



Introduction

Accident prevention and employee safety is an exceptionally important topic to the Forest Service. The Chief of the Forest Service has committed to creating a “zero fatality organization.” The organization’s response to accidents is believed to play a significant role in achieving this goal. The Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) has been developed to help the organization respond to accidents in a respectful way, designed to minimize harm to survivors. The Learning Review (LR) is one of several teams under the CRP. The LR replaces the Serious Accident Investigation for the USFS and is specifically designed to allow the agency and our personnel to learn as much as possible from the event.

Recent ground breaking research in the fields of organizational development, resilience engineering, social science and human factors points to the need for an approach to investigation that specifically targets learning from events. The Learning Review process (LR) incorporates this research and the mistakes of the past in a process designed to create organizational and field learning products. The LR embraces specific practices designed to engage a wide range of participants through targeted learning products. Where we used to construct accident investigation reports to place the incidents behind us, these new learning products are designed to invigorate communities of practice to discuss, question, and explore the incidents in ongoing dialogues that add perspectives, knowledge, and experience in order to develop applicable lessons learned.

Coordinated Response Protocol & Learning Review (CRP & LR) Key Messages

- The Forest Service recently adopted the CRP to manage response activities for accidents significant enough to warrant a Chief’s level review and the LR to replace the Serious Accident Investigation process.
- The CRP was developed to enable the Forest Service to minimize the impact of investigations and the information or data collection process on survivors and witnesses by controlling access to personnel, avoiding repetitious interviews, and making the process as painless as possible for all involved.
- The CRP synchronizes all USFS groups involved in post-accident response, including the LR Team; Peer Support/Critical Incident Stress Management; Law Enforcement and Investigations (LEI); Union; Communications; and Human Resource Management. It also makes every effort to coordinate external investigations.
- CRPs are conducted by Standing Teams, comprised of qualified personnel who have received common training in the CRP and work collaboratively under a Response Leader

who is responsible for the coordination of activities in an effort to lessen potential further harm to employees.

- A LR incorporates both technical and social approaches to accident investigation. The LR produces recommendations and learning products, which are designed to help the agency, and our employees to facilitate learning from the event.
- The LR process will also identify if corrective actions (recommendations to change or establish agency policy).
- The LR recognizes that safety is created in collaboration between rules regulations policy and procedures and the actions of field personnel. This describes a relationship between the field personnel and leadership who create guidance and the field who have to act in accordance with guidance and the uncertainty of a complex environment:
 - For example: The US Navy and Coast Guard recognize the importance of the empowerment of employees in complex work environments. This empowerment recognizes the importance of the employee in the creation of safety. It also recognizes the potential for error to occur as a result of necessary adaptations. The Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization (NATOPS) program prescribes general flight and operating instructions and procedures applicable to the operation of all U.S. naval aircraft and related activities. NATOPS states: *"NATOPS must be dynamic and stimulate rather than suppress individual thinking. Since aviation is a continuing, progressive profession, it is both desirable and necessary that new ideas and new techniques be expeditiously evaluated and incorporated if proven to be sound. To this end, commanding officers of aviation units are authorized to modify procedures contained herein for the purpose of assessing new ideas prior to initiating recommendations for permanent changes . . . NATOPS manuals provide the best available operating instructions for most circumstances, but no manual is a substitute for sound judgment. Compound emergencies, available facilities, adverse weather or terrain, or considerations affecting the lives and property of others may require modification of the procedures contained herein. Read this manual from cover to cover. It is the air crewman's responsibility to have a complete knowledge of its contents."*
- The Forest Service will not use products or information that result from the LR for administrative, disciplinary, or legal purposes or to blame employees. If there are indications of criminal activity, agency LEI staff will take appropriate actions.

Collateral Investigations

USFS collateral investigations are conducted independently of the LR and record the facts for litigation, claims, and other administrative or disciplinary actions. Other agencies may have a jurisdictional responsibility to conduct their own investigation (i.e. Law enforcement, Coroner,

Federal OSHA, State OSHA, NIOSH, and OIG). These following investigations are independent and may run concurrently with CRP Investigations and LRs:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) determines whether an employer violated occupational safety and health standards, leading to a death, or hospitalization of three or more employees.
 - Federal OSHA offices have jurisdiction over Federal employees and will have been notified by the agency safety manager, prior to CRP Team arrival.
 - State OSHA offices may get involved if there are victims that are not Federal employee's (e.g. state personnel, contractors, municipal employees). They may also be involved if the accident is on State land.
- In 1998, Congress allocated funds to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to address the continuing national problem of occupational fire fighter fatalities and injuries. NIOSH has the authority to conduct independent investigations. Based upon their investigations, NIOSH will develop narrative reports of events surrounding firefighter deaths. These reports are distributed throughout the United States fire community.
- United States Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General (OIG) has been mandated by Congress (Public Law 107-203) to conduct independent investigations of all fire related entrapments, or burn overs, that result in a fatality involving USDA Forest Service personnel. Upon completing the investigation, the Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture shall submit to Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture a report containing the results of the OIG investigation.
- Congress has designated the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as the organization with primary responsibility over the investigation of all civil and public aircraft accidents (49 CFR 831.2). The NTSB can assign all or part of an investigation to qualified Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), or Forest Service investigators.
 - In addition, the Forest Service team may conduct a Learning Review in accordance with this CRP/LR guide, concurrent with or following the NTSB investigation.