

FIRE RESPONSE & SUPPRESSION

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Lions River Fire Protection Association
By Landowners – For Landowners

1. Being sufficiently prepared and ensuring an appropriate response to forest fires when they occur are key factors in effective and efficient fire management. It is essential to have plans and resources in place prior to fires occurring. Responsible personnel need to have a range of options available, know which fires to suppress and which to allow to burn, mechanisms for monitoring fire danger and identifying fires which require action, and clear responsibilities and coordination mechanisms.
2. Efficient fire suppression is primarily geared towards a rapid response or an aggressive initial attack strategy. This fundamental principle of “throwing” the maximum amount of firefighting resources at a fire before it increases in size greatly reduces the complexity and the costs associated with a large fire that escapes initial attack.
3. Fire suppression includes operations and tactics aimed at containing, controlling and extinguishing fire. It deals with the management of the firefighting resources and the implementation of predetermined standard operating procedures, which guide decision-making and the actual operations on the ground.
4. Fire detection, the first component of initial attack and fire suppression aim at detecting unwanted ignitions rapidly and accurately.
5. Efficient fire detection clearly needs to be coupled with a high degree of responder readiness where a pre-planned amount and type of firefighting resources, on an immediate availability status, are mobilized with minimum delay to a fire incident. This process of ensuring that the relevant resources are ready and fully operational for mobilization on days of high fire danger is a significant contributor to reducing the damage caused by unwanted fires.
6. Well trained firefighting resources that have an immediate availability status remain dependant on a well-run dispatch and coordination system. This will ensure that they are mobilized to the targeted incident, with sufficient information and an official mandate, leading to an optimum and well led intervention.
7. With deterioration in weather conditions and/or an increase in the complexity of a fire incident, the need for a rapid and aggressive initial attack is replaced by a cooperative strategy between a growing number of role players, agencies and landowners. Ultimately, this means that one person the (Incident commander) will need to take charge and delegate authority to effectively manage the resources and the operations. During this extended attack phase, situations can escalate out of control especially where multiple fires occur or where life and property become seriously threatened.
8. The training of all role players and their appropriate structuring (how do we all work together and whom monitors & manages) form the primary requirement for the success of operations that involve multiple types of landowners, agencies and responders.

Have all necessary knowledge before fighting fires:

- SAFETY FIRST
- Understand responsibilities and safety at fires
- Know the Fire Danger Index
- Understand fire – types, terms and fire characteristics & behaviour
- Firefighting tactics – analyse fires and decide on best tactic
- Know potential hazards at fires and ensure firefighters are briefed
- Understand health & safety issues whilst at fires

Important Principles to adhere to:

- Everyone at the fire has responsibility for safety.
- Accept responsibility for your decisions and actions.
- Work co-operatively with others.
- Do not work alone – team up with others.
- Be aware of the situation around you and any hazards likely to cause you harm.
- Wear appropriate PPE.
- Ensure your equipment is well maintained and you know and operate it within its limits and capability.
- Ensure the tasks you undertake match your capability and that of your equipment.
- Maintain communications.