

## **Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) And Learning Review (LR) Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP)?**

The Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) is a tool to ensure that we align the various groups who respond to accidents in order to lessen accidents' painful effects. The Learning Review process is designed to facilitate learning everything possible from serious incidents to reduce the chances of recurrence.

The CRP uses Incident Command System principles to organize the way the U.S. Forest Service executes post-accident responses, including logistics, information transfer, and ordering additional specialists. It is designed to lessen the incident's impact on survivors by minimizing the number of interviews to which personnel are exposed. The CRP synchronizes all groups involved in post-accident response, including the Learning Review Team; Peer Support/Critical Incident Stress Management; Law Enforcement and Investigations; Union; Communications; and Human Resource Management. It also makes every effort to coordinate external investigations, such as those required by Occupational Safety and Health Administration; National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health; Office of Inspector General; state and local law enforcement; coroner's offices; and other cooperators and partners.

### **How does the U.S. Forest Service investigate accidents?**

In June, 2014, the U.S. Forest Service announced that the "Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP)" would be used to manage response activities when there is an accident that is significant enough to warrant a Chief's level review. The CRP includes a Learning Review (LR) that replaces the Serious Accident Investigation process.

### **What is a Learning Review (LR)?**

The Learning Review (LR) is a phased approach designed to help investigators thoroughly study an incident. The LR's emphasizes learning from the event, as the name implies. At least two products will result from an LR – a Learning Review Report for organizational leadership and generally one or more employee focused field learning products. Both the Learning Review Report and all field learning products will be posted internally on the Safety Engagement and OSOH SharePoint sites and wildland fire incidents will be posted on the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center for sharing with all employees and partners.

### **What types of accidents will a CRP and LR be used for?**

The CRP and LR will typically be initiated for serious accidents, defined as an unplanned event, or series of events that results in death, serious injury, occupational illness and/or damage to or loss of equipment or property. A CRP/LR can be initiated for any event that the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) judges to warrant a Chief's level review; for example, if it is likely that employees will be exposed to a large number of interviews, or for incidents with significant public or political interests, such as entrapment or fire shelter deployment.

### **What are the serious accident criteria?**

Updated: August 26, 2015

The U.S. Forest Service defines serious accidents as those that involve a death or three or more persons hospitalized after initial treatment for reasons other than observation. The agency also reviews and analyzes many unintended outcome events that do not rise to this level, such as near misses, minor injury accidents, and accidents involving only property damage. The Designated Agency Safety and Health Official will make the determination for the type of response for every serious accident. The U.S. Forest Service seeks to learn from both successful and unsuccessful outcomes and apply that knowledge to all future operations.

**Why does the LR produce two products?**

Two specific audiences are common to almost all U.S. Forest Service incidents and accidents: agency leadership and field personnel. These audiences have very different needs and ways of learning from the event. Safety is created both by agency leadership, through preparation and guidance, and by field personnel by their actions at the point of work. Senior leaders have a great deal of influence and must be prepared with information so that they can make informed decisions regarding systemic improvements. Field personnel face and manage risks and hazards in real time and have a need to understand why the event made sense to those involved so that they can better prepare themselves should similar conditions arise. All learning review products will be posted internally to the Safety Engagement and OSHA SharePoint sites, and to the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned site for wildland fire incidents.

**What will the Organizational Learning Review Report contain?**

The Organizational Learning Review Report will be a written report directed to answer the specific needs of the U.S. Forest Service, in terms of understanding the organizational, structural, system, and cultural contributors to the event.

**What kind of Field Learning Review Products will be created?**

Field learning products can be in any format that presents the narrative or related information in a way that facilitates the ability of field personnel to make sense of the incident. These tools are specifically designed to create dialogue (i.e. scenario based or tabletop exercises, mockups, multimedia presentations or narratives, dialogues, etc.). These products will be created in cooperation with the community of practice most closely involved in the incident or most affected by the product(s).

**What is the goal of the LR?**

The goal of the LR is prevention through learning. Traditional accident reports rarely go deep enough to gain enough understanding of an event to learn from it. It is useless to focus a Learning Review on the judgment of the individual actions, or decisions as right or wrong, bad or good. The LR attempts to understand ‘why’ an event occurred and will avoid labeling human action as a simple failure. The LR views actions and decisions as consequences, not causes. The LR seeks to understand what influenced decisions and actions and why they made sense to those involved at the time because if it did not make sense to them at the time, they would not have done it. Conditions shape decisions and actions, and revealing these conditions places the decisions and actions in the context in which they occurred and will aid the U.S. Forest Service and agency personnel in understanding how to recognize, change and react to conditional pressures.

Learning Reviews commonly review of all similar accidents and incidents in order to better understand the system and environments.

A LR collects and interprets information to assist all levels of the U.S. Forest Service to develop an understanding of how and why the accident or incident occurred. Recommendations and learning products can then be developed or designed to help U.S. Forest Service personnel and the agency, itself, to learn and improve. This process will also identify if corrective actions (recommendations to change or establish agency policy), hazard mitigations (to prevent unnecessary exposure, which could result in injury or occupational illnesses) and/or actions to prevent property damage are needed.

### **What are the four phases of the LR?**

The LR is designed to enhance sensemaking and to include technical, mechanical, and complex system assessments of the incident being studied. In this way, the LR is inclusive of multiple approaches and techniques. The LR adds the use of focus groups and the concept of sensemaking to the traditional suite of analytical tools.

The four phases of the LR are:

- 1) Initial Response – Selection and dispatch of the LR Team (accomplished through the CRP Process).
- 2) Information Collection - Inquiry, identification of performance influencing factors, information collection and synthesis. The creation of a complex narrative and the start of a list of conditions that supported actions/decisions.
- 3) Analysis and Sensemaking - Use of focus groups and subject matter experts to develop learning products, review of the learning products by focus groups, and preparation of recommendations. This approach brings the community of practice into the process to help the team make sense of the event as well as outside subject matter experts who often provide valuable perspectives and ask powerful questions that insiders might miss.
- 4) Application and Adoption – LR product evaluation and agency approval of learning products. Presentation to the LR Board.

### **Who will conduct the LR?**

Chief's-level accident LR teams are comprised of staff with technical expertise in the specialty areas such as Human Factors and social science, as well as technical experts. LR subject matter experts are drawn from an existing pool of personnel trained in accident investigation and/or qualified technical investigators (aviation's designation).

The LR is scalable, it can expand and contract, similar to the Incident Command System, to help meet unanticipated demands and complexity. Additional specialists and subject matter experts may be called once the team is in place and they begin to understand what occurred and what support may be needed. These include human factors/performance subject matter experts, technical and community of practices subject matter experts, subject matter experts from the academic community, documentation specialist, etc.

### **Why did the FS change from the SAI to the CRP/LR?**

Updated: August 26, 2015

Safety is one of the U.S. Forest Service's five focus areas and the agency's goal is to become a zero-fatality organization. One of the keys to reaching this goal is to learn all we can from accidents that occur on National Forest System land and that involve U.S. Forest Service employees. This requires survivors and witnesses to be willing to share what they know about the actions, circumstances, and events surrounding accidents. Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors, over the years many U.S. Forest Service employees lost trust in the agency's accident investigation process, came to fear it, and consequently were unwilling to share what they experienced and knew. A new way to manage the agency's response to serious accidents was needed to protect our employees and to restore employee trust.

When accidents occur on National Forest System land, or involve U.S. Forest Service employees, there are a number of investigations required by the agency and federal regulations. Personnel assigned to collect information or data can become so focused on their task that they can unintentionally do damage to the personnel involved in the incident.

The CRP was developed to enable the U.S. Forest Service to coordinate these different investigative efforts, while minimizing their impact on survivors and witnesses. One part of the CRP is the control or coordination of access to personnel. This is specifically designed to avoid, to the extent possible, repetitious interviews, and to make the process as painless as possible for all involved. This approach is based on several principles the most important of which is, "Do no further harm."

**Can we initiate a Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) when there is not a fatality?**

Yes, the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) can initiate a CRP whenever an incident's complexity warrants such use. Both the CRP and the Learning Review are fully scalable depending on incident severity. While only the DASHO may initiate a CRP, any Line Officer can initiate a LR. The Forest service also uses the Facilitated Learning Analysis for less than serious accidents. Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLAs) are used to review an less serious incidents regardless of whether the outcome is positive or negative. An FLA is the appropriate review for most unintended outcomes. A CRP/LR is normally only used for operational fatalities or multiple serious-injury incidents.

**Who signs the Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) delegation letter?**

The Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO), on behalf of the Chief, will approve the team assignments and sign a CRP delegation letter.

**Who signs the Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) delegation letter?**

The Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) delegating authority will be a Line Officer who will sign an FLA delegation letter as well as approve team assignments and assume responsibility for the FLA's funding expenses. For example, District Rangers, Forest Supervisors, Station Directors, and Regional Foresters commonly delegate FLAs.

**What is the significant distinction between a Learning Review (LR) and a Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA)?**

Both the Learning Review (LR) and Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) embrace learning as a core value and goal. The LR provides three levels of information review: technical, analytical,

and sense-making. The FLA develops stories or narratives that capture the complex interactions that took place during the event and presents the incident from the participants' perspectives. The LR is commonly used for serious accidents—normally those incidents resulting in a fatality or three or more employee hospitalizations. The LR also generates Learning Review Board and recommendations for the Chief's approval.

### **Who will conduct the CRP?**

A CRP Standing Team comprised of qualified personnel who have received common training in the CRP. Standing Team members will work collaboratively under a Response Leader to coordinate activities in accordance with the CRP in an effort to lessen potential further harm to employees.

### **What is a Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) Standing Team?**

Most professional organizations that investigate accidents (e.g., the National Transportation Safety Board [NTSB] and the U.S. Chemical Safety Board [CSB]) have created standing incident response teams. These teams are composed of specialists who have trained together and understand each other's needs and the expertise each brings to the team. The Forest Service uses the same approach by establishing a core group or pool of qualified personnel who have received common training in the Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) and can lead specialists in their area of expertise. Assignment to a Chief's-level accident Learning Review (LR) team, Law Enforcement Team, Union Representation, and Response Coordinator, at a minimum, will be selected from this standing personnel pool.

Inclusion on a CRP presumes pre-training regarding the CRP and an understanding of the principles and processes unique to the LR process. Specialists are commonly added to any Chief's-level response. As needed, these subject-matter and outside technical and academic experts will supplement the essential positions. As leaders, CRP Standing Team members will coordinate the entire response team's efforts in accordance with the CRP/LR Guide. LR subject-matter experts will come from an existing pool of those trained in accident investigation, qualified technical investigators (aviation's designation), or individuals with complex Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) or Serious Accident Investigation (SAI) experience or equivalent.

### **How can an employee join the Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) Standing Team?**

To ensure this process is sustainable, personnel interested in becoming qualified will receive all necessary training and will shadow qualified personnel as they perform the duties before being assigned to lead a specialty area during a Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) or a Learning Review (LR).

### **Who will attend the Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) Standing Team training, and how will it be used?**

The Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) will make assignments to the CRP Standing Team. A Standing Team will be composed of a select group of Response Leaders, Learning Review (LR) Team Leaders, Human Resource Management (HRM), Human Performance Experts, Law Enforcement and Investigations (LEI), Office of Communication, Safety, and Union representatives. Team leaders will be senior employees with extensive safety investigation/review experience and will be rotated approximately every two years. The Standing

Updated: August 26, 2015

Team will fill the critical positions in all LR responses. No similar standing organization exists for Facilitated Learning Analyses (FLA). The first CRP Standing Team training took place in March 2014.

### **Who are the CRP Standing Team members?**

CRP Standing Teams are composed of Response Leaders, Learning Review Team Leaders, Human Resource Management representatives, Human Performance Experts, Law Enforcement and Investigations Team Leaders, and Office of Communication, Wellbeing/Critical Incident Stress Management, Safety, and Union representatives. The Response Leader's role is to coordinate the efforts of the entire response team, including access to incident personnel and witnesses to minimize further trauma, in accordance with the CRP guide. The CRP process is scalable and can expand and contract, similar to the Incident Command System, to meet all types of investigations and levels of complexity. Subject matter and other technical experts, such as logistics coordinators, family liaison, documentation specialist, etc., will supplement the CRP Response Leader as needed.

### **What is the role of Law Enforcement?**

U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigation (LEI) assumes initial control of accident scenes on National Forest System lands. U.S. Forest Service LEI will release the accident scene to the CRP Response Leader as soon as possible, once it has determined that no criminal activity is suspected. Normally, this release will occur within 72 hours, or less, after the incident occurs. LEI may also, as required, ensure site security; serve as liaison with local law enforcement; serve as liaison with the coroner and the U.S. Forest Service Washington Office Fire and Aviation Management Medical officer; conduct or coordinate Tort Claims Investigations to occur simultaneously with the LR; communicate with on-scene Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); and provide law enforcement expertise to the CRP Standing Team if there are indications of criminal activity.

### **Is there a Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP)/Learning Review (LR) Guide?**

A Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP)/Learning Review (LR) Guide is now available, and as a living document, it will be updated often to include lessons learned during application or to reflect new research. The approved guidebook is available on the [Forest Service Safety Engagement SharePoint site](#). Eventually we intend to consolidate the CRP/LR Guide with the Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) Guide.

### **Does the Forest Service have qualified personnel to conduct Learning Reviews and Facilitated Learning Analyses (FLAs)?**

The Forest Service now has guidebooks providing detailed procedures to complete both Learning Review (LR) and Facilitated Learning Analyses (FLA). LRs and FLAs share common goals. Well over 600 Forest Service personnel have now completed the FLA workshop, 175 have completed CRP training. Another 150 individuals have previous Department of Defense (DOD), Serious Accident Investigation (SAI), or other agency safety investigation training and experience. The Office of Safety and Occupational Health (OSOH) and the Office of Innovation and Learning (IOL) maintain a list of individuals qualified through training and experience for CRP/LR responses.

**How does the Coordinated Response Protocol's (CRP) existence affect me? Affect my time? How will I benefit?**

The Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) is meant to minimize an incident's impact on personnel by controlling interview access to better coordinate multiple mandatory investigations that can add to witness trauma through repetitive interviews.

**What Does the Learning Review do for me?**

More comprehensive studies of incidents and sharing of learning nuggets will benefit everyone. The LR will focus on what the organization can do to improve work and add to the success of field personnel. The field learning products will help all of us learn from the event and how we can make changes to help prevent recurrence.

**What are some of the other agencies that can investigate accidents that occur on National Forest System land or involve U.S. Forest Service employees?**

Depending on the nature of the accident, the agencies that could investigate include the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Labor (OSHA), Department of Interior, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), State and/or local law enforcement officials, coroners, and fire marshals.

**What do we do when an incident involves interagency partners?**

Accidents involving interagency partners will be jointly investigated. Based on an incident's circumstances, agency Designated Agency Safety and Health Officials (DASHOs) will discuss and then appoint an overall team lead and also determine the review protocol. Typically a Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) will be used if the Forest Service has the lead; if a Department of Interior (DOI) agency has the lead, the Serious Accident Investigation (SAI) protocol will normally be used.

**Why don't the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior investigate accidents the same way?**

The U.S. Forest Service and the DOI are continuing to work towards use of a single protocol.

**Will the U.S. Forest Service produce other reports besides the Organizational Learning Review Report and the Field Learning Review Products?**

The U.S. Forest Service may produce one or more of the following reports:

- 24-Hour Preliminary report – The local unit has the responsibility to produce this report and provide it to the delegating official, or their designee, for distribution. This report contains the first details of the accident.
- 72-Hour Expanded Report - This is prepared by the LR Team Leader and signed by the CRP Response Leader, within 72 hours of the team's arrival. The CRP Response Leader sends the report to the delegating official (normally the DASHO) for approval and release. For fire related responses, the Washington Office Fire and Aviation Management Fire Operations and Risk Management Officer will post the 72 hour report on the Lessons Learned website after approval by the DASHO.

- Safety alert - A safety alert will be prepared when a team has identified a safety issue that poses an imminent threat to life or property, for example, a failure of a piece of equipment. The Safety Alert will identify the hazards and recommended corrective actions. A safety alert may be submitted at any time during the CRP or LR process.

### **What if there are discrepancies in the different reports?**

The reports will be completed by different parties for different purposes within different periods of time so it is possible that there may be discrepancies as more information becomes available over time. The primary purpose of the 24-hour and 72-hour reports is to determine whether there are any actions that need to be taken *immediately* to prevent a similar type of accident from occurring. The final Organizational Learning Review Report and Field Learning Review Products will contain the most thorough and accurate information available.

### **Will the Organizational Learning Review Report or the Field Learning Review Products identify who is to blame for this accident?**

The U.S. Forest Service conducts LRs to learn and improve, with the key objective of accident prevention. The agency will not use products or information that result from the LR for administrative, disciplinary, or legal purposes or to blame employees. Learning for future events is more important than assessing blame. In fact, the assessment of blame can inhibit learning.

### **If someone is identified as responsible through an investigation other than the LR, what will happen to that person or persons?**

As long as the employee is operating in the scope of their work there will be no punitive actions.

### **So nobody will be held accountable for the accident?**

We believe the CRP process includes a richer sense of organizational accountability, as the U.S. Forest Service system is accountable to prevent future occurrences. Attempts to provide individual accountability often lead to simple forms of blame, which can destroy the willingness of employees to provide information. Post event, the U.S. Forest Service defines accountability to holding ourselves accountable to learn from the event and to improve. Learning from an event can reveal aspects of an organization that can be difficult to see. These revelations often challenge our assumptions, which is an important aspect of learning. Organizations have a responsibility to view events as opportunities to improve, both at the individual and organizational levels.

### **What if criminal activity is discovered?**

If at any time there is a question regarding criminal activity, the Law Enforcement Team Leader will be notified. The Law Enforcement Team Leader will consider the information and consult with the Response Leader. Should they determine there is reason to initiate a Law Enforcement Investigation, the DASHO will direct the path forward. If there is confirmed criminal activity (e.g. an arson started wildfire), the DASHO will determine the path forward. This may result in cessation of the LR Process if it is determined that the CRP cannot run concurrently with the ongoing Law Enforcement investigation.

### **How long will it take to produce the Organizational Learning Review Report and the Field Learning Review Products?**

The LR will be done as quickly as possible to ensure that important information is not lost, misplaced, forgotten, or otherwise contaminated. However, the U.S. Forest Service's immediate priority is to ensure that no further injury or damage occurs and to aid the injured. As soon as the emergency situation is over, the on-site investigations and Learning Review will begin. There is an ethical responsibility to make the review as thorough as possible and to address the specific audiences who will benefit from the lessons learned. This results in the need for a balance to be struck between thoroughness and timeliness. The LR will never be 100% complete – it is not intended to be a complete or static document. Rather, it should be designed as a solid starting point for dialogue and learning. The goal is to complete the initial Organizational Learning Review for delivery to the Learning Review Board (LRB) within 90 days from the team's arrival at the incident. However, the actual completion is at the discretion of the DASHO and will be negotiated based on the complexity of the review. It is not unusual for Chiefs level reviews to take six months or longer to be completed and approved for release. After review, the Chief will approve a Safety Action Plan, which identifies the field learning products and the timeline for completion for each product. Most learning products require three to six months to complete.

**What will the U.S. Forest Service do with the recommendations?**

The CRP will generate recommendations and vet them through representatives of the community of practice (typically through focus groups) that will be affected by them and the U.S. Forest Service Office of Organizational learning to ensure they are reasonable, are consistent with existing research, will make a positive difference, are not in conflict with existing policy, and that they can be practically implemented. After the recommendations are vetted, they will be presented to the LRB for review and approval. If the LRB approves the recommendations (called the Safety Action Plan), they will be forwarded along with the Organizational Learning Review Report to the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service for approval. If the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service approves the recommendations, they will be assigned to agency staff for implementation. The U.S. Forest Service Office of Learning (OOL) will track approved recommendations' implementation and completion.

**Will the Organizational Learning Review Report be provided to the victim's family?**

Yes, a copy of the Organizational Learning Review Report will be delivered in person if possible to the next of kin before it is distributed internally or externally.

**Will the Organizational Learning Review Report be available to U.S. Forest Service employees?**

Yes, a copy of the Organizational Learning Review Report will be posted on the Safety Engagement SharePoint site <https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-wo-ese/SitePages/Home.aspx> after a copy has been delivered to the next of kin.

**Will the Organizational Learning Review Report and/or the Field Learning Review Products be available to the media and public?**

Yes, a copy of the Organizational Learning Review Report for a fire related accident will be posted on the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center website ([www.wildfirelessons.net](http://www.wildfirelessons.net)) after a copy has been delivered to the next of kin. The Directors of the U.S. Forest Service Office of

Updated: August 26, 2015

Innovation and Organizational Learning and Occupational Safety and Health will determine the best method to distribute Field Learning Review products, and will usually post the reports.

### **Will the Organizational Learning Review report be redacted?**

The Organizational Learning Review report will be reviewed by the U.S. Forest Service Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) staff before it is presented to the Learning Review Board. The goal is to create an un-redacted report that can be released after approved by the Learning Review Board. However, the U.S. Forest Service may withhold portions of the Organizational Learning Review Report in accordance with FOIA exemptions, such as names of witnesses and others involved in the accident and personal information under FOIA Exemption 6 (personal privacy); and Safety Action Plans and recommendations made by the Safety Investigation Team may be withheld under FOIA Exemption 5 (deliberative process). Additional information on how to submit a FOIA request is available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/im/foia/>

### **What is the Learning Review Board?**

The Learning Review Board reviews the Organizational Learning Review Report and the distribution or creation of the Field Learning Review Products. Learning Review Board duties include ensuring that all recommendations have applicability, with regard to accident prevention and organizational learning; ensuring that the overall report thoroughly addresses organizational accident concerns; and ensuring that the Organizational Learning Review Report and Field Learning Review recommendations address corrective actions to prevent future potential occurrence.

The Learning Review Board is typically comprised of senior representatives with expertise and knowledge in the areas of management, the accident program area, safety, and technical experts. The Learning Review Board will typically consist of at least three voting members (including the Chairperson) where the majority of the members are independent from the operation or activity in which the incident occurred as well as nonvoting members.

### **How are Learning Review Board Members appointed?**

The Designated Agency Safety and Health Official appoints Learning Review Board members.

### **Acronyms**

CRP – Coordinated Response Protocol

DASHO – Designated Agency Safety and Health Official

DOD – Department of Defense

DOI – Department of Interior

FLA – Facilitated Learning Analysis

HRM – Human Resource Management

LR – Learning Review (a major Coordinated Response Protocol [CRP] component)

Updated: August 26, 2015

LEI – Law Enforcement and Investigations

IOL – Office Innovation and Organizational Learning

OSOH – Office of Safety and Occupational Health

SAI – Serious Accident Investigation