Lesson 17 –Rationale

Estimated time to complete: 15 minutes

In this lesson, you will develop the rationale for a decision. Rationale is typically one of the last inputs developed for a decision and its completion is required before you can submit a pending decision for publishing.

If you've completed the suite of WFDSS 101 lessons, you have completed all other inputs for your training incident that are necessary before you can submit your decision for publishing. Once Rationale is complete, you use the Decision Editor to fine tune your document and add supporting text, image,s or formatting. You will learn how to use the Decision Editor in Lesson 18 and how to edit your decision document in Lesson 19.

About Rationale

The Rationale portion of a decision is developed by the decision Approver, or by an Incident Editor that can communicate the Line Officer's wishes. Rationale accomplishes two things, it:

- Documents why a specific course of action was chosen, and
- Records the risk decision dialog that has occurred among agency administrators and incident managers.

Rationale differs from Validation in that Validation validates that the COA is achievable and will meet objectives, whereas Rationale documents why the Agency Administrator needs to publish a decision. Rationale content can include information previously covered in Validation, but typically, it contains more specific information. The decision Rationale provides the opportunity to tell the "story" of the incident.

Rationale can only be entered:

- After a pending decision has been created on the **Decisions** tab, and
- Using the Decision Editor, which you can access from the **Decisions** tab once a pending decision has been created.

Decision Content: Rationale

When creating the Rationale, consider the following questions and content:

- What caused you to make this decision?
- What caused you to choose the course of action?
- What are the opportunities to manage the fire to meet land management plan objectives?
- What alternatives (objectives, strategies and tactics) are being considered?
- What is the relative probability of success associated with the alternatives being considered?
- What are the causes and influences on the incident?
- What are the social and political concerns/pressures?

- Who are the stakeholders that should be consulted prior to making a decision?
- What does the Relative Risk tell the user?
- What is the exposure to responders for the alternatives being considered?
- What alternative provides for the best balance between the desired outcome and exposure to responders?
- What are the critical values at risk?
- What is the chance the critical values will be impacted, and if so what are the consequences? What are the possible low probability/high consequence events?
- Are there smoke concerns?
- What Fire Behavior Models informed the decision?
- Did you document your qualitative and quantitative decision support elsewhere in the document? If so where?
- How was your estimated cost constructed? What are your concerns related to the cost?
- What are the critical thresholds that will trigger reconsideration of the proposed alternative and how will they be monitored?
- Add text, images, data and analyses to support your decision.

Oftentimes, there are many layers of 'why' that may need to be documented, and the tickler list above may help you derive all the reasons that support why you've developed a particular decision.

To develop Rationale for a decision:

1. From the Incident list, select the incident you want to develop Rationale for.
2. Click **View Information**. The Edit Incident page appears.
3. Choose the **Decision** tab, and then locate the pending decision in the list.
4. If the parts of the pending decision are not listed (Assessment, Objectives, etc.), click the blue expansion arrow to the left of the pending decision. The decision opens to display five parts.
5. Select the 'Pending Decision: Rationale' portion of the decision, and then click **Edit**. The Decision Editor opens to the Rationale portion of the decision.
6. Place the curser in the Decision Editor pane and begin to type. You can also use the cut and paste tools if you choose to cut and paste from other documents.
7. Answer the above questions as you develop content for the Rationale. You can:
    a. Develop bullets, numbered lists or text in paragraph form,
    b. Change the font color, style or size, insert or develop tables, and
    c. Apply time and date stamps.
8. When you are finished, click **Save** (the small floppy disc icon).

I've developed all the required inputs for my decision; is it ready for publishing?

Although Rationale is typically one of the last inputs you develop before submitting a pending decision for review, you may still need to fine tune your document and prepare it for publishing. You can add supporting text, images and other information to help tell the 'story' of your incident and you can do this using the Decision Editor. You will learn how to do this in Lesson s 18 and 19.

Search for these related topics in the Help:

- Validating the Course of Action (COA)
- Decision Content: Rationale