

After Incident Report Lessons Learned Center

The purpose of the After Incident Report is to identify issues that occurred on an incident and how they were resolved. The lessons learned in the report will also be used to refresh or update training curriculums. Issues and trends that are identified may have Information Collection Teams assigned to them in the future for further analysis and resolution.

Type I – V Incident Commanders and Agency Administrators are requested to complete the following questionnaire for the incident(s) that they managed. Crews and single resources are also encouraged to complete the questionnaire for incidents they participated in:

Incident Name: BULLOCK FIRE **Dates of Assignment: MAY 24 - JUNE 6, 2002**

Unit or Jurisdiction(s): USFS **Geographic Area: CATALINA DISTRICT
CORONADO NF**

Report Submitted by: LARRY HUMPHREY **Phone Number:**
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1. What was the most notable success at the incident that others may learn from?

According to IC Larry Humphrey, the biggest success was that they were able to catch the fire. Larry has been on this SW Type 1 team since 1986. He said this was the most difficult fire he has ever been on. This fire was tough for every section - operations, logistics, planning, finance, and safety - due to the extremely difficult terrain and complex logistical challenges. What made it successful was that the team had two of each command and general staff so they could split the fire into two branches and run two base camps. Because this team has worked well together for years, there was that element of trust even when the two branches were competing for resources.

Another success was moving the ICP and base camp to a high school facility. With the electronic and computerized needs in Type 1 incidents, it does not work having your base camp be in a remote location using tents and limited power sources. If a facility such as a school is not available, using construction trailers is necessary instead of UHauls or small trailers. The construction trailers are less expensive in the long run and are very good as facilities for the command and general staff functions.

A third success was training local personnel in an area that is deficient on incidents and then filling these positions with those personnel. Radio operators are critical positions but are often thought of as easy to fill with just anyone. A radio operator is a significant link from the field firefighter to base camp. This winter the Safford District trained 20 local personnel as dispatch recorders. Eight of the folks that went through the class are going out on fires this season; six were working on the Bullock Fire or in Expanded Dispatch. The Lesson Learned is that local units need to recruit and train for important, lower ICS level, hard-to-fill positions.

Another significant success was using a local buying team comprised of folks off the forest. The forest administrative officer put this in place ahead of time due to the severity of the fire season on the forest and the timeliness of getting a national buying team. A member of the local buying team was situated in each of the five spike camps. Part of the success was having these local folks stay in the spike camp and do their ordering in cooperation with the spike camp personnel. Without this local buying team, the turn around time for getting supplies to camps and the fire would have significantly affected personnel morale.

2. What were some of the most difficult challenges faced and how were they overcome?

The two biggest challenges were the terrain and the logistical complexities. The fire was burning on two sides of the mountain range. The team was carrying deputies or two section chiefs coming into this fire since on the three previous assignments this spring they could get no resources. They were able to divide the team members into the two branches. The logistical challenges came because it was a three-hour drive from one side of the fire to the other. There was an ICP, two base camps and five spike camps. These two challenges were overcome due to continual communication. The command and general staff located in two branches had to talk several times a day. When a team is split it makes communications difficult. It did strain the team but the fact that team members trust one another due to working together on other incidents made a difference. Urban interface fires add to the logistical complexities since it often makes it more difficult to locate suitable camps. Several smaller (spike) camps had to be set up until the school year ended and a local high school became available.

3. What changes, additions or deletions are recommended to various training curriculums?

Instructors need to stress the importance of being innovative, adaptable and flexible with ICS positions especially in the beginning of an incident. Since more often than not overhead ordered does not arrive within 1-2 days, positions like a GSUL, DOCL and DMOB should be used in other capacities where there is a need. Another example to stress in training is depending on the type, size or complexity of an incident certain ICS positions become increasingly significant. Humphrey's Team carries two structural fire specialists due to the high number of urban interface fires they respond to. The structural fire specialists work in operations and liaison daily with the local fire departments. They also have a security liaison that is on the command staff who communicates regularly with local law enforcement agencies involved with the incident. This position is also critical due to the high number of urban interface assignments.

4. What issues were not resolved to your satisfaction and need further review? Based on what was learned, what is your recommendation for resolution?

The biggest unresolved issue is the how the 30-Mile Fire abatement plan makes it nearly impossible for incident commanders to be in compliance while managing an incident. Individual agencies are issuing specific memos and interpreting the work rest guidelines differently. One agency memo came out in the middle of the Bullock Fire. The recommendation for resolution is that all new rules and guidelines need to be issued in the winter before the fire season begins. NWCG needs to review, test out and issue these rules across the board for all agencies.

Please submit this report to the Lessons Learned Center at the National Advanced Resource Technology Center (NARTC) attention Paula Nasiatka(pnasiatka@fs.fed.us or Fax 520-670-6413)

Thank you for completing the report. Others can learn from your experiences.