



## RX-300 Unit 1: Policies and Guidelines

### Summary:

This unit outlines the prominent policies and guidelines for prescribed fire planning. Successful plan writing involves an understanding and careful adherence to your agency's policies and guidelines.

### Incident Position Description (IPD) Alignment:

- Prepare and/or ensure the prescribed fire plan is in accordance with the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484, agency policy and direction, and land, and resource management plan.
- Ensure individual readiness by demonstrating understanding and adherence to all current agency – prescribed fire policies.

### Unit Objectives:

- Describe the purpose of a prescribed fire plan.
- Explain the processes involved in preparing the prescribed fire plan.
- Recognize national and local policies and guidelines related to prescribed fire from an agency perspective.
- Differentiate between the responsibilities of the prescribed fire plan preparer, technical reviewer, and agency administrator as they relate to fire plan preparation.
- Identify the agency policies and local considerations that direct prescribed fire planning and implementation.

### Unit at a Glance:

Topics	Method	Duration
Plan and Policy	Presentation	5 minutes
Review policy documents	Discussion	25 minutes
Roles and Planning Process	Presentation	20 minutes
<b>Total Unit Duration</b>		<b>50 Minutes</b>

### Materials:

- *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/484>,
- *Prescribed Fire Complexity Rating System Guide*, PMS 424, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/424>,
- Agency policy document – select documents based on the demographic of the students.
  - [DOI DM Part 620 – Wildland Fire Response](#)
  - [FSM 5100 Chapter 5140 – Wildland Fire Management](#)

# Unit 1: Policies and Guidelines

## Slide 1



# Unit 1: Policies and Guidelines

## Slide 2

### Performance Standards Duties and Responsibilities

- Prepare and/or ensure the prescribed fire plan is in accordance with the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484, agency policy and direction, and land and resource management plan.
- Ensure individual readiness by demonstrating understanding and adherence to all current agency prescribed fire policies.



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**Time estimate** – 30 seconds

### Outline

- ☐ Allow students time to read standards on their own. Refrain from reading the standards verbatim off the slide.
- ☐ Refer students to the incident position standards for direction for completing these duties and responsibilities.

## Slide 3

### Learning Objectives



- Recognize national and local policies and guidelines related to prescribed fire from an agency perspective.
- Identify the policies and local considerations that direct prescribed fire planning and implementation.
- Define the purpose of a prescribed fire plan.
- Identify the responsibilities of the prescribed fire plan preparer, technical reviewer, and agency administrator as they relate to plan preparation.
- Describe the processes involved in preparing the prescribed fire plan.

At the end of this unit, you will be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of a prescribed fire plan?
- What are the primary guiding documents for prescribed fire policy and planning?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the development of the prescribed fire plan?

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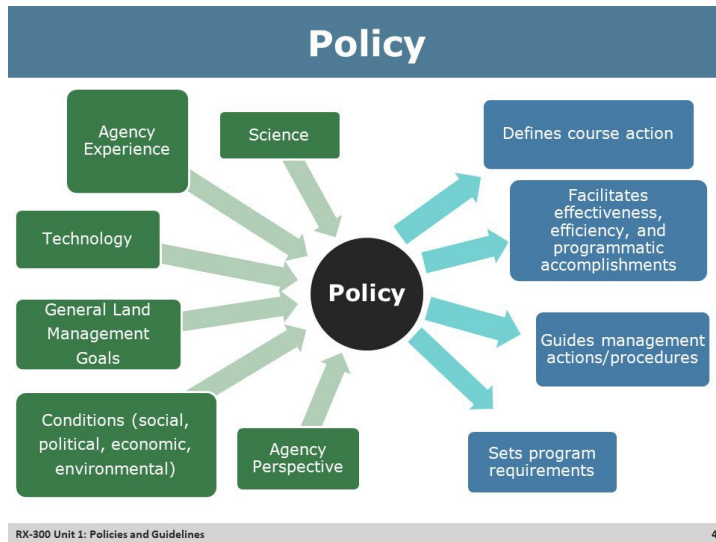
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**Time estimate** – 1 minute

### Outline

- ☐ Allow students time to read objectives on their own. Refrain from reading the objectives verbatim off the slide.
- ☐ Review the questions or have the students read them.

## Slide 4



**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

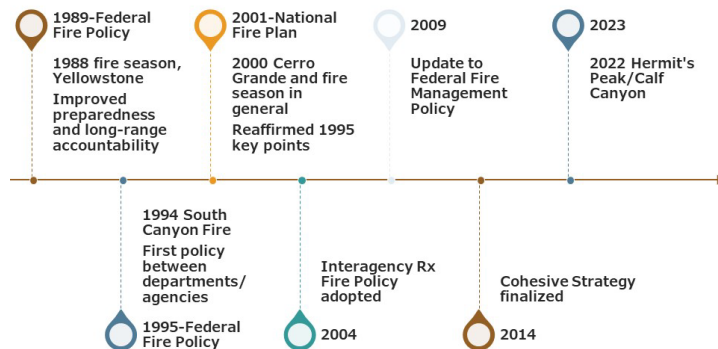
## Outline

- ☐ Review the inputs and outputs of policy.

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## Slide 5

### Policy Reviews and Updates



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**Time estimate** – 1 minute

### Outline

- There have been key events that have lead policy updates such as:
  - 1988 fire season, Yellowstone
  - 1994 South Canyon Fire
  - 2000 Cerro Grande and fire season
  - 2004 Interagency Rx Fire Policy adopted
  - 2009 update to Update to Federal Fire Management Policy
  - 2014 Cohesive Strategy finalized
  - 2022 Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon

## Slide 6

### Interagency Policy and Guidance

- **The Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy** (February, 2009): Encompasses all fire program management activities, ([http://www.nifc.gov/policies/policies\\_main.html](http://www.nifc.gov/policies/policies_main.html))
- **Interagency Agreement for Wildland Fire Management: Reference Section VI**, interagency agreements for planning and implementation of fuels projects
- **The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy**, all agencies, set 3 overarching goals.
- **Redbook 2023**: Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2023
- **NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation**, PMS 484, May 2022
- **Prescribed Fire Complexity Rating System Guide**, PMS 424, March 2022

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**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

#### Outline

- All of these refer to fuels in some capacity, interagency collaboration and partnerships, protection of communities, restoration, ecosystem sustainability, planning, science, roles, and responsibilities, and contracting and agreements.
- Focus will be on the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, Redbook, and the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/484>, and *Prescribed Fire Complexity Rating System Guide*, PMS 424, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/424>, as they tie into direct responsibilities and implementation.

## Slide 7

### Identification of Fuels Management Responsibilities

- **Redbook 2023: Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations**  
([http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol\\_ref\\_redbook.html](http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_redbook.html))
- **Program Organization and Responsibility Chapters**
  - **Chapter 2 BLM**                      **Chapter 3 NPS**
  - **Chapter 4 FWS**                      **Chapter 5 FS**
  - **Chapter 6 BIA**
  - **Fuels Management: Chapter 17**
- **Purpose of the Fuels Management programs DOI and FS**  
= to reduce hazardous fuels and risks to human communities and improve the health of the land by creating fire-resilient landscapes and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.

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**Time estimate** – 1 minute

### Outline

- ☐ Inform students on the importance of being familiar with agencies policy and procedures.



## Slide 8

### Bureau-Specific Manuals & Directives

- **FS** – Forest Service Manual 5140-Hazardous Fuels and Prescribed Fire
- **BLM** – 9214 Manual and 9214-1 Handbook, Fuels Management and Community Assistance,, Chapter 5
- **NPS** –NPS reference Manual RM18, Fuels Management, Chapter 7
- **BIA** –BIA Fuels Management Supplement to PMS 484, and Fuels Program Planning and Implementation Guide
- **FWS**- FWS Manual 621 FW1 Fire Management Program

**Time estimate** – 1 minute

### Outline

- ☐ Additional documents to become familiar with depending on your agency.

## Slide 9

### Additional Policies & Guideline Sources

- **DOI, Departmental Manual; Part 620: Wildland Fire Management; Chapter 4: Fuels Management and Wildland Urban Interface Community Assistance**
- **State laws/Directives**
- **Region specific direction**
- **Local government**
- **Non-government organizations**
- **Other compliance documents**
  - **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**
  - **Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

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**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

### Outline

- ☐ Discuss additional policies and guidelines the students may encounter.

## Slide 10

### Current Events in Policy

#### **USFS National Prescribed Fire Program Preview – 2022**

##### **Immediate recommendations**

- All FS Burn Plans must be updated to conform with Quality Assurance Checklist & Revised Prescribed Fire Plan Template
- Drought indicator and trend required
- Added emphasis on fuel model descriptions and fire behavior predictions
- Specify NWS office and initiate contact to help forecasters obtain necessary observations
- Added emphasis on use of tools to determine minimum staffing levels
- Include a "Critical Weather Step-up Plan"

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**Time estimate** – 10 minutes

#### **Directions to presenter**

- ☐ Update slide with recent events or policies that affect prescribed fire in your area.

#### **Outline**

- ☐ Review the recent events and policies and discuss how they will influence prescribed fire planning and implementation.

## Slide 11

### PMS 484

The *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation* establishes national interagency standards for the planning and implementation of prescribed fire.

“Describe what is minimally acceptable for prescribed fire planning and implementation. Agencies may choose to provide more restrictive standards and policy direction but must adhere to these minimums.”

**Time estimate** – 30 seconds

### Outline

- Policies are what you are held accountable for adhering to. You cannot win a game that you don't know the rules for.
- It is important to gain and maintain familiarity with policy documents.

## Slide 12

### Roles and Responsibilities

- **Plan Preparer**
  - **Technical Reviewer**
  - **Agency Administrator**
- Prepare plans according to policy
  - Coordinate with others to meet resource objectives
  - Interact with technical reviewer
  - Complete and sign complexity analysis

**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

### Outline

- ☐ Review the responsibilities.

## Slide 13

### Roles and Responsibilities

- **Plan Preparer**
  - **Technical Reviewer**
  - **Agency Administrator**
- Ensure plans meet policy
  - Ensure complexity analysis accurately reflects the project
  - Ensure prescription parameters meet the resource and control objectives
  - Ensure the ignition, holding, and contingency plans are consistent with predicted fire behavior
  - Complete and sign the technical review and the signature page

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**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

### Outline

- ☐ Review the responsibilities.

## Slide 14

### Roles and Responsibilities

- **Plan Preparer**
  - **Technical Reviewer**
  - **Agency Administrator**
- Approves the prescribed fire plan(s)
  - Understands and approves, by signature, the complexity analysis and assigned rating
  - Determines if and when they are to be notified that contingency actions are being taken
  - Ensures that prescribed fires which receive a National Ambient Air Quality Standards Notice of Violation are reviewed according to established guidelines

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**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

### Outline

- ☐ Review the responsibilities.

## Slide 15

### Required Elements

To follow PMS 484 you must adequately address each of the required elements.

This class will get you started but will take practice and critical review to get better

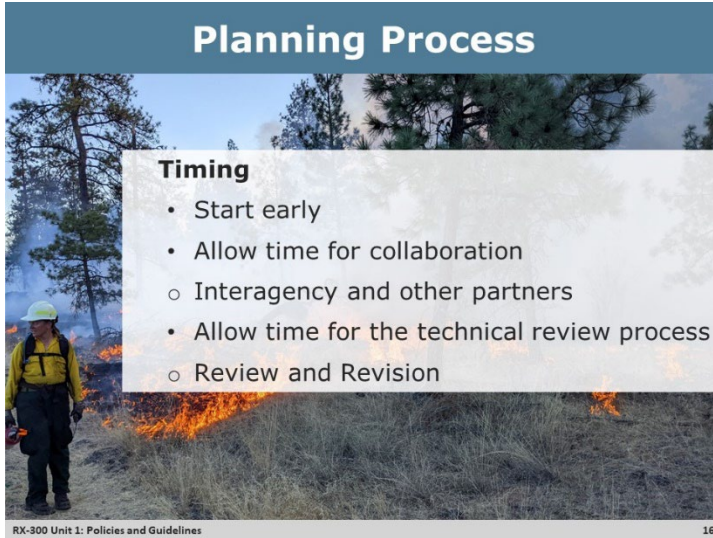
**Time estimate** – 1 minutes

### Outline

- ☐ Have students turn to the table of contents in the *NWCG Standards for Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation*, PMS 484, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/484>.



## Slide 16



**Planning Process**

**Timing**

- Start early
- Allow time for collaboration
  - Interagency and other partners
- Allow time for the technical review process
- Review and Revision

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**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

### Outline

- ☐ Review the slide

## Slide 17

### Planning Process



#### Sequence

1. Develop objectives
2. Project assessment and design
3. Preliminary complexity analysis
4. Prescription elements
5. Implementation plan
6. Final complexity analysis
7. Monitoring and post-burn activities
8. Technical review
9. Signatures

#### CADRE how do you develop your plans?

**Time estimate** – 10 minutes

#### Outline

- This is a recommended sequence.
- In reality there is a lot of jumping around between these steps.
- When signing *NWCG Prescribe Fire Plan Template*, PMS 484-1, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/484-1> you are stating that you have ensured that the RX fire is being conducted in accordance with the approved RX plan and established standards and guidelines, the plan reflects the project's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision and necessary agreements are in place.

#### Discuss

- ☐ CADRE how do you develop your plans?

## Slide 18

### Unit Summary

- **There are interagency and intra-agency policies around prescribed fire planning.**
- **Regularly review policy documents when planning.**
- **Know your roles as a plan preparer and work closely with others.**



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**Time estimate** – 2 minutes

### Outline

- ☐ Review the summary.