



# LEAD Time

## Leader's Intent

*Leadership Category*

In fast-moving, dynamic situations, top-level decision makers cannot always incorporate new information into a formal planning process and redirect people to action within a reasonable timeframe.

We provide leader's intent so people closest to the scene of action can adapt plans and exercise initiative to accomplish the objective when unanticipated opportunities arise or when the original plan no longer suffices.

Leader's intent is a crucial element of effective operations because it reduces internal friction and empowers subordinates – even when chaotic conditions prevent the chain of command from communicating effectively.

Leader's intent is a clear, concise statement about what people must do to succeed in their assignments. It delineates three essential components:

1. Task - what is the objective or goal of the assignment?
2. Purpose – why the assignment needs to be done.
3. End state – how the situation should look when the assignment is successfully completed.

Within the framework of the defined end state, leaders can develop plans that include incident objectives, priorities, strategies, trigger points, and contingency plans.

### Discussion Points

- How were you most recently provided leader's intent?
- Describe a situation where leader's intent was utilized to adapt and achieve the desired end state.
- Describe a situation where leader's intent was not clear.
- Discuss how to gain leaders intent if it is not initially provided.

### References

[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#) (IRPG) page ix  
[Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program](#)  
[Leading In the Wildland Fire Service](#)

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**Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.**

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