



NORTHERN ROCKIES COORDINATING GROUP

NRCG Guidelines for Private Firefighting Resources

NRCG encourages property owners to protect their homes before they are threatened by wildfire and recommends that property owners follow FIREWISE and FireSafe Program provisions (survivable space), retrofit their homes to modern wildland fire building standards and install fixed fire protection systems (internal and external). These proactive measures have proven highly effective in protecting homes in wildland urban interface areas. Many homes are destroyed during the early stages of a wildfire when fire resources, including public and private, are limited. Homes and communities located in wildland urban interface zones should be designed to withstand fire without any fire resources assigned to them.

Firefighting resources hired by private individuals or insurance companies are hereafter referred to as private resources. Private resources engaged to prepare and protect homes threatened by wildfire must adhere to evacuation orders if and when issued. The incident management team (IMT) and local sheriff will agree on rules as soon as possible regarding any evacuation order and communicate them to the private resources and affected landowners.

Guidelines for working with private resources hired by property owners/insurance companies on wildland fire incidents:

The following approved guidelines serve as a tool for the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) or incident commander (IC) when private resources hired by property owners or insurance companies are present on an incident. It is important to note these are only guidelines and it remains the individual decision of the AHJ or IC to determine implementation levels:

Contracted resources may be allowed to operate on an emergency incident, within a restricted area, only if they are under contract (by order and request number) to the agency having jurisdiction. Privately operated fire brigades may also be integrated within the incident if they have legal authority and jurisdiction to operate, are fully qualified and have a working relationship with the neighboring fire agencies.

1. All private resources must respect the decision of the AHJ/IC and law enforcement as they are the final decision makers for command, control, liability and safety of the incident.
2. The AHJ/IC and law enforcement have complete authority and legal right to control an emergency incident. Private resources are not first responders and are completely subject to the directions and limits set forth by public safety agency personnel. The private

resource has no claim or stake in unified command and will not have any role in incident command.

3. Private resource vendors shall provide a representative that reports to the incident commander or IMT liaison officer and can communicate with their resources.
 - a. This representative shall attend all planning and operational briefings and should be available to represent said entity in regards to qualifications and specific interests to be involved, etc.
 - b. Private resources are responsible to communicate their location and movements through the private resource representative to the incident commander/liaison officer.
4. Private resources shall check in with the incident commander prior to deployment within an emergency area. ICs need to maintain situational awareness regarding private resources and their compliance with evacuation orders.
5. A message should be included in the incident action plan (IAP) and briefed at operational briefings regarding known private resource activity on or near the incident.
6. Private resources must be able to monitor incident radio traffic so they maintain situational awareness and know when an area is being evacuated/restricted. They shall refrain from using incident radio frequencies unless there is a threat to life or property.
7. Private resources should focus their activities on pre-fire activities and pretreatment of values-at-risk prior to a road/area closure.
 - a. If the private resource does not evacuate the area, the private resource assumes full responsibility for the safety of the resource, personnel and equipment.
8. The IC or local law enforcement officials having jurisdiction must authorize access to any community under evacuation/restriction.
9. Contractors who are employed on an incident (as a local, state or federal resource) are not allowed to subcontract with the insurance industry or freelance to local homeowners while mobilized on the incident.
10. All private resources should be identified (non-emergency) on the outside of the vehicle to ensure they do not appear to be a public fire resource. This includes no red lights, sirens or facsimile fire agency decal.
11. During fires where a community meeting is hosted by the AHJ/IC, a clear understanding must be created with the general public as to the role of government and private resources.
12. All private resources shall provide the IMT with addresses of the insured properties to which they are providing service.

/s/ Len Dems

LEN DEMS
Chair, Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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Date