



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
2400

**March 4, 2019**

## Memorandum

To: Regional Directors  
Attention: Park Superintendents

From: Acting Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection 

Subject: Leader's Intent: 2019 Wildland Fire Season

The 2019 Fire Year has now begun in the southern tier of the country and it historically will progress northward and westward as it also moves south from Alaska. We do not know how severe the season will be in 2019, but we do know we will have wildfires.

The *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, commonly referred to as the Red Book, describes the nature of wildland fire operations as, "...a complex, dynamic, and often unpredictable phenomenon. Fire operations require mobilizing a complex organization that includes management, command, support, and firefighting personnel, as well as aircraft, vehicles, machinery, and communications equipment. While the magnitude and complexity of the fire itself and of the human response to it will vary, the fact that fire operations are inherently dangerous will never change. A firefighter utilizing the best available science, equipment, training, and working within the scope of agency doctrine and policy, can still suffer serious injury or death." Unfortunately, National Park Service firefighter Brian Hughes' death on the Ferguson Fire in July 2018 reminds us that this Red Book statement is still accurate. We can give our firefighters the best chance of success by thorough preparation and management engagement where appropriate.

To that end, I am asking you to prepare yourself and your staff. It will be helpful to review the Agency Administrator Management Performance Requirements for Fire Operations found in chapter three of the [2019 Red Book](#). My intent is that you review this material so that you are reminded of your role and the expectations placed on you in order to be as well prepared as possible for wildfires. Please take special note to ensure the following actions are completed:

1. Provide written delegation of authority to individual(s) responsible for wildland fire management activities to ensure they have an adequate level of operational authority.
2. Ensure the annual update to your Fire Management Plan has been completed.
3. Meet with your management team to review fire and aviation policies, roles, responsibilities, and delegations of authorities. Further discussion on critical safety issues and high-risk situations will help others understand your expectations in relation to safety and will help you all prepare.

4. Review safety policies, procedures and concerns with field fire and fire aviation personnel. The [2018 Incident Response Pocket Guide](#) (IRPG) contains a risk management process on page 1 and provides a guide on “How to Properly Refuse Risk” on page 19 if you choose to reference them and for use in the field.
5. Meet with your cooperators and review interagency agreements.
6. Ensure you are currently qualified as an [Agency Administrator \(AADM\)](#) or are working toward the qualification per agency policy found on page 90 of the [Red Book](#).
7. Refresh yourself and your designated approving officials in use of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System.

Monitoring and managing fatigue of incident response personnel and local unit employees supporting fire management activities is critically important. Adherence to the guidance beginning on page 10-13 of the [2018 NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management](#) under *Work/Rest, Length of Assignment, Days Off* will assist in this effort.

Finally, all employees, cooperators, contractors, and volunteers who participate in wildland fire activities have the duty to treat each other with respect and to maintain a work environment free of harassment and misconduct. This should be emphasized in your pre-season meetings and throughout the year.

Actively engaging with your fire management program staff will help you monitor fire danger conditions and the health and welfare of your employees. We can always hope for a mild fire season but we should prepare for the worst. The items listed above are a short list that will get you started.

cc: Deputy and Associate Regional Directors with Oversight of Wildland Fire Management  
Chief, Fire and Aviation Management  
Branch Chief, Wildland Fire  
NPS Memorandums