

CAL FIRE Butte Unit
Policies and Procedures



Approved By: 
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Subject: **8100 Command & Control**
Specific Subject: **8130.004 Special Response Plan (LCA)**

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POLICY:

Under extreme conditions, such as lightning storms and other severe weather events, the ECC will implement special response plans. Special response plans include but are not limited to the Lighting Plan, and include incident coordination at the geographic or functional level. The purpose of special response plans is to ensure the efficient, timely and coordinated response of scarce resources to multiple emergencies that are widespread and occur in a short time frame. Incidents of this nature would include lightning fires, flooding, heavy snowfall, wind events, earthquakes, and other similar emergencies.

PROCEDURE:

Special Response Plans will be implemented when the ECC is unable to (or is potentially unable to) efficiently dispatch the standard response plan resources, due to the volume (or expected volume) of incidents. Under these circumstances the emergency incidents will be broken down to geographical areas, typically a Battalion or community, or to a functional level. In instances where a specific special response plan has not been developed, but incident conditions dictate breaking down the dispatch process to the geographic or functional level this procedure will serve as a guide to manage multiple emergencies that are widespread and are occurring rapidly.

Activation of Special Response Plans

When weather conditions are present that will likely result in significant lightning, rain with anticipated flooding, wind with blowdown, heavy snow, significant ground strikes are occurring or multiple lightning fires exist, the ECC will consult with the Unit Duty Chief who may authorize the activation of a special response plan. The ECC will then notify all field units by radio (activate pager/house alarm for all Chief Officers and stations) of the activation of a special response plan. Time permitting the ECC will notify cooperating fire departments of the plan activation. For instance, when notifying the unit during activation of the lightning plan, the ECC will state (after 2 beeps), "The Lightning Coordination Area (LCA) Plan is in effect for all wildland/lightning fires in the Forbestown/Berry Creek Area".

Preparedness Levels – Special Staffing

Special response plans typically include pre identified preparedness levels used in establishing resource call back (Special Staffing) in order to provide sufficient resource availability base upon threat. The decision to initiate special staffing will be at the discretion of the Unit Duty Chief and follow CAL FIRE policies pertaining to Special Staffing or local agency approval for non-CAL FIRE incidents.

Detection - Intel

Depending upon the nature of the emergency, enhanced detection measures may be implemented at the Duty Chiefs direction including but not limited to lookouts and/or air reconnaissance. Consult the specific special response plan.

Modified Dispatching

Initial attack/initial alarm dispatching is normally accomplished by using the Butte Standard Response Plan. When a special response plan is activated the ECC will modify elements of the standard response plan. This is done to minimize rapid drawdown of resources, and allocate resources directly to the incident commander for allocation with geographic or functional structure. This modified response plan may include a single engine, and the assignment of a specialized resource such as an air tactical to assist in locating the incident, determining potential, resource needs and incident stabilization.

LCA Dispatching

The LCA IC will directly dispatch resources under their control to fires within their LCA. Additional resources requests will be directed to the ECC. The ECC will not directly dispatch resources to new incidents within a LCA unless asked to do so by the LCA IC; typically the ECC will dispatch resources to a staging area within the geographic area and from there the LCA IC will dispatch them to the incident(s).

Incident Naming & Numbering System

Incident naming conventions will be dictated by the type of incident, fires, floods, windfall, etc. Under an LCA incident naming will be assigned to each reported fire utilizing the Battalion number as the first digit, a hyphen, and then a consecutive number for each occurring reported fire:

- Forebstown LCA 5-1, 5-2, 5-3....
- Concow LCA 1-1, 1-2, 1-3....
- Butte Meadows LCA 2-1, 2-2, 2-3....

Under a LCA the dispatch of personnel and equipment will be by fire name, the latitude and longitude or legal description, and landmark if known. The LCA fire names will be given incident numbers when conditions allow coordination between the LCA IC and ECC (minimum once per day).

Communication

As staffing permits the ECC will transition to Butte Support (or other Support Net) for Special Response Plan support activities. The ECC, upon direction from the ECC Chief/Duty Officer and/or Duty Chief, will also order a Command Net(s) for use between LCAs and the Incident Commander.

The ECC will assign tactical frequencies (to each LCA) based upon need. Tactical frequencies normally used within that battalion will be the first choice.

Typically severe weather events are the type of situation that develops rapidly and results in multiple emergencies across a wide area. Under these circumstances command and control operations become taxed with significant emergency call volume and consequently increased radio traffic. When this occurs the ECC, based upon available staffing, will implement "two-frequency dispatching". The ECC will broadcast 2 beeps and announce, "Oroville to the Unit, effective immediately implement two frequency dispatching. All emergencies will be dispatched on BTU Local; all other traffic including response check back, resource status and other support traffic will be on conducted on Butte Support.

During **two-frequency dispatching**, resources should monitor both BTU Local and Butte Support Nets, while involved with routine movement and while responding/returning from incidents. During two-frequency dispatch mode the ECC will use Local Net to dispatch emergencies, and receive reports from the field of new incidents. Routine movement of apparatus and reports from the field of new incidents, "New Incident", should be broadcast over local net. All other radio communication from the field such as responding, at-scene, status updates, requests for resources and available, are transmitted on Butte Support Net.

Operations

Incident operations will be coordinated at the geographic or functional level. For example, under lightning conditions a Lightning Coordination Area (LCA) will be established. The incident commander will be appointed by the Unit Duty Chief. A LCA Incident Commander (LCA IC) will be assigned to geographical area (typically along battalion boundaries or communities) or functional operation (water rescue) and will direct all operations under their command. The incident commander will be referred to, based on the geographical area covered by the LCA. For instance, for a LCA in the Forbestown area, the designator will be "Forbestown IC." LCA ICs are responsible for maintaining situational and resource status of all fires and resources within their geographic area.

Extended Attack Fires

If one or more fires within an LCA develop in to extended attack, the Unit Duty Chief will consult with the affected LCA IC and decide if the incident(s) should be removed from the LCA control and placed under separate command. A separate fire organization will be established and operated through the ECC using expanded dispatch procedures. Also at this point a new fire name will be given other than the LCA fire name, (i.e. 2-1 will now be known as the Windy Incident).

Plans

The planning functions will be maintained by the IC or designee. The planning functions include situational status for incidents within the command, and resource status, including the requests for additional or release of surplus resources. This information will be communicated to the ECC and where appropriate the Unit Duty Chief. All resources will be immediately released to the ECC when the IC declares them excess.

Resources that are off shift will remain assigned to the incident command and will not advise the ECC of their status or location.

A Technical Specialist – Plans may be assigned by the Duty Chief/Incident Commander will collect, organize, and display incident situational and resource status. The position will also assist the ECC in the preparation of the ICS-209. Furthermore, under the direction of the IC the TS-Plans will assemble the daily IAP and distribute the IAP to the LCA IC & resources, ECC, Duty Chief, affected stations, cooperators and OCC (NOPS) via electronic mail or other means.

Logistics

All logistical support will be coordinated through the ECC who will coordinate with the unit FLO and fleet management, or, if activated, the Logistics Section. This includes such items as fuel, food, rehabilitation drinks, lodging, mechanics, etc.

Finance

The Technical Specialist – Finance will prepare and maintain a cost estimate, handle all financial issues (personnel and hired equipment time reporting, Cal Card purchases, compensation/claims documents and prepare the final cost package.

Safety

The incident commander will order Safety Officer(s) as appropriate, and safety officers will be allocated to incidents within the LCA upon request.

Command & Control

The ECC will maintain overall coordination to insure timely and accurate detection, reporting and dispatching of resources. All requests for additional resources will be placed from the LCA IC to the ECC. The IC shall prioritize fires for resource allocation.

The ECC will transition in to an “Expanded” operation as directed within the special response plan based on incident ordering and support needs. The ECC will dispatch all aircraft as requested. The ECC will attempt to “fill” all requests for additional personnel, equipment, and special services using the closest, most appropriate resources.

The ECC in consultation with the Unit Duty Chief will coordinate LCA activation and deactivation. The ECC will notify each LCA IC of any new incidents within their LCA. The ECC is responsible for all incidents outside of special response plan areas (LCA), and under lightning plan activation for all non-wildland incidents within a branch. For instance, a medical emergency within a LCA under the lightning plan would be the responsibility of the ECC; the ECC may contact the LCA IC and request resources from the LCA if available for response to the new incident.

The ECC in consultation with the Unit Duty Chief is responsible for working with the LCA(s) to ensure the transition to a separate command of all extended attack and major incidents.

The Duty Chief will maintain close communications with affected cooperators (Sierra Pacific Industries, USFS PNF & LNF), cooperating fire departments, and the NOPS Duty Officer.

Deactivation of the Special Response Plan

The following guidelines should be used to deactivate a LCA. All incidents in the LCA have been staffed, controlled/mitigated, and are in patrol/monitor status. The ECC will assume command & control responsibilities for resources remaining on incidents after LCA deactivation.

Appendix:

Appendix A Preparedness Levels

The following Preparedness Levels will be used in establishing resource call back (supplemental staffing) in order to prepare for effective resource utilization based on threat:

Level 1: Alert/Watch

- Fire Weather Office has issued LAL's (Lightning Activity Levels) of 2 or 3, and
- Unit **Duty Chief**, based on fire weather predictions, determines **lightning threat** exists, and
- Lookouts report **ground strikes** near the Unit or the ECC detects ground strikes nearing the Unit, via Radar (or other intelligence).

Level 2: Warning

- Fire Weather Office has issued a **Red Flag Warning** for **dry lightning** and/or
- LAL's (Lightning Activity Level) of 4 or greater, and
- Duty Chief** perceives **lightning threat** warrants this increased level of Preparedness

Level 3:

- Multiple lightning fires** exist in the Unit with containment success is unlikely within the Initial Attack period, and
- Multiple fires for multiple days**, requiring major logistical support, and
- Initial Attack fires **predicted to grow** into Extended Attack and/or Major Fires, and
- Duty Chief** perceives **lightning threat and resource draw down** warrants this increased level of Preparedness.

Staffing for Preparedness Levels

Based on the Preparedness Level determined by the Duty Chief, the ECC will order/process the following resources/notifications:

Level 1:

- Notify Unit Chief
- Staff all state engines (includes reserve engines)
- Staff 3 fire crews
- Staff 2 dozers
- Staff ECC with 4 ECCO's day, 3 ECCO's night (2 wide-awake)
- Staff Fire Lookouts, as per Lookout Staffing Plan
- Maintain a minimum of 4 battalion chiefs (or acting BC's)

Level 2 (in addition to Level 1):

- Call back appropriate number of battalion chiefs (or acting BC's) to maintain 2 B.C. coverage for I/A (not committed to Branch activities). Call back ECC BC if available.
- Selected staffing of volunteer Type-3 engines w/3 fire fighters and Type-6 engines w/ 2 fire fighters (career/volunteer)

- After volunteer engines are staffed, then staff all county reserve engines with career operators and career/volunteer fire fighters
- Staff 4 water tenders w/ up to 2 fire fighters (2 north/2 south)
- Maintain 2 dozers available for I/A (attempt agency dozers first)
- Staff Service Center with minimum 3 personnel (Logistical Support)
- Staff Shop with minimum of 2 mechanics
- Request an early start time for AirTac at CAAB (Approval from Unit Duty Chief and Region OCC required)
- Hire CWN Type-2 Helicopter, with bucket, at CAAB (w/CWN manager)
- Hire CWN relief AirTac (w/ATGS) at CAAB
- Order Plans Technical Specialist (reports to I.C.)
- Order Finance Technical Specialist (reports to I.C.)
- Order Information Officer (reports to I.C.)

Level 3 (in addition to Level 1 & 2):

- Call back DC's and BC's (staff and field), as needed
- Staff ECC for fully expanded operation (shift work)
- Hold fire control personnel on duty (except vacation/sick), as needed
- Establish Incident Base (and Camps), if needed
- Order MKU or local food service vendor
- Order MCC or Butte County Sheriff's Communications Unit
- Order the following overhead, as needed:
 - Logistics Section Chief
 - 3 mechanics
 - Food Unit Leader
 - Facilities Unit Leader
 - Finance Section Chief
 - Cost Unit Leader
 - Equipment Time Recorder
 - Motel Manager
 - Plans Section Chief
 - Check-In/Status Recorders (2)
 - Resources Unit Leader
 - Situation Unit Leader
 - Information Officers (3 to 6)
- Hire additional CWN helicopters (crew transport, water dropping, recon), as needed
- Hire additional CWN dozers (DVBE), as needed (if agency dozers unavailable)
- Staff additional volunteer water tenders, as needed
- Staff additional volunteer resources per north & south division volunteer staffing.