



**Today's discussion is from the
Miscellaneous Category.**

HAZARD MITIGATION THROUGH RISK MANAGEMENT

“Risk Management doesn’t get in the way of doing the mission – *it is the way we do the mission.*” The Risk Management Process assists in ensuring that critical factors and risks of the fireline work environment are considered during decision making. Good risk management utilizes a five-step process:

● Step 1—Situational Awareness:

- Obtain information.
- Scout the fire.
- Identify hazards—those likely to result in a negative impact.
- Consider all aspects of current and future situations.
- Consider known historical problem areas (Apply information from the Fire Danger Pocket Card.).
- Recognize the need for action.
- Demonstrate ongoing awareness of fire assignment status.
- Note deviations.
- Attempt to determine why discrepancies exist with information before proceeding.

● Step 2—Hazard Assessment:

- Assess hazards to determine risks (e.g., fire behavior, snags, unburned fuels, work/rest).
- Use the Look Up, Down, and Around; and the Tactical Watch Outs (both located in the Incident Response Pocket Guide) to identify high-risk tactical hazards.
- Assess the impact of each hazard in terms of potential loss, cost, and mission/operational degradation based on probability and severity (probability—how likely an event will occur; severity—consequences if the event occurs). Keep in mind that increased exposure time increases probability.

● Step 3—Hazard Control:

- Determine the best approach to mitigate or control the risk from the hazards assessed.
- Establish controls (e.g., anchor point, LCES, utilize downhill checklist, limit exposure time).
- As control measures are developed, reevaluate each risk until it is reduced to a level where benefits outweigh potential costs.

● Step 4—Decision Point (decision to accept or not accept the risk(s) associated with an action):

- Consider whether controls are in place for identified hazards, whether selected tactics are based on expected fire behavior and if instructions have been given and understood.
- Make certain the decision is made at the appropriate level; if not, then elevate to a higher level.
- Reject the action if the risk is unacceptable.

● Step 5—Evaluation:

- Ensure controls are implemented and accomplished to standards.
- Supervise/evaluate effectiveness of controls and decisions. Stay on top of the situation and adjust risk controls as necessary.
- Anticipate consequences of decisions; if controls do not work, determine problem and derive a better solution.
- Adjust actions as the situation changes; maintain situational awareness at all times.
- Maintain feedback line.

References:

[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#) page 1

[NWCG Human Factors on the Fireline Training](#) (L-180)

[Safety and Occupational Health Manual Handbook, BLM-1112-1](#)

Division Supervisor Course Guide--S-339, NWCG

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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