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OPERATIONS MANUAL  
STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01 FIRE SUPPRESSION  
SECTION 08 VEGETATION FIRES

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<b>TITLE</b> O P E R A T I O N S M A N U A L	<b>STANDARD</b> <b>INSTRUCTION 01</b>		<b>DEPARTMENT</b> F I R E - R E S C U E
<b>SUBJECT: FIRE SUPPRESSION</b> VEGETATION FIRES	<b>SECTION</b> 08	<b>PAGE</b> 1 of 4	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> TBD

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide an operational guide for vegetation fires in the wildland urban interface (WUI) areas.

**II. SCOPE**

This policy shall apply to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel, excluding lifeguards.

**III. AUTHORITY**

The fire chief authorizes the information within this policy.

**IV. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Strike Team: A strike team is a specified combination of the same type and kind of resources with common communications and a leader.
- B. Task Force: A task force is a combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need with common communications and a leader.
- C. Mutual Threat Zone (MTZ): A predetermined geographic area between neighboring agencies to which participating agencies respond (pursuant to a written agreement) to provide automatic aid to incidents on common radio channels and a pre-established common ordering point. Generally, the geographic area is within a mile of either side of the jurisdictional borders.
- D. Wildland Staffing Pattern: A temporary increase in staffing of various apparatus, at the discretion of the Operations Division, which takes several factors into consideration such as weather, local/regional incidents, current staffing levels, and units/resources deployed.

**V. POLICY**

- A. Fire Potential Index
  - 1. Used to quantify fire potential by assessing weather, live fuel moisture, dead fuel moisture, and greenness of the annual grasses.
  - 2. Provides a measure of predicted local fire danger based on past wildfire events and the potential for extreme fire behavior.
  - 3. Issued whenever above normal in San Diego City daily via 0800 page by Metro Zone Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC).
- B. Initial Dispatch
  - 1. All vegetation fire incidents will receive an immediate initial attack response.
  - 2. This initial attack response serves to quickly assess the incident, attack the fire, protect structures, and request additional resources as needed.
- C. Vegetation Fire Dispatch

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1. Vegetation fires will be assigned initial attack resources by ECDC unless one or more active fire indicators are present.
2. If one or more active fire indicators are noted, ECDC or any fire officer on the response shall automatically upgrade the incident to a vegetation 1st alarm.
3. Indicators of active fire include:
  - a. Multiple calls
  - b. Visible smoke from a distance identified by responding units
  - c. Reports of structures immediately threatened by fire
  - d. Active fire reported by an on-scene public safety professional
  - e. "Elevated" or "Extreme" FPI
4. The on-duty deputy chief of operations, operations battalion chief, ECDC battalion chief, and the fire dispatch supervisor all have the authority to upgrade the initial attack to a vegetation 1st alarm.
5. Vegetation 1st alarm consists of a combination of units to facilitate the protection of structures and the ability to initiate an attack on fires with greater potential, as identified in the Response Matrix.

D. Mutual Threat Zone (MTZ) Incidents

1. Participating agencies have pre-established procedures for incidents and communicate from a unified communications plan from the time of dispatch.
2. When a vegetation incident occurs within the MTZ, SDFD will automatically dispatch a first alarm vegetation response.
  - a. VHF channel assignments will be provided by CAL FIRE San Diego Unit ECC.
  - b. Units will communicate size ups, updates, resource orders, and needs directly to CAL FIRE San Diego Unit ECC using these VHF channels.
  - c. Units may deviate from using the VHF radio channels early in an incident when there is no channel assigned or if there is an apparent communication failure.
    - 1) UHF 10K will be used to communicate with CAL FIRE San Diego Unit ECC until able to return to the assigned VHF frequencies.
    - 2) If company officers are unable to reach SDU on 10K after three attempts, officers are to contact ECDC on 7A and have ECDC relay their status.

E. Dispatch Changes with Wildland Staffing Pattern

1. During wildland staffing patterns, the deputy chief of emergency operations has the option to:
  - a. Increase dispatches to all vegetation fires to a full first alarm.
    - 1) Add all upstaffed and staged units to the first alarm assignment.

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F. Staff Notification

1. Executive command staff will be notified of vegetation 1<sup>st</sup> alarm or greater if FPI is elevated/extreme, or when strike teams/task forces are requested by incident command.

G. Operations support, duty medical support, and logistics personnel shall respond when requested and voice their status on the command channel to ECDC.

H. Strike Team Deployment

1. All strike teams and strike team leaders (STEN)/task force leaders (TFLD) shall respond in accordance with the following FIREScope standards.

- a. Strike team alpha-numeric designation assigned by ECDC
- b. Designation consists of 3 parts:
  - 1) 3 letter agency identifier
    - a) SDFD's strike team designator is SND
    - b) Mixed San Diego County strike team designator is XSD
  - 2) Four-digit strike team number
  - 3) Alphabetical designator to define the strike team type
    - a) "A": type 1 engines
    - b) "B": type 2 engines
    - c) "C": type 3 engines
  - 4) Task force team numbers use agency identifier, the letters "TF", followed by the number

2. Examples:

- a. SND6430A: City of San Diego Strike Team, Type 1
- b. SND6430C: City of San Diego Strike Team, Type 3
- c. XSD6430A: Mixed Zone Strike Team, Type 1
- d. XSD6430C: Mixed Zone Strike Team, Type 3
- e. SND TF 6430: City of San Diego Task Force
- f. XSD TF 6430: Mixed Zone Task Force