

Fire Assessment Process

Each Operational Period, Before Assigned

- Review fire weather forecast, noting National Weather Service (NWS) Watches and Warnings and key discussion terminology.
- Review recent fire activity and notable fire behavior.
- Compare current fire danger levels to historic trends and thresholds on local PocketCard to assess season severity.
- Consider critical fire weather patterns with fire weather forecast and predictive services 7-day outlook.

Once Assigned and En Route to the Fire

- Take weather forecast along; consider spot forecast needs.
- Recall weather from yesterday, overnight, and now.
- Utilize maps of the fire area to evaluate what has burned and what may be ahead.
- Interpret sky and smoke conditions for stability, wind speed and direction, and signs of intense burning.

On-Scene Fire Assessment

- Validate forecast with current on-site weather conditions, especially windspeed and direction.
- Determine where, what, and how the fire is burning.
- Identify hazardous fuels and significant terrain ahead of the fire.
- Anticipate rapidly changing fire behavior.
- Continue to monitor the sky for cloud and smoke indicators.

Determine Decision Thresholds and Ensure LCES

- Recognize how changes impact objectives, strategies, and tactics.
- Establish escape routes, time frames, and triggers for escape to safety zones.
- Identify best lookout locations to monitor for changes.
- Communicate weather and fire behavior observations.

Document Your Assessment

- Record your observations and assumptions.
- Include assessments and decisions in personal logs.