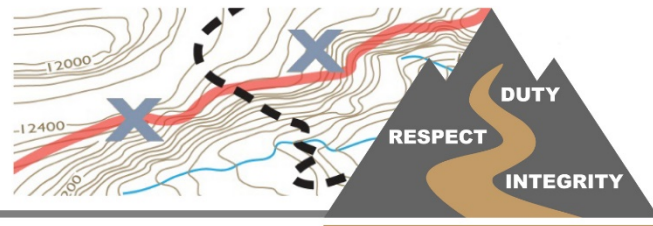


Tactical Decision Games



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

DIFFICULT ESCAPE AND SAFETY/PETES FIRE

INITIAL FACILITATOR INFORMATION—NOT TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Author(s)

Paul Chamberlin, Northern Rockies Regional Office
Bill Miller, Great Northern Crew
Randy Skelton, Black Hills National Forest

Target Audience

Single Resource Boss

Training Objective

Given the following scenario, the players will describe the associated risks with engaging the spot fire.

Intermediate – The players will describe the risks and the appropriate mitigations that must be in place before engaging the spot fire.

Complex – The players will describe the risks, describe their mitigations and communicate a plan of action to engage the spot fire.

This can be used as a drill to discuss Watchout Situation #17. Players should verbally communicate their decisions to the appropriate individuals.

Resources Referenced

- **1 Single Resource Boss (Player Role)**
- Similar to unit/crew individuals participating in the TDGS, such as leader of an engine module, helitack module, 20-person crew, Smokejumpers, etc.

SCENARIO INFORMATION TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Facilitator Briefing to Student(s)

You are part of a Type 2 handcrew. It is now 1500 on June 15th. The Forest has experienced several initial attack fires in the last 3 days. Your crew is mixed with experienced and inexperienced individuals and has been called in from out of the area. Your crew has been on five fires in the last three days. You have been successfully employing direct attack tactics on the Petes Fire.

Current Conditions:

- 90 degrees
- 12% relative humidity
- Winds are light and variable
- Fire Behavior: 1 to 2' flame lengths with minor spotting
- Haines Index: 4
- Fuels: cured grass on the slopes with scattered timber in the drainages
- Expected weather is continued hot and dry conditions."

Your crew is making great progress and the fire is now 10 acres in size and 50% contained on a south aspect in moderate terrain. A spot fire has been discovered in the drainage off the right flank of the fire approximately 150 feet from the main fire. Between the main fire and the spot fire, there is a transition from a 20% slope to a 60% slope with loose footing and 6' to 10' ledges. The fuels in the drainage are understory brush, dead/down timber.

Currently, LCES is in place and adequate for the main fire. The only resources on scene is your crew...as of yet, no actions have taken place on the spot fire.

Leaders Intent:

Continue direct attack actions on main fire; suppress the spot fire.

Basic:

In 30 seconds or less, brief the facilitator on the risks associated with engaging the spot fire.

Intermediate:

Take two minutes to review your scenario. Brief the facilitator and/or observers on the risks and the mitigations they would employ before engaging the spot fire.

Complex:

Take three minutes to review your scenario. Brief your module (2 + role players) on risks, mitigations and a plan of action to engage the spot fire.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FACILITATOR ONLY

Facilitator “Murphy’s Law” Suggestions

The “Murphy’s Law” suggestions listed below can be added as “What ifs” at any time during the scenario to raise the stress level of the leader. You can also use one of your own.

(How would you do this differently if):

- The “best” escape route to a safety zone is no longer a viable option; close off the bottom of the drainage with a 50’ shelf or another active spot fire below them.
- A Lookout reports frontal system approaching the fire area.
- The lookout is not in a good position to see into the drainage.
- One of your FFT’s suffers an injury and requires a medivac.
- The group attacking the spot fire loses communications.
- Failure to contain the spot fire increases the threat to structures.
- A media van parks on the road at the head of the drainage above the spot fire.

Facilitator’s Notes

Approach this TDGS as a tool to train your troops and strengthen your SOP’s for Watchout Situation #17 – Terrain and Fuels make escape to safety difficult. There is no intent to overload the student; the facilitator should present an appropriate challenge for each individual with a goal of enhancing Recognition Primed Decision Making.

Based on an individual’s experience level, the intent of this TDGS is to exhibit risk recognition, mitigation, and the ability of individuals to communicate a plan of action.

Briefing for entry level firefighters can be very basic. Remember, this is not an assignment; just paint the picture of their situation and have them assess the risks.

The facilitator needs to guide individuals and keep them on task with their objective; For example, limit discussion of tactics... “All I want to know is what are the risks, mitigations, plan of action, etc.”

As the experience level increases, add more information into the briefing.

- Entry-level firefighters will be expected to describe the risk associated with the given scenario.
- Intermediate level firefighters will be expected to describe the risk associated and appropriate mitigation measures.
- Supervisory level firefighters will be expected to describe the risk, mitigations and develop and communicate a plan of action in a thorough, succinct brief to a module of subordinates (role players/observers).

SUGGESTION: Use this as an opportunity to increase cohesion, communication among unit/module/group, increase experience and learn from one another).

- Begin with least experienced individual; have firefighters play one at a time.

- After each individual completes TDGS, have them remain in the room as “quiet” observers.
- Increase the complexity of the TDGS as with the experience level of participants, allowing less experienced firefighters to witness the decision making process exhibited by higher experienced leaders.

This TDGS may be revisited with additional complexity:

- Wind shift
- Proximity to draw
- Time of day (light, flashy fuels) – noticeable increase in fire behavior
- Complacency on easy terrain
- Cell moves over (STEX tool – poly batting suspended from ceiling)
- Weather report predicting change
- Local factors influencing fire behavior
- Fuel transitions
- Drought; cumulative
- Difficult to reach Safety Zone
- Communication problems
- Fatigue (multiple fires in a few days)

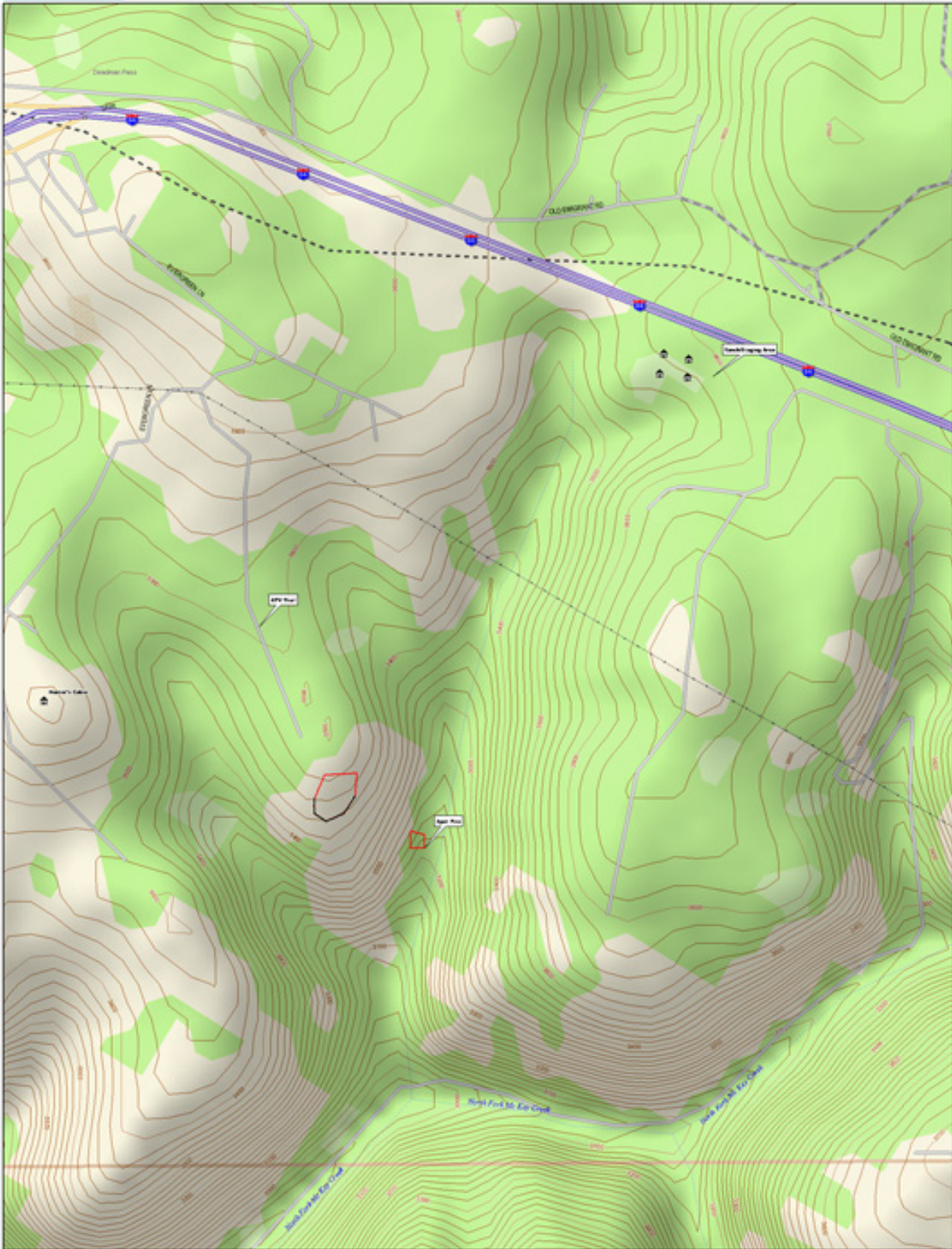
After Action Review

Conduct an AAR with focus on the training objective. Use the AAR format found in the Incident Response Pocket Guide to facilitate the AAR. There are four basic questions in the AAR.

1. What was planned?
2. What actually happened?
3. Why did it happen?
4. What can we do next time?

TDGS shouldn't have a single solution, keep the focus of the AAR on what was done and why.

When the TDGS is delivered in a seminar style format, consider the use of the “Chainsaw AAR”. A Chainsaw AAR capitalizes on time constraints and utilizes a round robin format where each participant contributes by describing something they learned from the exercise. Examples of Chainsaw AAR's may be found on the Fire Leadership website. www.fireleadership.gov



Data use subject to license.
© 2004 DeLorme. Topo USA® 5.0.
www.delorme.com

