

5130 Suppression

June 16, 1982

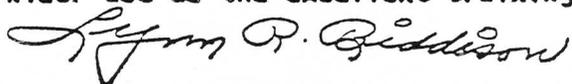
Basics of Fire Suppression

Chief

We often talk about the "basics" of fire suppression, but we are seldom specific about what we mean.

Enclosed is a list of what the "basics of fire suppression" are to me. I'm sure each person could add their own basics. I suggest this list be published in Fire Management Notes.

FSH 5109.12, Chapter 50, contains some excellent material on the basics of suppression. This was published in 1966 and is in need of updating. I recommend establishment of a small task force to accomplish this task. The work could be done by mail and telephone. By updating and reissuing this material, it will receive wider use as the excellent training material it is.



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Enclosure

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Reply to: 5130 Suppression

Date: June 16, 1982

Subject: Basics of Fire Suppression

To: Forest Supervisors

We often talk about the "basics" of fire suppression, but we are seldom specific about what we mean.

Forest Service Handbook 5109.12, Chapter 50, Suppression, has some excellent material on the basics of suppression.

Following are a few examples of what the "basics of fire suppression" mean to me. Each person may be able to add some additional items of their own to this list.

I. Initial Attack

1. Size up the fire.
2. Select key point for attack and go to work.
3. Continue work until fire is controlled. If initial attack is not successful, continue work on the flanks. NEVER give up and just sit and watch the fire.

II. Line Location

1. Avoid undercut lines and sharp angles in the line.
2. Construct a "black line" wide enough to control the fire but do not waste time building a freeway.
3. All lines across slopes must be trenched.
4. Limb trees on either side of the line.
5. Make use of "Hot Spot" crew in advance of main line construction.
6. Where possible, have crews take advantage of retardant drops. (Do not regularly drop retardant unless crews are there to take advantage of it).
7. Use line locator ahead of line building crew. (Can be part of crew overhead).
8. Fall all snags near line. (Both inside and outside of the burn).



9. When the fire has long fingers, cut across and burn out rather than building line around each finger.
10. Clean all lines to mineral soil.
11. Dispose of material so it does not interfere with mop-up.
12. Where possible, keep one foot in and one foot out of the burn.
13. Take advantage of natural barriers.

III. General

1. Sector Boss (Division Supervisor) walk their assigned section of the line at least three times per shift. (Need to be where problems are occurring or are anticipated).
2. Division Boss (Branch Director) walk their assigned section of the line at least once per shift. (Need to be where problems are occurring or are anticipated).
3. Line Boss (Operations Chief) must get out on the ground. The job can't be done solely from a pickup or helicopter.
4. Crew Boss (Crew Supervisor) take full responsibility for their crew both in and out of camp.
 - a. Be sure they are fed and have proper sleeping facilities in camp.
 - b. Be sure they are up, fed, and ready to go on the line by the time scheduled.
 - c. Be sure they produce expected work on the line.
 - d. Deal with problems as they occur and not after the fire.
5. Each supervisor, insure everyone he/she supervises performs job to standard. Do not accept poor performance. When it occurs, secure replacement and document the poor performance.
6. Have shift change accomplished so that crews are on line, ready to work before sunrise and before sunset.
7. Keep fire camps to a maximum of 500 people.
8. Use "Spike Camps" and "Coyote" tactics. (Keep crews on line with minimal creature comforts).
9. Make use of rations and lunches rather than "Hot Meals" for short period fires.
10. Do not use "Staging" areas for demobilization. Send crews and overhead directly from fire camp to airport or their home unit.

11. Do not depend on helicopters to move crews. If helicopter is not available, do not wait for one - walk to the line. (Same idea for ground transportation-if can't drive-get out and walk).
12. When mopping up with water, pair up nozzleman with a person with a hand tool.
13. Never leave the line until you are properly relieved and have briefed your relief.
14. Overhead will use every opportunity to train someone not doing the job properly.
15. Establish accomplishment objectives (expectations) for each crew or module. Have each Crew Boss (Supervisor); Sector Boss (Division Supervisor) report actual accomplishment to planning sector at end of shift.
16. Bring all tools and other equipment off the line at end of each shift and return them to camp.
17. Keep hand tools sharp and in good condition. (Sharpen tools each time you take a break).
18. Use Crew Boss (Crew Supervisor) time reports.
19. Flag spot fires over the main line so they can be checked.
20. Park vehicles so that roadways are not blocked.
21. When on line, leave keys in vehicle. When in camp turn keys in to transportation.
22. In mop-up - feel out hots spots with bare hands (Not with gloves on).
23. If a crew is split-up for helicopter flight to the line, start working as soon as you get to the line - don't wait for the remainder of the crew - they will catch up when they arrive.
24. Do not be critical of other agencies - assist them to meet control objectives.
25. Never take short cuts through the un-burned.
26. Every person must have only one boss.
27. Critique actions on every fire regardless of how small or large.
28. Bore in and bear down on standards.
29. Instill a sense of urgency in those you supervise.

30. Never abandon a fire until you are sure it is OUT.
31. If the fire runs out - DO NOT GIVE UP - back up and start again.
32. FIGHT FIRE AGGRESSIVELY.

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