

ABSTRACT
COMMAND DECISIONS DURING CATASTROPHIC URBAN-
INTERFACE WILDFIRE: A CASE STUDY OF THE
1993 ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,
LAGUNA FIRE

By

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The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges and commonalities experienced by the personnel who commanded six catastrophic California wildland-urban interface fires and how future fires of this nature might be commanded and prepared for. The study includes a description of strategies and tactics specific to the Laguna, Old Topanga, Kinneloa, Harmony, Paint, and Tunnel Fires. The Laguna Fire was studied in depth through recollections of those who performed in command functions during that fire. Commonalities were significant and uniform among the studied fires, suggesting that the experiences of the Laguna Fire participants mirrored those of the participants in the six studied fires and that they are likely indicative of potential experiences during future fires occurring under similar conditions. Subject matter experts commented on the Laguna Fire and other fires, contrasting their perceptions of those fires with industry best practices. These observations were then recommended for inclusion in fire command training curriculum.

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