

# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Montana State Office  
5001 Southgate Drive, P.O. Box 36800  
Billings, Montana 59107-6800  
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/>

In Reply To:  
9210(923)P

September 19, 2003

EMAIL TRANSMISSION - 09/19/03  
Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2003-079  
Expires: 9/30/04

**To:** Field Managers

**From:** State Director

**Subject:** Montana/Dakotas Process for Compliance with Office of Fire and Aviation Instruction Memorandum No. 2003-038, Interim Guidance for Completion of Fire Management Plan Revisions Using the Interagency Template **DD: 09/30/04**

**Program Areas:** Fire and Fuels Management Planning

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) conveys a strategy and schedule (Attachment 1) for updating Montana/Dakotas Field Office Fire Management Plans (FMP) to be consistent with the template provided by the National Office of Fire and Aviation.

**Background:** All FMPs should be consistent with the template provided by IM No. 2003-038 and ready for use by September 30, 2004. We don't anticipate a need to conduct plan amendments. However, the schedule does provide for this contingency in the event that a Field Manager determines that a land use plan amendment is necessary.

Each Field Office has received a customized draft FMP and sample Fire Management Unit (FMU) matrix table from John Thompson. These include the information that was available from the Fire/Fuels Management Plan Environmental Assessment/Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas. Washington Office IM No. 2003-226 provides additional direction to develop quantifiable fire management objectives. Fire management planning training is also scheduled for October 20-21, 2003, in Billings to help Field Offices develop their fire management plans.

**Policy/Action:** Each FMP and FMU matrix should be revised and completed by the Field Office as appropriate by September 30, 2004. To help achieve this objective, each Field Office should plan to send either a Fire Management Officer (FMO) and/or an ID Team Leader to the FMP training.

John Thompson, State Office Planning and Environmental Specialist, and Jim Gray, Fuels Specialist, will be available upon request to provide guidance at Field Office interdisciplinary team meetings.

**Contacts:** Please direct questions or requests for assistance to John Thompson (406) 896-5030 or Jim Gray (406) 896-2911.

Signed by: A. Jerry Meredith, Associate

Authenticated by: Merry Prestridge (MT923)

1 Attachment

1-Strategy and Schedule for Updating Montana/Dakotas Field Office Fire Management Plans (3 pp)

Distribution

SOMT-1

Asst. FM Harve-1

Asst. FM Glasgow-1

## Strategy for Updating Fire Management Plans for Each Field Office

1. Assemble land use plan review team and conduct land use plan review to document fire management decisions and other resource management decisions from the resource management plan (RMP) that relate to fire/fuels management. (Field Office Manager)
2. Schedule Field Office meetings with interdisciplinary resource/fire specialists. (Field Office)
3. Incorporate appropriate state fire/fuels management data and Fire Management Unit/polygon (FMU) information into the required Fire Management Plan (FMP) template. (Thompson)
4. Optional: Develop an initial map for each FMU that shows: topography, fuels, fire occurrence, interface, land status, infrastructure, major water sources, areas of management constraints, access, values to be protected, fuel types, proposed treatments, other. (Field Office GIS specialist/Schardt)
5. Optional: Preliminary FMU maps available at Field Office 2 weeks prior to first Field Office meeting. (Thompson/Field Office GIS specialist)
6. Review preliminary FMP and revise/update material as appropriate. (Each Field Office resource/fire specialist)
7. Field Office interdisciplinary team meeting with resource/fire specialists to update, correct, and complete information about each FMU description, map, and the FMP. (Field Office) State Office planning and fuels personnel will help facilitate if requested by Field Manager. (Thompson, Gray)
8. Verify/develop objectives/desired future condition, fire management strategy, management constraints, topographic features, access, values to be protected, political boundaries, fuel types, and proposed treatments. (Resource specialists/fire specialist)
9. Consolidate revisions to the preliminary FMP as appropriate. (Field Office)
10. \*If appropriate/necessary, File Federal Register Notice of Intent to Amend RMPs, draft NEPA document, initiate Section 7 Consultation, and write Biological Assessment. (Field Office)
11. Review revised/updated FMP. (Field Office)
12. Consolidate final revisions to FMP and maps. (Field Office)
13. \*If appropriate/necessary, initiate 30-day public review/comment period. (Field Office)
14. \*If appropriate/necessary, initiate 60-day Governor's Consistency Review. (Field Office)
15. \*If appropriate/necessary, begin 30-day protest period. (Field Office)
16. \*If appropriate/necessary, end protest period\*, Governor's Consistency Review, Decision Record signed and implemented. (Field Office)

17. Provide copies of the FMP and maps to fire personnel, including dispatchers, prior to fire season. (Field Office fire management officer/State Office fire management officer)
18. Update/revise FMP fire history, objectives, fire management strategy for each FMU annually. (Field Office)

\*Applies if a RMP Amendment is necessary.

## Schedule for Updating Fire Management Plans

- June-Aug 2003**
- State Management Team (SMT) endorsement of proposed strategy.
  - Assemble land use plan review teams and conduct land use plan review to document fire management decisions and other resource management decisions from the RMP that relate to fire/fuels management.
  - Schedule Field Office meetings with interdisciplinary resource/fire specialists.
  - Incorporate appropriate state fire/fuels management data and Fire Management Unit (FMU) information into the required Fire Management Plan (FMP) template.
  - Develop a map for each FMP and FMU that shows topography, fuels, fire occurrence, interface, land status, infrastructure, major water sources, areas of management constraints, access, values to be protected, fuels types, proposed treatment areas, other.
  - Preliminary FMP and FMU maps sent to each Field Office 2 weeks prior to the Field Office meeting.
- July-Sept 2003**
- Review preliminary FMP and revise/update material as appropriate.
- Aug-Oct 2003**
- Field Office ID team meetings with resources/fire specialists to update, correct, and complete information about each FMU description, map, and the FMP.
- Oct-Dec 2003**
- Verify/develop objectives/desired future condition, fire management strategy, management constraints, topographical features, access, values to be protected, political boundaries, fuel types, and proposed treatments.
- Feb 1, 2004**
- Consolidate revisions to preliminary FMP as appropriate.
- March 1, 2004**
- File Federal Register Notice of Intent to Amend RMPs, Draft Biological Assessment, if appropriate.
- April 1, 2004**
- Review the revised preliminary FMP.
- Spring 2004**
- Provide copies of FMP and maps to fire personnel, including dispatchers prior to fire season.
- If a plan amendment is determined necessary by the Field Manager:**
- May 20, 2004**
- Draft environmental assessment completed, if appropriate.
  - Initiate Section 7 Consultation, if appropriate.
  - Initiate a 30-day public review/comment period, if appropriate.
- July 1, 2004**
- Begin Governor's Consistency Review of proposed plan amendments.
  - Begin 30-day protest period for proposed plan amendments.
- Aug 1, 2004**
- End of Protest Period.
- Sept 1, 2004**
- Governor's Consistency Review complete.
  - Decision Record signed and implemented, if appropriate.
  - Consolidate final revisions to FMP and maps.
  - Submit FMPs to the National Interagency Fire Center.
- Spring 2005**
- Provide copies of the FMP and maps to fire personnel, including dispatchers.