

2026 WFDSS & ISAP Integration for CIMTs

Overview

When used together, ISAP and the WFDSS decision provide clear strategic direction that then tiers to tactics that are prioritized around the current Critical Values at Risk (CVAR) at any given time.

The guiding principle behind the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) as the authoritative source is to provide the leader's intent regarding the management strategy of an incident in a clear and concise manner that can be tiered to on-the-ground implementation (tactical action), so that tactics and management strategy are aligned.

The Incident Strategic Alignment Process (ISAP) helps Fire Managers, CIMTs, Operations, and Agency Administrators, Line Officers, Bureau Advisors, and any other authorized representative for the jurisdictional unit(s), align strategy with tactics. While risk changes throughout an incident, based on factors such as weather, fire behavior, resource availability, and social or political factors, and may rise or fall to a level where a particular Critical Value is no longer at risk, the importance of any particular Critical Value At Risk (CVAR) does not change.

The WFDSS Decision should be Published early and as often as needed to reflect changing conditions, guide decision-making, document those decisions and to inform the ISAP process or other tactical planning process.

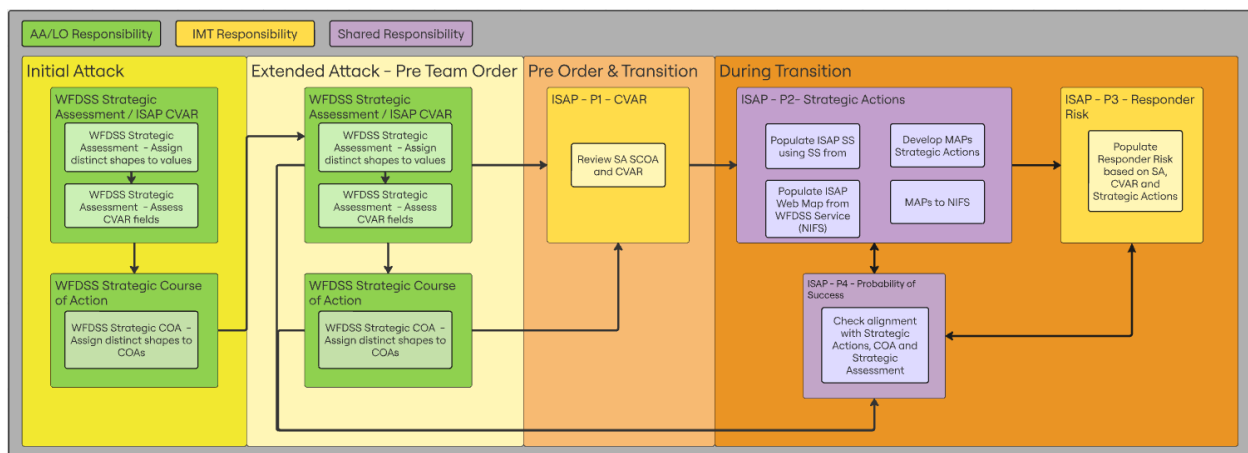


Figure 1: Optimal decision flow WFDSS to ISAP to IAP / Implementation

When an order for an Incident Management Team is placed, the factors driving the request should be documented in a published WFDSS decision (requirement for DOI per the 2026 Redbook also required to have a completed PMS 236 Part B, C, D and E) so

that a clear picture of risk, the extent of the area to be managed, any CVARs are identified and prioritized, a clear strategy is defined, and the reasoning for the need of a CIMT is documented in the Organization Assessment (PMS 236, parts C & D).

The IC of an incoming IMT will also need the published decision to meet their responsibilities in developing incident objectives, and tactics, consistent with the Delegation of Authority and the latest published strategic decisions in WFDSS. Having a published WFDSS decision can also facilitate an initial implementation of the ISAP process prior to Transition or the arrival of the entire incident management team. Since CVAR is the first pillar of ISAP, having CVAR(s) defined allows the CIMT to move on to pillars 2-4 (Strategic Actions, Responder Risk and Probability of Success). The sooner the CIMT can begin defining initial Strategic Actions, assessing the Responder Risk and assessing the Probability of Success the sooner they can begin to build and implement tactical plans aligned with the Incident Management Strategy and by extension, the sooner the Team and the on-the-ground resources can begin successfully accomplishing incident objectives.

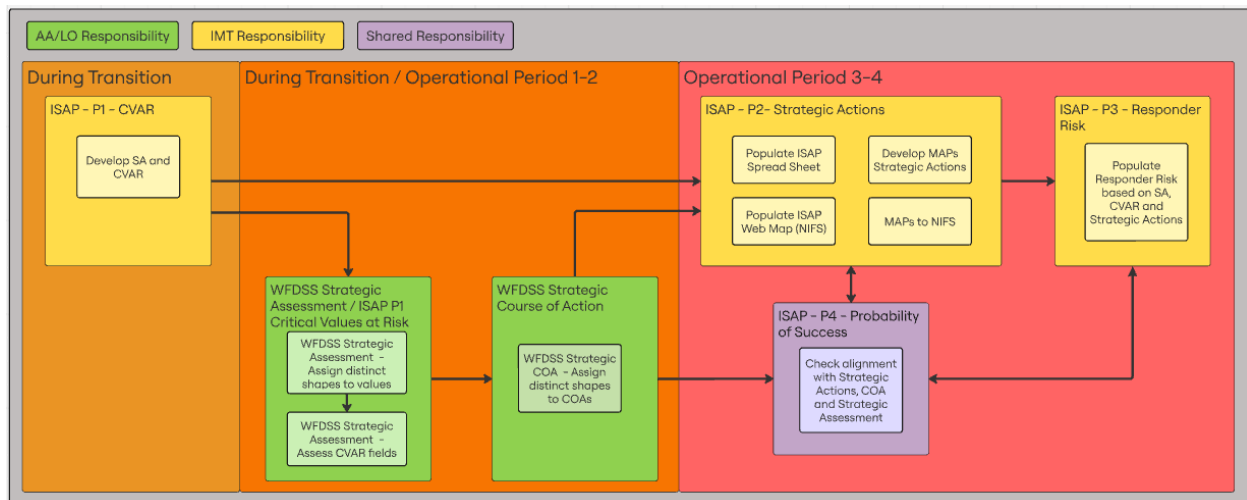


Figure 2: Decision flow WFDSS to ISAP to IAP / Implementation delayed, beginning during transition.

The alternative to beginning the ISAP process prior to transition is to begin the process during or after transition but this can significantly delay the development of clear incident objectives and a clear picture of WHY fire fighters are being asked to complete various tactical actions and take on the risks associated with those actions.

WFDSS and ISAP and the IAP

The principle that guides many of the planning processes used in wildland fire management is the Risk Informed Decision Process (RIDP). The RIDP is predicated on gathering intelligence, doing analysis based on that intelligence, and using that intelligence and analysis to develop a solution to a problem, double checking the solution then implementing and constantly evaluating if your solution is being effective. WFDSS, ISAP, and the Incident Action Plan (IAP) all represent various parts of this process. The image below shows how WFDSS, ISAP, and the IAP and how those processes relate to each other, can build on one another, what parts of the RIDP they address, as well as how they should defer to the authority of each other's information.

WFDSS, ISAP, and IAP can be used independent of each other if desired but extra efforts will need to be made to fill the gaps in the RIDP that particular process does not address.

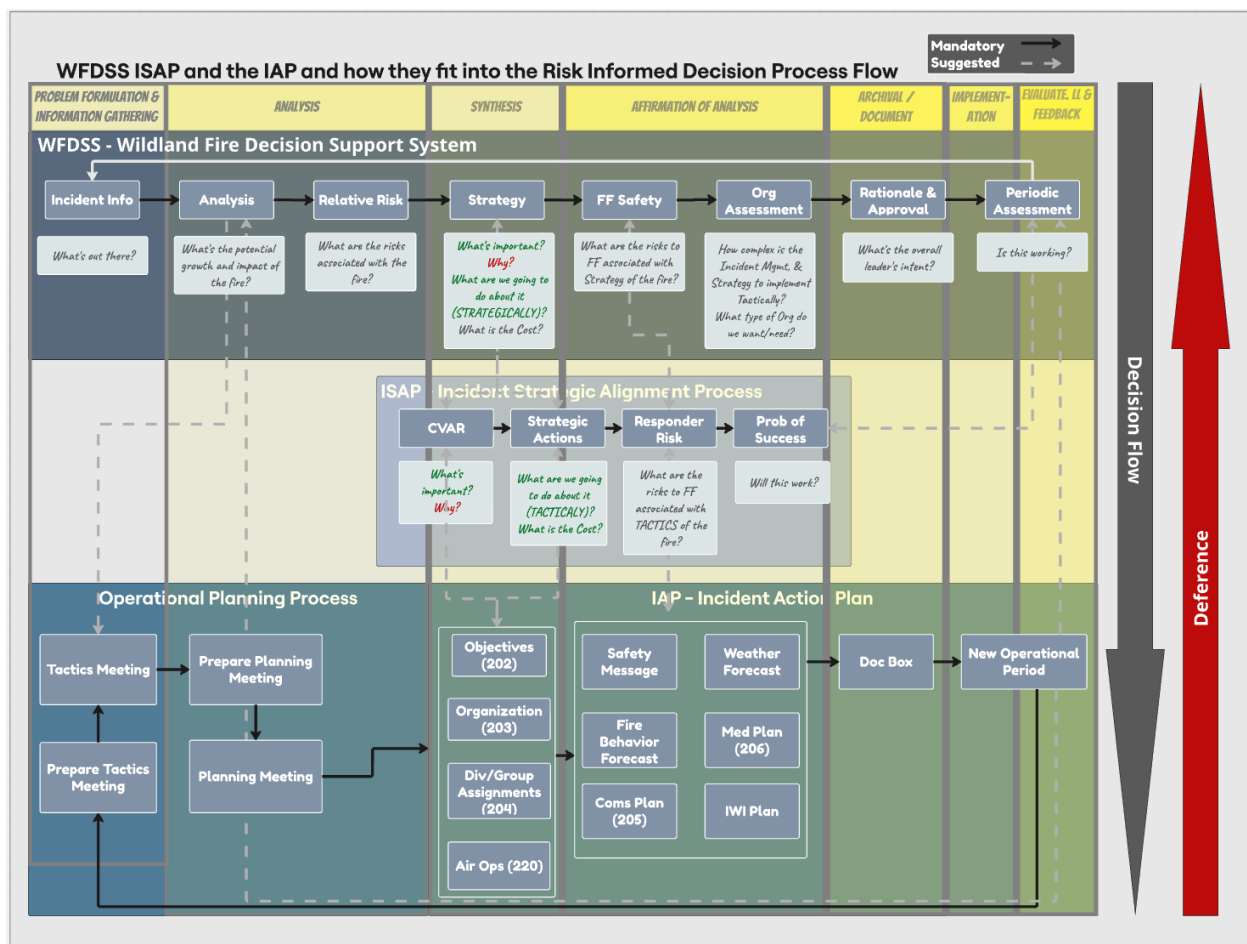


Figure 3: Tiering of WFDSS, ISAP and IAP

ISAP Pillar One and WFDSS – Critical Values at Risk

The Objective and Requirements section of WFDSS has been renamed **Strategic Assessments** (SAs) and has been updated to include a variety of categories of concerns and considerations such as Safety Concerns, Protection Objectives, and others. Each Strategic Assessment can also be optionally appended with **Critical Values at Risk (CVAR)** information that can be turned on and off as the risk to Critical Values changes.

When considering values in the Strategic Assessment, section it is important to:

- Keep values that are geographically separated as separate shapes that can be individually assessed as Critical Values at Risk.
- Ensure that the Planning Area fully contains any Strategic Assessment or Critical Values at Risk.
- Ensure you have a representative and current FSPRO analysis that can be used for assessing the probability that any given value might become a Critical Value at Risk given current and expected fire behavior.
- Ensure Strategic Assessments give side bars and context to the Strategic Course(s) of Action in the context of LRMP and don't simply restate LRMP or other applicable guidance.
- WFDSS has been built to be scalable and allow splitting and combining of SAs where appropriate, review the decision frequently to ensure the grouping or splitting of SAs is appropriate for current incident conditions and potential subsequent Strategic Actions.

ISAP Pillars Two Through Four and WFDSS

The Strategic Actions of ISAP should be guided by the WFDSS Strategic Course of Action (SCOA) and Strategic Assessments (SAs) including applicable Critical Values at Risk (CVARs), so those items must be addressed before moving on to determination of Strategic Actions (ISAP Pillar 2), the associated Responder Risk (ISAP Pillar 3) or the Probability of Success (ISAP Pillar 4).

The SCOA in WFDSS is spatial and may apply to the whole planning area or smaller spatial extents in the planning area depending on LRMP guidance, what the SCOA(s) outline as the desired outcome, and the constraints. All the information and thought processes, including the tradeoffs of various alternatives that were considered in the Strategic Comparison section need to be recorded as clear text as possible within the WFDSS Decision. Knowing these details will help define success and subsequently determine the Probability of Success of a particular Strategy and the associated Strategic Actions.

WFDSS & ISAP Integration Best Practices

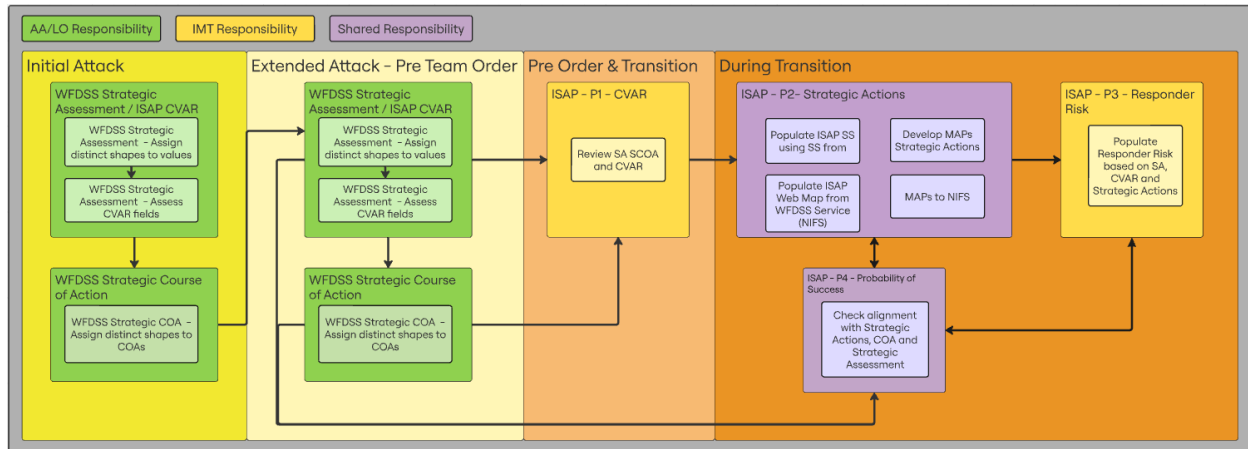


Figure 1: Optimal decision flow WFDSS to ISAP to IAP / Implementation

Initial Attack

Although a decision is not required by policy or guidance for initial attack incidents, going through the WFDSS Risk Informed Decision Process for active incidents will help with general situational awareness for the season, a particular unit's values and concerns, as well as increasing a users familiarity with the WFDSS application. Remember that just because you start a decision does not mean you have to publish, should the fire be caught, but should the fire escape initial attack and a team need to be ordered, you will be that much further along toward a published decision. To utilize the fire behavior modeling capabilities of WFDSS, a decision must be initiated.

Extended Attack

Per the 2026 Redbook, All fires will have a published decision within WFDSS when they: escape initial attack, exceed initial response, or include objectives with both protection and resource benefit elements consistent with land management planning documents. If a decision was started during initial attack, completing the initial decision as the fire moves into extended attack should be a light lift. Completing a decision is also necessary to get a completed Risk Complexity Analysis (PMS 236 Part C & D), which is required to place an order for a CIMT per the DRAFT 2026 Redbook.

Spending some extra time on the decision prior to placing an order for a CIMT is advised as it has the added advantage of having Critical Values at Risk (CVAR), Objectives,

Requirements and a clear Strategy and accompanying Strategic Course of Action outlined prior to initial discussions with the CIMT. Should a CIMT not be needed, having clear objectives, requirements, and associated SCOA will still assist with clearly communicating leader's intent all the way down to the on-the-ground firefighter.

Publishing a decision sooner than later also ensures that the decision documents the information the decision maker had at the time of the decision and in effect acts as snapshot in time should there be future investigations or reviews. Publishing often will help record the adjustments in management direction based on changes in available information and conditions through time.

Agency Administrators

- Ensure the decision contains all CVARs and that the SCOA clearly explains the WHY of the Strategy and is Published.
- Contact a SOPL and a LTAN to ensure all the information needed to determine Risk to Critical Values and to inform the Risk Complexity Analysis – Relative Risk, Organization Assessment and Complexity Analysis is included in the decision.

Operations

- Ensure current tactical actions are aligned with strategy.

LTAN / Analyst

- Review pending and published decisions to ensure fire behavior, fuels, climatology and fire weather information is up to date and as complete as possible.
- Ensure information or analyses are current and that AAs are briefed to ensure they know what has changed since the last analyses and information update, so they can ensure the decision is still valid in light of the information changes.

Pre Order & Transition

The sooner that coordination with the incoming CIMT can be made the better, ideally those connections will include AA/LO, IC (if possible) Ops, the SOPL and the LTAN. Coordination should be focused on the CVARs and how they are going to be addressed per the overall Strategy and associated Course of Action. In essence, this is the beginning of the ISAP

process, specifically Pillar 1 but anchored in the WFDSS Decision to ensure LMP guidance is met.

Agency Administrators

- Ensure the decision contains all CVARs and that the SCOA clearly explains the WHY of the Strategy and is Published.
- Contact SOPL and LTAN to ensure all the information needed to determine Risk to Critical Values and to inform the Risk Complexity Analysis – Relative Risk, Organization Assessment and Complexity Analysis is included in the decision.

Operations

- Upon learning of a potential order, review the published and pending decisions and ensure a clear picture of CVAR and the ‘WHY’ of the strategy is clear.
- Contact IC & AAs to verify that initial Strategic Assessments and associated CVAR are current and complete
- Contact SOPL/Strat Ops and LTAN to ensure all the information needed to determine responder risk and probability of success is current or can be gathered ASAP.

LTAN / Analyst

- Review pending and published decisions to ensure fire behavior, fuels, climatology and fire weather information is current and as complete as possible.
- Ensure information or analyses are current and that AA/LOs are briefed to ensure they know what has changed since the last analyses and information update, so they can assess if the decision is still valid in light of the information changes.

Transition

Reviewing the CVAR and the current SCOA in the preorder/pre-transition will set the stage for incoming Operations to develop Strategic Actions that are in line with CVAR and tier to the incident SCOA and Strategy during transition from either the unit resources or the CIMT in place. Having CVAR information in place ensures that when incoming Operations ties in with the in-place Operations that the ongoing tactics’ probability of success can be weighed considering the CVARs and any necessary adjustments can be made to the assessment of the CVARs, Strategic Course of Action or Strategic Actions.

Adjustments to Strategic Actions during the transition also sets the stage to move to Pillar 3 and 4 of ISAP and assess not only the risk to responders but also the probability of the proposed Strategic Actions being successful. It would also be advisable to make any adjustments to the WFDSS decision to ensure that all Strategic Actions are in line with the Strategy and Course of Action as outlined in the WFDSS decision.

Agency Administrators

- Ensure decision is up to date, ready for ISAP discussion, and most importantly published.

Operations

- Prepare Strategic Actions based on the Strategic Course of Action and CVARs
- Prepare Responder Risk assessment with all necessary personnel so that a complete picture of proposed action can be given to AAs
- Contact LTAN/Analyst to get information to support Probability of Success

LTAN / Analyst

- Ensure information or analyses are current and that AA/LOs are briefed to ensure they know what has changed since the last analyses and information update, so they can assess if the decision is still valid and as complete as possible to inform ISAP discussion.