

**MEMORANDUM**  
**Department of Natural Resources**

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**Division of Forestry**

TO: Fire Staff

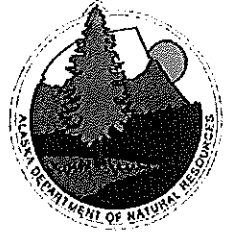
DATE: April 26, 2011

Thru: John "Chris" Maisch  
State Forester

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FROM: Tom Kurth  
Chief, Fire and Aviation

SUBJECT: Inventory & Site  
Protection Criteria in Modified  
& Limited Protection Options



In Limited Areas or Modified Areas that have converted, the default action by policy (*Revised Cabin Protection Policy, 1992, Protection Policy for Private Structures, 1997*) is to not protect the structure or value at risk. With the 2008 legislative intent change to 41.15.010, we can now consider all resources at risk, not just the natural resources at risk. Therefore, criteria to be considered in making a determination to protect private structures may include year-round residency, defensible space that would increase probability of success, or other fire management considerations such as fire fighter safety, resource availability, and fire behavior. Identifying values at risk and pre-planning a fire management response is our best approach. The 1992 cabin policy states that values at risk "should be incorporated into the pre-planning stages of fire management. To leave the decision to site-by-site, while the fire is burning, is not responsible or reasonable."

When there is a need to engage in protection of values at risk, we will ensure that we are taking safe and reasonable tactical actions of which we are trained and equipped. Do not use tactics such as gelling, wrapping, or extensive hazardous fuels modifications, and avoid long term staging of personnel or long term parking of structural engines on location.

Using the following criteria, determine the appropriate tactics for protection of a structure or group of structures (see attached chart):

- Time until fire arrives at location
- Fuels surrounding the structure(s)
- Number of structures
- Available firefighting resources
- Availability of supplies including pumps, hose, and sprinkler kits
- Cabin occupied or full-time residence
- Landowner responsibility

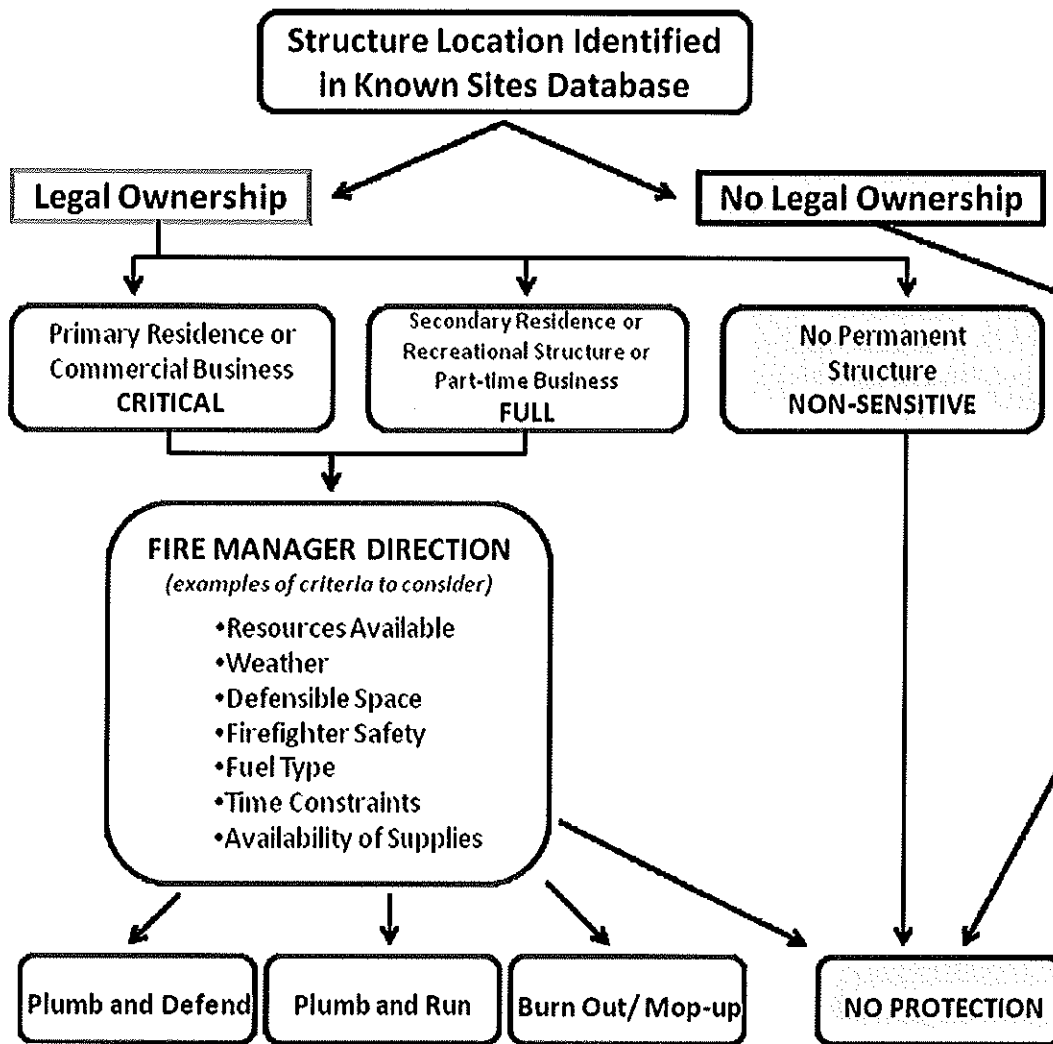
Landowner responsibility includes (see Figure 1):

- Reducing home ignitability. Key items include non-flammable roofing materials and reducing burnable fuels around structures using "Firewise" principles.
- Primary and ultimate responsibility for home wildfire protection lies with the homeowner.

Consider the following tactics:

1. Plumb and defend -- set up pumps and sprinklers and maintain personnel on the site as the fire passes.
2. Plumb and run -- set up pumps and sprinklers, personnel return if possible to start pumps.
3. Burn out and mop-up -- conduct burn out and maintain personnel to complete mop-up.
4. No Protection

**Values at Risk Protection Criteria Chart  
(Figure 1)**



Protection of life and fire fighter safety is our primary concern. The nature of the fire season, shortages of equipment, manpower, and other resources may make it difficult to achieve all of our objectives on an incident and the loss of structures is a regrettable, but an acceptable, outcome.

As we continue to work on this issue, DOF Areas, Cooperators, and Jurisdictional Agencies are responsible for:

- 1) Validating fire management plan options and paper map atlases at the Area and Alaska Interagency Coordination Center.
- 2) Updating the current Known Sites Database to include critical or full site protection designators where appropriate within Limited/ Modified.
- 3) Continuing the process of educating private landowners on responsibilities in wildland fire protection and applying “Firewise” principles to their property.
- 4) Documenting the information collected in an electronic database and updating all map atlases prior to fire season.
- 5) Working directly with fire fighting forces in the field and Incident Management Teams (IMT) to clarify strategy, tactics, and cost containment objectives.