

The causes and prevention of wildfire on heathlands and peatlands in England (NEER014)

Appendix 5: National Fire Chiefs Council Wildfire Working Group

First edition – July 2020

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Wildfire Working Group Terms of Reference

Date: August 2011 (Revised January 2012)

Introduction

Wildfire is an incident type, which requires specific knowledge and understanding to address the difficulties and dangers inherent in its management. There is a growing consensus that current UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) training and awareness is insufficient to deal effectively with the growing Wildfire threat. In the UK, the problem is exasperated by the sporadic nature of this type of event which offers little opportunity for personnel to obtain any meaningful experience resulting in an essential skills gap.

Although sporadic, wildfire is a frequent incident type for many UK FRS, and when climatic conditions are supportive, FRS's across the UK are called upon to respond to large numbers of wildfire/rural fires. Due to the anticipated impact of climatic change, it is likely that the number and size of wildfires will increase; fire behaviour will become more intense, and, depending upon the fuel type, more extreme. This has the potential to result in a significant impact on the resilience of FRS and an increased risk to firefighters.

Fire and Rescue Services should work proactively with partners within the land management sector to enhance incident pre-planning, improve operational response and build resilient mutual aid arrangements.

In recognition of the above, a National Fire Chiefs Council (previously Chief Fire Officers Association, CFOA) Wildfire Working Group was established in 2011.

Aims and decision making powers of the group

- Raise the awareness of risks and dangers of Wildfire incidents within the UK FRS community.
- Seek to develop national standards for Wildfire training and suppression techniques.
- Seek to identify and establish accreditation for Wildfire training.
- Identify and share best practice in relation to Wildfire Incidents.
- To seek to support Fire and Rescue Services by developing a resilient and robust mutual aid framework to meet operational, tactical and command and control requirements.
- Develop an effective marketing, lobbying and communications strategy to support the activities of the Working Group.
- To offer advice and support to Fire and Rescue Services regarding Wildfire pre-planning, prevention and response.
- To encourage and support Fire and Rescue Services to work in partnership with local and regional land management agencies to develop more effective planning and response networks i.e. Fire Operations Groups.

- To seek to support improved data quality, collection and statistical analysis of wildfire events from the CLG Incident Recording System and external partners.
- To ensure that there is effective liaison and exchange of information between the CFOA Wildfire Forum and the England and Wales Wildfire Forum (EWWF), Scottish Wildfire Forum (SWF) and other relevant fora, organisations and agencies.
- The group will commission and co-ordinate work packages to develop policies and procedures. Where necessary proposals/documents will be submitted to the CFOA Operations Response Directorate on behalf of the forum.

Membership

- The forum will be chaired by Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.
- Membership of the forum is open to all Fire and Rescue Services.
- Representatives from other organisations will be invited to attend as appropriate.
- External agency partners may form part of the membership of the Wildfire Working Group sub groups if appropriate.

Procedures/practices

As currently determined within individual Fire and Rescue Services.

Supporting documentation/support/relationship to other procedures etc.

- CFOA Operational Response Plan.
- Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 – Section 7(1) & (2).
- Fire and Rescue Service Manual Vol.2 Fire Service Operations – Incident Command 3rd Edition.
- Manual of Firemanship 6b: Practical Firemanship – II.
- Civil Contingencies Act 2007.
- IRMP Steering Group Integrated Risk Management Planning: Policy Guidance – Wildfire.
- Keeping the Country Running: Natural Hazards and Infrastructure.
- National Generic Risk Assessment 3.4 – Fighting Fires in Rural Areas.

MOU/relationship agreements

To be determined.

External Representation Liaison

- England and Wales Wildfire Forum (EWWF).
- Scottish Wildfire Forum (SWF).
- Chief Fire and Rescue Advisors Unit – CLG.
- Devolved Administrations – Scottish Government/Welsh Assembly Government.

Related research

To be determined.

Secretariat Support

This will be provided by Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service or the FRS hosting the Working Group.

Meeting Frequency

- Three meetings per year will be held.
- The meetings shall be scheduled to allow sufficient time for Wildfire Group updates to be provided to the CFOA Technical Response Lead Officer for inclusion in updates provided to the National Operations Policy Committee.
- The dates and venues for meetings will be agreed by the forum.

Governance arrangements

- CFOA Wildfire Group sits as a specific workstream within CFOA Technical Response, which is one of the 8 strategic work streams which constitute the CFOA Operations Response. The CFOA Operations Response Directorate is managed via the National Operations Policy Committee (NPOC).
- The Chair of the CFOA Wildfire Group is responsible for the production of briefing notes for the CFOA Technical Response Lead Officer as and when requested. These briefing notes will be used to update members of the National Operations Policy Committee on Wildfire Group strategy and progress.
- The Chair of the CFOA Wildfire Group is responsible for the production of the annual Wildfire Group business plan and for ensuring that progress against specific targets is maintained.



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Catalogue Code: NEER014 (Appendix 5)
ISBN 978-1-78354-572-8
www.gov.uk/natural-england

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