

CHAPTER 4 – REQUESTING FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSISTANCE

I. General

The President of the United States is authorized to provide federal assistance to any state for the suppression of any fire on publicly or privately owned forest or grassland that would constitute a major disaster. Such assistance may be in the form of grants, equipment, supplies, and personnel in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's policy on requesting Fire Suppression Assistance as contained in 44 CFR Part 206, Subpart L.

II. Purpose of Fire Suppression Assistance

Through the Fire Suppression Assistance Program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's role in combating grassland, wildland, or wildland/urban interface fires is to provide financial assistance to states for fire suppression. The program is unique in that the Federal Emergency Management Agency actively provides assistance to suppress fires that threaten such destruction as would constitute a major disaster. When it has been determined that a wildland fire or fires on publicly or privately owned forest or grassland threaten such destruction as would constitute a major disaster, supplemental assistance may be provided in the form of a single grant, to reimburse eligible fire suppression costs.

III. Scope of Fire Suppression Assistance

A fire suppression declaration is the authorization of Federal assistance that is made the Federal Emergency Management Agency when a fire or fires constitute the threat of a major disaster.

A. Criteria for Fire Suppression Assistance

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will authorize a fire suppression declaration if the eligible damage and potential impact of the fire is of a magnitude that it could result into a major disaster declaration for Public Assistance and/or Individual Assistance.

B. Key Factors for Fire Suppression Assistance

1. The Division of Forestry, the State Coordinating Officer, the Principal Advisor, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency will consider the following key factors when evaluating and analyzing the need for fire suppression assistance:
 - a. Threat to lives and improved property.
 - b. Threat to critical facilities.
 - c. Committed or unavailable State and local resources including resources through: State agencies; local fire

departments; Cooperative Agreements; and Interstate/Regional Compacts; the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

2. High danger fire conditions, as indicated by:
 - a. Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) or similar nationally accepted index.
 - b. Energy release component.
 - c. Current weather conditions.
 - d. Rate of spread based on a nationally accepted behavior model.
 - e. Spread component.
 - f. Ignition component.
 - g. Burning index.
 - h. Relevant State restrictions in place and implemented.
 - i. Topography of the land.
3. Threatened watershed areas.
4. Potential impact on the environmental and historic/cultural resources.
5. Potential major economic impact.
6. Existence of multiple wildfires/potential convergence of fires.

IV. Gathering Information for Fire Suppression Assistance Request

Staff for the Division of Forestry will be made aware of the potential need to document and gather information required to request federal fire suppression assistance.

A. Critical Information for Requesting Fire Suppression Assistance

When making a request for federal fire suppression assistance, the following critical information is required and must be gathered:

1. If the State is unable to control or suppress wildfires or a complex of wildfires without out of state assistance.

2. If homes and/or structures are threatened and or evacuated due to the threat of the wildfire and the number of such homes, structures, or commercial businesses that are threatened.
3. If there is key infrastructure being threatened such as power plants, utility lines, water and/or sewage plants.
4. If the wildfire is not controlled or contained at the time of the request.
5. If the number of resources being utilized, including local fire/rescue resources, are documented and reported.
6. If current weather conditions are being reported and documented.

B. Closing Fire Suppression Grant Assistance

To close out a federal Fire Suppression Grant in the State of Florida, the Unified Command/Division of Forestry representative will notify the State Coordinating Officer of any Complexes in which all fires are controlled thus signaling the end to the grant period. It will then be the Division of Forestry's responsibility to issue the notification to the principal advisor. All such notifications must be in writing.

V. Roles and Responsibilities for Fire Suppression Assistance

A. The Division of Forestry Incident Commander

The Incident Commander will notify the Division of Forestry's State Officer in Charge of the wildfire, as soon as possible and report the information that is available. The Incident Commander will coordinate this information with the county emergency management representative.

B. The Director of the Division of Forestry

The Director or designee will coordinate with the Division of Emergency Management liaison or Duty Officer to notify the State Coordinating Officer, if identified, when a fire meets the criteria for a fire suppression grant. This notification can be done by contacting the State Warning Point.

C. The State Coordinating Officer

1. Will by telephone, fax, or through other rapid communications, contact the Regional Federal Emergency Management Agency

coordinator and make them aware of the situation and of the request.

2. Will follow-up in writing to the Region IV office of Federal Emergency Management Agency outlining some of the principal items in the request.
3. Will apply for assistance for wildfire complexes utilizing established Forestry Districts or Centers encompassing varying numbers of counties and will continue to utilize these districts/centers when applying for additional assistance.

D. The Division of Forestry Representative

1. A representative from the Division of Forestry will fill out the Federal Emergency Management Agency request form **FEMA 90-58**. The form is then signed by the State Coordinating Officer and submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Regional Office.
2. Will contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Principal Advisor to make any request a recommendation be made on the grant request.

E. The Principal Advisor

The Principal advisor will complete their recommendation and submit it to Federal Emergency Management Agency on **FEMA form 90-32**.