

Wildland Fire Management RD&A
Decision Support
Standard Operating Procedures and FAQs
Version 2014 - 3.0

SECTION 2: Information for GA EDITORS/GACC and REGIONAL LEVEL MANAGERS - Utilizing WFM RD&A to support Incidents

How do I explain the process for a local unit to request Fire Behavior Support?

Support for Fire Behavior requests can be obtained several different ways depending on the requesting unit's needs. In general local units should follow these steps to request assistance:

- The local unit can call their GA Editor directly
- A local unit requests support through the WFDSS program using the "Request Fire Behavior Support" button found on the left menu
 - a. If the "Request Fire Behavior Support" button is used and no communication is received within a reasonable timeframe, or if the request is time sensitive, the local unit should call the Geographic Area Editor
- If a local unit is unable to communicate with their GA Editor then they should call the WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator at **208-473-8107**.

As a Geographic Area Editor, how can I monitor fire behavior requests from the field?

A Geographic Area Editor or Representative should monitor the "Request for Fire Behavior Support" screen in WFDSS or subscribe to the text message/email notification feed of requests to determine support needs in the field. This will assist in identifying emerging incidents in the area and getting assistance to the field. From this request the GA Editor can assist the unit in finding a local person to support them using the "Call-when-needed (CWN) Fire Behavior/Decision Support Specialist List" (i.e. CWN List).

Contact the WFM RD&A to obtain a current copy of the CWN List (it will be updated throughout the fire season) or to be added to the text message/email feed.

The WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator will also monitor the "Request for Fire Behavior Support" screen to coordinate with the GA Editor if no support has been given.

How do I explain the process for a local unit to request WFDSS Decision support?

Support for WFDSS Decision requests can be obtained several different ways depending on the requesting unit's needs. In general local units should follow these steps to request assistance:

1. Utilize the HELP menu in the WFDSS program
2. If the question cannot be answered using the online WFDSS HELP then a call should be placed to the WFDSS Help Desk at **1-866-224-7677** or **1-360-326-6002**

3. If the question is beyond the scope of the WFDSS HELP Desk then a local unit can contact their GA Editor. If the local unit cannot get help through the WFDSS Help Desk and is unable to communicate with their GA Editor then a call should be placed to the WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator at **1-208-473-8107**.

How does a GA Editor/GACC/Regional Office Request WFM RD&A Assistance for an individual unit or incident?

If no Geographic Area resources are available to support the request or if the analysis needs are too complex, coordination with the WFM RD&A should occur to determine the best course of action. The Geographic Area Editor or Representative for the Geographic Area will contact the WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator at **208-473-8107**. Once a request has been made the WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator will determine the priority of the incident(s) and coordinate with the requesting Geographic Area to provide the proper level of support.

How does the WFM RD&A Prioritize Incidents during a busy time period?

Fires of national significance, of high complexity, or have critical values at risk will be given priority over less complex incidents. Therefore it is important that Geographic Areas become familiar with their local analysts so incidents of lower complexity and priority can be supported locally when possible.

Additionally it will be important to identify emerging incidents early so support can be provided utilizing valuable tools for decision making to assist in keeping the fire from becoming nationally significant.

What kind of information should the GA Editor gather from the requesting unit before contacting the WFM RD&A for assistance?

Not all of this information may be known, but the more that can be gathered the easier it will be for the WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator to assign the appropriate specialist.

1. Incident Name
2. Contact person and their role on the incident
3. Types of analysis/decision support needed
4. Level of WFDSS/fire behavior tool knowledge on the incident
5. Accounting information – FireCode
6. Any trainee analysts that may be available to shadow Fire Behavior Specialists

When WFM RD&A staff or other analysts are working remotely to support incidents the unit or team requesting support should identify a primary contact to assist the technical specialists. For fire behavior analyses, the WFM RD&A analyst will need a contact for calibration of models and dissemination of the results. The identified person on the incident should understand the strategy taken on the fire and be knowledgeable with fire behavior support information such as vegetation, fuel types, general fire danger information and the representative weather stations (RAWS). WFDSS Decision support specialists will need to be in contact with agency administrators and other resource and fire management staff members to facilitate the decision process.

How can I develop Fire Behavior Specialist and/or WFDSS Decision expertise within my Geographic Area?

When requesting WFM RD&A assistance GA Editors should contact any local trainees that would be available to shadow assigned Fire Behavior or WFDSS Decision Specialists. This will facilitate expanding the pool of decision support personnel in the future.

GA Editors can direct interested trainees to the [Mentee/Detailer/CWN page](#) on the RD&A website to add their name to a list of available Fire Behavior /Decision Support Specialists. This will help identify trainees located in your area.

How does a GA Editor/GACC/Regional Office Request WFM RD&A Assistance to establish a Decision Support Center?

If managers within a geographic area decide that fire activity is such that local analysts and regional decision support capabilities are becoming taxed, the WFM RD&A is available to mobilize to assist that area. The GA Editors should coordinate with the GACC and call the WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator at **208-473-8107**. The WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator will discuss the areas needs to determine the number and type of specialists necessary to support the effort. Support may be provided on-site, in a virtual environment or as a combination depending on the situation.

What type(s) of information should be gathered before placing a call to the WFM RD&A for Decision Support Center mobilization?

- Summary of fire activity – types and numbers of incidents requiring support
- Potential duration of assignment
- Type of decision support needed – fire behavior analysis, decision document assistance, long term planning needs
- Primary contact personnel at the Geographic Area Level for the WFM RD&A Team Coordinator
- Location that the WFM RD&A will be working from
- Whether WFM RD&A analysts will be expected to travel to the field
- If known, who the primary local contacts will be for decision support personnel

What will be required to support a Decision Support Center?

The primary requirement for a Decision Support Center to be operational is either Broadband Internet Access or excellent cell phone coverage in order to utilize cellular broadband cards. Analysts that will work in a Decision Support Center come from all five federal fire agencies and some non-federal partners, so the ability for anyone, regardless of agency, to connect to the internet is important for production efficiency.

The following requirements should be considered if hosting decision and fire behavior support in your area. The actual needs of the Decision Support Center can be discussed prior to mobilization, but the list below is a good starting point.

Technical Support Requirements:

- Broadband Internet Access or Excellent Cell phone coverage
- Printer/Copier
- Fax Machine
- Power Strips/extension cords
- Quiet work area with 24 hour access

Once a Decision Support Center is established how will coordination with the GACCs, incidents etc. occur?

A Decision Support Team Lead (DSC Team Lead) will be assigned regardless of location and size of the organization. Depending on workload the DSC Team Lead may not be involved directly with the analyses but will manage priorities with the appropriate interested parties and establish work assignments to ensure information, analyses

and decision documentation support is provided for the incidents in a timely manner. The assigned decision support personnel will work directly for the DSC Team Lead. A clear chain of command and prompt and thorough communication with the hosting unit is imperative.

A [“Decision Support Center Letter of Expectations”](#) has been developed to assist the DSC Team Lead and the host unit understand the capabilities of the Decision Support team as well as communicate needs of the host unit. Upon arrival the DSC Team Lead will review and sign the letter of expectations with the host unit in order to come to agreement on how business will be conducted throughout the duration of the assignment.

How will communication and information dissemination occur between the Decision Support Center and the local units and individual incidents?

Communication and information dissemination regarding WFDSS analysis tools, their inputs, outputs and results can be handled in a variety of ways depending on the needs of the requesting units, the location of the decision support personnel and available technology.

Telephone communication: Some communication and information dissemination will occur through direct telephone communication and/or conference calls and may be combined with other methods below.

E-Mail: Some communication may take place via e-mail although this may be inefficient large attachments are required to share information.

E-Meeting Technology: Online meeting technology such as “Go To Meeting” or “Go To Webinar” is often used to share inputs, outputs and analysis results with local incident personnel.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) sites: FTP sites may also be used to pass additional information (outside of WFDSS) between requesting units and WFM RD&A personal. Assistance and instructions will be given for uploading, downloading and viewing files.

On- site: In some instances it may be mutually beneficial for NFSDC staff to be physically located in the vicinity or at the requesting unit.

Site Visits: In some instances WFM RD&A staff may be located off-site, but close enough to make site visits to share or gather information.

How will time charged to various incidents be tracked?

The WFM RD&A On-Call Coordinator or Decision Support Team Lead will keep an **Incident Tracking Spreadsheet** which will include the decision support personnel assigned, charge codes, hours worked and primary contact for each incident. This spreadsheet will be made available to individuals at the Geographic Area level for distribution to local units if requested.

How can I provide feedback to the WFM RD&A after support has been provided?

After the WFM RD&A has provided support, a link to an evaluation form will be sent to you: [WFM RD&A Evaluation Form 2013](#). Please take some time to answer the questions and provide feedback for the support you received. This information will be important for improving operations in the future.