



LEAD Time

Bias for Action

Leadership Category

Leaders in the wildland fire service are not only empowered but also duty-bound to act on a situation that is within our power to affect, even without direction from above.

This empowerment is not intended to encourage freelancing. In a high-risk environment, freelancing is a dangerous and unpredictable element, causing more harm than good. Ultimately, leaders are always accountable for their actions.

- A bias for action acknowledges wildfire as an environment where events do not always go according to plan,
- At times during an incident, one person may be the only one in a position to see what needs to be done and to make it happen,
- Time may not permit gathering all of the information that one might like to have, if you wait until you have all the facts to be 100% sure it will almost always be too late.

In these time critical situations, fire leaders use judgment, act within the intent of their leaders, work in unison with others, develop and communicate a plan, and then inform leaders of actions as soon as safely possible.

On a chaotic and rapidly developing wildfire, one person taking the initiative can make all the difference in seizing and taking advantage of an opportunity. Being hesitant, risk-averse, or indecisive can expose firefighters to greater long-term risks and translate into a waste of time, opportunity, energy, and money.

Discussion Points

- Discuss the difference between freelancing and a bias for action.
- Describe and Discuss instances of taking appropriate action and indecisiveness / non-action.
- How are some ways we train for situations requiring a bias for action?

References:

[Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program](#)

[Leading In the Wildland Fire Service](#)

[Tactical Decision Games Library](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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