



United States Department of Agriculture



# Purple Ribbon Campaign: A Guide for Firefighters and Their Families



Forest Service

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To: All USDA Forest Service Wildland Firefighters

Congratulations on choosing a career as a wildland firefighter. It is a great honor to bring to you what we hope will become a helpful resource guide as you travel your chosen career path.

Being a wildland firefighter means that you will:

- train long and hard, both mentally and physically.
- develop strong bonds with fellow firefighters.
- respond all hours of day and night spending long durations away from family and friends.
- be subject to a roller coaster of physical, mental and emotional demands;
- risk your lives in high hazard environments.
- be a member of one of the most elite firefighting organizations in the world.

The purpose of the Purple Ribbon Campaign Guide is to provide you and your loved ones information that will help bridge the gaps between “all is well” and “managing the unexpected”. The content within is intended to aid the critical decisions you will need to make as you begin, build and grow in your chosen profession including:

- Information and statistics on the hazards and risks associated with wildland firefighting.
- Information helpful to you in discussing with family and friends your job as a wildland firefighter.
- Links to peer support and contact information for individual counseling.
- Links and information on organizations whose mission is to support wildland firefighters and their families.
- The USDA Forest Service Death and Serious Injury Handbook.
- The history, purpose and use of Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP), including what to expect when a serious accident or line of duty death occurs.

Preparing yourselves and your family for the exciting, and at times, dangerous work that you will do can be both challenging and rewarding. These discussions can be difficult given the context of what must be shared and decisions that will need to be made, but it can help you and your family build greater bonds through communication and understanding.

Finally, as fellow wildland firefighters, we dedicate to you our commitment, our support, and our loyalty to stand together, never wavering, through the greatest and gravest times we may face.

We stand with you!

The Purple Ribbon Campaign Team



Please provide comments on this DRAFT guide to [purple\\_ribbon\\_campaign@firenet.gov](mailto:purple_ribbon_campaign@firenet.gov)

On the cover: A cross placed at Mann Gulch in Montana marks the site at which one of thirteen firefighters fell on August 5, 1949.

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# Part 1: Hazards of the Job

## *Physical and Mental Hazards, Injuries and Fatalities, and Resources for Help.*

A career in wildland firefighting can provide tremendous rewards. It attracts men and women of character, courage, and commitment. This drive is so much a part of the fire service culture that firefighters willingly accept risk to protect and save lives, communities, and natural resources. As firefighters, the drive is deeply engrained.

Wildland firefighting can be a dangerous occupation. We use sound risk management principles to mitigate risk; however we can never eliminate all risk in wildland firefighting. **You will be exposed to risk if you do this job.** The number one priority is always firefighter safety, **your safety**, but history has taught us that injuries will occur, some will be serious, and some firefighters may not make it home.

The intent is not to scare you, but to ensure that you understand the risks of wildland firefighting and that you and your family are prepared for the possibility of serious injury or death. In addition, we encourage you to have open discussions at work and at home about both the hazards and stress that wildland firefighters are exposed to. There are a number of resources in this guide to help you and your family.



*Photo by Lance Cheung, USDA*

“We will continue to implement strategies and tactics that commit responders only to operations where and when they can be successful. We will deploy our people under conditions where important values actually at risk are protected with the least exposure necessary, while maintaining relationships with the communities we serve. Each of us must remain committed to “stop, think and talk” before “acting” in any circumstance that may represent unnecessary exposure.”

*Vickie Christiansen*  
Interim Chief of the Forest Service

**Chief’s Letter of Intent for Wildland Fire - 2018**

## Hazard Types

There are many hazards in the wildland fire environment that can cause physical harm or death. There are also secondary hazards that affect wildland firefighters. While physical hazards are usually easy to see, mental hazards encountered throughout your career can lead to psychological and physical health problems. Be aware of both types of hazards and learn how to prevent and recognize injury.

### PHYSICAL HAZARDS

Wildland firefighters are exposed to a variety of hazards that may put them at risk of both fatal and non-fatal injuries while on the job. Exposures occur on wildland fire incidents, during project work, while participating in training or drills, during physical training, and while travelling. The most common hazards wildland firefighters may encounter include:

- Slips, trips and falls
- Burns, including sun-burns
- Heat related illness
- Scrapes and cuts from tools and equipment, such as chain-saws
- Impact injuries from falling trees, rocks or other objects
- Contact with plant irritants and sensitizers (e.g., poison oak, thorns)
- Snake, animal, and insect bites
- Injuries sustained in crashes of vehicles, airplanes, or helicopters
- Electrocution from downed power lines and lightning
- Exposure to hazardous materials

Despite our best efforts to manage risk, wildland firefighters continue to pay the ultimate price. Fatalities have occurred

in all geographic areas and in almost every state. There have been 160 wildland firefighter line of duty deaths in the last 10 years. The most common causes continue to be:

- Medical
- Vehicle Accident
- Hazard Tree
- Aviation
- Entrapment / Burn over



#### Resources in this guide for help with a serious injury or fatality:

Forest Service Response guide (including hospital liaison information).

Summary of FSH 1309.19: Death and Serious Injury Handbook.

Overview of beneficiary information and resources.

Emergency Contact forms (including optional last wishes).

#### Additional Information on Wildland Firefighter Fatalities

[NWCG Report on Wildland Firefighter Fatalities in the United States: 2007-2016](#)

[NWCG Historical Firefighter Fatality Reports](#)

[Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center Annual Incident Review Summaries](#)

## MENTAL HAZARDS

The profession of wildland firefighting carries enormous rewards but can also carry intense stressors. Stress can have a profound impact, and steps can be taken to understand and manage it. Help your family understand these stressors and possible effects, as well.

It does not take personal involvement in a highly-publicized traumatic event to experience stress injury. Stress can occur from exposure to traumatic events, or multiple experiences and can compound over several years. Symptoms can develop suddenly after an event, or they can develop subtly over a long period of time.

According to the American Addiction Center, firefighters' and first responders' "constant exposure to trauma, life-threatening situations, and the physical strain of working long hours on little to no sleep can negatively impact overall mental health, increasing the vulnerability and risk of substance abuse and addiction among firefighters and first responders. Furthermore, retirement can uncover or exacerbate alcohol, drug, and mental health disorders that may have been masked or submerged during active duty."

### Behavioral Health Resources

[National Wildland Fire CISM website](#): Information on Critical Incident Stress Management, peer support, and other resources.

[American Addiction Centers: Firefighters and First Responders](#): Information about effects of first responder careers, including a peer support call line. 888-731-FIRE (3473).

[National Fallen Firefighter's Foundation "Initiative 13"](#): Peer support, training, and resources for firefighters about behavioral health and suicide.

[Wildland Firefighter Foundation](#): Support for wildland firefighters and their families, including suicide intervention phone numbers.

[National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder](#): In depth information on trauma and PTSD.

[Safe Call Now](#): A confidential, comprehensive, 24-hour crisis referral service for emergency services personnel and their family members. 206-459-3020.

## Examples of Stress Injury Causes

*Excerpted from the Stress First Aid curriculum.*

In firefighting and Emergency Medical Services work, trauma is not the only harmful exposure. Stress injuries can arise from four possible mechanisms or causes:

Wear and Tear - the result of fatigue and accumulation of prolonged stress, including from non-operational sources, without sufficient sleep, rest and restoration.

An example of wear and tear: *"This is my tenth day working on this fire and we're working 16 hour shifts. There's a guy on my crew who keeps giving me a hard time, and it's really starting to get to me, plus I can't stop thinking about how my dog at home is on her last leg and could pass away any day now. I'm just starting to get worn down..."*

Inner Conflict - a "beliefs" injury due to conflict between one's moral/ethical beliefs and current experiences. Inner conflict stress injuries can include acting outside of internal, self-imposed morals or values.

Example of Inner Conflict: *"I can't stop thinking about my kids and how this job keeps me away from home for such long periods of time. I never thought I'd miss a birthday!"*

Life Threat - due to traumatic life-threatening or other situations that provoke terror, horror or helplessness. This type of injury can include experiencing a near-miss or close call.

Example of Life Threat: *"I can't stop replaying that day in my head. I have nightmares about it. We were down in Florida for hurricane relief efforts when we were notified that another hurricane was going to make landfall. The winds were over 100 miles per hour and the roof blew off and trees were flying in the air. I was so terrified and thought that was the end."*

Loss - grief due to the loss of close comrades, leaders, family members or other cared-for individuals.

Example of Loss: *"Our whole Forest is mourning the loss of Rachel. She was such a hard worker and fun person to work alongside. Rachel worked on our engine and loved her job. I can't believe she's no longer with us."*

## Suicide in the Fire Service

Suicide rates are on the rise among firefighters. They face intense physical and psychological demands and confront a variety of unique stressors inherent to their occupation that can result in psychological issues. Often, the culture of wildland firefighters inhibits a member asking for help for a mental issue. Thankfully, first responders are now taking a more accepting view towards mental health, although we know further strides must be made. Firefighters need to know it is not an admission of weakness to ask for help. *You are not alone.*

**If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, help is available immediately and confidentially, 24-7, through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 1-800-273-8255**

Some non-emergency resources for help and information can be found here:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/rmrs/suicide-awareness-tool-box>

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-8255**

### Suicide Intervention

#### CARE

Care for your employee.

Stay calm and safe; do not use force.

Actively listen to show understanding to produce relief.

Ask your employee.

Have the courage to ask the question, but stay calm.

Ask the question directly: Are you thinking of killing yourself?

Remove potential harm.

Remove any means that could be used for self-injury.

Escort your employee.

Never leave the employee alone.

Escort to supervisor, health professional, primary care, or LE&I. This can include a phone call to a help line.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-TALK(8255)**

The [Wildfire Lessons Learned Center](#) published two issues of *Two More Chains* dedicated to generating discussion and action to address suicide in the wildland fire community.

[Suicide in the Wildland Fire Service](#)

[Special SME Insights and Info](#)

## Human Performance

For the past couple of years, there have been several efforts to help employees adapt and manage stress. Leading this effort is "Human Performance" -- by building upon existing research, we are in the midst of developing programs that will promote the health, safety, performance, and resilience for our employees.

Human Performance (HP) is guided by the principles of resilience, adaptation, integration and research. Each of these requires a concerted effort to understand the limits and capacities of human performance, to capture and promote best practices, integrate these into operations, and provide appropriate training and support to enable mission accomplishment.

The Human Performance initiative is focused on:

- Building understanding of Human Performance, resilience and learning;
- Determining how best to enhance comprehensive skills; and
- Assisting in integrating effective practices to transform culture.

This work rests on and contributes to USDA values of Professionalism-Building and Cultural Transformation and contributes to a highly skilled, diverse, and compassionate workforce. It directly assists in meeting the agency's intent to "increase individual and organizational resilience, suicide prevention, and comprehensive wellness." It supports the Forest Service's health and safety journey, and the organizational vision of becoming a true learning organization.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/rmrs/groups/human-performance-innovation-and-organizational-learning>

## STRESS FIRST AID

The following information is excerpted from the peer support class “Stress First Aid for Wildland Firefighters” (SFA). The SFA model is a self-care and peer support model developed for those in high-risk occupations like military, fire and rescue, and law enforcement. It includes seven actions that help you identify and address early signs of stress reactions in yourself and others in an ongoing way (not just after “critical incidents”).

*There is much supporting information and many more tools that accompany these graphics.* It can be very useful for modules to use the SFA class proactively. [NAFRI](#) offers the Stress First Aid “train the trainer” to certify instructors to deliver SFA at the unit or module level, in 15 minute, 90 minute, or 4 hour formats.

## The Stress Continuum

The Stress Continuum Model was developed as a visual tool for assessing an individual's stress responses, and forms the foundation for SFA.

Stress responses lie along a spectrum of severity and type — they are neither all normal, transient and self-limiting, nor are they all signs of chronic mental illness. 100% of people will react when faced with stressful stimuli. However, the way in which they respond will depend on how prepared they are for the stressor event and how they, as individuals, interpret it. During the

course of this response, a person’s state can range relatively rapidly from Green to Yellow to Orange to Red and back again.

Stress First Aid was created to fill the care gap between training, stress management and prevention at the left end of the Stress Continuum, and clinical treatments available from healthcare providers on the right. SFA is a set of procedures for the management of stress reactions when someone is moving from the Yellow to Orange Zone, and often into the Red Zone as well. SFA actions can and should be applied by anyone, anywhere.

<b>READY (Green)</b>	<b>REACTING (Yellow)</b>	<b>INJURED (Orange)</b>	<b>ILL (Red)</b>
<p><b>DEFINITION</b> Adaptive coping and mastery Optimal functioning Wellness</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Well trained and prepared Fit and focused In control Optimally effective Behaving ethically Having fun</p>	<p><b>DEFINITION</b> Mild and transient distress or loss of optimal functioning</p> <p>Always goes away Low risk for illness</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Irritable, angry Anxious or depressed Physically too pumped up or tired Loss of complete self control Poor focus Poor sleep Not having fun</p>	<p><b>DEFINITION</b> More severe and persistent distress or loss of function Leaves a "scar"</p> <p>Higher risk for illness</p> <p><b>CAUSES</b> Life threat Loss Inner conflict Wear and tear</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Panic or rage Loss of control of body or mind Can't sleep Recurrent nightmares or bad memories Persistent shame, guilt, or blame Loss of moral values &amp; beliefs</p>	<p><b>DEFINITION</b> Persistent and disabling distress or loss of function Clinical mental disorders Unhealed stress injuries</p> <p><b>TYPES</b> PTSD Depression Anxiety Substance abuse</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Symptoms and disability persist over many weeks Symptoms and disability get worse over time</p>
Stress Management	Stress First Aid		Clinical Treatment



## The Seven Cs of Stress First Aid

The goal of SFA is to move people towards wellness. It is a way to preserve well-being, prevent further harm and promote recovery. The Seven Cs provide a practical tool that can be used whenever it is needed for yourself or your peers.

SFA is *not* an event-only or one-time intervention, but a way to focus on people and behaviors and provide long-term support. It is also *not* a replacement for needed medical or behavioral health interventions.

This diagram makes it seem like these actions are sequential, but in actuality, Check and Coordinate are continuous, and the others are only used as needed. Check provides the foundation of SFA. It is needed continuously, because:

- People injured by stress may be the last to recognize it.
- Stigma can be an obstacle to asking for help.

- Stress zones and needs change over time.
- Risks from stress injuries may last a long time.

It is important to look out for each other, but you can also “Check” yourself. Look for departures from your norms, like fatigue, lack of focus, being short tempered, withdrawing, or not doing the things you normally enjoy.

*“One of the key points of ‘check’ is knowing your people, and spending a lot of time with them, both professionally and personally. Then you can recognize those subtle changes. What I’ve done is to start a conversation about anything except what I think might be bugging them, and then I actively listen. And once again I’m talking the flood-gates open, and it goes well.”*

- “Check” example from a firefighter.



## Seven Cs of Stress First Aid:

### 1. CHECK

Assess: observe and listen

### 2. COORDINATE

Get help, refer as needed

### 3. COVER

Get to safety ASAP

### 4. CALM

Relax, slow down, refocus

### 5. CONNECT

Get support from others

### 6. COMPETENCE

Restore effectiveness

### 7. CONFIDENCE

Restore self-esteem and hope

# Part 2: What to Expect

## *A Practical Guide for Family Members of Wildland Firefighters*

Your family member or loved one has decided to start one of the most rewarding professions: a wildland firefighter with the U.S. Forest Service. This basic guide will assist you in navigating the wildland fire lifestyle and prepare you for what to expect and how to adapt.

Becoming a wildland firefighter means your loved one has made the choice to:

- Participate in erratic work schedules outside of normal hours. Sometimes gone for 14 or more days.
- Spend extra hours training, both mentally and physically, for the duties of the job.
- Put themselves in inherently dangerous situations.
- Establish tight bonds with fellow crewmembers and wildland firefighters, often times relying on them for peer support.
- Be outside of cell phone service or not able to answer phone calls/ text messages readily.
- Be called a moments notice and leave work or family events abruptly to answer a fire dispatch.

Being aware of these realities and planning accordingly can ease the stress of these challenges for both the wildland firefighter and the family.



*Photo by Kari Greer*

### The Wildland Fire Community

“It’s a great honor to be a part of something larger than yourself. The support system behind a wildland firefighter is not often highlighted and it takes a great deal of commitment, support, and sacrifice.

There are many unforeseeable challenges, but knowing I’m not alone and that others are working through similar challenges makes it easier. I didn’t anticipate the supportive community of WLFF and I’m genuinely proud to be a part of it.”

- *Megan*

Spouse of a Wildland Firefighter

## THE BASICS

The Forest Service has been managing wildland fire for more than 100 years. As the world's premiere wildland firefighting agency, we provide critically needed resources and expertise to protect at-risk communities. From 'boots on the ground' to airtanker drops overhead, Forest Service personnel are answering the call. And now, emergency response is not limited to wildland fires. Forest Service employees are also dispatched to help in emergencies such as hurricanes. Our teams played important roles in the 9-11 response in New York and Washington, DC, and during the Columbia Space Shuttle recovery.

Wildland firefighting positions include working on a hand crew, on a helitack or rappel crew, a hotshot crew, as a smokejumper, on an engine crew, or as a fire prevention patroller. Jobs in wildland fire also include prescribed fire specialists, fire ecologists, fire behavior analysts, and other scientific and planning positions. There are also many "collateral duty" jobs that are specifically for supporting emergency incidents. Employees receive specialized classroom and on-the-job training for these additional qualifications.

Remember, these are tough jobs often performed in primitive, backcountry conditions. In addition to specific requirements for each kind of job, it is essential that firefighter be in top physical condition for this demanding work. Employees and prospective employees must pass the Work Capacity Test annually before working on the fire line. The Forest Service provides Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) clothing, hardhat and fire shelter, and may provide a stipend to purchase lug soled, eight inch leather boots.

The people involved in Fire and Aviation Management



represent the pride exemplified by all Forest Service employees in "caring for the land and serving people." The Forest Service looks for dedicated men and women from all walks of life and all abilities to join our workforce.

## WILDLAND FIRE DECODER

The NWCG Glossary is a helpful resource for understanding the specialized terms commonly used in wildland fire. <https://www.nwcg.gov/glossary/a-z>

## HOT TOPICS

### The Cell Phone

A wildland firefighter (WLFF) carries a cell phone to receive urgent calls and text messages for a dispatch. [Sometimes, cell phones are issued to people in supervisory positions. Those phones must be used for work only.] Firefighters need to be able to answer these calls quickly to receive information about the assignment. These calls can literally come at any time of day or night: during a family dinner, a movie, a soccer game, while camping, hunting, or travelling. Your wildland firefighter will need to stop whatever activity they are engaged in to talk and plan for the next fire accordingly.

Because work stations and wildland fires are often in remote locations, cell phone service is limited. The WLFF may be out of cell phone service for prolonged periods of time or not able to answer calls or texts readily. Usually it is against crew rules to use cell phones on the fire line or during work hours, except in the case of an emergency. Their safety and the safety of those around them depends on their focus and professionalism.

### The Personal Gear Bag ("PG Bag")

This bag contains all the personal gear an employee will need for extended assignment away from home, which can last 14 days or more. Essential items in the PG bag include underwear, socks, personal hygiene items, sleeping bag, tent, sleeping mat, extra work T-shirts, extra Nomex pants and shirts, headlamp, batteries, snacks and anything that can make their lives more comfortable while sleeping on the ground for extended periods of time. All this must fit into a single issued bag, and may have a weight limit of 40 pounds or less.

On days off or while off duty, the WLFF will often need to wash clothes and replenish supplies in their PG bag. Spending time getting their gear prepared is essential to maintain a sense of readiness and comfort.

## Physical Demands and Training

The wildland firefighting profession is a physically demanding job. Firefighters must train in the “off season” to meet physical fitness standards and perform duties of the position. Physical training often includes hiking with weight, running, pull ups, push ups, strength training, intense cardio training and more.

The Work Capacity Test (WCT), which involves walking three miles in 45 minutes carrying a 45 pound pack, must be passed annually. For seasonal firefighters, this test usually happens on the first day of work. Fire modules generally become available for assignment after a couple weeks of core classroom and on-the-job training. Assignments on fires can be much more demanding than the WCT with long hours of physical work. This means that off-season training is vitally important for firefighter health

and safety.

## Will They Be Home for Dinner?

Sometimes a firefighter will be dispatched to leave for an assignment when they are not with the family. This can happen when they are at work at the home station or out in the field doing “project work.” They may be out of cell range or may not have time to call home during the initial response to the family to notify them of the dispatch.

Don’t take this personally and understand that this is common. Rest assured that your firefighter will make contact with you when reasonable. Managing the unknown is difficult, and managing expectations for communication is helpful.

## Schedules, Planning, and Understanding

Having a discussion with your firefighter about schedules and family plans is important early on. As mentioned in other sections, it is sometimes difficult to maintain plans when the profession carries so many unknowns. Weddings, birthdays, reunions, BBQ’s, parties, vacations and other holidays are sometimes missed due to the obligations the firefighter has to their crew and position. Planned events like concerts are often missed, sometimes at the last minute.

These disruptions are most common during the peak of fire season but can happen anytime the firefighter is in employment status. With a little bit of open communication early in the season, the firefighter and supervisors can sometimes negotiate family obligations. Amidst these demands, it is also important to note that time off to disengage is healthy. Have this conversation with your loved one.

## Perspectives from Real Families

*“My son has followed in my footsteps as a wildland firefighter. The job is dangerous but I know how well we train our firefighters. Knowing that he loves being a firefighter helps me deal with some of those ‘Mom emotions’ that sometimes pop up when he goes on a fire assignment.”*

Terri (Mother of Wildland Firefighter)

*“My kid said to me last week, ‘Dad you know what sucks about you being a smokejumper? 1. You’re gone all the time. 2. You could die.’*

*I said ‘I am the one responsible for making sure we don’t die, and I know buddy, but if YOU grow up and find a job that you love then you’ll have to make some sacrifices too. You’re the most important thing in the world to me, but this is a calculated sacrifice, and I won’t do it forever.’”*

Kurt (Father, Husband, Smoke Jumper)

*“It’s a tough job to be the family of a firefighter. Only those who understand the demands can accept it and make a family life work. If your loved one loves fire as much as you know they love you, you’ve got to be proud and respect the demands, even if you want to be selfish!”*

Trinity (Wife of Wildland Firefighter)



Photo by Kari Greer

## The Tough Conversation

*"I've worked in fire and safety for most of my Forest Service career. My kids were raised knowing that summer vacations wouldn't include Dad. I know well that while we try to mitigate risks, there is no zero risk option in firefighting. I prepared my wife for the possibility that I wouldn't come home from a fire assignment, but I think I downplayed the risks to my children, not wanting to worry them. Now, my son is a full-time Forest Service firefighter, and he has a young child. I wonder, has he had the difficult conversations with my daughter-in-law? Are they prepared?"*

- Steve (Forest Service Employee and Father of Wildland Firefighter)



## LINE OF DUTY DEATH OR INJURY

A conversation about the potential for line of duty death or injury is exceptionally important to have with family and loved ones. Although it may be difficult, approach it with openness and trust, not worry or fear. Planning for the worst case scenario is difficult to conceptualize, but it is very important to establish these real-life topics that may come up in the event of a line of duty death or injury. If you are a spouse, the following topics are of particular importance.

### Financial planning

Discuss these topics: life insurance policy, how will the family earn income without the income of the wildland fire fighter, how to obtain information on Forest Service beneficiary documents, Forest Service policy in the event of line of duty death.

### Planning the funeral

Consider special wishes surrounding burial and funeral of your loved one. Is the Forest Service Honor Guard requested at the service? Does the family/ firefighter wish to have Forest Service presence at the service?

### Preparing for serious injury

Discuss how the family may be impacted financially, mentally and in lifestyle if the wildland firefighter becomes critically injured. Research the Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP) and Forest Service policy regarding compensation and disability.

### Talking to children

Reflect with children and family about the fear that surrounds their parent being hurt or killed in the line of duty. Think of words and phrases that will resonate with them and provide an accurate but age-appropriate picture of the dangers and risks of wildland firefighting.

### Designate a family spokesperson

In times of stress it is often helpful to designate someone to speak on behalf of the family. Consider selecting an individual to represent the family in this capacity.

## TOOLS & TIPS

- **Firefighters:** Be open and honest with your family about the hazards and risks associated with the profession. (Have these conversations with whomever would handle your wishes and affairs.)
- **Spouse & Firefighter:** Sit down together and ensure all applicable Forest Service financial documentation is current. The Forest Service Albuquerque Service Center Human Resources Management (ASC HRM: 1-877-372-7248) houses all of the financial documents, including Federal Employee Life Insurance (FEGLI) Policy information, Designation of Beneficiary documents, and Federal Health Insurance.
- During the first three hours of the initial incident (injury) the Forest Service will appoint an **Agency Hospital Liaison** who will assist the injured employee and the family navigate hospital and agency paperwork. This individual is a Forest Service employee that upon notification of an injured firefighter, will travel to the hospital where the firefighter is being transported and start the liaison process. This individual is specially trained to work through hospital and Forest Service paperwork and serve as a point of contact for the family.
- The Forest Service has specific policy that addresses death and serious injury. This handbook provides Forest Service policy that establishes official guidance to management for handling death and serious injuries. An information sheet on the *Death and Serious Injury Handbook* is provided in this guide.

*“Friends of mine have stated how they couldn’t be away from their families as much as I have to be for my job, because they love their family too much and couldn’t put them through being gone. Funny thing is that I don’t feel I love my family any less, just that I also have a sense duty to my family and honor within myself to uphold. Maybe it’s a blessing or a curse, but I’ve got skills and experiences that must be passed on to the next generation of firefighters for their safety and the progression of the organization. When I see the people that I’m responsible for, I see their families as well. I know that I have a duty to do my very best to bring them home to their families and will only return ‘whole’ to my own family if I’ve done everything I can for my crew.”*

- Dave (Crew supervisor, husband, father, son, uncle, brother)

### HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES

**Five Wishes Living Will:** This living will is a simple online form written in everyday language. Available at: <http://thelastvisit.com/resources/advance-directives/five-wishes-a-planning-tool/>

**FEGLI:** Federal Employee Group Life Insurance. <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance/>

**WAPEA:** Long-Term Care Insurance, Group Term Life Insurance, and Financial Service Benefits for Federal Civilian Employees. <https://www.waepa.org/>



## A Day in the Life of a Wildland Firefighter on Assignment

Although every assignment is a little different, this timeline gives a glimpse of what a day might look like during an extended fire assignment. Personnel are generally limited to 16 hours of work per day, not including breaks for meals. Driving and hiking time to the fire line is one of the biggest variables, and sometimes crews will sleep away from the main camp if the distance is far. Ideally, gear rehab, dinner, and maybe even a shower are wrapped up in time to get some good sleep. Days can be very long with little free time.

**0500** Wake up in tent. Pack and load gear.

**0530** Breakfast in fire camp.

**0600** Start of shift. Fire operational briefing. Gather up water, lunches, and supplies for the day.

**0700** Drive to the fire line to begin the day's assigned work.

**0800** Begin work at the fire.

May include long, arduous hikes with fire packs (up to 40lbs), chainsaws (45lb), and hand tools (8lbs).

Work environment can be in hazardous, hot, dry, and dusty conditions.

Work site is usually in remote locations with no cell phone service; only communication is face to face or over the fire radios.

Physical work includes miles of hiking, digging fire line, moving brush, trees, rocks, and cutting down trees with chainsaws.

**1300** Half hour lunch break eating fire issued brown sack lunches or MRE's (Military style Meal Ready to Eat).

**1900** Hike off the fire line and refurbish gear.

**2000** Drive back to fire camp.

**2100** Dinner in fire camp.

**2130** Tie up loose ends. Ready gear for the next day. Make personal phone calls/ texts (if possible)

**2230** Go to bed.



Incidents operate on the 24 hour clock.  
Subtract 12 for p.m. time.  
2030 (read like "twenty -thirty") is 8:30 p.m.

# Attachments

## *Useful forms and more information*

### Behavioral Health Resources

- Wellness and Peer Support websites
- EAP Brochures

### Planning for Emergencies

- Emergency Contact form
- Designation of Beneficiary instructions

### Agency Response Information

- Forest Service “Death and Serious Injury” Handbook overview
- Forest Service Response to Death and Serious Injury- What to expect.
- Critical Response Protocol
- Line Officer Reference Guide





## Wellness and Peer Support Contacts

### **National Wildland Fire and Aviation Management Critical Incident Management**

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/cism/index.html>

The National Wildland Fire and Aviation Critical Incident Management website is designed to provide firefighters and their families with a wealth of support material and contacts that focus on helping manage in a high stress environment. Here one will have access to topics including Critical Incident Stress Management, Peer Support, Training, Culture and Suicide. The site is continuously updated with current contacts and support networks that serve to aid individuals, groups and families in their need for managing difficult situations.

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### **National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

Helpful information for individuals who may find themselves facing symptoms of and / or recovery from the effects of PTSD.

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### **Wildland Firefighters Foundation**

<https://wffoundation.org/>

The Wildland Firefighters Foundation is a non-government organization whose mission is *“To honor, recognize, and support wildland firefighters, past, present, and future, and to provide resources to assist fallen and injured firefighters and their families.”* The website provides background information on the organization including the vision, purpose and goals of the organization along with support events and contacts.

### **National Fallen Firefighter Foundation**

<https://www.firehero.org/>

<https://www.everyonegoeshome.com/>

<https://www.everyonegoeshome.com/16-initiatives/13-psychological-support/>

The National Fallen Firefighter Foundation mission is *“To honor and remember America’s fallen fire heroes, to provide resources to assist their families in rebuilding their lives, and work within the fire service community to reduce firefighter deaths and injuries.”* A vast network of support services and contacts are provided to fire services, individual firefighters and their families along with local and national events honoring the fallen. Everyone Goes Home is NFFF’s 16 Life Safety Initiatives, with #13 being psychological support. This website contains many resources.



Listed below are several websites for organizations that offer educational support and contact information for employees and their families. A list of topics include resilience, stress management, trauma recovery and individual or group counseling.

### Employee Assistance Program

## USFS EAP Vendors

### Region 1

EAP # 800-869-0276  
Vendor Espyr [www.eapconsultants.com](http://www.eapconsultants.com)  
user: fsregion1

### Regions 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, and WO

EAP # 800-222-0364  
Vendor FOH <http://www.foh4you.com/>

### Region 4

EAP # 1-888-290-4327  
Vendor ComPsych [http://fsweb.r4.fs.fed.us/unit/cr/eap/docs/eap\\_brochure.pdf](http://fsweb.r4.fs.fed.us/unit/cr/eap/docs/eap_brochure.pdf)

### Region 6

EAP # 1-800-869-0276  
Vendor Espyr <https://espyr.com/>

### Region 9 Link on homepage to EAP pdf brochure

EAP # 1.800.458.1930  
Vendor FEI Behavioral Health <http://www.feieap.com>  
user: fsr9

### Resilience and Recovery

[Trauma Recovery](#)  
[How and Why to Develop Mental Toughness](#)  
[Road to Resilience](#)

### Managing Stress

[International CISM Foundation](#)  
[Cornell Medical](#)  
[Navy Stress Continuum PPT](#)

# Employee Assistance Program Overview

Information on Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Services and Benefits.

Personal and family problems can diminish your health, your happiness, and your ability to be at your best for yourself and your family. With the help of your EAP, provided by Federal Occupational Health, you can resolve these problems and become happier, healthier, and even more effective at home and at work.

## Convenient Access by Phone or on the Web

Employees can call **1-800-222-0364** (TTY: 1-888-262-7848) from anywhere in the United States to receive immediate assistance, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can also get information and resources online at **FOH4You.com**. There, you will have easy access to educational materials, self-assessment tools, and specific information on available EAP services.

## Financial and Legal Services

FOH's EAP includes **FREE** consultation with financial experts and licensed attorneys to provide assistance with your legal and financial questions.

Services include help with living will and health care power of attorney, housing or real estate matters, estate planning, education funding, retirement planning, and investment strategies.

## Counseling Services

Licensed or credentialed professional counselors provide face-to-face, short-term counseling to employees and family members. Counselors can also provide referrals to community resources based on client needs, health insurance coverage, and financial resources.

## Health and Wellness Presentations and EAP Orientations

Health and wellness presentations and EAP orientations support both supervisors and employees.

Health and wellness presentations include such topics as workplace civility, change and transition, balancing work and life, time and stress management, and more.

The employee orientation sessions discuss the features and benefits of the EAP, how the EAP functions, and how to access and use the EAP. The supervisor orientation includes useful information about when and how supervisors refer employees to the EAP, documentation, crisis management, privacy, and confidentiality.

## Supervisor and Risk Management Consultation

EAP counselors provide guidance and consultation so that supervisors and managers can effectively identify, interact with, and refer employees with performance or conduct issues to the

program. FOH counselors are available 24/7 to discuss performance concerns and the appropriate EAP intervention.

## Crisis Response

Exposure to threats, acts of violence, natural disasters, injury, or death requires immediate response. EAP's national crisis response team assists in management consultations, critical incident services, and follow-up with the organization and individuals is provided as appropriate.

## Confidentiality

The EAP is confidential in accordance with both state and federal laws, including the Privacy Act of 1974 and applicable Confidentiality Regulations (42 CFR 1A2). However, when clients disclose life-threatening situations, such as child or elder abuse, or threats of serious harm to themselves or others, counselors must report these disclosures as required by law.

For more information call us toll-free, or visit us online.



We care, just call.

1-800-222-0364  
(TTY: 1-888-262-7848)  
FOH4You.com

## What is the Lifecycle® Connect Website?

It is a comprehensive on-line tool with the following features:

- A detailed description of your EAP/Work-Life benefits as well as a collection of resources to support work, care giving and wellness issues
- A menu containing more than 90 topics
- Thousands of pages of the most current and comprehensive behavioral health news and articles
- Numerous categorized videos and hyperlinks to information on specific conditions, treatments, associations and support groups
- Searchable databases for child care and elder care
- Screening quizzes and glossaries
- Google translation feature for 50+ languages
- RSS feed subscriber



employee assistance

800.458.1930

online : [www.feieap.com](http://www.feieap.com)  
username : fsr9



employee assistance

800.458.1930

online : [www.feieap.com](http://www.feieap.com)  
username : fsr9

Solutions focused on navigating the spectrum of life events— EAP and Work-Life Services make it easy for you to improve the quality of your life at home and at work.

### How do I access the service?

Begin by calling your toll-free number at **1.800.458.1930** to access services, and plan to spend up to 15 minutes with an EAP counselor for an initial phone interview. You may also contact the program online at [www.feieap.com](http://www.feieap.com); username: fsr9

### Is it confidential?

Yes. To ensure confidentiality, all services are provided by FEI Behavioral Health (FEI), an independent provider of EAP services. Information about your personal situation is protected within the limits of state and federal laws pertaining to confidentiality.

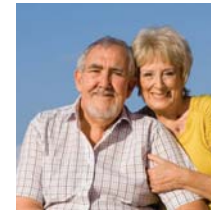
services provided by :



Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
New York, New York  
Atlanta, Georgia



# employee assistance program



- Counseling Services
- Work-Life Services
- Legal & Financial Services
- LifeCycle® Connect Website



# we're here to help

Struggling with personal relationship issues?

Needing answers to a legal or financial concern?

Feeling stress from job or family responsibilities?

Confused about how to help an aging relative?

Looking for help in coping with a loss?

Concerned about your (or a family member's) alcohol or drug use?

## What is the Employee Assistance Program?

Most of us face difficult challenges at different stages of our lives. Many of us feel stressed from juggling increasing responsibilities, from financial pressures to relationship issues. Sometimes we find ourselves facing legal concerns brought on by life events such as divorce, child custody, real-estate issues, and more. Having professionals to turn to when facing these situations can make all the difference. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), paid for by your employer, offers professional counseling, telephonic support and online resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all at no cost to you.



## What are Work-Life Services?

Work-Life Services provide you with comprehensive telephonic or online consultation, assessment and customized referrals for your family caregiving concerns. Our Work-Life Specialists will assess your family needs and provide education information and verified referrals to local:

- Child care providers
- Elder care and dependent care services providers
- Adoption agencies
- Schools, tutoring programs, summer programs and more

In addition, Work-Life Services will assist with college, financial aid and scholarship searches.

## What are Legal and Financial Services?

This benefit provides telephonic consultation with an attorney or financial advisor for information and referrals for a wide range of legal and financial issues at no cost to you. Referrals for ongoing legal services will be offered at a 25% discount off of customary fees. One consultation with a legal or financial professional is available per issue.

## What does my benefit include?

Your benefit begins with a call to the EAP, where an EAP counselor will provide an initial phone assessment of your needs and, if appropriate, will refer you for short-term counseling at a location near your home or workplace. You and your eligible family members are entitled to up to 6 confidential, in-person EAP counseling sessions per incident.

An incident is defined as a distinct and unique problem. There must be at least a 30 day break between your last session for "Problem A", and your request for sessions for "Problem B". If services beyond the EAP are needed, the counselor can help you explore options which may include a referral to a professional in your insurance plan.



employee assistance

confidential assistance available  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week



employee assistance

confidential assistance available  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week



## EMPLOYEE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

The information that you provide will be used **ONLY** in the event of your serious injury or death in the line of duty. Please take the time to fill it out fully and accurately because the data will help the department take care of your family and friends.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>
<b>Home Address</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip</b>
<b>Phone Number</b>		

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Family or friends you would like the department to contact. Please list in the order you want them contacted. If needed, provide additional names on the back of this sheet.

**NOTE: If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult to contact.**

<b>Name</b>
<b>Relationship</b>
<b>Home Contact Information</b>
<b>Work Contact Information</b>
<b>Special Circumstances – such as health conditions or need for an interpreter</b>

<b>Name</b>
<b>Relationship</b>
<b>Home Contact Information</b>
<b>Work Contact Information</b>
<b>Special Circumstances – such as health conditions or need for an interpreter</b>

List names and dates of birth of all of your children.	
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:
Name:	DOB:

List the department member(s) you would like to accompany a chief fire officer to make the notification.
Name:
Name:

List anyone else you want to help make the notification. (for example, your minister)
Name:
Relationship:
Home Contact Information
Address:
Phone: Work
Contact Information
Name of Employer:
Address:
Phone:
Pager/Cellphone:

**OPTIONAL INFORMATION**

Make sure someone close to you knows this information.

Religious Preferences
Religion:
Place of Worship:
Address:

Funeral Preferences		
Are you a veteran of the U. S. Armed Services?	Yes	No
If you are entitled to a military funeral, do you wish to have one?	Yes	No
Do you wish to have a fire service funeral?	Yes	No

Please list your membership in fire service, religious, or community organizations that may provide assistance to your family:

Do you have a will?	Yes	No
<i>If yes, where is it located or who should be contacted about it? _____</i>		

List all life insurance policies you have:		
<u>Company</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Location of Policy</u>
Is all information current? (beneficiary names, contact info, etc. This information may determine who gets Federal benefits, see next page.)		

Special Requests
If you are an organ donor, coordination with the medical officials will be necessary. List any requests in this section.

Form last updated on \_\_\_\_\_

## Designation of Beneficiary Information ( [OPM.GOV](http://OPM.GOV) and [Insurance FAQs](#) )

### Are Your Designations of Beneficiary Current?

When was the last time you checked your designations of beneficiary? Most employees and annuitants don't realize that they have several designations to keep current. If you don't have a designation on file, then the funds will be distributed according to the order of precedence. That may be OK with you, but maybe it isn't. Worse yet is an out-of-date designation giving the money to someone that you no longer wish to give it to.

### Order of Precedence

Check the order of precedence for each of these funds

- [FEGLI](#)
- [CSRS Lump Sum Payment Order of Precedence Upon the Death of a Current Employee](#)
- [FERS Lump Sum Payment Order of Precedence Upon the Death of a Current Employee](#)
- [Thrift Savings Plan](#)
- [Payment of Unpaid Compensation upon the Death of a Federal Employee](#)
- [All other](#)

If you want benefits paid to someone else or in a different order, you must designate a beneficiary. This could well be vital to your family's future welfare.

### Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI)

[Designations Form: Standard Form 2823, Designation of Beneficiary \(4/01\)](#) (PDF file) [717.83 KB]

- [Where Do I Send My FEGLI Designation of Beneficiary Form?](#)

### Thrift Savings Plan

Designations Form: [TSP-3, Thrift Savings Plan Designation of Beneficiary \(10/05\)](#) (external link) (PDF file)

All Thrift Savings Plan designations should be sent to the following address:

Thrift Savings Plan Service Office  
P.O. Box 385021  
Birmingham AL 35238

- [Thrift Savings Plan Order of Preference](#)
- [Thrift Savings Plan website](#) (external link)

### Unpaid Compensation - for Employees only

Designations Form: [Standard Form 1152, Designation of Beneficiary, Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee \(6/02\)](#) (PDF file) [194.09 KB]

### Civil Service Retirement Programs

Use the following two forms to designate who is to receive a **lump-sum payment** which may become payable under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). These forms do **not** affect the right of any person who is eligible for survivor annuity benefits.

*Designations Forms:*

- **Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)** - [Standard Form 2808, Designation of Beneficiary \(2/99\)](#) (PDF file) [230.61 KB]
- **Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)** - [Standard Form 3102, Designation of Beneficiary \(6/00\)](#) (PDF file) [472.2 KB]

### Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB)

Designation Form: [Designation of PSOB Beneficiary](#) (external link)

Employee should keep a completed copy for personal records. Additional program information can be found at this link, [PSOB](#).



# Forest Service Policy and Response to Death and Serious Injury

## Forest Service Handbook 1309.19

*"It is the intent of the Forest Service to provide immediate assistance and support to survivors, families and coworkers of those who die or are seriously injured in the line of duty. The primary focus of the handbook is injuries or fatalities while employees or others are on duty or in travel status, performing the Forest Service mission."*

As a loved one or family member, you may have immediate questions on how the Forest Service may assist the family.

We will go through common questions and the answers provided by Forest Service policy, as seen in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1309.19

Want to reference this document online? Click below.

[https://www.fs.fed.us/cgi-bin/Directives/get\\_dirs/fsh?1309.19](https://www.fs.fed.us/cgi-bin/Directives/get_dirs/fsh?1309.19)

### **Q: Does the Forest Service provide any liaison services to the family?**

A: Depending on the circumstance, a Line Officer may assign a liaison to assist family. These include hospital liaison, family liaison, and funeral liaison. (FSH 1309.19, Chapter 20)

### **Q: Can the Forest Service provide funding for family member travel expenses to be by the side of a critically injured firefighter?**

A: When an employee is seriously injured while in travel status, the Forest Service Approver\* may request the use of appropriated funds, on a case-by-case basis, to pay for travel expenses for up to three immediate family members (defined as spouse, domestic partner, parents, siblings, or children who are members, both kinship and affinity, of the employee's household at time of reporting for duty) to travel to the location where the employee is receiving medical treatment. (FSH 1309.19, Chapter 30)

\*Approver: Deputy Chief, Regional Forester, Station Director, Area Director, Special Agent in Charge (or designated acting)

### **Q: Can the Forest Service provide funding for the**

### **family to attend private award ceremonies or memorial services?**

A: The Forest Service may fund necessary expenses related to honorary recognition of employees, including posthumous non-monetary awards, in accordance with the Government Employees Incentive Awards Act (5 USC 4503) and the USDA Department Regulation 4040-451-1. The agency may pay travel expenses for one family representative to receive the award. (FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40)

### **Q: Does the Forest Service pay for any death benefits?**

A: Public Law 104-208, Section 651 (codified as a note to 5 USC 8133 and 8134), authorizes agencies to pay up to \$10,000 in burial costs and related out-of-pocket expenses, as a death gratuity to the personal representative of any employee who dies from an injury sustained in the line of duty. This payment is authorized by Albuquerque Service Center-Human Resources Management/Workers Compensation Branch (ASC-HRM/WC) only when the worker's compensation claim is adjudicated and accepted by the Department of Labor (OWCP). (FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40)

## FOREST SERVICE RESPONSE TO A DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY

### What happens now?

Unexpected serious injury or death invokes a unique set of emotional challenges and responses. The injured and their families face innumerable hurdles through treatment and recovery. Survivors of those who have lost their lives in service are left with a sense of unreality, helplessness, and unfinished business. Survivors will want to understand what happened and try to bring some meaning to their loss.

Should the unexpected happen, be it serious injury or line of duty death, the Line Officer in charge may assign Family and Hospital Liaisons to assist the victim and/or the family. The Hospital or Family Liaison represents the agency, provides support to the injured and their family, and can help guide the family through the maze of emotional decisions that need to be made. Liaisons will bring solace,

a calm presence and compassion to an otherwise turbulent situation.

The role of **Hospital Liaison** is to respond to an incident or event as support and agency connection for an injured employee and their family. The Hospital Liaison facilitates communication/coordination between the employee,



employee's family, Human Resources Management, the receiving medical treatment facility, the employee's home unit, or the Incident Comp/Claims Specialist if the injury occurred on an incident. The liaison serves as point of contact for supervisory updates, coordinates patient transportation, and/or other employee needs.

The role of **Family Liaison** is to respond to an incident or event as support and agency connection for the family of a deceased employee. The Family Liaison facilitates communication between the family and the agency in an emotionally charged atmosphere. He or she must have direct access to agency officials, outside of the chain of command. The Family Liaison is a facilitator and not a decision maker.

In addition to assigning a Hospital or Family Liaison, the agency may initiate actions that may, or may not, directly involve the family but critical to managing the incident, caring for the employee and meeting the needs and best interest of the family. Listed below are actions that may be taken within the first 24 hours and beyond.

### In the first 24 hours, the agency may:

- Ensure on-scene coordinator is assigned to manage the overall incident and immediate medical care of victim(s)
- Protect incident scene and gather factual information
- If Line of Duty Death, notify immediate family (or next of kin) and jurisdictional law enforcement officials
- Provide support and care to meet immediate family needs
- Protect and care for on-scene resources involved with, or witness to, the incident

- Assign Public Affairs to manage incident information and protect the identity of the victim(s) and their family until formal notification has been made
- Notify agency officials including local Line Officer, victim(s) immediate supervisor and home unit
- Assign Hospital or Family Liaison
- Notify appropriate jurisdictional authorities and/or partner agencies
- Notify Albuquerque Service Center-Human Resource Management/Workers Compensation with a request for Benefits Coordinator and Workers Compensation Coordinator
- Notify Albuquerque Travel Branch to initiate travel request for injured and/or family member(s)
- Contact Regional Critical Incident Stress Coordinator and discuss the need for CISM team
- Assign, activate & dispatch a Coordinated Response Protocol team
- Assess complexity of incident and the possible need for outside Incident Management Team

### Beyond 24 hours, the agency may:

- Coordinate with the Hospital Liaison to ensure the needs of the injured and their family are being met in accordance with agency policy and procedure
- Coordinate with the Family Liaison to meet the family's preference regarding Memorial Service and attendance by Forest Service, Federal, State and local personnel dignitaries at the funeral or other services
- Provide for the needs of affected fellow employees immediate and long-term
- Designate and assign support personnel to assist the Coordinated Response Protocol Team and required investigation teams (OIG, OSHA)
- Ensure personal property owned by the employee are returned to the employee (or surviving family in event of a death) as soon as possible after items have been released by agency officials



## USDA Forest Service Informational Briefing Paper Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP)

Spring 2018

### Introduction

The Coordinated Response Protocol—CRP for short—represents basic changes in how the Forest Service responds to and learns from tragic events. The CRP uses pre-trained response team members who work collaboratively under a response team leader to lessen potential further harm to our employees.

### Features

The CRP process actively seeks to minimize the number of interviews to which our personnel are exposed and to control access to our employees.

- **Synchronizes all response groups**, including the Learning Review team, Peer Support/Critical Incident Stress Management, Law Enforcement and Investigations, Union, Communications, and Human Resource Management.
- **Makes every effort to coordinate external investigations**, such as those required by Occupational Safety and Health Administration, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Office of Inspector General, state and local law enforcement, coroner's offices, and other cooperators and partners.
- **Includes a Learning Review (LR) that replaces the Serious Accident Investigation process.** The LR collects information to help build individual and organizational products to support our ability to learn from the event.
- **Minimal impact investigation.** When accidents happen, our organization's response affects both employee morale and our future safety. We must learn everything we can from those events to prevent recurrence. We want to minimize impacts to survivors and witnesses while managing required investigation activities.
- **Developed by safety experts.** Human Performance and Innovation and Organizational Learning—comprised of Risk Management and Human Factors Research, Development, and Applications (RD&A) and Office of Safety and Occupational Health components—oversaw the development to which numerous safety experts across the Forest Service contributed.

### Application

The CRP is designed for incidents involving on-duty employees that include a fatality or more than three hospitalizations. Another review process known as the Facilitated Learning Analysis or FLA helps us learn from near-miss and less serious incidents.

- **Creates safer environments.** The CRP process can expand and contract, similar to the Incident Command System, to help meet unanticipated demands and complexity. The guidebook continually evolves and is updated as needed. Safer environments are created in many ways. One of the most important is our ability to act in ways that avoid tragic outcomes. Investing in the CRP and FLA processes will help all of us be better prepared with the best knowledge available.
- **A Safety Review is for learning and improving.** The Forest Service will not use Learning Review or Facilitated Learning Analysis information as a basis for any disciplinary action or to blame employees.

Learn more about the CRP process at the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center website (external)<sup>1</sup> or the Office of Safety and Health Share Point site (internal)<sup>2</sup>.

### Contacts:

**Sara Brown**, Interim Director of the Human Performance and Innovation and Organizational Learning RD&As. [sarabrown@fs.fed.us](mailto:sarabrown@fs.fed.us); 435-590-3112.

**Alex Viktora**, Assistant Center Manager, Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center. [javiktora@fs.fed.us](mailto:javiktora@fs.fed.us); 520-799-8748.

<sup>1</sup> Go to <https://www.wildfirelessons.net/viewdocument/the-coordinated-response-protocol>.

<sup>2</sup> Go to <https://ems-portal.usda.gov/sites/fs-osoh/Documents/CRP%20Information%20Sheet%2019May2014.pdf> CRP Information Sheet.



# Line Officer's Reference Guide

## Death, Serious Injury, and Medical Emergency

Line of Duty Death (LODD)  
Non-Line of Duty Death (Non-LODD)  
September 2016 v7

Activity	Is it an FS Employee?	LODD	TDY	Who Approves?	Point-of-Contact	Reference/Authority ( <a href="#">HyperLinked</a> )
Firefighter Work/Rest Schedule <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Incident Commander or Agency Administrator	FAM	<a href="#">Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, NWCC Handbook 2, PMS 902</a>
Obtaining Emergency Medical Care	N/A	N/A	N/A	Witness	EMS	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 30</a>
Paying for Emergency Medical Care <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	N/A	DOL - OWCP	HRM - WC	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 30</a>
	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 30</a>
Flags at Half Staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	Secretary of Agriculture	Deputy Chief - BusOps	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40, Section 41.5</a>
Autopsy <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	N/A	Local Line Officer	HRM - WC	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40</a>
	Yes	No	Yes	Local Line Officer	HRM - WC	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40</a>
	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 50</a>
Determining Type of Death (Workers Compensation)	N/A	N/A	N/A	DOL - OWCP	HRM - WC	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40</a>
Preparation and Transportation of Remains (Cremation/Embalming)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Local Line Officer	Family Liason and Local Warranted Cardholder	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40</a>
	Yes	No	Yes	Local Line Officer	Family Liason and Local Warranted Cardholder	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40</a>
	Yes	No	No	Local Line Officer	Family Liason and Local Warranted Cardholder	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 40</a>
Non-Employee Use of FS Vehicle	No	N/A	N/A	Local Line Officer	Regional Engineer and Fleet Manager	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 30, Sec. 31.3;</a> <a href="#">FSH 6509.33, Chapter 300</a>
Use of FS Aircraft	Yes	N/A	N/A	Employee Supervisor	FAM - Aviation	<a href="#">FSM 5713.3;</a> <a href="#">FSM 5716.42;</a> and <a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chap. 30, Sec. 31.3;</a> Administrative Use of Aircraft
	No	N/A	N/A	USDA, Office of General Counsel	FAM - Aviation	<a href="#">FSM 5713.3;</a> <a href="#">FSM 5716.42;</a> and <a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chap. 30, Sec. 31.3;</a> Administrative Use of Aircraft
Escort(s) for injured/deceased <sup>4</sup>	Yes	N/A	Yes	Local Line Officer	ASC - B&F - Travel	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 30 and 40;</a> <a href="#">FTR 301-1.2(c);</a> and <a href="#">Comptroller General (CG) Decision B-270446 (2/11/97)</a>
Invitational Family Travel	Yes	N/A	Yes	Local Line Officer	ASC - B&F - Travel	<a href="#">FSH 1309.19, Chapter 30 and 40;</a> <a href="#">FTR 301-1.2(c);</a> and <a href="#">Comptroller General (CG) Decision B-270446 (2/11/97)</a>
Service Attendance (Funeral/Memorial) <sup>5</sup>	Yes	Yes	N/A	See Note 5	ASC - HRM - Pay Policy	<a href="#">FSH 6109.11, Chapter 30, Sec. 38.2, para. 11</a>
	Yes	No	N/A	See Note 5	ASC - HRM - Pay Policy	<a href="#">FSH 6109.11, Chapter 30, Sec. 38.2, para. 11</a>
	No	N/A	N/A	See Note 5	ASC - HRM - Pay Policy	<a href="#">FSH 6109.11, Chapter 30, Sec. 38.2, para. 11</a>
Honor Guard/Watch	Yes	Yes	N/A	Local Line Officer	FAM	<a href="#">FSH 1309.13, Chapter 50, Section 53</a>
	Yes	No	N/A	Chief	FAM	<a href="#">FSH 1309.13, Chapter 50, Section 53</a>
Posthumous Non-Monetary Service Recognition Awards	Yes	N/A	N/A	Local Line Officer	CFO - Financial Policy	<a href="#">FSM 6510</a>
Other Support Expenses <sup>6</sup>	Yes	N/A	N/A	Local Line Officer	CFO - Financial Policy	<a href="#">FSH 6109.11, Chapter 30;</a> <a href="#">FTR 303-70.1;</a> and <a href="#">FTR 303-70.4</a>
Determining Final Time & Attendance	Yes	N/A	N/A	Supervisor	ASC - HRM - Pay Policy	<a href="#">FSH 6109.11, Chapter 10</a>

## Death, Serious Injury, and Medical Emergency

**Line of Duty Death (LODD)** is defined as (1) death that occurs as a (2) direct and proximate result of personal injury (3) sustained in the performance of official duties or in travel status, (4) acting within the scope of his/her employment.

<sup>1</sup> **Firefighter Work/Rest Schedule:** Applies to Types 1-5. Time off supplementary to mandatory days off. ASC-HRM recognizes guidance updated by FAM, found in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, NWCG Handbook 2, PMS 902, posted on the following website:

<https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/products/pms902.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> **Paying for Emergency Medical Care (Non-LODD):** (e.g., twisted intestine, heart attack) Employee's medical issues occurring at the home unit are a personal expense of the employee. Personal insurance covers medical and transportation expenses.

<sup>3</sup> **Autopsy:** (Non-LODD and Not in TDY status) Personal insurance covers the cost associated with performing an autopsy. The Firefighter's Autopsy Protocol: [https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/firefighter\\_autopsy\\_protocol.pdf](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/firefighter_autopsy_protocol.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> **Escort(s) for injured/deceased:** If escorts are non-FS employees, the FTR authorizes up to 3 family members. FTR §301-31.2.

<sup>5</sup> **Service Attendance (Funeral/Memorial):**

- Employee death in the line of duty – 25 may attend in an official capacity (TC-01) and only the Chief can approve more than 25.
- Employee death not in the line of duty – 5 may attend in an official capacity (TC-01) and only the Chief can approve more than that.
- Non-employee death – 0 may attend in an official capacity (TC-01) and only the Chief can approve more than that.
  - Line Officers have authority to grant Admin Leave (TC-66) not official time [TC-01] like the Chief to attend the funeral. Line Officers may coordinate with HRM-Pay Policy for these types of circumstances.

<sup>6</sup> **Other Support Expenses:** (e.g., American Flags, playbills, etc.) Consult the Financial Policy staff within the Washington Office for further guidance on appropriate expenses.

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**Disclaimer:** *This Line Officer's guide is a quick reference sheet and should be used in conjunction with the Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks to capture full understanding.*