

FREWSBURG FIRE DISTRICT OPERATIONAL POLICY	Section 7	EMERGENCY OPERATIONS	
	SUBJECT	WOODS/ GRASS/ BRUSH FIRES	
	Policy 7-07	PAGE 1 OF 5	DATE: 01-01-2023

I. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Frewsburg Fire District operating on emergency scenes involving wood, grass, or brush fires.

II. PURPOSE

This plan is intended to serve as an operational guide when woods, grass or brush fires are encountered.

III. TACTICAL PRIORITIES

1. Tactical priorities will vary as fire situations are encountered. Wildland/urban interface usually encompasses three types of environments.
 - A. Isolated areas of wildland within an urban area called “buffers”.
 - B. Structures on small, medium, or even larger lots that are bordered by wildland on broad, front-type entrances.
 - C. Structures scattered over large wildland areas.
2. The three tactical priorities are as follows:
 - A. **Reconnaissance:** A careful and complete survey of the area involved will be the top priority of the first arriving Unit. The only exceptions should be for small fires where the entire area can be observed from one location, situations that require immediate action (as in a rescue), or when an exposure is severely threatened.
 - B. **Exposure Protection:** Protecting exposures and other improvements from the fire becomes a high priority, even at the risk of adding extra acreage to the size of the fire.
 - C. **Confinement of Perimeter:** The heads of the fire should be given the highest priority in order to efficiently control the fire spread. A direct application fire stream, with Units operating in the burn area, is the fastest control evolution available to stop the fire spread (direct attack).
 - i. Many situations will not support this method and Command may elect to use natural and man-made barriers to stop the forward progress of the fire (indirect attack).

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- ii. Where geographical, weather, and exposure conditions permit, the initial attempt at controlling the fire should be the indirect method.
- iii. Special consideration must be given to the availability of resources for patrolling the perimeter.

IV. STANDARD COMPANY OPERATIONS

1. Standard Company Operations assign basic fire ground functions and activities to the various Companies, based upon the capability and characteristics of each type of Unit. Standard Company Operations on brush fires vary greatly from other types of incidents.
2. Upon receipt of a brush fire alarm, after Units have been dispatched, the Communications Center shall cross-reference the reported location against known burn permits and advise responding Units of possible controlled burns in the area.
3. Upon arrival, the Incident Commander shall provide the following information in the initial radio report:
 - A. Size (an estimate, given in acres or fraction of acres)
 - B. General size of vegetation (light, medium, or heavy rough) □ Rate of spread (expressed as slow, moderate, or rapid)
 - C. Command shall determine the need for any additional resources.
 - D. Access routes into the area for incoming Units
 - E. On major incidents, establish a Command Post as soon as possible.
 - F. Command should plot and update the fire size, location, and progress as often as possible.
 - G. Command shall determine the location of tankers and other sources of water supply and notify all Units at the incident of their location.
 - H. As an incident grows, the Command Post may expand in size; therefore, the location selected should be capable of accommodating additional personnel
4. The following items represent the standard operating procedure that will normally be performed by Companies on brush fire incidents:
 - A. **Brush Truck/ ATV**
 - i. Operate off-road, from the burned area, to directly apply fire streams

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- ii. Reconnaissance
- iii. Rescue and evacuation
- iv. Exposure protection
- v. Fireline and spot-fire patrol
- vi. Overhaul (mop-up)

B. Engine Company

- i. Ability to directly apply fire streams from improved roadways.
- ii. Rescue and evacuation
- iii. Exposure Protection
- iv. Water supply for Brush Trucks/ ATVs
- v. Overhaul of accessible areas.

C. Tankers

- i. Water supply
- ii. Exposure protection
- iii. Overhaul in accessible areas

5. Due to the ever-changing nature of a brush fire, the key concept in standard company operations is mobility. Engine Companies and Tankers should not be committed in such a manner as to become inflexible to rapid reassignment of duties or location

V. FIREGROUND FACTORS

1. The following factors have a critical effect on the burning characteristics of a brush fire and on the effectiveness of control efforts:
 - A. Weather
 - B. Relative humidity
 - C. Wind-speed and direction
 - D. Temperature
 - E. Cumulative and long-range drying
 - F. Fuel
 - G. Type
 - H. Size
 - I. Arrangement

J. Equipment available

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VI. TACTICS AND STRATEGY

1. Brush fires often present a large area of rapidly spreading fire with numerous and complex exposure problems.
2. There are two basic methods of attacking a brush fire: The Direct Attack and the Indirect Attack. In many situations, a combination of the two, applied to different areas of the fire, has proven most successful in providing effective control.
3. Command must quickly develop a firefighting plan, and this plan must remain flexible throughout the incident.
4. The following is a list of size-up considerations that affect the strategy and tactics considered:
 - a. Location, direction, and speed of fire heads, wind direction, and speed
 - b. Exposures and improvements involved or threatened.
 - c. Burning conditions, weather, time of day, and previous experience in the general area
 - d. Fuel: size, type, and arrangement
 - e. Barriers available to support backfire, natural or man-made.
 - f. Accessibility into the fire area
 - g. Spot fires, frequency, and distance from the main fire.
 - h. When operating in unburned areas, always maintain an escape plan.
 - i. When cutting wire fences, keep the post between yourself and cut, as the wire may recoil when tension is released.
 - j. If it becomes necessary to cut a fence, make every effort to repair it. Notify Command and be very careful not to let any livestock escape.
 - k. Full protective clothing must be worn while working with winch cables. When tension is applied to winch cables, maintain a safe distance, or stand behind the apparatus.

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VII. EQUIPMENT

1. Only brush trucks/ ATVs should be taken off-road. Extreme circumstances may require the use of a pumper; however, this action must be approved by the Fire Chief or Assistant Chief.
2. Never place equipment in front of a brush fire.
3. Vehicles should not be left unattended in dry grass or other flammable vegetation.
4. While operating off-road, maintain a constant awareness of soil composition or conditions that would hamper mobility. Be careful of changes in type, size, and color of vegetation (as it may indicate a change of soil composition). Use a person's foot to precede the Unit when soil is questionable.
5. When entering off-road areas, switch to four-wheel drive prior to departing the hard surface of the roadway.
6. Vehicles with a winch should be parked near questionable areas to facilitate removal of units more readily should they become stuck.
7. Brush Trucks shall not be used to push over or plow through trees and heavy brush.
8. When working a fire with a Brush Truck, the driver should be aware of available water levels in the tank. Depending on the location in the fire area, try to have enough water in the tank to protect the vehicle and Crew in case you are cut off, or have a flare-up and need to escape.

VIII. SAFETY

1. Always provide for an escape route. Try to have at least two routes of egress, should one become blocked by fire or smoke conditions.
2. Do not allow firefighting personnel to become exhausted. Proper rotation of personnel to Rehab is essential.
3. Provide drinking water. Hydration is critical during and after strenuous, high heat conditions.
4. Wear appropriate protective clothing.
5. Keep equipment and personnel in good condition.

