

## Operational Leadership

The most essential element of successful wildland firefighting is competent and confident leadership.

Leadership means providing purpose, direction, and motivation for wildland firefighters working to accomplish difficult tasks under dangerous, stressful circumstances.

In confusing and uncertain situations, a good operational leader will:

- **TAKE CHARGE** of assigned resources.
- **ASSESS SITUATION** by gaining intel.
- **MOTIVATE** firefighters with a “can do safely” attitude.
- **DEMONSTRATE INITIATIVE** by taking action in the absence of orders.
- **COMMUNICATE** by giving specific instructions and asking for feedback.
- **SUPERVISE** at the scene of action.

## DUTY

### **Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.**

- Take charge when in charge.
- Adhere to professional standard operating procedures.
- Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.

### **Make sound and timely decisions.**

- Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.
- Develop contingencies and consider consequences.
- Improvise within the leader's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment.

### **Ensure tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished.**

- Issue clear instructions.
- Observe and assess actions in progress without micro-managing.
- Use positive feedback to modify duties, tasks, and assignments when appropriate.

### **Develop your subordinates for the future.**

- Clearly state expectations.
- Delegate tasks that you are not required to do personally.
- Consider individual skill levels and developmental needs when assigning tasks.

# RESPECT

## **Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.**

- Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.
- Take care of your subordinates' needs.
- Resolve conflicts between individuals on the team.

## **Keep your subordinates informed.**

- Provide accurate and timely briefings.
- Give the reason (intent) for assignments and tasks.
- Make yourself available to answer questions at appropriate times.

## **Build the team.**

- Conduct frequent debriefings with the team to identify lessons learned.
- Recognize individual and team accomplishments and reward them appropriately.
- Apply disciplinary measures equally.

## **Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.**

- Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.
- Provide early warning to subordinates of tasks they will be responsible for.
- Consider team experience, fatigue, and physical limitations when accepting assignments.

# INTEGRITY

## **Know yourself and seek improvement.**

- Know the strengths and weaknesses in your character and skill level.
- Ask questions of peers and superiors.
- Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.

## **Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.**

- Accept full responsibility for poor team performance.
- Credit subordinates for good performance.
- Keep your superiors informed of your actions.

## **Set the example.**

- Share the hazards and hardships with your subordinates.
- Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks.
- Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.