

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU

NOTICE
16.2

December 17, 2014

TO: All Concerned Commanding Officers

FROM: Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau

SUBJECT: BRUSHFIRE RESPONSE GUIDE - REVISED

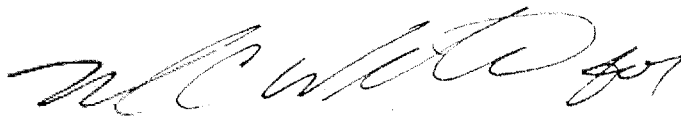
The Brushfire Response Guide has been updated and the revisions consist of the following:

- Contact information has been updated;
- “Red Flag Warning” has been replaced with “Red Flag Condition” for consistency with Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) terminology;
- The line of demarcation between the LAFD rescue (evacuation) responsibilities and the Department evacuation responsibilities has been reduced from 45 minutes to 30 minutes from the estimated burn path (where the fire will burn to in 30 minutes);
- Changes were made to the evacuation portion of the guide to address people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; and,
- Evacuation Branch Organization Chart information has been updated.


Supervisors shall ensure that the revised “*Brushfire Response Guide-2014*” has been placed inside both the current Divisional Standing Plans (Section X, Special Area Plans and Single-Use Plans), and the “*Supervisor’s Field Operations Guide*” (FOG) under the “Incident Checklists/Fires” tab. The FOG should be used as a reference guide in the event of a major brushfire.

If you have questions regarding this Notice, please contact Captain Philip S. Fontanetta, Commanding Officer, Emergency Operations Division, at (213) 486-0680.

APPROVED:



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Attachment

DISTRIBUTION “B”

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT BRUSHFIRE RESPONSE GUIDE - 2014

BACKGROUND

The success of the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) in specialized operations and emergency management is dependent on comprehensive planning and effective, meaningful training. Planning for unusual occurrences should begin as early as possible to allow sufficient time to consider all options. Training should be directed toward preparation and operational readiness, at both the field and command levels.

The onset of the fire season requires that Department personnel examine policy and procedures for response to brushfires. Area commanding officers should identify locations that may be impacted by brushfires and develop incident action plans specific to those locations.

The following is provided as a general guide in the management of brushfire emergencies.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department is to protect lives and to restore conditions to normal as rapidly and efficiently as possible. The objectives that must be addressed to accomplish this mission are listed in priority order as follows:

- Protect lives
- Restore and maintain order
- Protect vital facilities
- Arrest law violators
- Protect property

RED FLAG CONDITION AND RED FLAG ALERT

A Red Flag Condition (RFC) and a Red Flag Alert (RFA) are issued by the City and/or County Fire Departments to describe periods of elevated danger for brushfires. Factors that are considered in the issuance of a condition or alert include temperature, humidity, and wind speed. It is possible for a condition or alert to be issued for County areas and not include portions of the City. In the event of a media announced RFA, the Watch Commander, Department Operations Center (DOC)/Real-Time Analysis and Critical Response Division (RACR), shall contact the Floor Captain, Metropolitan Fire Communications, Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), at (213) 576-8920, or contact LAFD dispatch at (213) 847-5340 to verify whether the alert includes the City.

RED FLAG CONDITION

An RFC is issued by LAFD when the relative humidity is below 15% and winds exceed 25 miles per hour. The LAFD deploys additional resources to wildfire prone areas during RFC periods.

The LAFD had its local Station Commanders conduct a survey of their districts in order to identify the areas that would create a problem for community members while evacuating and for fire companies entering the area during a fast-moving brushfire. Station Commanders were directed to identify narrow roads, tight curves, and critical intersections that would create choke points. The areas identified were reviewed by the LAFD and Los Angeles Department of

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Transportation (LADOT) to make sure the criteria for posting was correct. Once identified, these areas were posted by LADOT during an RFC.

RED FLAG ALERT

An RFA is the public notice that is issued by the LAFD to notify community members that an RFC exists in the right combination to cause the City to take certain protective actions. An RFA indicates a serious threat of imminent brushfires. In the event of an RFA, the following Department actions will be taken:

- Upon notification by the LAFD of an RFA, the DOC shall ensure that an RFA broadcast is made through Communications Division.
- All geographic Areas with an urban/wild land interface shall implement the RFC Single Purpose Operations Plan contained in their Standing Plans.
- The DOC shall be activated at Level I and the Department placed on Modified Tactical Alert.
- The DOC shall specifically notify all Traffic Divisions of potential need for Motor Strike Teams (MST) and determine the number of MST available for deployment in the event of a brushfire.

OFFICER SAFETY

All officers should be aware of the dangers involved in brushfires. A person trapped by a fast-moving brushfire can seldom escape on-rushing flames. Knowledge of brushfire survival techniques may alleviate injury to officers working in close proximity to the fire, such as:

- Knowing where the fire is at all times and monitoring the radio.
- Keeping escape routes in mind and making them known to others.
- Parking vehicles where they will not obstruct others.
- Closing vehicle windows and parking the vehicle toward the escape route.
- Keeping clear of all electrical power lines.
- Wearing a helmet and face shield in areas of heavy smoke and flying debris.

Supervisors should be aware of the locations of their officers at all times. Interior patrols of extremely hazardous areas (hilltops) should be avoided. Selection of experienced officers with tactical knowledge should be a consideration in designating interior patrols.

If an officer becomes trapped on foot in the fire zone, he or she should not attempt to outrun the fire. The officer should take shelter, or if firefighters are in the vicinity, be guided by their actions. If forced to take shelter inside a residence, close all the doors and windows. Wait out the fire in a room in the center of the house with the doors closed. After the bulk of the heat from the brushfire has passed, exit the structure as soon as practical. Officers trapped in the open should avoid hillsides. The heat is hottest at the top. Smoke and heat kills. In windy conditions, flames can travel around hillsides at alarming speed.

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When driving in a fire area, close the vehicle windows and air vents, turn on headlights and drive slowly. If an officer must leave the vehicle, he or she should not turn off the vehicle engine, as smoke and lack of oxygen from the fire may prevent the vehicle from restarting. Avoid driving over fire hoses; but if it becomes necessary to drive over a fire hose, use caution and drive slowly, but do not stop. Cross at least three feet from the coupling.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

The LAFD Incident Commander (IC) has overall command responsibility of brushfire incidents. The Department's mission is to support the LAFD IC.

FIRST RESPONDER

The first unit at scene, regardless of rank, is responsible for directing the Department's initial response and shall ensure that a situation estimate is obtained and forwarded to the LAFD (if not at scene) and Communications Division. The situation estimate shall include:

- **Name of the area involved** - Use Thomas Guide if necessary (i.e., for canyon/hillside names). Include street boundaries if available.
- **Wind direction and speed** - During Santa Ana wind conditions, brushfires move faster than normal.
- **Type of area** - Canyon or hillside and type of vegetation (trees, brush, etc.). Are structures being threatened by the fire?
- **Threatened critical locations** - Hospitals, schools, assisted-living facilities or nursing homes, camps, etc.
- **Ingress and egress routes** - For LAFD equipment to respond.

NOTE: Streets may be too narrow or blocked by vehicles. Take action to prevent these routes from being blocked by traffic attempting to enter the area.

The first responding unit shall coordinate the Department's initial response with LAFD and other City departments until relieved.

AREA WATCH COMMANDER

Upon learning of an incident or an emergency having the potential of becoming an Unusual Occurrence (UO), the watch commander of the involved Area **shall** designate a supervisor or senior officer as acting watch commander. The watch commander **shall** immediately go to the LAFD Incident Command Post (ICP) and assume command of police operations. If appropriate, the watch commander shall implement an Area Standing Plan and initiate command and control move up.

During the early stages of a UO (prior to activation of the DOC), it is essential that communications between the police operations and the concerned Area station remain open. The watch commander, assuming command of police operations, shall establish an open telephone line (when possible) or use a tactical frequency to accomplish these communications links.

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The Area Watch Commander shall:

- Go to the scene and assume command of police operations and take this guide with him/her.
- Join and/or establish an Incident/Unified Command Post with LAFD.
- Ensure that an updated situation estimate has been communicated to Communications Division and the DOC:
 - Location of the emergency.
 - Size of the involved area (actual and potential).
 - Apparent direction of the fire.
 - Type of area (business, residential, hillside, etc.).
 - Ingress/egress routes for emergency vehicles.
 - Additional Department personnel required and location of Staging Area. (Emphasize numbers of people, not units.)
 - Location and radio designation of the police operations.
- Declare a Tactical Alert (if required).
- Advise responding personnel of the appropriate officer-safety considerations. For brushfire survival information refer to Page 30 of the Supervisor's Field Operations Guide (FOG) – Incident Checklists/Fires.
- Dispatch personnel to maintain:
 - Perimeter control to keep unauthorized vehicles and pedestrians out of the area, in accordance with direction from the LAFD Incident Commander.
 - Ingress/egress routes for emergency vehicles.
 - If evacuations have occurred, establish interior patrols where practical.

NOTE: In a fire emergency, the LAFD IC has the responsibility to determine if an area will be closed, what the boundaries of the closed area will be, and what entry criteria will be used. Generally, there is no legal authority to keep members of the Press with valid passes out of a closed area. Additionally, LAFD may issue Fire Line Passes to selected persons (see ACCESS INTO CLOSED AREAS, Page 6 of this document).

- If the LAFD IC orders evacuation of an area, refer to Page 27 of the Supervisor's FOG-Incident Checklists/Evacuations. (Evacuation notifications for brushfires are the responsibility of LAFD and will be ordered by the LAFD through their established emergency notification protocols.)

NOTE: The LAFD has a policy that residents may remain in the closed area to attempt to protect their homes during brushfires. Officers **shall** attempt to identify residents and complete a Field Interview Report (Form 15.43.00) for all residents that remain in the closed area. The Field Interview Report **shall** be forwarded to police operations in the Incident/Unified Command Post. For Specialized Resources, refer to Pages 11-12 of this Guide.

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DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS CENTER / REAL-TIME ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL RESPONSE DIVISION

Upon notification of a brushfire that has the potential for evacuations or the need for significant Department resources, the following actions shall be taken:

- The DOC shall be activated at Level I and the Department placed on Modified Tactical Alert.
- The DOC shall specifically notify all Traffic Divisions of the potential need for Motor Strike Teams (MST) and determine the number of MSTs available for deployment to the incident.
- The DOC shall contact the Planning Section at the Incident/Unified Command Post and provide the Department's resource availability.
- Notify all appropriate staff including the Commanding Officer, RACR Division.
- Notify the Commanding Officer, Emergency Operations Division.

TACTICAL ALERT

A Tactical Alert provides for the controlled redistribution of on-duty personnel to achieve the personnel level necessary for control of a major police incident. The watch commander (any rank), the Incident Commander (any rank), the Communications Division Watch Commander, or the Director of Emergency Operations may initiate a Tactical Alert. When there is a need for a Tactical Alert, it **shall** be initiated as soon as possible to restrict voluntary responses and avoid depletion of personnel from the involved Area and surrounding geographic Areas.

The officer declaring a Tactical Alert shall provide the Communications Division Watch Commander with the following information:

- Location and nature of incident.
- Anticipated personnel and equipment needs.
- Anticipated duration of incident.
- Likelihood of the incident escalating (short and long term).

Watch commanders shall maintain an accounting of on-duty personnel on the Unusual Occurrence Personnel Status Report, Form 14.03, in accordance with instructions on the form and forward the completed form by fax to the Police DOC (if activated).

DOC/RACR fax numbers: (213) 237-9935
(213) 237-9936

NOTE: For additional information on Tactical Alerts, refer to Pages 36-43 of Volume I of the Emergency Operations Guide, Policy and Procedures, Personnel Mobilization Plan-Tactical Alert.

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ACCESS INTO CLOSED AREAS (Section 409.5 California Penal Code)

NO-ACCESS

Prohibits unauthorized persons from entering the closed area.

LIMITED ACCESS

Allows persons into the closed area according to criteria established by the Unified Command. The following may be considered:

- Residents with valid identification and service providers that support people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.
- Public utility employees.
- Credentialed Animal Regulation employees/volunteers.
- Persons with valid Press passes.

NOTE: At the scene of a fire, police officers **shall** permit members of the Press with proper identification to enter a closed area. They should be directed not to block emergency vehicles or hamper emergency operations, warned of the possible dangers, and allowed to proceed. In cases where Press vehicles may block emergency access, the vehicles may be excluded.

FIRE LINE PASSES

The LAFD Board of Fire Commissioners issues Fire Line Passes to residents to identify pass holders as members of the community who have demonstrated an active and constructive interest toward the LAFD's aims, programs and operations. There are presently two categories of passes:

- One-year pass (red)
- Two-year pass (red)

NOTE: Possession of a Fire Pass does not automatically grant access into a closed area if the presence of the holder/holder's vehicle impairs emergency operations. Entry into a closed area is at the discretion of the LAFD Incident Commander.

PERIMETER CONTROL

INGRESS AND EGRESS

Control of selected ingress and egress routes shall be maintained to:

- Help secure access routes into the involved area;
- Prevent unauthorized persons from entering.

TOWING/IMPOUND

Legally parked vehicles hampering emergency operations may be impounded when owners cannot be readily located (Section 22651(b)V.C.). When practicable, officers may move legally parked vehicles to a nearby location and make arrangements to notify the owner.

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EVACUATION

The Police Department and the Fire Department have concurrent jurisdiction in emergencies involving evacuation within the City. As a practical matter, decisions whether to evacuate should be made by the agency with primary control responsibility for the situation at hand. However, either agency may make the decision to evacuate in an emergency situation (see evacuation checklist for additional assistance). Brushfires present a unique challenge due to the speed at which fires can advance. In general, law enforcement resources should not be committed to rescue operations between the head of the fire and the point to which the fire will travel in 30 minutes. This zone is typically where only the Fire Department works. The affected Area Watch Commander and/or the IC shall ensure the following items are accomplished as appropriate. Regardless of which agency makes the decision, the Police Department's mission is to provide:

- Conduct a Size Up.
- Identify the location of the emergency.
- Determine the size of the involved area (actual and potential).
- Identify the area to be evacuated.
- Determine the ingress/egress routes for emergency vehicles, evacuation buses, and evacuation routes.
- Coordinate with Recreation and Parks for location of initial evacuation site/center.
- Determine additional resources required, and location of Staging Area. (Emphasize numbers of people, not units.)
- Identify a location and radio designation for the Incident Command Post.
- Provide a plan for the control of emergency vehicle ingress/egress routes, evacuation routes, and evacuation bus ingress.
- Establish and maintain a perimeter around the Closed Area (limited access or no access).
- Facilitate evacuation for those requiring assistance (i.e. people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, children and older adults). Absent compromised life safety, service animals must be transported with an evacuated individual on the evacuee transport vehicle. All critical durable medical equipment, assistive technology, essential equipment and service animals should, absent compromised life safety, be taken with people who depend on these devices.
- If the need arises during an evacuation for specific resources, such as an ambulance, medical staff or the LAFD Access and Functional Needs Task Force, officers shall immediately notify the Evacuation Branch Director or the Operations Section Chief of the situation.
- Conduct door-to-door communication utilizing the ringing of doorbells, door knocking, vehicle P.A., helicopter P.A., flashing of vehicle headlights and flashlights to gain the attention of people within the involved area, including warning them to evacuate, and directing them to the "initial evacuation site/center."
- Utilize attention getting vibration/movement such as striking of a baton on a metal security gate to gain attention and tools such as picture boards, pictograms, writing tablets, written materials, pamphlets, communication boards, and video-text displays as

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alternative ways to communicate. Officers can use the LA City's emergency language translation bank by contacting LAPD's Communications Division via cell phone or Department Radio.

- Officers that have LAPD-issued electronic mobile devices may use their device to utilize applications such as Google Translation or other Smart Phone Applications, Augmentative Communications Device or any other technologies that may assist in communication.
- If on scene, LAPD officers may request use of Command Officer's electronic mobile device to utilize applications such as Google Translation or other Smart Phone Applications, Augmentative Communications Device or any other technologies that may assist in communication.
- Inquire of neighbors whether they know of anyone who may need assistance to evacuate.
- The use of IPAWS/WEA, Alert LA County, Reverse 911, and Nixle Alert to disseminate an emergency mass message regarding an evacuation may also be necessary. The DOC/RACR will facilitate all emergency notification and mass messaging. All messages must be approved by the Department's ADA Coordinator. When Facebook or Twitter is utilized for emergency messaging, the message must comply with the guidelines set forth in the City's ADA Guidance: Inclusionary, Accessible Messaging and Effective Communication, dated March 13, 2014. All referenced documents can be located in the Emergency Operations Guide, Volume 10, Emergency Preparedness Bulletin No. 9.
- Make a record of each contact or no-answer on a Field Information Report (FI). Ask neighbors about any people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs who may not have responded to a door knock in order to ascertain if there are people who require assistance to evacuate.
- Develop a security plan for interior/exterior of the evacuated area, if appropriate and refer to the Emergency Notification/Mass Communication Plan.

INITIATING AN EVACUATION/CONSIDERATIONS

Determine whether the evacuation should be voluntary or mandatory. **Voluntary Evacuation** is defined as a warning given to persons within the closed area that a threat to life and property exists. Individuals issued this type of warning are not required to evacuate. A **Mandatory Evacuation** is defined as a warning given to persons within the closed area that an imminent threat to life and property exists. Individuals issued this type of warning must evacuate in accordance with the directives of the IC.

NOTE: Authority to close area and the ordering of evacuations can be found at:
Penal Code Section 409.5
Los Angeles City Charter Sections 131 and 132
Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 57.01.21
Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.224

Ideally, there will be enough time for radio and television stations to broadcast the required evacuation information (via the Emergency Alert System – contact RACR). Also, if sufficient time is available, copies of the evacuation notice can be locally reproduced (by copy machine)

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and distributed. Regardless of the means, the evacuation warning should include such information as:

- Type (voluntary or mandatory);
- Best available route(s) out of the area;
- Location of evacuation site/centers;
- Anticipated duration of the emergency; and
- Time remaining before the situation becomes critical.

Divide the involved area into divisions and sectors if necessary. Assign squads (motor units are very effective) to vacate specific sectors, beginning at the incident and moving outward from it.

No-Access: A no-access closed area prohibits unauthorized persons from entering the closed area.

Limited-Access: A limited-access closed area allows persons into the closed area according to criteria established by the IC. Suggested criteria to consider are as follows:

- Residents with valid identification and service providers that support people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.
- Public utility employees.
- Credentialed Animal Regulation employees/volunteers.
- Persons with valid Press passes.

Assign units to patrol the interior of the involved area, if appropriate.

EVACUEE TRANSPORTATION

When directed by the concerned Watch Commander or Unified Commander, DOC/RACR should be contacted to fulfill requests for buses. The DOC/RACR will contact the LADOT at (818) 752-5120. The LADOT will be the coordinator for bus services and will make the appropriate notifications to MTA, LAUSD, or other contracted entities. All requests for transportation assets will include the any requirements for accessible transportation assets.

The Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) shall be the first point of contact for all sheltering requests. This request is facilitated by the DOC/RACR to RAP. The RAP arranges for housing and shelter facilities for persons rendered homeless as a result of a local emergency. The American Red Cross, LAUSD, the Salvation Army and other governmental agencies assist by providing food, clothing, shelter, registration, information service, and rehabilitation to individuals affected by a local emergency.

All shelters must be compliant to accommodate people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. The RAP maintains a list of City-approved shelter locations and shall be contacted for all shelter requests.