



BACKFIRING and BURNOUT OPERATIONS

Fireline Safety Category

Backfiring or burnout operations are often critical operations in the fire management job. If planned and executed correctly, they can speed control of a fire and greatly reduce suppression costs. Conversely, if done incorrectly, they can endanger personnel, extend control time and increase cost. Safety considerations must always be given first priority. No backfiring or burnout action, regardless of strategic importance or other critical factors, is worth risking one human life!

- Backfiring or burnout operations must not jeopardize the safety of personnel or equipment or compromise suppression actions on adjacent portions of the fireline.
- One qualified individual must be responsible for controlling and directing the firing operation.
- Before beginning backfiring or burnout operations, assure that:
 - Lookouts are posted.
 - Communications are established with both firing and holding teams.
 - Escape routes and safety zones are established, known to all resources, and will not be compromised by the firing operations.
 - Has it been approved and relayed to adjoining forces?
- If it is necessary, and time allows, concentrations of fuel adjacent to and inside the control line should be removed.
- Fuel outside the control line may be removed; concentrations of fuel may be scattered, covered with foam or wet down, or treated by ground or aerial retardant applications.
- Critical points such as hooks in the fireline, saddles or canyon may require extra holding forces.

References:

[Fireline Handbook](#)

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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