**S-219 FIELD EXERCISE – FIRING TEAM SIMULATION (2-4 HOURS)**

**Instructor Note: This is a generic field exercise to apply the concepts from the S-219 course. Students should be assigned to positions in the exercise based on their experience level. Positions that could be used in this exercise are:**

* **Firing Boss**
* **Firing Boss trainee**
* **Firing Team Leader**
* **Firing Team Crewmembers**
* **Holding Boss**
* **Holding Crewmembers**

**The exercise can be run in any fuel type. If possible use more than one fuel type to emphasize particular points associated with each. It will be up to the course coordinator or cadre to set up the field area with either a flag line or actual fireline. Complex terrain with perimeters with multiple corners will maximize the benefit of this exercise. *USE LIVE FIRE IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.***

**Prior to running the simulation, instructors should incorporate the demonstration of various firing devices used at the local units within this exercise. This is necessary to reinforce the online Module 1 and to ensure all students, regardless of experience level, possess basic proficiency with the relevant devices.**

**Instructors have the option of creating stations with different devices for students to rotate through prior to the actual firing simulation.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

Given a fire scenario, students will simulate a firing operation with emphasis on:

1. Safety, firing techniques, firing sequence, and firing team stagger.
2. Demonstrating proper use of the drip torch (or other preferred devices).
3. Evaluating which fuels will ignite to achieve specific objectives on either a wildland or prescribed fire.
4. Learning how a firing team can regulate heat by modifying techniques and/or strip width.
5. Gaining insight into navigating over terrain and fuels while planning access and egress routes.
6. Staying in constant contact both visually and verbally with adjacent firing team members.
7. Relaying instructions and messages between firing team members.

**Note: Objectives 3, 5, and 6 are best met in a brush or timber fuel type where visibility and access can be compromised.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Designate a student as a Firing Boss with or without a trainee. Break the students into 4-5 person firing teams with one Firing Team Leader and the rest as burners. The Firing Teams work for the Firing Boss. Following a flag line or actual fireline, the firing team will stagger their burners out and begin a firing simulation. The Firing Boss will relay instructions to the Firing Team Leaders. Burners will concentrate on maintaining communication, safe spacing, picking an access route cross country, and evaluating what fuels to ignite. Burners shall be spaced at least one chain apart and should try to keep a uniform distance (depth) from the control line and each other. The Firing Boss and Firing Team Leaders will manage burners verbally or through the use of radios.

If the class size is large, consider establishing a holding crew working for a designated Holding Boss. Rotate students through both the firing and holding crews over the course of the exercise. It may also be necessary to divide the class into different firing teams which work towards (or away) from either other.

It is possible to run the exercise similar to a tactical decision game. Instructors can add “what ifs” provided they do not significantly change the direction of the overall scenario or significantly modify the objectives. While using “what ifs” is not the primary objective, they can be an effective tool for getting more individuals engaged and adding complexity as needed. Possible “what ifs” include:

* Wind shifts and/or topography changes necessitate a change in stagger
* Drip torches are not working or running out of fuel (each firing team should go through a fueling up procedure)
* Firing behavior or spotting forces a reverse tool order
* Spot fires require burners to assist with the suppression
* Purposely moving a burner underneath another in flashy fuels and seeing how the Firing Team Leader reacts to the situation
* Ping pong balls are being dropped too close to the ground burners
* A burner comes down with heat exhaustion

**EQUIPMENT:**

* Full personal protective equipment and fire packs
* Hand tools for each student
* Full drip torches (or device of choice)
* Radios with designated frequencies (instructors should have access to their own frequency)
* Maps (if necessary)
* Full jerry cans (optional for the holders to bump along)
* Backpack pumps (optional for the holders)

**EVALUATION:** Ideally each group of students should have an instructor present. If the Firing Boss position is used, a dedicated instructor should shadow that individual. Instructors should evaluate the following:

* How well communications are passed among firing team members
* How well spacing and stagger is maintained (especially through heavy fuels)
* How uniform the firing depth is maintained (especially when firing around corners or through complex terrain)
* How well good access and escape routes are maintained
* Which fuels are available to burn
* How well or whether the fire would carry

Other things to look for:

* Has LCES been established?
* Do people know where their anchor point is?
* Are the Firing and Holding Bosses communicating with each other?
* Are the Firing Boss and Firing Team Leaders communicating clear leader’s intent to the burners?
* Is the Firing Boss being mobile and coordinating the entire firing operation?
* Are the Firing Team Leaders adjusting stagger and spacing based on topography and wind?
* Are the Firing Team Leaders adjusting the firing sequence between the burners, especially in the more challenging topographical areas?
* How well do multiple Firing Teams tie in together?
* Does the Holding Boss have their people spread out appropriately?
* Are the holders’ eyes in the green?
* Are holders standing right next to fuel (e.g. – chaparral) which would be burning very hot in reality?
* Are holders bumping the necessary equipment along?

**WITH LARGER CLASS SIZES, INSTRUCTORS NEED TO BE MOBILE AND ROTATE THROUGH THE STUDENTS TO DELIVER SPECIFIC GUIDANCE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TEACHABLE MOMENTS.**

**AFTER ACTION REVIEW:** Conduct an AAR after the exercise is completed. Ensure the objectives are reviewed and that students are encouraged to share what they learned.