

Appendix A. Fire Management Option Operational Direction

Operational Area	Critical Option	Full Option	Modified Option (Pre-conversion)	Modified Option (Post-conversion)	Limited Option
Initial Resource Allocation Priority	Wildfires occurring in the Critical Management Option or that threaten Critical sites are assigned the highest priority for suppression actions and assignment of available firefighting resources.	Wildfires occurring in the Full Management Option or that threaten Full sites are assigned a high priority for suppression actions and assignment of available firefighting resources but are below wildfires within or threatening a Critical Management Option area or site.	Before the conversion date, fires occurring within Modified will receive priority for allocation of initial action forces after the protection of Critical and Full areas. <b>Exception:</b> When on-the-ground actions are warranted, the resource allocation priority is equivalent to the management option designation of the site being protected. For example, if an action on a fire within pre-conversion Modified is an attempt to keep the fire from burning on to a Full site, the resource allocation priority should be equal to that given to Full.	After the conversion date, the priority is low for the allocation of initial action forces and is equal to the Limited Option. <b>Exception:</b> When on-the-ground actions are warranted, the resource allocation priority is equivalent to the management option designation of the site being protected. For example, if an action on a fire within post-conversion Modified is an attempt to keep the fire from burning on to a Full site, the resource allocation priority should be equal to that given to Full.	Limited Management Option fires are assigned the lowest resource allocation priority. <b>Exception:</b> When on-the-ground actions are warranted, the resource allocation priority is equivalent to the management option designation of the site being protected. For example, if an action on a fire within Limited is an attempt to keep the fire from burning on to a Full site, the resource allocation priority should be equal to that given to Full.
Detection	Critical Management Option areas and sites are the highest priority for detection coverage when lightning activity or human use indicate a high potential for ignition, or at the request of a Jurisdictional Agency.	Full Management Option areas and sites are the next priority after Critical for detection coverage when lightning activity or human use indicate a high potential for ignition, or at the request of a Jurisdictional Agency.	Detection coverage will be commensurate with fire conditions and availability of detection resources. Jurisdictional Agencies may negotiate additional detection flights with Protecting Agencies.	Detection coverage will be commensurate with fire conditions and availability of detection resources. Jurisdictional Agencies may negotiate additional detection flights with Protecting Agencies.	Detection coverage will be commensurate with fire conditions and availability of detection resources. Jurisdictional Agencies may negotiate additional detection flights with Protecting Agencies.
Initial Notification Requirements	Provide early notification to the jurisdiction at the point of origin and other jurisdictions immediately threatened so they can identify and prioritize values, communicate concerns, help to validate the default initial response, participate in any decision to take a non-standard response, and keep their leadership and stakeholders informed. This applies even if no suppression action is being taken or is being considered. Whenever possible, notification shall take place prior to taking any suppression action; however, initial response should not be delayed if contacts cannot be made.	Provide early notification to the jurisdiction at the point of origin and other jurisdictions immediately threatened so they can identify and prioritize values, communicate concerns, help to validate the default initial response, participate in any decision to take a non-standard response, and keep their leadership and stakeholders informed. This applies even if no suppression action is being taken or is being considered. Whenever possible, notification shall take place prior to taking any suppression action; however, initial response should not be delayed if contacts cannot be made.	Provide early notification to the jurisdiction at the point of origin and other jurisdictions immediately threatened so they can identify and prioritize values, communicate concerns, help to validate the default initial response, participate in any decision to take a non-standard response, and keep their leadership and stakeholders informed. This applies even if no suppression action is being taken or is being considered. Whenever possible, notification shall take place prior to taking any suppression action; however, initial response should not be delayed if contacts cannot be made.	Provide early notification to the jurisdiction at the point of origin and other jurisdictions immediately threatened so they can identify and prioritize values, communicate concerns, help to validate the default initial response, participate in any decision to take a non-standard response, and keep their leadership and stakeholders informed. This applies even if no suppression action is being taken or is being considered.	Provide early notification to the jurisdiction at the point of origin and other jurisdictions immediately threatened so they can identify and prioritize values, communicate concerns, help to validate the default initial response, participate in any decision to take a non-standard response, and keep their leadership and stakeholders informed. This applies even if no suppression action is being taken or is being considered.
Default Initial Action (Standard Response)	Mobilize resources to protect the area and/or sites and suppress the fire while minimizing risk to public and/or firefighter safety.	Mobilize resources to protect the area and/or sites and suppress the fire while minimizing risk to public and/or firefighter safety.	Mobilize resources to protect the area and/or sites and suppress the fire while minimizing risk to public and/or firefighter safety.	Conduct surveillance, assessments, and site protection as warranted.	Assess the fire’s potential to affect neighboring values. Conduct surveillance and site protection as warranted.
Initial Action Priorities	1. Protect human life. 2. Protect qualifying sites and natural resources from damage by wildfire. 3. Contain fires at the smallest acreage reasonably possible to limit short and long-term threats to values.	1. Protect human life. 2. Protect qualifying sites and natural resources from damage by wildfire. 3. Contain fires at the smallest acreage reasonably possible to limit short and long-term threats to values.	1. Protect human life. 2. Protect qualifying sites and natural resources from damage by wildfire. 3. Contain fires to limit short and long-term threats to values.	1. Protect human life. 2. Protect qualifying sites and natural resources from damage by wildfire. 3. Allow fires to burn naturally to the extent possible to protect, maintain, and enhance natural and cultural resources and maintain natural fire regimes.	1. Protect human life. 2. Protect qualifying sites and natural resources from damage by wildfire. 3. Allow fires to burn naturally to the extent possible to protect, maintain, and enhance natural and cultural resources and maintain natural fire regimes.
Extended Action & Notifications	Assess fires periodically and provide early notification to additional jurisdictions whose lands become threatened throughout the life of the incident. The Protecting Agency will determine the surveillance frequency in coordination with the affected Jurisdictional Agency(ies). If the pre-designated response is no longer appropriate, use a decision support process including situational assessment and risk analysis to develop incident-specific objectives, requirements, and courses of action; and document the rationale behind them.	Assess fires periodically and provide early notification to additional jurisdictions whose lands become threatened throughout the life of the incident. The Protecting Agency will determine the surveillance frequency in coordination with the affected Jurisdictional Agency(ies). If the pre-designated response is no longer appropriate, use a decision support process including situational assessment and risk analysis to develop incident-specific objectives, requirements, and courses of action; and document the rationale behind them.	Assess fires periodically and provide early notification to additional jurisdictions whose lands become threatened throughout the life of the incident. The Protecting Agency will determine the surveillance frequency in coordination with the affected Jurisdictional Agency(ies). If the pre-designated response is no longer appropriate, use a decision support process including situational assessment and risk analysis to develop incident-specific objectives, requirements, and courses of action; and document the rationale behind them.	Assess fires periodically and provide early notification to additional jurisdictions whose lands become threatened throughout the life of the incident. The Protecting Agency will determine the surveillance frequency in coordination with the affected Jurisdictional Agency(ies). If the pre-designated response is no longer appropriate, use a decision support process including situational assessment and risk analysis to develop incident-specific objectives, requirements, and courses of action; and document the rationale behind them.	Assess fires periodically and provide early notification to additional jurisdictions whose lands become threatened throughout the life of the incident. The Protecting Agency will determine the surveillance frequency in coordination with the affected Jurisdictional Agency(ies). If the pre-designated response is no longer appropriate, use a decision support process including situational assessment and risk analysis to develop incident-specific objectives, requirements, and courses of action; and document the rationale behind them.
Resource Benefit Objectives	Only appropriate in extraordinary circumstances at the explicit documented direction of an affected Jurisdictional Agency. Document the course of action with a decision analysis and support process.	Only appropriate on rare occasions, based on site-specific circumstances (e.g., the initial size-up and response is delayed beyond 24 hours, or a fire is primarily burning into Limited). Document the course of action with a decision analysis and support process.	May be appropriate, based on site-specific circumstances and time of season (e.g., a pre-conversion Modified ignition that as of the conversion date has little potential to threaten values). Document the course of action with a decision analysis and support process.	It is routinely appropriate to manage all or part of post-conversion Modified fires for resource benefit. A documented decision analysis and support process may be needed based on complexity or may be initiated at the discretion of an affected Jurisdictional Agency.	It is routinely appropriate to manage all or part of Limited fires for resource benefit. A documented decision analysis and support process may be needed based on complexity or may be initiated at the discretion of an affected Jurisdictional Agency.

Alaska Statewide Management Requirements

Jurisdictional Agencies have identified the following general constraints and guidelines. Additional constraints applicable to specific incidents are at the discretion of the Jurisdictional Agency and are documented in the Jurisdictional Agency’s fire management plans, the incident’s decision record, and/or the Delegation of Authority.

- Weigh the cost and environmental impacts of suppression actions against the economic, social, and/or resource values warranting protection. Consider risk to firefighters and the public in all fire management decisions.
- To the extent possible, use minimum impact suppression tactics. Wherever possible, construct firelines in a manner that minimizes erosion and follows natural contours. Use indirect attack to the extent practical. A suppression repair plan for wildfire suppression activity damage, as approved by the Jurisdictional Agency(ies), must be completed before the final demobilization occurs.
- Locate base camps, spike camps, staging areas, helispots, and other incident support areas in natural clearings if possible and minimize their visible footprint consistent with operational need and safety requirements. Make Jurisdictional Agencies aware of all support areas located on their lands. Keep these areas clean so as not to attract animals and ensure all unused supplies including fuel, oil, food, etc. are removed prior to demobilization of the incident. Exceptions must be explicitly authorized by the Jurisdictional Agency.
- Incident support areas on private lands or Native allotments require a Land Use Agreement (LUA). Do not remove resources (e.g., firewood, etc.) from private lands or Native allotments without an approved LUA. The BIA or the local BIA service provider must prepare Land Use Agreements involving Native allotments.
- The use of tracked or off-road vehicles requires approval by the Jurisdictional Agency(ies) prior to use.
- Comply with the stipulations and notification requirements in the ADF&G statewide [Fish Habitat Permit FH20-SW-0001 Amendment 3](#) when withdrawing water from a fish bearing stream with portable pumps, scooper aircraft or aerial buckers; or when crossing it with a vehicle or heavy equipment.
- If a game animal is killed in defense of life or property (DLP) on an incident, file an [Alaska Department of Fish & Game \(ADF&G\) DLP Report](#) and notify the Jurisdictional Agency(ies).
- Protecting and Jurisdictional Agencies will coordinate with State of Alaska land managers if wildland fires, or wildland fire management activities have the potential to affect public access to public waters or impact state resources. Protecting and Jurisdictional Agencies will coordinate if wildland fire or wildland fire management activities may result in fire area public access closures or may adversely impact values at risk.
- Take measures to prevent the introduction and spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species during fire operations. To the extent possible, ensure that heavy equipment, gear, tools, and footwear are weed free before moving into incident support and fire suppression areas. Do not use waterbodies known to harbor invasive species as water sources for air or ground-based water delivery equipment unless needed to protect life or property. If used, clean and sanitize equipment before the next use. Communicate concerns, questions, and needs regarding invasive species to jurisdictional representatives in a timely manner.
- Avoid application of aerial or ground delivered fire chemicals (including retardant) near lakes, wetlands, streams, rivers, and sources of human water consumption or areas adjacent to water sources. A minimum of 300 feet from waterways is identified in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book). Individual Jurisdictional Agencies may have more restrictive retardant or other fire chemical use guidelines. Deviations from these guidelines may be acceptable when life or property is threatened, and the use of fire chemicals can be reasonably expected to alleviate the threat.
- Suppression activities including flight patterns on or near cultural sites or sites designated as “Avoid” must be coordinated with the Jurisdictional Agency.
- Consult with Jurisdictional Agencies regarding any operational restrictions in designated wilderness areas.
- When planning incident fireline construction, consult completed and planned fuels treatment information provided by the Jurisdictional and/or Protecting Agencies.
- Limit structure protection (not suppression) activities by wildland firefighters to exterior efforts, and only when such actions can be accomplished safely and in accordance with agency policy and established wildland fire operations standards.
- Wildland firefighters will not take direct suppression action on vehicle fires. Limit suppression efforts on vehicle fires by wildland firefighters to preventing spread into the wildlands and only if responders can avoid being exposed to the smoke from the burning vehicle.
- Wildland firefighters will not take direct action on fires within landfills. Limit suppression actions to preventing spread into the wildlands and only if responders can avoid being exposed to the smoke from the landfill. Protecting agencies will notify the ADEC Solid Waste Program of all fires that escape from landfills or that have a high potential to escape.
- Immediately report any discovery of potential unexploded ordnance (UXO) or other potentially hazardous materials (e.g., mining sites) through proper channels. Firefighters will remain clear of the area until the threat has been evaluated and mitigated.

Non-standard Responses

The non-standard determination is based on the initial response to a wildfire, regardless of intent. This does not apply to non-wildfire incident types. The following are considered **non-standard responses**:

- Critical, Full, or pre-conversion Modified Management Option fires where the initial strategy is **Monitor, Confine, or Point/Zone Protection** (no suppression actions intended to fully contain the fire are taken by ground or air resources within 12 hours of discovery). Justifications include, but are not limited to:
  - Lack of available resources or higher priorities.
  - Safety/weather concerns.
  - Re-evaluation of threat potential, risks, benefits (e.g., natural barriers preclude escape, extended forecast for wet weather, etc.).
- Post-conversion Modified or Limited Management Option fires where the initial strategy is **Full Suppression** (ground or air resources take suppression action on the fire within 12 hours of discovery with intent to fully contain it). Justifications include, but are not limited to:
  - Re-evaluation of threat potential, risks, benefits (e.g., site specific conditions warrant containment effort or proximity of values requiring protection).
  - Initial site protection most efficiently achieved by containing the fire.
  - Partial containment/confinement.

Operational Decision Chart for All Wildfire Management Options

