



FI-110 Unit 1: Roles and Responsibilities of the First Responder

Unit Objectives:

- Describe why accurate fire cause determination is important.
- Understand the basic responsibilities of a first responder.
- List the recommended equipment for a first responder.

Unit at a Glance:

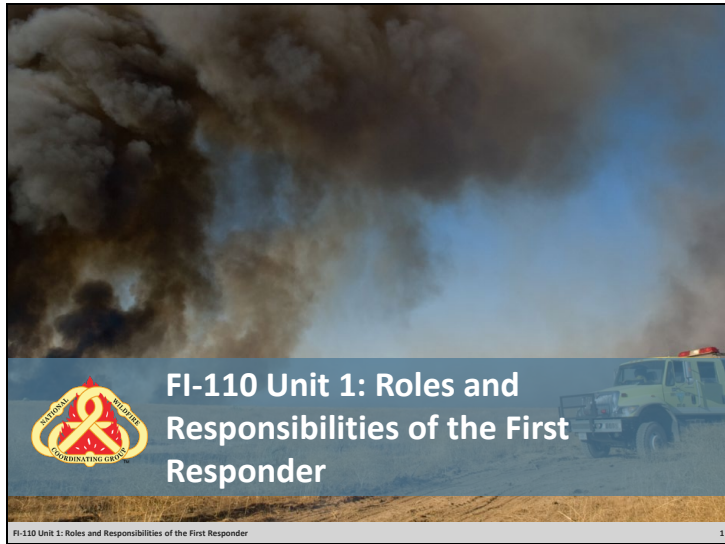
Topics	Method	Duration
Why do we investigate wildland fires?	Presentation	5 Minutes
Your role as a first responder to protect the scene.	Presentation	5 Minutes
Basic responsibilities	Presentation	5 Minutes
Recommended equipment to have available.	Presentation	5 Minutes
Knowledge Check/Review	Class discussion	5 Minutes
Total Unit Duration		25 Minutes

Materials:

- Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG), PMS 461, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/461>.
- Notebook for participants.
- Ability to display images and video on large screen.
- White board or easel access for group breakout.

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- ☐ Review unit objectives.
- ☐ Ask students why they might think fire investigation is important based on this photograph.
- ☐ Provide background on this image as noted below.
 - Waldo Canyon fire 2012, Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA.
 - Resulted in insurance claims totaling more than U.S. \$453.7 million.
 - Two fatalities.
 - 346 homes destroyed by the fire.

Note to Instructor

Your agency will have similar events to describe. Utilize this opportunity to discuss one.

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Fire suppression agencies investigate wildland fires to determine the origin and cause:

- To gather information and validate statistical data to support fire prevention programs.
- For pursuit of criminal and/or civil prosecution.
- For state/federal/provincial penalties.



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- Why do we investigate wildland fires?
- If we understand what starts fires, we can work towards preventing them, through engineering, education, and enforcement.
- For civil: insurance and cost recovery.
- For state/federal/provincial penalties: resulting in violation tickets, monetary fines, or court appearances.

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Fire suppression agencies investigate wildland fires to determine the origin and cause:

- Accurate determination of origin and cause is very important.
- All staff have a direct and indirect responsibility to provide knowledge and share the data obtained that will support an investigation.



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- ☐ Discuss how photos, accurate timelines, and other observations support an investigation.
- All staff would include the initial attack crew leader, the Incident Commander (IC), the responding officer, etc.

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Your role:

- To protect possible ignition sources and evidence from suppression activities once the site is safe, fire spread has been contained, and appropriate resources are available.



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Your basic responsibilities are to:

- Record observations en route and upon your arrival at a fire scene.
- Photograph and document the fire scene.
- Identify and protect the general origin area.
- Identify and protect physical evidence.
- Document potential witness information.
- Take and document on-scene weather readings.



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- There are six basic responsibilities. Of these six, the last five will be discussed in detail in Unit 3: Arrival at the Fire Scene. Recognize the five tasks to be performed upon arrival to a wildland fire.

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- Most of this equipment will already be in your vehicle or office. It's recommended these items be put into an equipment or gear bag for easy access.
 - **Note-taking materials:** Used for accurate sketches, reference points, witness names, documenting exact times of significant events, etc.
 - **Digital Cameras:** Don't delete any photos. Store on your agency's digital network.
 - **Compass:** Ensure declination is documented.
 - **Belt weather kit:** A digital weather instrument will also be sufficient. Take a reading upon arrival. Record your observations.
 - **Digital weather instrument:** Reference in your notes what was used to obtain your observations.
 - **Flagging tape:** Recommend yellow ribbon/flagging where possible. Used to mark key locations of evidence and/or block off areas to restrict vehicle traffic or human activity.
 - **GPS:** Ensure you take a GPS reading as a reference point near the general origin area to provide an accurate location for further follow-up. Ensure datum is documented.

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- ☐ Review unit objectives.