

INL FACT SHEET WILDLAND FIRES RESOURCES AND PREPARATIONS

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INL Emergency Management System

The Idaho National Laboratory Emergency Management System is designed around the concept of trained employees using the proper tools and resources to reduce the effects of events that might endanger our employees, public facilities or the environment.

The core of the system is the Emergency Response Organization. It is composed of trained first responders, such as INL Fire Department firefighters and Security officers, as well as employees who serve on facility incident response teams, staff emergency centers, serve as area wardens or provide logistics support.

INL maintains a well-equipped fire department that operates from three stations on the desert Site. In addition to fighting building fires, the department provides hazardous materials, special rescue and wildland fire responses. The fire department operates ambulances and all firefighters are certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), most at the Advanced EMT level.

The Warning Communications Center is our key facility for getting information to and from the Emergency Operations Center during an emergency. Staffed 24 hours a day, the WCC receives and disseminates warnings and critical information using a full suite of communications equipment, including pagers, two-way radios and cell phones.

The INL Emergency Operations Center is the primary coordinating facility for larger-scale emergency situations. Emergency centers at the Site manage facility- and logistics-related issues to support responders at the scene. INL also maintains a large, mobile emergency communications center that can be brought to the scene of the emergency as needed.

The response to any event is conducted according to guidelines outlined in plans and procedures that link various functions and organizations, including providing information to local, tribal, state and federal organizations. Hazard surveys and assessment documents are prepared for facilities to help determine emergency response actions.

Ongoing training and qualification programs ensure that all Emergency Response Organization employees receive general and position-specific training, and a comprehensive drill and exercise program provides frequent opportunities for employees to maintain their skills.

The Emergency Services Division has management responsibility for Emergency Management, the Fire Department and the Warning Communications Center.

INL Fire Department wildland fire capabilities

Stations — 3: Central Facilities Area, Materials & Fuels Complex, Test Area North.

Staffing — 75 employees trained as wildland firefighters; 22 firefighters on duty at all times; training and qualification is consistent with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group; full callback of off-duty employees is available to augment staff as needed.

Equipment

— 4 off-road heavy firefighting trucks, each able to carry six firefighters and 830 gallons of water for conventional application and compressed air foam streams.

— one 2,000-gallon, all-wheel drive water tender

— seven mobile water cannons

— additional resources include bulldozers, graders and additional water tenders.

Support agreements — mutual aid and assistance agreements exist with surrounding communities and federal agencies.

Fire department response — Depending on the season and fire danger, the fire department's initial response is increased or decreased based on predicted fire intensity and growth. Normal initial response during early-season fire danger conditions consists of two wildland units, a water tender, an incident commander and an aide. Normal response during later-season fire danger conditions consists of four wildland units, a water tender, an incident commander and necessary mutual aid resources.

INL facility protection

INL maintains defensible spaces between wildland vegetation and desert Site facilities. Vegetation is removed or reduced to create a substantial buffer area at the perimeter of all significant Site areas, and seasonal vegetation inspections are performed to ensure the buffer is maintained. Significant INL structures are built with noncombustible or fire-resistant materials and have automatic fire sprinkler systems to protect them.

INL wildland fire prevention programs

INL has implemented comprehensive fire prevention programs to minimize the potential for human-caused fires. Fire danger ratings and fire prevention messages are posted at strategic INL locations, including public highways. Employee bulletins are generated throughout the wildland fire season to maintain a heightened awareness of fire danger conditions. Fire restrictions are implemented during periods of “very high” and “extreme” fire danger to minimize activities that could start a fire.

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