EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BRITISH COLUMBIA

Office of the Fire Commissioner

Review Draft

PROVINCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION PLAN

USER MANUAL

Wildfire Season 2012

TAB i

Provincial Resource Mobilization Plan

USER MANUAL

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TAB 1

Introduction and Purpose of this Manual

1. Introduction and Purpose

The challenges posed by major wildland-urban interface fires in the province are enormous. Each year, from about May until September, there are significant risks of major interface fires, particularly (though not exclusively) in the province's interior. Interface fires pose a significant threat to communities and often overwhelm local fire fighting resources. A coordinated response from Local Authorities and the Province is critical to ensuring that interface fires can be fought effectively and efficiently.

For the purposes of this Manual, local governments and authorities – which include municipalities, regional districts and improvement districts – are referred to as "Local Authorities". The provincial government and its ministries are collectively referred to as the "Province". Users are directed to TAB **, which contains a list of defined terms and acronyms used in this Manual.

This Manual constitutes the Provincial Resource Mobilization Plan (the "Mobilization Plan"). The Mobilization Plan comprises the following:

- identification of how responsibilities and jurisdiction are shared between local authorities and relevant provincial ministries, including Emergency Management British Columbia ("EMBC") and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations ("Ministry of Forests");
- the principles which underlie the provision of support – either in the form of resource mobilization and or financial assistance – by the province to Local Authorities in relation to wildfire or interface events;
- a description of the situations in which EMBC, through the Office of the Fire Commissioner ("OFC") and the Provincial Emergency Plan ("PEP"), will provide assistance, and the types of assistance that are available;
- the process which Local Authorities need to follow to obtain assistance;
- the OFC's procedures for identifying, pre-qualifying and dispatching requested assistance;
- command, control and communications issues;
- financial responsibility and filing of reimbursement or compensation claims; and
- the OFC's proposed spring and fall consultation processes.

In addition, there are summary checklists for both Local Authorities and for fire departments which are mobilized in response to an OFC request.

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The Mobilization Plan is based upon and consistent with existing provincial emergency planning, including the BC Emergency Response Management System, and existing statutory authorities and responsibilities. It is intended to provide the stakeholders with an understanding of the roles played by the multiple layers of authority involved during an interface fire and to facilitate Local Authorities' efforts to obtain timely provincial assistance.

References:

Emergency Program Act
Wildfire Act
Fire Services Act
Community Charter
Local Government Act

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TAB 2

Statutory Authority, Jurisdiction and Responsibilities

Introduction

There are multiple layers of authority and responsibility involved in dealing with wildfires and interface events. In broadest terms, there is a basic division of responsibility between:

- Local Authorities, which are responsible for structural and wildfire fire fighting within defined service areas and maintaining capacity and processes for addressing local emergencies; and
- the Province, which has a broad mandate to combat wildfire, and in times of emergency, to provide assistance to Local Authorities.

The Province addresses its responsibilities through two different ministries:

- Wildfire control is the direct responsibility of the Wildfire Management Branch ("WMB"), a division of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations ("Ministry of Forests");
- Emergency assistance for Local Authorities is the responsibility of EMBC, an umbrella organization operating under the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General ("PSSG"), which, for the purposes of wildfires and interface events, incorporates the activities of the following two organizations:
    - the OFC, which manages interface fire mitigation efforts, and
    - PEP, which supports Local Authorities in managing the consequences of interface fires (including matters such as evacuations, emergency social services, etc.). PEP is also responsible for issuing task numbers which Local Authorities and OFC-mobilized fire resources use to track eligible expenditures during an interface fire for subsequent reimbursement by the Province.

Statutory Authority and Jurisdiction

The following outlines the statutory authority under which the Local Authorities and Province operate in relation to wildfires and interface events:

1. Local Authorities

Local Authorities derive their powers from either the *Community Charter* (in the case of municipalities) or the *Local Government Act* (in the case of regional districts and improvement districts). Other than the City of Vancouver, there is no statutory requirement that Local Authorities establish and maintain fire fighting services; however, once a fire department has been established it must be operated in accordance with the *Fire Services Act* and the regulations and orders made thereunder.

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Municipal governments and regional districts are also required to establish and maintain emergency plans in accordance with section 6(2) of the *Emergency Program Act* and the *Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation.* The vast majority of those plans conform to the B.C. Emergency Response Management System ("BCERMS"). If required, municipal and regional district governments can avail themselves of emergency powers under the *Emergency Program Act*, by declaring a state of local emergency pursuant to section 12.

a. Local Fire Departments

Local fire departments derive their authority from their establishment and operational criteria bylaws passed by their responsible Local Authority. In each case, however, the powers and authorities granted to the fire chiefs, officers and fire fighters are limited to the jurisdictional authority of the entity creating the department. In the case of a municipal fire department, this typically means the boundaries of the municipality. In the context of wildfires and interface events, local fire departments also rely on:

- Mutual aid/automatic aid agreements (when going to the support of another local fire department);
- Ministry of Forests/WMB Operational Guideline #1.06.01 (in connection with initial attacks on wildfires proximate to their local jurisdictional boundaries); and
- Orders or requests received in connection with a declaration of a local or provincial state of emergency. These orders or requests may be channeled through the Emergency Operations Centre ("EOC"), a Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre ("PREOC") or the OFC. Such orders may be supplemented by additional directions, permission or authority provided by the fire department's Local Authority, in addition to PEP task numbers, where appropriate.

Responsibilities in Relation to Wildfire and Interface Events.

The following sections describe the overarching responsibilities of the Local Authorities and the Province in relation to wildfire and interface events. It should be noted that the primary response obligation changes depending on whether the fire starts within or outside of an existing fire suppression area.

The intention here is to describe the general ambit of responsibility, rather than provide a detailed examination of how those responsibilities are met.

1. WMB

WMB is the provincial agency primarily responsible for combating wildfires within British Columbia. As a matter of policy, this generally is taken to mean it has the primary responsibility for combating such fires on Crown land. Since 2003, however, WMB has become increasingly active in assessing threats to structures (and critical infrastructure) at the wildland – urban interface, and requesting the OFC to address those risks, at the same time that WMB is managing the wildfire. Indeed, much of the focus of the WMB's wildfire effort is now

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concentrated on wildfires that produce risk to assets ***in addition to*** wildland values – so, interface fires, critical infrastructure at risk and similar situations. In part, this approach reflects a better assessment of at-risk values as well as a change in the method of managing purely wildland fires (i.e., fires where neither lives nor other values are materially at risk).

a. Unprotected Areas

WMB is primarily responsible for combating wildfires in unprotected areas. It may, under Operational Guideline #1.06.01, authorize (and compensate) a proximate local fire department to commence an initial attack on such a wildfire. It should be noted that the compensation arrangement under this WMB operational guideline is entirely separate from the one contemplated by the *Emergency Program Act*.

If an interface situation exists in an unprotected area, WMB *may* arrange for some level of structural fire protection for the at-risk values. This determination is made based on a series of operational factors which include: the availability of resources; the values at risk; the accessibility of the structures; the proximity of reliable water sources; and the nature, speed and extent of the wildfire. It generally will arrange for this protection through the OFC.

b. Existing Fire Suppression Areas

Where a Local Authority is experiencing a wildfire or an interface event in an established fire protection area, WMB (subject to the availability of resources) will provide wildland fire response in support of the Local Authority. WMB will not charge the Local Authority for the support it provides; conversely, in general WMB will not compensate the Local Authority for carrying out fire protection activities within the Local Authority's own fire protection area. The only exception to the latter rule is if the wildfire/interface event involved Crown land within the fire protection area (e.g., a provincial park).

2. Local Authorities

Where there is an established fire protection area, the relevant Local Authority has primary responsibility for combating wildfires and interface fires within that area. It is responsible for the direct costs of its own fire suppression operations and may only seek assistance with incremental costs (e.g., overtime) in accordance with the *Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation*.

In addition, Local Authorities are empowered or required to:

- Develop mutual/automatic aid agreements with neighboring communities Develop and regularly test a local Emergency Plan **(statutory requirement for municipalities and regional districts);**
- Du**ring an emergency, initiate the Emergency Plan and set up and oper**ate an EOC **(required as part of the Emergency Plan; necessary to activate assistance from the Province);**

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- In the case of wildfires and interface events, request the assistance of WMB, the OFC and PEP when the emergency is beyond the local fire department's capacity **;**
- Declare a Local State of Emergency when required or necessary **(power granted to municipalities and regional districts under the *Emergency Program Act)***
- In the event of a request for assistance to the Province, the Local Authority and its staff are responsible for understanding the procedures and pre-approval requirements necessary to obtain provincial financial assistance **(required: see cautionary notes in Principles 9 & 10 in TAB 3.).**

3. EMBC

In connection with a wildfire or an interface event, EMBC operates through the OFC (in relation to structural fire protection) and PEP (in relation to other emergency assistance to Local Authorities).

a. The OFC

Where there is an interface event, and additional structural fire fighting resources are required, the OFC is responsible for approving the request and then locating, dispatching and managing those additional resources.

(i) Fires within an Existing Fire Suppression Area

A Local Authority may make a request to the OFC for additional structure protection or other fire fighting assets when facing an interface event that is beyond the capabilities of its local resources. This request should be directed from the relevant EOC to either the PREOC or, if not activated, the PEP Duty Manager. The OFC will review the request in consultation with the Local Authority and (where relevant) the WMB. Resources dispatched and/or approved by the OFC are the financial responsibility of EMBC. Resources available include:

- Traditional fire suppression apparatus and crews (which may include mutual aid departments of the affected Local Authority);
- Structure Protection Units ("SPUs");
- Structure Protection Specialists ("SPSs"; and
- Other equipment, apparatus and personnel as may be necessary and are available.

(ii) Fires outside of an Existing Fire Suppression Area

Where there is an interface event occurring outside of an existing fire protection area, any request for structure protection assistance is made by the WMB. These requests will be routed from incident command, through the RWCC and PWCC to the OFC. The OFC will review the request and identify and dispatch appropriate resources. Structure protection resources dispatched pursuant to such a request are the financial responsibility of the Ministry of Forests.

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NOTE: if there is a Local Authority EOC activated in response to the particular interface event, the EOC must be kept informed of the status of all requests for structure protection.

(iii) Provincial Fire Department

In rare circumstances, where there has been a provincial declaration of emergency under the *Emergency Program Act*, the OFC may also be given direct control over fire fighting resources within the province. Where this occurs, fire fighting resources seconded by the OFC will be compensated through EMBC.

b. PEP

PEP provides assistance to Local Authorities dealing with the consequences of wildfires and interface events. These responsibilities are not changed by the location or nature of the fire. PEP will assist Local Authorities in dealing with matters such as evacuations, related emergency social services, and similar matters.

In terms of managing eligible expenses during an emergency situation, PEP will issue an incident task number to the Local Authority References**:**

Emergency Program Act
Wildfire Act
Fire Services Act
Community Charter
Local Government Act

"Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation" made under the *Emergency Program Act.*
"Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation" made under the *Emergency Program Act*

WMB, "Operational Guideline #1.06.01" (last updated 2008).

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TAB 3

Fundamental Principles

Introduction.

Given the overlapping jurisdictions and responsibilities involved in relation to wildfires and interface events, it is not surprising that, over the years, a number of different policies, procedures and guidelines have been issued by various ministries at various times. This situation has given rise to confusion for some affected stakeholders, particularly Local Authorities.

Wildfires and interface events can occur and expand with astonishing rapidity. For some Local Authorities, it may be the first occasion on which they have had to activate their emergency planning on a broad scale and attempted to utilize their EOCs and emergency powers. Questions about eligible expenses and expense authorization forms should be directed to the PREOC or to the PEP Duty Manager.

In assessing claims, the Province will utilize a principled approach based on existing statute, regulation and published policy.

The Fundamental Principles.

These principles are based on existing statutory and regulatory authority and responsibility, including the current interpretation of those obligations as reflected in policies and guidelines adopted by EMBC and WMB. These principles seek to strike an appropriate balance between the obligations of Local Authorities and the obligations of the Province.

1. **The Province will help.**

   The Province will assist Local Authorities facing a wildfire or interface event, whether that event occurs within an established fire protection zone, or in an unprotected area. The statutory authority underlying the provision of this assistance is found in the *Emergency Program Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.

2. **Local Authorities must meet certain operational and financial obligations.**

   A Local Authority has primary operational responsibility for combating wildfires and interface fires within its existing fire protection area. It also shares financial responsibility with the Province, in accordance with these principles.

3. **Structures and businesses in unprotected areas face greater risk.**

   For unprotected areas, the level, nature and extent of structural fire protection that will be provided is determined at the discretion of the WMB. The decision to provide structural protection is based on a series of operational factors, including available resources, the values at risk, structure survivability, accessibility, proximity to water sources, and the nature, speed and extent of the wildfire involved. Residents in unprotected areas need to understand that there is a possibility that no or only limited structural fire protection can be provided.

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4. **Local Authorities need to plan for a period of self-sufficiency.**

   A Local Authority must establish and utilize reasonable mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring Local Authorities to combat interface fires in its established fire protection areas. Local Authorities need to plan to be self-sufficient for a period of up to 24 hours.

5. **Local Authorities need to take certain steps to access assistance from the Province.**

   When facing a major wildfire or interface event – one which is beyond its capability to handle – a Local Authority must activate its emergency plan, initiate its EOC and advise both WMB and EMBC of the situation in order to obtain assistance from the Province. To avoid problems with claims after an event, Local Authorities should understand and adhere to all EMBC policies for authorizing expenses. Staff at the PREOCs (or the EMBC Duty Manager) are available to review and approve expense authorization forms ("EAFs").

6. **Extended interface events are not standard mutual aid calls.**

   EMBC recognizes and accepts that an extended interface event is not a standard mutual aid call. Mutual aid departments will transition to provincial compensation if their presence is required for an extended period during an interface event and notification is provided in accordance with Principle #5.

7. **WMB will assist Local Authorities in fighting wildfires.**

   Subject to the availability of resources, WMB will assist a Local Authority in combating wildfires within its fire protection area. WMB will not seek compensation from the Local Authority for this assistance; WMB, however, has no financial responsibility for the costs or expenses incurred by Local Authority in such situations. The only exception regarding compensation, is where a Local Authority has dealt with a wildfire on Crown land (e.g., a Provincial Park) located within its fire protection area. Some or all of the costs of this response may be recoverable from WMB if the procedures in OG#1.06.01 are followed. See TAB 4B.

8. **Reimbursable expenses and costs are defined by Regulation.**

   In relation to an interface event in an established fire protection area, the expenses for which a Local Authority is entitled to be reimbursed or compensated are established in (or subject to limitation by) the *Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation* made under the *Emergency Program Act*. Questions about eligible expenses should be directed to the PREOC or to the EMBC Duty Manager. Claims for expenses incurred should be directed to EMBC.

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TAB 4

Resource Activation Process

1. Overview

The activation of structure protection resources or additional structural fire fighting assets by the OFC, occurs when a request is made either by a Local Authority or the WMB. Of the two, more requests are received from the latter, as the WMB is primarily dealing with areas without structural fire protection. Thus, any wildfire advancing towards unprotected homes or commercial operations will potentially lead to a request for structure protection resources.

To clearly distinguish between the two situations, requests by Local Authorities are covered in TAB 4A.

In both cases, the goal is to describe the recommended process for activating these resources. Adherence to these processes will ensure greater certainty around issues such as financial responsibility and command, control and communications questions.

2. Limited Resources

The OFC will use reasonable best efforts to identify and dispatch resources in a timely fashion. In a bad fire season, however, resources may be in short supply, which can lead to delays in dispatching assistance. This is particularly true of SPUs, which are limited in number within the province.

EMBC strongly recommends that Local Authorities which face significant interface risks develop capacity to address those risks – including both proactive mitigation measures (such as the "FireSmart" program) and firefighting capacity in the form of SPUs and appropriate apparatus and training in local fire departments.

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TAB 4A

Resource Activation
Wildfire/Interface Event Inside an Existing Fire Suppression Area

Recommended Process for Local Authorities

When a local fire department is confronted by a wildfire/interface event within its fire protection area, which is beyond its capability to manage, it needs to take the following steps:

1. **Get immediate help.**
   Local mutual aid agreements should be activated and the local fire department should call for assistance from its mutual aid partners.

2. **Activate the BCERMS Process.**
   Incident command should request that the Local Authority initiate its emergency plan and activate its EOC.

3. **Seek Help from the WMB**
   The Local Authority should inform the relevant (nearest) RWCC and, if necessary, request assistance from WMB. When making a request for assistance, the following information should be included (to the extent known at the time):

   - the fire department involved and location of the fire;
   - what is burning and threatened;
   - nature of access to the fire
   - fire department equipment and agencies enroute or on scene;
   - fire potential and fire behaviour;
   - type of assistance required;
   - radio frequency, if known, and key contact at the scene;
   - water sources at or near the fire, if known; and
   - whether there are power lines, gas lines, other critical infrastructure or other known safety concerns.

   NOTE: The process for this communication with WMB is likely to be situation dependent. Ideally, the request to the RWCC would be sent from the EOC, however there are situations where, based on local knowledge and/or the urgency of the situation, the request may come directly from the local fire department's incident command. Local Authorities should define appropriate operational guidelines for their Fire Chiefs and incident commanders when faced with such a situation and review those guidelines for appropriateness with the local RWCCs and PREOCs.

   In certain circumstances a unified command should be established between the local fire department and WMB, particularly if there is a significant resource commitment provided

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by WMB (especially if the incident is projected to last beyond one operational period) and if the wildfire is projected to spread into forest/grass land for which WMB is responsible).

4. **Inform the PREOC/PEP Duty Manager; Local state of emergency**
   The EOC needs inform the PREOC and/or PEP Duty Manager of the emergency (including what actions are being taken or contemplated – for example, if it is known whether evacuations are likely to be necessary and details about mutual aid partners which have been activated). The EOC will also determine, based on event information from incident command, whether a local state of emergency is required.

5. **Request Additional Fire Protection Resources or Fire Fighting Assets**
   If the incident commander/local fire department determines that additional fire fighting resources are required:

   a. The incident commander should direct this request to his/her EOC, specifying what additional resources are needed.

   b. The EOC will make this request to the OFC through either the PREOC (if activated) or the PEP Duty Manager.

   c. EOCs should ensure that any additional resources requested by the Local Authority are properly authorized. See discussion in TAB 9.

6. EMBC, through its OFC representative, may, at OFC's discretion, become part of the unified command structure and will determine the length of deployment and the actual structure firefighting resources that are required.
   a.

   NOTE: Again, the routing of the request described above is recommended. Some situations may see the request for additional support being made immediately; in other cases, there may be time for planning, based on the size and speed of the particular wildfire event. Where unified command has been established between WMB and the local fire department, requests for assistance from the OFC should still be routed from incident command, to the EOC where the assets are to be used within the department's fire protection area. WMB should only be requesting assistance from the OFC where the structure protection resources are needed in areas outside of an existing fire protection area.

NOTE: The OFC's process for mobilizing and dispatching structure protection or other fire fighting resources is described in TAB 6.

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TAB 4A Last Updated:

Tab 5

OFC Procedures for Pre-qualifying Fire Resources

1. Introduction

Each year the OFC will pre-qualify fire resources throughout the province for potential deployment to interface situations, on an as needed basis. While participation in this process is voluntary, there are mutual advantages arising from widespread participation by Local Authorities who have the capacity to assist. First, widespread participation throughout the province helps ensure a timely response when and where the need arises. Second, for the participating Local Authority it means that it has a body of trained and experienced personnel, in the event of a wildfire/interface event in its own jurisdiction. Participants in OFC deployments have almost universally found the experience valuable.

2. Pre-qualifying process

Each calendar year, the OFC will distribute an Expression Of Interest ("EOI") to Local Authorities, inviting them to indicate whether they have fire resources available for deployment to interface events throughout the province during that year's wildfire season. When completing the EOI, Local Authorities should only indicate the elements within their fire service that they are prepared to commit, if requested.

Due to the varied make-up of fire departments throughout the Province all EOI's will require the approval of either the Local Authority's CAO, Regional District Fire Services Manager or, in the case of Improvement Districts, of the Improvement District Board, to be considered.

3. Fire Resource Personnel, Equipment and Apparatus

In general, the OFC utilizes SPUs when providing fire resource assistance to either WMB or Local Authorities; in rarer instances it also requires more traditional fire apparatus to provide structural fire protection during interface events. In recent years, SPUs have become the primary method for providing structural protection as opposed to the deployment of more traditional fire apparatus. This trend is likely to continue although it is possible that, during extreme fire seasons, more traditional fire apparatus will also be put into service.

Fire Resources

Fire resources include:

- SPUs (including towing and staff vehicle)
- Structural Protection Specialists (SPS)
- Incident Commanders
- Fire Fighters
- Other Fire Apparatus (including pumpers and bush vehicles)
- Tankers

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The reimbursement rate for different apparatus is based on its "typing". Detailed specification for SPUs, fire apparatus and tankers can be found in the *Inter-Agency Working Group Report* (last revised July 2010), along with the corresponding reimbursement rates. A copy of this report is attached as Appendix B to this TAB 5.

Staff Training and Qualification Requirements

Interface events and wildfires are dangerous. The size, speed and spread of a wildfire, and its behaviour characteristics, are materially different than traditional structure fires. All personnel provided by a local fire department to a request from the OFC must be sufficiently trained and knowledgeable to do the job effectively and, more importantly, safely. Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that the personnel they are sending are appropriately trained and meet all the necessary qualifications.

All fire fighting personnel shall have at a minimum NFPA 1001 or Basic Structure Fire Fighter training in the case of volunteer departments. In addition, the following qualifications are required:

Position	**Minimum Required Training**
Fire Fighters	Basic Structure Fire Fighter (NFPA 1001 preferred) ICS 100, S100, S115, S215
Structural Protection Specialists	Fire Officer II, ICS 300, S200, S115, S215, Fire Weather
Incident Commanders	Fire Officer II, ICS 300, S200, S215

The OFC hosts various training sessions around the province. For information on training dates, costs and availability please contact your OFC Regional Manager.

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Inter-Agency Working Group Report

The Inter-Agency Working Group Report is a collaborative effort between the OFC and the FCABC. It establishes the agreed reimbursement rates for apparatus, equipment and personnel mobilized by the OFC.

The most recent update of this report is dated July 2011.

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TAB 6

OFC Procedures for Mobilizing and Dispatching Fire Resources

1. Deployment

The following process and guidelines are in effect during the average fire season.

- Equipment, apparatus and personnel deployed by the OFC and reimbursed by the Province are considered a provincial resource and any decisions to re-deploy or release from an incident are determined by the OFC.
- EMBC, through its OFC representative, may, at OFC's discretion, become part of the unified command structure and will determine the length of deployment and the actual structure firefighting resources that are required.

In the event a Local Authority requires a release and return of their fire resources due to an unforeseen change in conditions in its local fire protection area, the OFC will endeavour to release the resources as quickly as possible.

Note: In the event of a Provincial Declaration of a State of Emergency, the Minister may empower the Fire Commissioner to take command of fire fighting resources within the province. Under these circumstances, the OFC may determine that it is necessary to deploy fire resources not previously identified as available by a Local Authority. During these rare situations, the OFC may deviate from guidelines described in this Manual.

2. Deployment Process

The deployment of resources to any area in the province will be determined by the OFC in consultation with WMB and the relevant Local Authorities, and in consideration of the following factors:

- the ability of WMB, local fire department and mutual aid partners to deal with the incident;
- values of threatened property (in the case of unprotected areas);
- geographic location of the incident compared to the available resources;
- expected duration of the deployment: and.
- resources needed and travel time required for additional fire resources to arrive on scene.

Once it has been determined by the OFC that additional fire resources are required and can arrive within the needed timeframe, the process of dispatching the appropriate resources will begin. Provincial staging locations will be established, with responding fire resources managed by OFC representatives or local incident commanders.

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3. Deployment Priorities

Deployment priorities will be dependent on operational factors, including the fire resources required, travel distances, fire conditions in neighbouring areas, equipment and apparatus availability, and the potential for fire escalation.

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TAB 7

Responsibilities of Participating Fire Resources

This TAB 7 sets out the responsibilities of participating (responding) fire resources when deploying out of jurisdiction in response to an OFC mobilization and deployment. Certain of the principles here (for example, ensuring that there is appropriate permission to deploy), are of universal application. Thus, while the section deals primarily with requests from the province through the OFC, local jurisdictions should consider following similar procedures when deploying out of jurisdiction.

1. Permission/Authority to Deploy

A fire department participating in an OFC mobilization must have the permission of, and be authorized by, their Local Authority prior to deploying to an incident. Mobilization requests will be directed to the Fire Chief or designate. It is the Fire Chief's responsibility to confirm his/her Local Authority has given permission for out of jurisdiction deployment.

2. Vehicle & Equipment Insurance (ICBC)

Provision of vehicle and equipment insurance is the responsibility of the participating Local Authority. Ensure that coverage includes or is amended to include, response outside of your regular area of jurisdiction. It should be noted that ICBC insurance may limit the use of your fire apparatus to a specific region within the province, unless the policy is appropriately amended.

3. Liability Insurance

Although emergency workers have a certain amount of liability protection under s. 18 of the *Emergency Program Act*, all responding fire departments are required to carry appropriate liability coverage for their out-of-jurisdiction activities. Responding fire departments should review the matter with their liability insurers, and confirm that coverage extends to and includes actions taken in response to an OFC mobilization.

4. Overweight Vehicle Permits

Responding fire departments should ensure that apparatus being dispatched has all necessary overweight permits from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Such overweight permits, like vehicle insurance, has limited geographic coverage.

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5. Temporary Food and Accommodation Funding

While food and accommodation will be provided by the requesting agency, this may take a day or so to set up. Responding fire resources need to have access to either cash or credit card to look after them until such time as food and accommodation can be arranged. Receipts must be submitted to the requesting agency for reimbursement.

6. Compensation Claims for WorkSafe BC

7. Training Levels

Required training levels for participating personnel are set out in TAB 5, section 3. Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that the personnel sent in response to an OFC mobilization meet or exceed these levels. **Condition of Apparatus/Equipment Deployed**

Pre-qualifying of apparatus and equipment is discussed in TAB 5. All apparatus and equipment must be in good working condition and meet the specifications as outlined in the FCABC "*Inter-Agency Working Group Report"*. A copy of this report is attached as Appendix B to TAB 5. In addition the following documentation must accompany the vehicle/equipment:

- Detailed equipment checklist; and
- Current insurance coverage documentation.

8. Record Keeping

Apparatus and personnel deployed by the OFC may be issued a Staging/Activity Binder that will include forms for record keeping (note: same rate will be paid for travel, active staging and active time). Whether or not such a binder is available in relation to a particular deployment, responding fire departments are responsible for keeping accurate records of travel time, staging time and active time for each deployed fire fighter and piece of apparatus. A daily record of deployment must be signed off by an OFC representative or by the Incident Commander and shall be provided to the OFC for all personnel and apparatus. Responding fire departments should retain a copy of all submitted records to ensure accurate billing after the event.

Record keeping and claims for reimbursement as a result of a short term response by a local jurisdiction at the request or by agreement of WMB under OG #1.06.01, as well as general issues related to reimbursement of claims are set out in TAB 9.

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TAB 8

Command, Control and Communications

1. **Introduction**
2. **Deployments will follow BCERMS.**

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TAB 9

Financial Responsibility and Reimbursement of Claims

1. Overview

In the context of a major interface event, a Local Authority will have a series of recoverable expenditures and costs. The majority of these costs are described or defined in the *Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation* made under the *Emergency Program Act*. This regulation describes in fairly precise terms what costs are and are not recoverable, and in some cases, places limits on the amount or percentage of costs that can be claimed, or provides discretion to PEP to limit the amounts paid out (e.g., amounts to be paid to a municipal or regional government in relation to claims for administrative costs).

> **NOTE:** This manual only examines recoverable costs in relation to fire fighting. For other recoverable costs, please consult the regulations, or the guide: "*Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs: A Guide for BC Local Authorities and First Nations,*" published by PEP/EMBC.

In addition to recovery under the *Emergency Program Act*, where a fire department has been activated by WMB (or by the OFC on behalf of the WMB), the costs of that activation are claimed from the Ministry of Forests. In those cases, there are two applicable reimbursement rates. For immediate responses to the outbreak of a wildfire on Crown land or outside of an established fire protection area, the reimbursement rate is set under OG#1.06.01 at $400/hour per staffed piece of apparatus. Where WMB has requested structural protection in an unprotected area, and a local fire department has been activated in response to that request by the OFC, the reimbursement rate is established in the "*Inter-Agency Working Group Report: Reimbursement Rates*." These rates are established by agreement between the OFC and the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC, and updated every few years. This set of reimbursement rules contains different rates based on a number of factors, including the specific type of apparatus being deployed.

To file claims under the EPA, Local Authorities must have initiated their emergency plans, activated their EOCs and advised the PREOCs of the nature of their situation (including whether there are mutual aid departments responding). EOCs should follow EMBC/PEP guidelines for authorizing expenses and if there is any doubt about a particular expenditure, clarification should immediately be sought from the PREOC or PEP Duty Manager. EOCs should obtain PREOC authorization for expenditures using expenditure authorization forms. A copy of an EAF is attached as Appendix A to this TAB 9.

2. Wildfire/Interface Event occurring within an established Fire Protection Area

Where a Local Authority has to deal with a wildfire/interface event within its established fire protection area, the following rules apply:

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Own Fire Department.

The direct costs of operation of the Local Authority's own fire department are not recoverable under the *Emergency Program Act*. However, incremental costs (such as overtime), may be recoverable. For career fire departments, overtime is determined in accordance with the relevant employment or collective agreement.

Certain other costs related to the operation of the local fire department may also be claimable under the *Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation*, such as insurance deductibles (if a claim is made, for example, in relation to damage to a fire truck).

Exception for Crown Land. Where a wildfire has broken out on Crown land within an existing fire protection area, some or all of the costs of the responding local fire department may be recoverable under and in accordance with OG#1.06.01.

**Claims for combating wildfires on Crown land within a fire protection area are to be made to the Ministry of Forests. For a copy of the claim form see Appendix B to this TAB 9.

Mutual Aid Fire Departments

Where there is an extended wildfire/interface event to which a mutual aid department has responded, that mutual aid department may claim reimbursement in accordance with the "*Inter-Agency Working Group Report: Reimbursement Rates*". A mutual aid department is entitled to reimbursement where deployment is required for an extended period or would include any re-deployments to the same incident or event.

NOTE: Where there is a call-out for a wildfire/interface event, mutual aid departments should confirm with the requesting department that its Local Authority has initiated its emergency plan, activated its EOC and advised the PREOC of the situation (including the presence of mutual aid departments).

****Claims for reimbursement by mutual aid departments are to be made to EMBC and must be approved by the OFC in the same manner as requests for assistance made through the EOC

OFC-Activated Fire Resources

If the OFC has mobilized and dispatched fire resources in support of a Local Authority – whether SPUs, personnel or traditional fire apparatus – the costs of the assets mobilized and dispatched are the responsibility of the OFC. For departments which provide resources in response to such an activation, reimbursement rates are as prescribed in the "I*nter-Agency Working Group Report: Reimbursement Rates*".

For departments mobilized by the OFC, claims for reimbursement should be directed to EMBC.

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3. **Wildfire/Interface Event occurring outside of an established Fire Protection Area**

Where there is a wildfire/interface event outside of an established fire protection area, WMB may request initial assistance from a local fire department, or may request structure protection resources through the OFC.

Where a local fire department has provided initial assistance to WMB in accordance with OG#1.06.01, it is entitled to reimbursement for that assistance. WMB currently reimburses departments at the rate of $400/hour per staffed piece of apparatus.

**Claims for reimbursement under OG#1.06.01 should be forwarded to the relevant RWCC. Claims should be in the form set by WMB – See Appendix B to this TAB 9 for a copy of the form.

4. **Other Issues**

Wildfire and interface events are complex situations, which can span regional, municipal, EMBC and WMB boundaries. Responsibility – both operational and financial – is shared between the Province and Local Authorities. Determining appropriate levels of compensation in any given circumstance can involve subjective judgements. To facilitate claims assessment, Local Authorities need to ensure that their documentation of their participation is thorough and complete, and that wherever possible, their EOCs have obtained pre-authorization of expenses (or resource commitments) through the PREOC.

References:

Emergency Program Act
Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation
"Financial Assistance for Emergency Response and Recovery Costs: A Guide for BC Local Authorities and First Nations" (prepared by EMBC/PEP, updated 2008)
"Inter-Agency Working Group Report: Reimbursement Rates" (prepared by Fire Chiefs' Association of British Columbia and EMBC) (2010)
WMB, *Operational Guideline #1.06.01* (updated 2006)

TAB 9 Last Updated:

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TAB 10

Consultation and Review Process

Introduction

It is the goal of EMBC to ensure that the planning and processes described in this Manual reflect best practices and remain current in terms of statutory and regulatory matters, policy guidelines of the various ministries, Local Authorities' concerns and operational issues encountered during each wildfire season.

On that basis, EMBC will coordinate an annual review each year:

1. **Plan Revision**

Based on the input obtained from the post-season debriefing, as well as any changes made (or proposed) for the applicable statutory/regulatory system or relevant policies or guidelines of any provincial ministry, EMBC will revise this Manual and its underlying Mobilization Plan. The goal will be to ensure that this Manual is updated and refreshed by the end of January in each year, for pre-season review by stakeholders.

TAB 10 Last Updated:

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