (C), 979-458-6606 (O)
- EOC promptly notifies the on-call TFSCS of all potentially significant incidents at newsmedia@tfs.tamu.edu
- Activation of a TFS Information Center (Center) to support the TFSCO response is the responsibility of the TFSCM and may occur when a significant incident is:
 - likely to continue for at multiple days;
 - threatening significant resources/structures/etc;
 - generating intense political scrutiny and/or inquiry at state and national level;
 - highly visible to a community and/or
 - generating considerable media interest.
- Activation of a Center should also be considered when there are numerous starts occurring within the same operating period.

Long Duration Incidents

The following procedures are recommended when a Type 1 or Type 2 IMT(s) have been activated to assist TFS suppression efforts:

Delegation of Authority

A Letter of Intent (see Attachment B) outlining key information concerns and incorporating by reference these procedures will be provided to incoming Incident Management Teams as part of the Delegation of Authority package. Further clarification of roles will take place during subsequent discussions between the IMTPIO, TFSCM and Agency Administrator.

IMTPIO Responsibilities

In addition to normally expected roles and responsibilities, the IMTPIO will:

Media

- Prioritize working with the local community and media
- Handle media and public information concerning the operational aspects of the team's assignment, releasing 209-confirmed information and/or updates as approved by your Incident Commander and Dispatch Tracker
- Notify TFSCO of inquiries from national media
- Submit medial relations materials to TFSCO for approval and dissemination
- Work with TFSCO on social media strategy and posting
- Maintain Inciweb unless other arrangements are made with TFSCM
- Coordinate with Information Center and Joint Information Center if established
- Participate in TFSCO statewide incident information meetings/calls

Elected officials

- Work directly with local TFS representative when contacting elected officials
- Notify TFSCM of any contact with elected officials

Local personnel

- Maintain regular contact with local or assigned TFS personnel
- Maintain regular contact with local county and/or city Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) and provide information, maps/other materials for posting as requested

- Coordinate regularly with the Prevention Team Leader regarding plans and activities, talking points and media interview requests.
- Refer issues and concerns of a political and/or policy nature to TFSCM

Prevention

- Assist Prevention Team personnel with delivery of prevention and mitigation messages
- Prevention personnel engaged in PIO activities directly related to the incident will check-in and check-out with the IMTPIO but will not be reassigned to the IMT

Guidelines

- Assure all assigned PIOs follow the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* requirements for fire line visits. Unescorted PIOs must meet minimal qualifications for a Single Resource Boss. Deviation requires the approval of the Incident Commander. Any instance of deviation from the standards must be documented.
- Assure all assigned PIOs adhere to the established Texas response framework for incident information, follow the Texas A&M Forest Service Incident Information Procedures and are provided a copy of the Texas A&M Forest Service Incident Information Handout
- Assure all assigned PIOs follow Agency Administrator's Guide to Critical Incident Management

Overview of TFSCM Responsibilities

The TFSCM will:

- Produce a statewide fire update. The information on this update is from the TFS Situation Report that uses 209 data. If an Information Center is activated, they will be tasked with this responsibility.
- Produce a list of TFS-approved talking points for use by IMTPIOs. If an Information Center is activated, they may be tasked with this responsibility.
- Host a frequent conference call with all PIOs to discuss key messages and concerns. Calls can be more frequent when the scope and intensity of information activities increase.
- Determine when to activate an Information Center, including location, staffing and hours of operation. Management of the Center will be the responsibility of IMTPIO unless otherwise agreed to with TFSCM. The Center will be the primary point of contact for the media and the public for all incidents.
- Provide support through a State Public Information Officer. The SPIO assists TFSCM to coordinate the management of information among IMTPIOs, Information Center, TFS EOC, and TFS Prevention and Mitigation. Roles and responsibilities are similar to an Area Command PIO.

TFS Information Center

The TFS Information Center (Center) will be activated when the media and public inquiries exceed the capacity of the TFSCO staff or when the incident potential indicates a Center is needed. The Center will support all incidents statewide and will typically be co-located with IMTPIO. If multiple jurisdictions are involved, the TFSCM will contact cooperating agency TFSCMs and determine if a Joint Information Center (JIC) is needed and if so, where it will be located and how it will be staffed and managed.

Unless otherwise negotiated with the TFSCM, the Center will be managed by the IMTPIO in coordination with the TFSCM. When possible, Center PIOs will be recruited from TFS and cooperating agencies. Volunteers may also be utilized to answer phones.

Incident Updates, News Releases and Media Advisories

IMTPIO is responsible for preparing incident updates, news releases, incident alerts and media advisories pertaining to the incident. Unless otherwise negotiated with the TFSCM, the TFSCM will review all materials prior to release and disseminate all statewide materials. All final versions should also be submitted to newsmedia@tfs.tamu.edu.

IMTPIOS may disseminate media materials approved by the TFSCM to local contacts and respond directly to inquiries from local contacts. TFSCM may provide a media contact list to the IMTPIO for the operational area.

The incident update is also disseminated via e-mail from the TFSCO or Center to a standing list of news media, elected officials, cooperators and other stakeholders. Any requests for additions to the distribution list should be provided to the TFSCM for approval

All incident updates, news releases, incident alerts and media advisories are to be issued with the TFS logo (use <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/LogoUseGuidelinesAndDownloads/>). If Unified Command is in place, cooperating agency logos should be included. Team logos may also be included. All communications materials should provide the Center phone number (if activated), TFS web site address (<http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/>) and Inciweb address as points of contact.

Social Media

IMT establishment and use of incident related social media accounts are prohibited. TFSCO will post items to officially established TFS social media venues

- TFS main website <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/>
- TFS Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/texasforestservice/>
- All Hazards Twitter @AllHazardsTFS https://twitter.com/AllHazardsTFS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- TFS Twitter @TXForestService <https://twitter.com/TXForestService>
- Lone Star State Incident Management Team Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/lssimt/>

TFS passwords are not to be shared.

IMT team accounts may be used for internal team communication and cannot compete with TFS as the primary information source. TFS <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/communicationresources/> and Texas A&M University System social media guidelines <https://www.tamus.edu/marcomm/socialmedia/employee-guidelines/>

Social media posts and digital visual assets such as photos, maps and videos may be submitted to TFSCO newsmedia@tfs.tamu.edu for use.

Media Interviews

The TFSCM will address TFS policy issues, especially contentious or politically controversial issues.

IMTPIOs have the approval to talk to local, regional and national media without prior TFSCM approval. Comments will be confined to issues pertaining to the operations of the incident.

The TFSCM should be notified of any significant or extraordinary interview requests from national media. Notification should include the media outlet, interview content, significant issues/concerns and the name/position of the agency person participating in the interview.

The IMTPIO may respond to specific media inquiries about composition, functions, organization and daily work of the IMT. In addition, the IMTPIO may explain the national system of allocating inter-agency resources. The TFSCM or the TFS IMT Coordinator may help address why the IMT is working for TFS, financial considerations related to the IMT being in Texas or the TFS Delegation of Authority.

Media Access

IMTPIOs will strive to accommodate the needs of the media in the safest manner possible. All visitors to an incident must meet the requirements of *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, Safety for Non-Operational Personnel Visiting Fires*. IMTPIO will solicit media cooperation to operate in a safe manner; this will be handled without restricting media's right to a story. The only exceptions will be when media may impede fire operations, jeopardize the safety of others or jeopardize or impede an investigation.

All news media requesting access to the fire area will be briefed on safety concerns and considerations. All news media entering the fire area will be required to wear PPE. If they do not have their own PPE and if available, they will be issued a hard hat, goggles; Nomex pants and shirt; gloves and fire shelters and instructed on their use. They will be directed to return the PPE to the fire information unit before leaving the incident.

Media Helicopter Access

Requests from media for a helicopter overflight will be routed through the IMTPIO or TFSCM for approval and coordination. Permission to enter a Temporary Flight Restriction established for an incident is made through and coordinated with the Incident Air Operations or the TFS EOC.

In general, media will not be allowed on board incident helicopters. Rare exceptions may be made as described in the TFS Aviation Management Plan.

(http://ticc.tamu.edu/Documents/OhterInfo/Aviation/air_plan_11.pdf).

Under certain conditions, helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft may transport non-employees such as cooperators, local government officials, company representatives, civic groups, feature writers or reporters, etc. for point to point, observation and reconnaissance related flights but only after approval by the Type I or II Incident Commander, Chief of Fire Operations or Aviation Management Officer. The following requirements must be met:

a. For federally contracted aircraft, a "Day Trip Authorization" form (FS-5700-12) must be completed and signed by the appropriate official prior to transporting non-mission passengers, such as those listed in the above paragraph

at http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/aviation/day_trip_auth.pdf

b. Proper PPE will be worn by all passengers.

c. Such passengers will not be on board while aircraft are performing mission functions such as bucket work, retardant delivery, low level flights, air attack missions, etc.

Elected Officials

IMTPIO may contact local elected officials to establish open communication, clarify IMTPIO role and determine information support needs. Notify affected District Forester, RFC and/or Mitigation & Prevention personnel prior to contact and conduct joint visits whenever possible.

Contact with state and nationally elected officials (and their staffs) remains the responsibility of the TFSCM and/or the Agency Administrator, unless otherwise negotiated with the TFSCM and Agency Administrator.

Should the IMTPIO receive any negative comments regarding TFS from any elected or appointed officials, the IMTPIO will report immediately to the TFSCM.

TFS may request the assistance of IMTPIOs and incident command staff at briefings for local, state and nationally elected officials and/or their staff.

Notify the TFSCM and local Agency Administrator immediately regarding the presence of elected officials at the incident. Provide details regarding questions asked, requested information supplied and the duration of their visit.

Community Relations

Notify TFSCM of any requests for community meetings. The location, facility and presentations for community meetings may be coordinated with the TFSCM.

IMTPIO will maintain a close working relationship with TFS Mitigation & Prevention staff with responsibility for communities affected by the incident.

Public Service Announcements should be coordinated with the TFSCM and TFS Mitigation & Prevention staff.

Coordination with Law Enforcement

In the event a fire cause is suspicious and/or under investigation, the Incident Commander will work in consultation with the lead TFS law enforcement investigator to determine the release of information regarding fire cause. In the case of a non-fire incident, TFS law enforcement will coordinate with the Agency Administrator and TFSCM to determine what information is to be released internally and externally, and when. The TFSCM will work with Law Enforcement to ensure that appropriate notifications are made.

By statute, TFS is the lead agency on wildfire investigations. These are conducted by the TFS Forest Resource Protection Law Enforcement. In accordance with the Public Information Open Records Act, to obtain a copy of an investigation a written request must be submitted to TFS. Directions for submitting an Open Records Request can be found at <http://txforestservicetamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=85> .

Internal Reporting Requirements

The Texas Interagency Coordination Center (TICC) (936) 875-4786, EOC and TFSCM (979) 450-1160 should be notified immediately by telephone of any incident involving the following: structures destroyed or evacuated; fatality (employee, contractor, or member of public); aircraft incident; shelter deployment; or serious injury to firefighter requiring hospitalization.

In the event of a fatality, consult the guidelines provided in the Agency Administrator's Guide to Critical Incident Management (<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm> PMS 926).

All communications will be coordinated with the TFSCM.

Attachments

<u>Attachment A: TFS Communications Contact Information</u>	14
<u>Attachment B: Letter of Intent, Delegation of Authority</u>	15
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<u>Attachment E: Texas Government Facts</u>	15
<u>Attachment F: Regional Fire Coordinators</u>	19
<u>Attachment G: 2017 Wildfire Season Communications Themes</u>	20
<u>Attachment H: Digital Image Standards</u>	22
<u>Attachment I: Useful Links</u>	23

Attachment A: TFS Communications Contact Information

Contact Name

Linda Moon

Communications Manager

Phillip Truitt

Communications Specialist

Shylo Adams

Communications Specialist

After Hours/On-Call Communications Contact

Contact Information

lmooon@tfs.tamu.edu

(979) 458-6614 (Office)

(979) 450-1160 (Mobile)

ptruitt@tfs.tamu.edu

(979) 458-6605 (Office)

(979) 255-0591 (Mobile)

sadams@tfs.tamu.edu

979-458-6619 (Office)

979-324-0708 (Mobile)

newsmedia@tfs.tamu.edu

Attachment B: Letter of Intent, Delegation of Authority



To: Incident Management Team Public Information Officer
From: Texas A&M Forest Service Agency Administrator
Date:
Subject: Letter of Intent

In addition to all pertinent items contained in my agency's delegation of authority to your team, I expect you to do the following:

- Priority should be placed on working with the local community and media.
- Handle media and public information concerning the operational aspects of your team's assignment, releasing 209-confirmed information and/or updates as approved by your Incident Commander and Dispatch Tracker;
- Adhere to the response framework for incident information established by the agency administrator and the Texas A&M Forest Service Communications Office who serves as the State Public Information Officer
- Coordinate with any Information Centers or Joint Information Centers if established;
- Participate in conference calls with Texas A&M Forest Service Communications Office when calls are scheduled
- Provide copies of news releases, fact sheets, and other public and media outreach documents to Texas A&M Forest Service Communications Office before sending (send to newsmedia@tfs.tamu.edu);
- Refer issues and concerns of a political and/or policy nature to Linda Moon, Communications Manager, Texas A&M Forest Service, lmooon@tfs.tamu.edu, 979-458-6614 office and 979-450-1160 cell.
- Notify Texas A&M Forest Service Communications Office of inquiries from national media and contacts and inquiries from elected state legislative and federal congressional officials.
- Maintain InciWeb with updates occurring at least once per day.
- A copy of the Texas A&M Forest Service Incident Information Procedures document and Public Information Officer handout shall be provided.

Paul Hannemann
Agency Administrator
Texas A&M Forest Service

Attachment C: Public Information Officer Incident Information Handout

TFS Public Information (incident information) is based upon:

- Being the first and best source of information about the incident
- Working collaboratively with other agencies to frequently gather and exchange information
- Getting the right information to the right people at the right time to better protect lives and property
- Ensuring designated spokespeople speak only to their areas of responsibility

Incident information is coordinated among public information officers in the field and the agency's communications office.

Coordination occurs in different ways depending on the scope of the incident:

- Regular or specially-called conference calls
- Internal speaking points
- Direct contact between field PIO and communications office
- Summary reports to communications office of media contacts and activity

TFS Communications Office serves as the State Public Information Officer, and also the Team PIO when IMT is not stood up

- Media line 979-458-6606 newsmedia@tfs.tamu.edu
- News and information from the communications office can be disseminated in the following ways:
- TFS website home page: <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu>
- [Current situation page](http://texasforests.tamu.edu/CurrentSituation/) <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/CurrentSituation/>
- TFS website Newsroom: <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/main/default.aspx?dept=news>
- TFS eNews subscription http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/main/default.aspx?dept=news&news_coll=eNews&id=3748
- News Releases disseminated to targeted and/or statewide media
- Facebook posts <https://www.facebook.com/texasforests.tamu.edu>
- Lone Star State Incident Management Team Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/lssimt/>
- Twitter posts <https://twitter.com/TXForestService>, <https://twitter.com/AllHazardsTFS>
- Texas Interagency Coordination Center, TICC, <http://ticc.tamu.edu/>
- InciWeb <http://www.inciweb.org/>
- Wildfire Preparedness information: www.texasfirewise.org

To help ensure that the right spokesperson is speaking to the appropriate area of responsibility, as a general rule, field PIOs provide real-time, on the ground updates about the incident to members of the media, the community, responding parties and to the TFS communications office. Field PIOs refer questions and inquiries about agency policy, interagency issues, finances, fatalities and injuries — and other sensitive subjects — to the TFS communications office.

PIO in the field

Requests for PIOs are generated with concurrence from Branch Assistant Chiefs or Regional Foresters, Communications Office and/or the Incident Commander, if applicable. Requests will be placed through TICC.

Response may use prevention personnel from within own branch to fill the PIO role by coordinating with WUI leadership.

Dispatchers are copied into requests and post PIO deployments and demobilizations in Tracker based on resource orders.

Field PIOs report on scene to TFS Incident Commander (Regional Fire Coordinator, Asst. Chief RFC, and other designated TFS Incident Response staff) and fill the field PIO assignments based on their direction for location, duration and work.

Work with local entities in a unified command to assist as the PIO (Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, EMC, etc.)

Tie in with other Agency/Department PIO (Fire Dept., DPS, TDEM, etc.)

TFS field PIO may operate under unified command and speak as a member of that command.

TFS field PIO must also coordinate with TFS Communications Office on speaking points, incident updates, media relations activity and outreach as a representative of TFS.


Attachment D: Media Fire Guide: Safely covering wildfires in Texas *(see separate document)*

Attachment E: Texas Government Facts

- 254 counties, County Judge is the Chief Elected Official; Sheriff is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer (elected).
- County Judge by statute (Section 418.1015, Chapter 418, Texas Government Code) is designated the County Emergency Management Director (EMD) and can appoint a County Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC).
- City Mayor by statute (Section 418.1015, Chapter 418, Texas Government Code) is designated as the City EMD and can appoint a City EMC.
- Counties and cities, in some cases, have opted to operate jointly under a County's emergency operations plan.
- Texas counties have the authority to issue burn bans (Chapter 352, Subchapter D, Local Government Code)
- Municipalities can issue outdoor burning ordinances within the city limits only.
- Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Disaster District Chair (DDC) has authority to activate state resources within the district and serve as the conduit to State Operations Center (SOC) for additional state resources. All DDCs have assigned PIOs known as Safety Education Officers/Troopers (see attachment).
- Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) coordinates the state emergency management program, which is intended to ensure the state and its local governments respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters, and implement plans and programs to help prevent or lessen the impact of emergencies and disasters. During disaster situations, TFS works in tandem with TDEM – including the execution of TDEM assigned tasks.
- The TFS is a state agency within the Texas A&M University System.
- The TFSCO staff work for, represent and report to the Texas A&M Forest Service Director's Office. They are not part of the incident management team or in the chain of command of the incident. They are responsible for maintaining agency media relations, legislative relations, agency communications, branding, marketing and messaging.

Attachment F: Regional Fire Coordinators


Regional Fire Coordinators (RFC) are supervisory employees that respond to wildfires as well as interact regularly with the community and local government. RFCs also help train and equip area fire departments and work with local communities to reduce potential wildfire risks.




**TEXAS A&M
FOREST SERVICE**

The role of the Incident Response Department is to ensure the rapid and effective response of appropriate resources, as needed, to suppress and extinguish wildfires in Texas. Rapid initial response to wildland fires is essential to suppress wildfires during high fire danger conditions, limit losses and provide for the safety of emergency responders and citizens. In addition, TFS is often requested to respond to all-hazard incidents that affect the state.


REGIONAL FIRE COORDINATORS




Jim Linares
ACRFC - SOC
(979) 218-3106



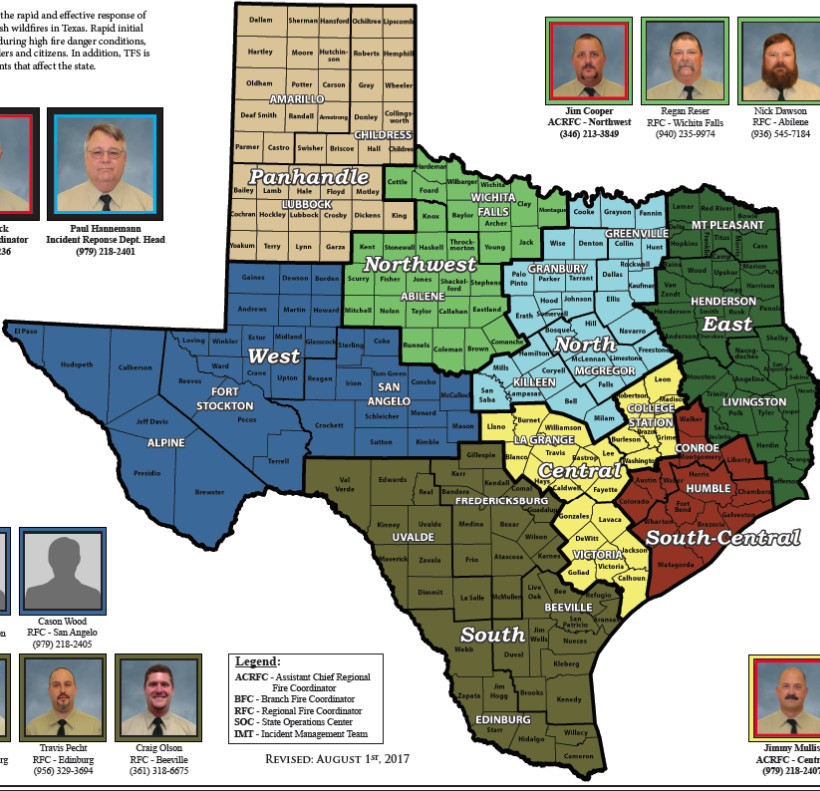
Boo Walker
IMT Coordinator
(936) 544-4348




Steve Pollock
Chief Fire Coordinator
(979) 224-8236




Paul Hammemann
Incident Response Dept. Head
(979) 218-2401







Jim Cooper
ACRFC - Northwest
(846) 213-3849




Regan Riser
RFC - Wichita Falls
(940) 235-9974




Nick Dawson
RFC - Abilene
(936) 545-7184




Rhea Cooper
ACRFC - North
(979) 218-3105




Steven Carter
RFC - North
(979) 393-8210




Mitchell LaBoun
RFC - Granbury
(254) 220-5138




John Pugh
RFC - Greenville
(936) 546-1882




Gabe Mohlan
RFC - Killen
(830) 333-5589




Matthew Schaefer
RFC - McGregor
(979) 218-3108




Billy Whitworth
ACRFC - East
(936) 546-3190




Jared Karas
RFC - East
(936) 202-0688



Nathan Carroll
RFC - Mt. Pleasant
(936) 546-1918




Curtis Sanford
RFC - Henderson
(936) 546-1915




Ricky Holbrook
RFC - Livingston
(936) 546-3094




Jeremy Wagner
ACRFC - South-Central
(832) 494-7144




Ashley Johnson
RFC - Humble
(346) 224-1910




Jimmy Mullis
ACRFC - Central
(979) 218-2407



Justin Graf
RFC - College Station
(979) 229-3402



Nicole Castillon
RFC - La Grange
(936) 546-1693




Ruel Esparza
RFC - Victoria
(361) 571-9429

Position Vacant


Position Vacant

Position Vacant
RFC - Lubbock
(979) 587-2912


Position Vacant
RFC - Childress
(979) 220-0577




Jeff Meiser
ACRFC - West
(432) 270-8872




Robert Pomsich
RFC - Alpine
(432) 386-8108



Sam Bundy
RFC - Fort Stockton
(979) 218-2300




Cason Wood
RFC - San Angelo
(979) 218-2405




Gary Duncan
ACRFC - South
(979) 218-2404


Position Vacant
RFC - Uvalde



Gary Barney
RFC - Fredericksburg
(979) 204-4101



Travis Peahr
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Legend:
 ACRFC - Assistant Chief Regional Fire Coordinator
 BFC - Branch Fire Coordinator
 RFC - Regional Fire Coordinator
 SOC - State Operations Center
 IMT - Incident Management Team

REVISED: AUGUST 1st, 2017

Attachment G: 2017 Wildfire Season Communications Themes

2017 Wildfire Season Communications Themes

The Importance of Communications in Wildland Fire Management

Effective and efficient communications and information exchange is essential to the success of wildland fire management and response. Accountability and clear chains of command and information flow are of the utmost priority.

Texas A&M Forest Service has established a process for gathering, sharing and managing incident-related information and intelligence.

Predictive Services

The Texas A&M Forest Service Predictive Services department tracks weather patterns, drought conditions and fuels across the state and can predict when and where high-impact fire weather is likely to occur. The state agency uses this information to position firefighting personnel and resources based on wildfire risk.

In 2010, working with the National Weather Service, the Predictive Services department discovered the Southern Plains Wildfire Outbreak, or Firestorm. A Firestorm, also called an Outbreak, is a pattern of conditions conducive to fast-moving, destructive fires in the Southern Plains. Outbreaks generally can be predicted several days ahead of time allowing us to better provide for the safety of the citizens of Texas.

Ten outbreaks had been documented from 2005 – 2010. A record-breaking nine more were documented during the 2011 wildfire season alone.

2017 Wildfire Season

Past two years, we've had abundant rain – this has led to increased fuel loads, even in places we are unaccustomed to seeing it.

The Panhandle fires of March 6, 2017 occurred during outbreak conditions. They burned nearly 500,000 acres and occurred in heavy loading of grass fuels during outbreak conditions spanning Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas.

With this fire weather pattern, wildfires that are started will move quickly and present control issues for firefighters.

Fires are managed in different ways

Fire managers take a look at what the fire is burning, where it is going to burn, what values are at risk from the fire and a handful of other factors.

Deep coordination between air and ground managers develops a plan of response and allocates resources accordingly.

Fire seasons are expected to become longer and more difficult

Experts predict longer fire seasons than what firefighters faced 20 or 30 years ago. Fires will burn into difficult places with heavy fuel loadings. With more people living and working in interface areas, this is especially important to understand and prepare for.

We have to think in terms of “when fire burns here” not “if fire burns here.”

It takes teamwork

Managing wildland fire is a complex job. In addition to suppression, fire management includes prevention, planning, prescribed fire and rehabilitation. It’s a team effort.

No single state, agency, county or tribe is able to hire, equip and train a standing army capable of doing the whole job under the fire weather conditions that Texas is currently experiencing.

Teamwork is effective from operational and safety viewpoints and it also makes fiscal sense.

Taxpayers expect cooperation and efficiency. We work with local, state and interagency organizations in a coordinated and often unified command.

We are all expected to do our part

Much like a tornado or hurricane, wildland fire is a natural phenomenon. Also like a force of nature, the occurrence of wildfire can be predicted but not stopped. Current and forecast weather and fuel conditions, combined with human interactivity, will continue to produce wildfires throughout the state. This means that both firefighters and residents have to be on heightened alert for the threat of wildfire at all times.

Firefighters train hard and make countless preparations to be ready for a wildfire. Residents need to do the same. Successfully preparing for a wildfire requires you to take personal responsibility for protecting yourself, your family and your property.

Fire-responding agencies take every precaution to protect you and your property from a wildfire. But the reality is, during a major wildfire, there will simply not be enough fire engines or firefighters to defend every home, so you must become part of the solution.

Make your home resistant to wildfires and prepare your family to leave early and safely.

Attachment H: Digital Image Standards

For transmission purposes, a balance must be maintained between image quality and file size. Compressed images in JPEG format will generally fall into the 600-700kb range for typical print newspapers. All images should have who, what, where, when, why attributes.

Standards for Digital Imagery:

Requirement Resolution	Commercial Release Min: MegaPixel	Multimedia Min: 260 x 120	Web **Dependent on image requirements
	Pref: 2000 x 1312	Pref 320 x 240	
File Type	*.jpg or *.tif	*.jpg or *.tif	*.jpg or *.tif
File Size	500 kb	300 kb	100 kb

** A 2000 x 1312 image can be resized to a thumbnail of 3 by 2 inches which is 6kb and will load in about two seconds. This can be linked to the full-size image for downloading. The full-size image will, of course, be a much larger file.

Resolution -- Category Definitions

When the vertical and horizontal resolutions fall within different resolution categories, base the resolution specification on the dimension that falls in the highest category, e.g., 200 vertical pixels by 1200 horizontal pixels falls in the High range.

Very Low or thumbnail

Vertical: 1 - 191 pixels

Horizontal: 1 - 287 pixels

Low or preview

Vertical: 192 - 383 pixels

Horizontal: 288 - 575 pixels

Medium or screen or default

Vertical: 384 - 767 pixels

Horizontal: 576 - 11511 pixels viewing)

High

Vertical: 768 - 1535 pixels

Horizontal: 1152 - 2303 pixels

Very High

Vertical: 1536 - 3071 pixels

Horizontal: 2304 - 4607 pixels

Extremely High

Vertical: 3072 - 6143 pixels

Horizontal: 4608 - 9216 pixels

Attachment I: Useful Links

Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations:

http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_redbook_2011.html

Agency Administrator's Guide to Critical Incident Management:

<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pubs.htm> PMS 926

Texas A&M Forest Service Toolbox:

<http://tfsfrp.tamu.edu/toolbox/classic.html>

Texas A&M Forest Service Current Situation *(soon to be All Hazard Incident Information Website)*

<http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/CurrentSituation/>

Texas Interagency Coordination Center

<http://ticc.tamu.edu/>

Southern Area Coordination Center Situation Report

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/sacc/predictive/intelligence/SACCMorningReport.pdf>

National Interagency Coordination Center Situation Report

<https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>

Texas A&M Forest Service Social Media

Main website <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/>

All Hazards Twitter @AllHazardsTFS https://twitter.com/AllHazardsTFS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

Agency Twitter @TXForestService <https://twitter.com/TXForestService>

Agency Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/texasforestservice/>