



LEAD Time

Operational Tempo
Leadership Category

Operational tempo is the speed and intensity of our actions relative to the speed and intensity of unfolding events in the operational environment. Within this context, fire leaders plan, prepare, and execute operations proactively, rather than continuously being forced to react to the environment.

Successfully maintaining operational tempo is not solely about speeding up to match or exceed the pace of the environment. It is also about knowing when operations should slow down and why.

We are most vulnerable to accidents and errors when the operational tempo is changing, especially when it changes quickly. Maintaining good situation awareness in spite of change in operational tempo represents a considerable challenge.

The key to managing operational tempo successfully is monitoring the changing environment and capabilities of the team, and then applying good judgment to determine whether to push forward or pull back while making necessary planning and resource adjustments.

Discussion Points

- How do you maintain situational awareness in different operational tempos?
- When do you see this occurring most?
- Give an example of when you experienced changes in operational tempo that resulted in you feeling uncomfortable.

References:

[Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program](#)
[Leading In the Wildland Fire Service](#)
[Making Sound and Timely Decisions](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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