

**TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**SECTION: Firefighting
SUBJECT: Brush & Wildland Fires
REVISED: 7/2013**

PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines that will provide the fire ground commander and personnel with a safe and effective way of handling fires involving forest, brush, and/or ground cover fires.

POLICY:

In the event of a forest, brush, and/or ground cover fires, the following guidelines have been established.

RESPONSE:

The response order for forest, brush, and/or ground cover fires should be as follows:

1. Brush Truck.
2. Tanker
3. Rescue/pumper
4. Pumper if requested.

PROCEDURE:

- A. Report on conditions.
 1. Determine actual location of the fire.
 2. Direction and characteristics of fire travel.
 3. Type of fuel burning (grass, heavy brush).
 4. Exposures
 5. Action being taken by first arriving units
- B. Request additional equipment
- C. Determine plan of action based on priorities and resources available.

SAFETY:

- A. All members shall wear necessary protective clothing in accordance with the hazard.
- B. Safety rules for operating vehicles "off road"
 1. Have a means of escape should your position be over run.
 2. Avoid commitment of units on narrow roads in heavy brush areas.
 3. It is not uncommon for heavy vehicles to become stuck off road.
 4. Before taking a unit off road you must know location and direction of fire travel.
- C. Post guard when advancing and maintaining lines in brush areas.
 1. Spot fires below your crew and frequent spot fires.
 2. Heavy equipment working above your crew, i.e. falling rocks, etc.
 3. Changes in wind velocity and direction.
- D. A means for escape shall be made known to all fire personnel working in brush areas. Stay close to burned areas.
- E. All personnel should know location and direction of travel of fire head.

- F. Do not allow fire personnel to become exhausted. Provide rest periods, frequency will be dependent upon topography and weather conditions.
- G. Be alert to the possibility of downed electrical wires, there may be energized fences as a result.
- H. Do not go downhill to attack a fire.

CONTROL:

- A. Base all actions and strategy on current and expected behavior of the fire.
- B. Structural protection and life safety take priority over extinguishment of brush.
- C. If offensive attack is indicated, choose an anchor point and hit the head of the fire if possible. If that is not possible establish an anchor point and start on the flanks and work toward the head.
- D. If the fire is a large hot fast moving one, then a direct attack may not be possible. In such cases, an indirect and/or parallel attack may be utilized by cutting a fire line a distance ahead of the fire.
 - 1. This may require writing off losses in the path of the fire.
 - 2. Indirect attack is commonly used in conjunction with fire retardant drops and back fire techniques.
- E. Different methods of attack may be used simultaneously according to the situation.
- F. If assigned structural protection, keep hose lays flexible enough to be able to quickly break away in the event of being over run.
- G. If additional resources are needed the NYS DEC Forest Rangers should be contacted. They have added supplies of tools, and call lists for additional personnel.

COMMAND:

- A. The incident command system should be put in place.
- B. Establish a command post.
- C. The incident commander has responsibility for the entire operation. They also have responsibility for assigning the following positions during brush fire operations:
 - 1. Operations
 - 2. Support.
 - 3. Sectors.
 - 4. Liaison positions between various agencies (unified command).
- D. If an area evacuation is warranted, use local law enforcement to assist.
- E. Radio communications should conform to incident command system guidelines.