



**Today's discussion is from the  
Fire/Weather Behavior Category.**

## **Proper Use of Trigger Points**

Accurate situational awareness (SA) requires constant reassessment of conditions (existing or potential) that may impact the safety and effectiveness of tactics. Monitoring for the 18 Watchout Situations and establishing operational / environmental limits ("trigger points") ahead of time can help to focus SA, prompt reassessment, and help you re-evaluate the risk of current actions. The following items are things to consider in your planning and discussion. Remember, trigger points are NOT decision makers, but serve as predetermined cues to prompt you to re-evaluate the current and potential situation and associated risks, and help you to determine and implement the proper course of action.

- Preplan! Don't wait until you're in the wrong place at the wrong time---with no time.
- Trigger points should be based on measurable factors such as:
  - RH
  - Winds
  - Fire Behavior
  - Topographical boundaries
  - Time constraints/Time of day
  - Time/distance to safety zones
  - Loss of suppression resources
  - Other operational considerations (e.g., firefighter fatigue, loss of lookouts or communication, weather change)
- As you approach predetermined trigger points, go through the Risk Management Process to help you decide if a change in tactics is required. (See the Incident Response Pocket Guide)
  - Gather information to assure good Situational Awareness
  - Assess hazards to anticipate serious risks
  - Establish hazard controls to mitigate serious risks
  - Make decisions based on your ability to mitigate those serious risks
  - Evaluate effectiveness of current actions
- Command/Leadership responsibilities when changing tactics  
Communicate the changes to your subordinates, as well as to adjacent forces and up the chain of command
  - Account for all your people
  - Make sure everyone knows and follows the new plan

### **References:**

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations  
Incident Response Pocket Guide](#)

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**Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.**

**ONLINE | MAIL: 6 Minutes For Safety Task Group • 3833 S. Development Ave • Boise, ID 83705 | FAX: 208-387-5250**

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