

## 2002 SEASON

### NATIONAL INCIDENT COMMANDER/AREA COMMANDER

#### *LESSONS LEARNED AFTER INCIDENT REPORT (AIR)*

#### **1. What were the most notable successes from the season that others may learn from?**

\*A most notable success for one Incident Management Team (IMT) was the **number of trainees who completed the task books needed to become fully qualified**. On lengthy incidents, 60 personnel were trainees. Task books were completed for several command and general staff trainees as well as for unit leaders.

Another IMT **completed training and mentoring for nine team members** who then attended S-520 Advanced Incident Management in 2003. Additionally, because this IMT has a fulltime training specialist assigned to the team, they "served" the needs of over 600 trainees in 2002. Over 50% of these trainees received certification.

The **addition of a Law Enforcement Liaison to the IMT** really added value and is recommended for other Teams. With all the Urban Interface fires and numerous jurisdictions, this position has become critical.

\*Adding the **Liaison Officer position** to the IMT was extremely beneficial and cost effective. The individual on one IMT was a County Fire Warden and Department of Environmental Safety coordinator for one of the Counties. She was instrumental in the Team's success in working with local government.

\*2002 was an **extremely safe season**, even though there were a record number of assignments. One Team had fires assignments totaling approximately 70 days. During this period, the only two serious accidents involved a motor vehicle accident and one broken wrist. (Note: for specific information on proactive risk management programs, click on [http://www.wildfirelessons.net/Libr\\_RiskMgt.html](http://www.wildfirelessons.net/Libr_RiskMgt.html))

\*Another significant success was the **activation of the military and the moving of the battalion** from an eastern Oregon incident to a western Oregon complex. Over 700 people moved while the only casualty was a broken alternator on a National Guard 5-ton truck. The move was over 350 miles away, completed in one day, and the troops were available for deployment the next day.

For one IMT, **implementing the 30 Mile Abatement Plan was not a challenge or an issue**. The Team first decided how they would accomplish this task before fire season and then always took approximately 60 people on every assignment. Eighty-one team members went to one of the large Northwest incidents. This IC believes that "we do not have a compliance issue, we have a staffing issue." A good decision was allowing IMTs to negotiate order request numbers with the Agency Administrator and the receiving Fire Management Officer. Leave this decision "as is" and remind the Geographical Areas of this "national direction" when they attempt to limit team member numbers.

For the 2003 Incident Commander Responsibilities regarding the 30 Mile Abatement Plan, go online to: [http://www.wildfirelessons.net/Library/IncidentMgt/IC\\_responsibilities.doc](http://www.wildfirelessons.net/Library/IncidentMgt/IC_responsibilities.doc)

\*One IMT successfully **implemented wireless technology** that allowed for excellent connections at the Incident Command Post (ICP) for ISUITE. For the 2003 version of ISUITE, go online to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/fire/i-suite/> The Team also developed an **expeditious, "paperless" demobilization process**. The Demobilization Unit Leader (DMOB) was able to share a readable format demobilization list with expanded dispatch and the list had to be completed just twice each day.

This Team also **implemented satellite radio technology** that solved 100% of the communication needs on every fire. Additionally, they devised a method for the Branch Directors to download both Operational Planning Worksheets (ICS215) and Division Assignment List (ICS204) from the line via satellite radio to the Planning Operations Section Chief. This greatly expedited the planning meetings. The IMT could actually discuss strategy rather than wait for the Resource Unit Leader to write the same information on the 215s each day.

\***Using a Three Operations Section Chief System** (a tactical operations, a planning operations, and a strategic operations) allowed a Team to get ahead of the fire. They developed realistic projections, updated the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) with least cost alternatives (despite what the WFSA said) and **saved taxpayers millions of dollars** on at least three fires as a direct result.

\*In addition to double and triple staffing some positions using regular team members, Branch Directors were regularly used in Operations. The IMT carries a minimum of four with the capability to staff eight. **By doubling up key Command and General Staff positions, Logistics can be branched to service and support and Planning branched to short and long range.** The really positive effect is one IMT can assume command of a much larger piece of country, run multiple camps and maintain a 24 hour operation without running into conflicts with span of control and work/rest issues.

\*A significant success was **carrying two Human Resource specialists, one female and one male**, who are members of the Command and General Staff. For the last four years this has prevented potential human resource issues by being able to deal with the issues in fire camp and taking the appropriate action. This year, when the Team assumed command of a large incident, they dealt with three fatalities, the investigation team, and over 300 people who witnessed the crash of an airtanker. Many of the IMT members also personally witnessed the accident. Having two human resource specialists allowed them to Branch the issue. One dealt with the on-going fire and human resource issues and the other dealt with the families, investigation teams, and critical incident stress debriefing (CISD.) The IMT also conducted an "in camp" memorial service which was attended by over 1000 people. This provided a real sense of closure for those involved.

\*A very notable success was **utilizing the Six Minutes for Safety theme for each operational period**. The theme was based on some infrequent/high risk tasks or based on trends of incidents or close calls the IMT had experienced. The presenters at operational briefings each addressed certain aspects of the safety message. Collectively this took about six minutes of the briefing. The results included positive feedback from the troops.

The IMT also **practiced Lookouts, Communications, Escape Route and Safety Zones (LCES)**

**check-in procedure** to ensure that when people were on the line, they were looking at the same hazards and mitigation that the Team was looking at when the LCES (215a) was completed for the operational period. (This was generally 12 hours previous.) This resulted in a conscious effort to create a timeout for LCES. The team received good feedback with positive responses all the way down to the single resource crew boss and back to operations and safety.

**\*Deputies were used for all General Staff positions** when they could be located. This proved critical to handling work/rest for team members, spreading workload and having enough depth to deal with weaknesses or unavailability in unit leader positions.

**\*The flexibility demonstrated in determining team size on mobilization** was refreshing. Having the IC talk to the Agency Administrator and decide jointly on size and composition of the team is not only sensible, it is efficient and practical.

**\*Of the many successes, those that particularly stand out are:**

- Something we should be proud of is the 2002 national wildland fire safety record.
- Adoption and implementation of ISUITE. Even though there are problems with the program, having a common database in electronic format is required, particularly on incidents like Biscuit that end up with multiple team transitions.
- Effectively managing two base camps on one incident. An IMT was faced with this challenge both on one Northwest Incident where the IMT learned a lesson on managing two base camps and at a second Northwest Incident where they had the opportunity to put those lessons learned into action.
- **Transitions and transition packages improved significantly.** Some of the most notable transitions were with the Northern Rockies Team (excellent package) and with the Southern Team (also very thorough and complete package.)  
For an approved Transfer of Command template, go online to:  
[http://www.wildfirelessons.net/Library/IncidentMgt/Incldt\\_Trans\\_Plan\\_Template.rtf](http://www.wildfirelessons.net/Library/IncidentMgt/Incldt_Trans_Plan_Template.rtf).
- Coordination, cooperation, and teamwork with multiple teams on one fire, particularly at Biscuit when the IMT was working with four other teams at the same time.
- Contract resources, we could not have done the job without those resources, particularly in the Pacific Northwest.
- Integration of a Type 2 IMT into a Type 1 IMT to fill in critical overhead resources that could not be filled through the normal channels.
- The mobilization of so many resources, including the military, for a protracted length of time.
- The mobilization and use of international fire forces: the Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders.
- The use of "Off Duty Officers" for public safety/security on a Colorado incident. This was a group of retired law enforcement personnel that knew the job and were very effective. This was key because finding enough qualified law enforcement personnel is always a challenge.
- The September 11th Remembrance, jointly conducted at two base camps on 9/11