



Incident Commander Guide

Incident Kits for Employee Health, Wellbeing and Work Environment

Why it Matters?

This IC guide is provided to describe some opportunities you can take to lead and more information about the Incident Kits to enhance your understanding and support you to lead in this context.

We're committed to doing everything we can to better support the mental health and wellbeing of our employees. The Forest Service wholeheartedly believes we have incredibly talented, dedicated and committed employees, and we owe it to each of them that they be safe, including mentally and emotionally. The role of an IC positions you to directly lead on an incident to support employee health and wellbeing. It may be a formally designated responsibility through added language in your DOA or Leaders Intent Letter. These kits have been created for easy deployment of information on an incident. The effort is to help connect employees with resources and skill building opportunities on high priority topics. There is another document titled "Incident Kit Introduction" which can orient you and your IMT to the kits and how they can be used.

Opportunities to Lead

Review Delegation of Authority and Leaders Intent documents – The information shown below provides for an example of how an AA may provide leaders intent around the topic of work environment and employee wellbeing on an incident. It may or may not appear in your DOA/Leaders Intent Letter. You can review the information below and understand it is the current Forest Service posture on work environment and employee health and wellbeing.

Human Resources – Work Environment, Behavioral Health and Employee Wellbeing

- Our Agency Code and Commitments of treating everyone with respect, empowering one another, investing in relationships, modeling integrity, protecting one another, and learning from mistakes shall provide the framework from which you lead and manage personnel on this incident. Work environment management extends beyond the office into all aspects of incident response and should be attended to in alignment with Agency values, policies, and process.
- All personnel assigned shall be treated with dignity and respect. Manage the human resources assigned to the fire in a manner that promotes a positive and harassment-free work environment and creates a "no tolerance" atmosphere for harassment, alcohol, or illegal drug use. Notify the AA if/when harassment is reported. Post Harassment Hotline information in high visibility areas in camp.
- Leadership shall be provided through the team, with messaging and visible actions to encourage and support employee wellbeing and a healthy work environment on this incident. Incident kits are available to support you in messaging and "This is who We Are" poster files are available for printing and posting. If you need a copy of the This is Who We Are booklet the AA can provide one.
- Our commitment to a safe and resilient workforce means personally sustaining physical and mental wellbeing as well as getting help for and supporting colleagues who may be experiencing physical and mental health issues. Familiarization with the support provided through [EAP Programs](#) will help you provide support during this incident. You are expected to provide employees with connections to EAP

or other supportive services as needed if behavioral health, conduct, or performance concerns arise. EAP contact information for Forest Service Employees is provided in one of the kits.

- The [Preparedness Guide for Firefighters and Their Families](#) and the companion *Reset Guide* [Reset: Firefighter and Family Members' Reintegration Guide](#) are additional resources to build resiliency by acknowledging and addressing some of the hazards and risks associated with wildland firefighting and all hazard responses. These guides were created to support the health and wellbeing of all responders and should be referred to as tools for firefighter support. The AA can provide copies for you upon request.
- It is expected that you ensure sufficient staffing to support employee wellbeing and providing a healthy work environment. Human Resource Specialists are to be assigned to Type 1 or 2 Incident Management Team (IMT) incidents with 300 or more assigned personnel. Human Resource Specialists should also be assigned for Type 3 incidents with greater than 300 assigned personnel when the incident is expected to last for 3 days or more (FSM 5137.03).

Leading at Morning briefings – An IC, AA or team member such as the HRSP (also Safety or MEDL) can deliver the “Leaders Invitation” information from the tool kit. These remarks introduce the topic and resources for the topic. The leader should not read these statements but understand and deliver the intent and invitation to materials in IAP or on information board poster with some understanding and authenticity. You don’t need to be an expert in the topic to introduce the tool and orient people on where to find the information. You can discuss this opportunity with your team, and the AA and decide together how to do this based on the current circumstances and incident response priorities.

AA/IC meetings – During your normal AA/IC meeting take the time to discuss what the team is doing on this topic, why it is the right time, or not the right time to provide leadership and information about work environment and employee behavioral health and wellbeing on this incident. The shared leadership between the AA and the IC is important. You may need support from the AA and your team to add this element of work into your normal leadership posture and operations.

Resources



[*Preparedness Guide for Firefighters and Their Families.pdf*](#)

New kits are being developed and we need to learn about how these kits are or are not working. For questions, request for topics to be added, and to provide feedback please reach to K.C. Briggs Kimberly.briggs2@usda.gov 541-954-6520