



## FI-110 Unit 3: Arrival at the Fire Scene

### Unit Objective:

- Recognize the five tasks to be performed upon arrival at a wildland fire.

### Unit at a Glance:

Topics	Method	Duration
The Five Tasks	Presentation	3 Minutes
Photograph and document the fire scene	Presentation	7 Minutes
Identify and protect the General Origin Area.	Presentation	5 Minutes
Identify and protect physical evidence.	Presentation	5 Minutes
Document potential witness information.	Presentation	5 Minutes
Take and document on-scene weather readings.	Presentation	5 Minutes
Knowledge Check/Review	Group Activity	5 Minutes
<b>Total Unit Duration</b>		<b>35 Minutes</b>

### Materials:

- Computer, large monitor, or screen, and projector.
- Notebook for participants.
- Ability to display images and video on large screen.
- White board or easel access for discussion or further explanations.

# Unit 3: Arrival at the Fire Scene

## Slide 1



# Unit 3: Arrival at the Fire Scene

## Slide 2

### Objective

- Recognize the five tasks to be performed upon arrival at a wildland fire.



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### ☐ Review unit objective.


- The five tasks are identified within the six basic responsibilities in Unit 1: Roles and Responsibilities of the First Responder.

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## Slide 3

**5 Tasks**

1. Photograph and document the fire scene.
2. Identify and protect the general origin area.
3. Identify and protect physical evidence.
4. Document potential witness information.
5. Take and document on-scene weather readings.

A firefighter wearing a yellow jacket, red helmet, and sunglasses stands at a fire scene. He is holding a wooden tool, possibly a pike pole, and looking towards the right. The background shows a wooded area with bare trees and a fire scene.

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- These five tasks are identified within the six basic responsibilities in unit 1.
- All of Unit 4, Identifying Signs of a General Origin Area is related to Task 2.
- Capturing video where appropriate but caution must be used with sound and commentary in the background.

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#### Task 1: Photograph and document the fire scene.



- Take photographs immediately upon arrival.
- Capture as much of the initial fire perimeter as possible.
- Photograph the entire scene, including onlookers.
- Take notes of general fire behavior.

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- Take photos upon arrival. Do not wait until the fire is under control. Key information will be lost. Consider using a smartphone for photos/video.
- Consider assigning at least one person to be responsible for written documentation and photographs.
- Photographs are an essential part of the documentation.
- Valuable information may be obtained from these photos and notes to assist investigators.

### Slide 5

#### Aerial Photo



Arrival by air is a great opportunity to photograph the entire fire perimeter.

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- This is a good opportunity to take photos of the heel versus the head of the fire.

### Slide 6

#### Personal Action Cameras

- Provide extremely valuable information for investigators.
- May be mounted in vehicles, helicopters, or on your person.
- Ensure this data is provided to the investigator.



Vehicle mount



On person

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- Left photo camera mounted in an engine unit cab.
- Right photo from a body cam.
- Do not share sensitive information.
- When these cameras are on, be mindful of what you say.

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#### Task 1: Photograph and document the fire scene.



Discuss the value provided with an image such as this.

- This image shows potential witnesses, wind direction, vehicles present, heavy equipment, etc.
- As a first responder, it's important to note people or vehicles because:
  - It could be the person responsible, or
  - These vehicles or people may not be there when the investigator arrives, and they could be key witness or have valuable information.
- Remind the students of the items to be documented for vehicle description:
  - License plate number
  - Make
  - Model
  - Year
  - Color
  - Damage to the vehicle
  - Any unusual or obvious accessories
- Other:
  - Number of occupants
  - Direction of travel
  - Speed of travel



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- Photo includes the following observations:
  - One all-terrain vehicle (ATV) with an operator
  - Two children
  - Five farmers
  - One first responder
  - One school bus
  - Two dozers on flatbeds
  - White pick-up truck leaving scene
  - Two white pick-up trucks on site
  - One dark pick-up truck on site
  - Includes the weather and smoke conditions
  - Photo metadata for the date and time may be of value

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#### Task 1: Photograph and document the fire scene.

- Your notes should be written as soon as possible (ASAP).
- If values are burned while on-site, photograph and document the time and fire behavior observed.
- Document the distance the fire is from values at risk.
- Document if anyone takes responsibility for starting the fire, e.g., equipment operator, cabin owner, landowner.



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- Examples of values at risk: cell tower, power lines, personal property, etc.

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#### Field Notes



- Legible
- Brief
- Descriptive
- Accurate
- Factual
- Complete
- Sketches

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- How good is your memory? Professionalism/ Accountability.
- Legible: not only by you but someone else may need them.
- Brief: use short sentences or phrases.
- Descriptive: use words that describe what you see.
- Accurate: times, dates, names, weather, vehicle descriptions, map locations, etc.
- Factual: keep personal opinions out.
- Complete: answer the 5 Ws and How.
- Sketches: create sketches to provide a visual reference to the scene and your notes.

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**Field Notes**

Is there anything wrong with doing this?



The image shows two examples of field notes. On the left is a TacoTime napkin with a red oval logo containing a cactus and the word 'TacoTime'. Below the logo is the slogan 'real taste. real value. any time.' Handwritten in blue ink is 'CGH 2009', 'Black Cow', and 'Crew 616'. A red circle is drawn around this text. On the right is a pack of Player's cigarettes. The pack is blue and white with a red bull logo. It says 'CIGARETTES ARE A HEARTBREAKER' and 'Player's Light'. Handwritten in blue ink at the top is 'CGH 344' and 'Green Field 4x4'. A red circle is drawn around this text.

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- Answer is...No!
- Best practice is in your field notebook, as writing information on a napkin or cigarette package isn't permanent. It is still acceptable if you have no other means to record at the time.
- Follow your agency's policy on retention and handling of any field notes.

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#### Task 2: Identify and protect the general origin area.

- Protect the general origin area and any potential evidence while you work the perimeter of the fire.



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- Ensure initial suppression activities do not destroy or damage the ignition area.

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#### Task 2: Identify and protect the general origin area.

- Mark with flagging tape.
- Keep vehicles and equipment out of this area and minimize suppression activities.
- Ensure this area is not disturbed before the arrival of an investigator.



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- Ensure all firefighters and onlookers do not put cigarette butts or garbage into or near this area (e.g., wrappers, juice containers, cans).
- All items have the potential to hold DNA. Make sure it is not yours!
- If unsure, protect more area than less around the area you identified as the general origin area.

### Slide 13

#### Task 3: Identify and protect physical evidence.

- Do not touch, remove, or destroy any possible evidence.



- If you see evidence that you feel will be of interest to the investigator.
  - Take photos.
  - Protect the evidence or area.
  - Ensure the investigator finds out about it.
  - Do not touch with bare hands!
  - If it is necessary to touch evidence, do so with proper gloves.
- In the above photo, firefighters observed a box of matches near the general origin area. This was flagged off and protected until the investigators arrived.

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#### Task 3: Identify and protect physical evidence.

- Examples of first responders protecting evidence at the scene.



- Left photo: Pylons protecting fireworks (roman candle).
- Right photo: Shovels and flagging tape used to protect tire track impressions on edge of the road near fire origin.



### Slide 15

#### Task 4: Document potential witness information.

Obtain the following:

- Name
- Physical address
- Email address
- Phone number
- Vehicle license plate and description
- Photos or videos

Ask if additional photos/videos were taken.

Provide this information to the investigators for follow-up.



- Consider obtaining the witness's driver's license number and date of birth (DOB).
- Collection of information could be based on an employee's training and job responsibilities. Follow your agency's policy on collecting this type of information.

### Slide 16

#### Task 5: Take and document on-scene weather readings.

- Use of belt weather kit or digital weather instrument.
- Obtain at or near general origin area.
- If weather instruments are not available, estimate the wind-speed, gusts, and direction.



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- Fire weather information may be critical for corroborating cause determination.
- A belt weather kit contains:
  - Humidity slide ruler
  - Weather notebook
  - Digital weather instrument
  - Sling psychrometer
  - Wind-meter
  - Water bottle

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#### Objective

- Recognize the five tasks to be performed upon arrival at a wildland fire.



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- ☐ Review unit objective.
- ☐ Review the five tasks.
  - 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.