

TO: National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)

FROM: Ed Christopher
Chair, Fire Management Board (FMB)

SUBJECT: Pausing Tactical UTVs/OHVs Modification Practices

This season, Wildland Fire Contracting staff have fielded an increase in Emergency Equipment Agreement (EERA) orders for “Tactical” UTVs/OHVs with water tanks, pumps, and Starlinks. No NWCG or industry specifications exist for UTVs/OHVs outfitted with this additional equipment, which creates challenges with inspections and ensuring the resulting modified vehicle is safe to operate in the wildland fire setting. Many of the “Tactical” UTVs/OHVs go beyond the vehicle’s specification for weight and height loading, with unknown vulnerabilities to both the equipment itself and the operation of that equipment by wildland fire personnel. Further, the arrangement of these modifications on the UTVs/OHVs has contributed to rollover accidents and other situations damaging the UTV/OHV and more importantly risking the driver and passengers’ health and safety.

Operationally these resources are valuable, but significant modifications require further understanding of safety implications. Therefore, a pause on all tactical UTV/OHV incident ordering will be in effect until rescinded. Current Rapid Extraction Module Support team contracts that include UTVs/OHVs will not be included in this pause action. Acquisition of “regular” UTVs/OHVs is still allowed.

The following actions will occur during this pause:

- 1) Work with the NWCG Equipment Technology Committee to develop standards/specifications for “tactical” UTVs/OHVs as well as any additional operator training requirements,
- 2) Require use of established “tactical” UTV/OHV specifications for future ordering with EERAs,
- 3) Develop pre-season contractual tool (VIPR) or “tactical” UTVs/OHVs for the 2026 season.

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