

The National Response Plan

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry

The Evolving Role of ESF-4



Description: The USDA Forest Service has the responsibility to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency through its role as Emergency Support Function #4 Coordinator (ESF-4), for implementing the Firefighting Annex under the National Response Plan (NRP). The Northeastern Area, Fire and Aviation Management provides initial response as Lead ESF-4 to three FEMA Regions, (I, II and III); and shares initial response in two others (Regions V and VII). Fifteen states within the Northeastern Area have Cooperative Fire Agreements with the Forest Service that authorize the states to assist on all-hazard incidents through the Robert T. Stafford Act.

Key Issues:

- The role of the ESF-4 in all-hazard response has continued to expand outside the “normal” mission of providing Incident Management Teams (IMTs) for managing distribution centers.
- The NRP tasks the Forest Service with the responsibility of mobilizing and managing all fire fighting resources on FEMA incidents.
- The Forest Service is recognized for its depth of knowledge in the Incident Command System, and as a source of experiential ICS training. Requests for training assistance from other agencies have been increasing annually.
- State and local fire and emergency agencies can provide additional all-hazard resources that have not been used because they lack National Wildfire Coordinating Group recognition.
- The amount of time dedicated to all-hazard response has had a significant impact on unit work plans.

Accomplishments:

- NA Fire and Aviation Management hosted two ESF-4 Training sessions in the Philadelphia area in 2005. Forty personnel completed the training.
- The NA took part in the NRP Rollout in April, 2005, staffing the USDA Forest Service display to answer questions about the NRP and the agency’s role as ESF-4.
- NA continues to provide the Fire Department of New York with experiential ICS training to help them increase their capacity to respond to future acts of terrorism and other forms of mass casualty disasters. Fifty FDNY firefighters are trained in various ICS positions at NWCG 310-1 standards.
- NA Fire and Aviation Management assisted FEMA in the delivery of the Response Operations III, ICS Training. In 2005, Fire & Aviation Management provided experienced ICS coaching staff to help instruct six FEMA training sessions in the Northeastern Area.

Future Direction:

- Support states and local Fire Departments in the development of interagency IMTs.
- Develop Cooperative Incident Management Agreements with States and supporting agencies.
- Continue to support FDNY to develop all-hazard IMTs.
- Facilitate the use of state and local IMTs on FEMA incidents.



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