

BRUSH FIRE SAFETY

Standard Firefighting Orders & 18 Watch Out Situations

The original ten Standard Firefighting Orders were developed in 1957 by a task force commissioned by the USDA-Forest Service Chief Richard E. McArdie. The task force reviewed the records of 16 tragedy fires that occurred from 1937 to 1956. The Standard Firefighting Orders were based in part on the successful "General Orders" used by the United States Armed Forces. The Standard Firefighting Orders are organized in a deliberate and sequential way to be implemented systematically and applied to all fire situations.

Shortly after the Standard Firefighting Orders were incorporated into firefighting training, the 18 Watch Out Situations were developed. These 18 situations are more specific and cautionary than the Standard Fire Orders and describe situations that expand the 10 points of the Fire Orders. If firefighters follow the Standard Firefighting Orders and are alerted to the 18 Watch Out Situations, their risk in firefighting is reduced.

USFS Fire & Aviation Management - Risk Management Section
http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/10_18/10_18.html

Standard Firefighting Orders

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.
 2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
 3. Base all actions on current and expected behaviors of the fire.
 4. Identify escape routes and safety zones. Make them known.
 5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.
 6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
 7. Maintain prompt communications with your forces, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.
 8. Give clear instructions and insure they are understood.
 9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.
 10. Fight fire aggressively, but provide safety first.
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18 Watchouts Situations

1. The fire is not scouted out and sized up.
 2. In terrain not seen in daylight.
 3. Safety zones and escape routes are not identified.
 4. Unfamiliar with weather and local factors influencing fire behavior.
 5. Uninformed on strategy, tactics, and hazards.
 6. Instructions and assignments are not clear.
 7. No communication link with crew members/supervisors.
 8. Constructing fireline without safe anchor point.
 9. Building fireline downhill with fire below.
 10. Attempting frontal assault on fire.
 11. There is unburned fuel between you and the fire.
 12. Cannot see main fire, not in contact with anyone who can.
 13. On a hillside where rolling material can ignite fuel below.
 14. Weather is getting hotter and drier.
 15. Wind increases and/or changes direction.
 16. Getting frequent spot fires across fireline.
 17. Terrain and fuels make escape to safety zones difficult.
 18. Taking a nap near the fireline.
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