

## **Interim Standard Operating Guideline**

**For**

### **Third Party Wildfire Resources in the Province of British Columbia, Canada**

The following Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) relates generally to the provision of wildfire-related services by entities which are not those of an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) either directly employed or under contract or other form of agreement. This SOG provides the AHJ defined as being Local Government, First Nations and/or Crown land with objective guidelines to manage third-party private fire prevention resources (hereinafter referenced as 'third-party resources') access to and operational movement on wildfire incidents. Terms used in this protocol but not otherwise defined have the meaning ascribed to such terms by the Incident Command System Canada (ICS).

- Failure to comply with any part of the SOG is grounds for the removal from evacuation order/ restricted zones.
- The AHJ holds the right to request more information and/or documentation than is listed in this SOG.
- The Third-party resource agrees to a non-disclosure of scene details until permission received from AHJ.

#### **I. Scope of Resources**

- a. The third-party resources referred to in this SOG may include wildland engines, tenders, hand crews, fire/liaison officers, and personnel working for or contracted by an insurance company or other entity as noted above, with a mission to mitigate wildfire threats to client structures. Third-party resources work in compliance with the AHJ and instructions of the Incident Commander, BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), and Incident Management Team, and this SOG. All qualifications, standards, and specifications for personnel and equipment are to be consistent with BC Wildfire Service, Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) and where applicable the U.S. National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). In particular, the standards for personnel and equipment are outlined in the [Memorandum of Agreement for Inter-Agency Operational Guidelines and Reimbursement Rates](#) between the Fire Chiefs Association of BC and BC Wildfire Service. (the IAA).

- b. The third-party resources mission is limited to providing loss intervention services to client properties. With AHJ authorization, these activities may occur on the specified properties within geographic areas under an Evacuation Order.
- c. Pre-wildfire structure loss intervention services may include property inspection and observation, emergency fuel mitigation, structure ignition zone sprinkler system setup, fuel break construction, fire blocking gel or fire-retardant application, flammable/combustible hazards removal, secure/protect openings in structures, and other similar activities.
- d. Post-wildfire structure loss intervention services may include property inspection and observation, return of the property to pre-wildfire loss intervention condition including removal of tape, return of relocated combustibles, removal of sprinkler equipment, securing property from residual wildfire threats, mop-up, and washing away of fire blocking gels and fire retardants.
- e. Third-party resources must have been given permission by property owners/insurance provider to access their property. No actions will be taken on property without these permissions in place. Any real or potential hazards on property adjacent to the defined client property must be incorporated into the third-party resource site safety plan.

## **II. Operating Guidelines**

### **1. Access**

- a. The AHJ may grant access to any community or properties within evacuated or restricted zones unless any of the following apply:
  - i. The AHJ or their authorized designee determines third-party resources do not meet the standards set forth for personnel and equipment, for this SOG, or any Agreement with the Provincial authority,
  - ii. The AHJ has determined after receiving a recommendation for the approval or denial of the request based on the perspective of safety from a subject matter expert (SME) and/or BC Wildfire Service on the specific hazard event that it is not safe for third-party resources to operate within a designated evacuation order area/restricted zone.
  - iii. The AHJ has determined at their discretion that entry of third-party resources within a designated evacuation order/restricted area does not assist in reducing the consequential impact of the emergency event for the community.

- iv. The Third-party resources has failed to provide adequate documentation as laid out in this SOG.
- b. The AHJ may utilize the guidelines provided by Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) [Managing Access to Areas Under Evacuation Order for Local Authorities and First Nations](#) for additional information and access templates.
- c. As a condition of access, the third-party resources shall comply with all orders from AHJ and/or BC Wildfire Service representatives including orders to vacate an area due to unsafe fire activity and/or any safety risk as per 1(a) ii.
- d. When compliant with 1(b) above, third-party resources may be granted timely access to client properties by the AHJ to provide loss intervention services within designated evacuation order area/restricted zones.

## **2. Incident Oversight of Private Fire Prevention Resources (Third-Party Resources)**

- a. The AHJ, or their authorized designee, retains oversight of third-party resources in the same manner as other individuals or entities granted access to a designated evacuation order area/restricted zone . As such third-party resources will follow direction to evacuate from any areas that are deemed unsafe as per 1(a)ii.
- b. Third-party resources recognize and accept that the AHJ and/or law enforcement are endowed with the statutory authority for command and control of an emergency incident and shall comply with all lawful orders.
- c. Third-party resources have no claim or stake in unified command and will not perform in an ICS role, except as set forth in this SOG.
- d. Third-party resources will adhere to and comply with parameters laid out within any structure defense/structure protection planning laid out by the AHJ, BC Wildfire Service and/or their designee.
- e. Third-party resources shall utilize identified water sources as approved by the AHJ, BC Wildfire Service or their authorized designee and shall follow AHJ safe water handling protocols.

## **3. Self-sufficient Operations**

- a. Third-party resources shall remain self-sufficient with the ability to operate without relying on the AHJ, BC Wildfire Service or their authorized designee for assistance or resources. This includes the capability to produce and

procure the necessary area authorizations and operational resources at the point of use.

- b. Third-party resources shall not utilize any Province supplied camp or facility or taxpayer based public support resources and shall operate self-sufficiently, as above.
- c. The grant of access within designated evacuation order area/restricted zones by the AHJ to third-party resources does not imply or create any obligation or responsibility for the operational management or situational awareness of third-party resources.

4. **BC Wildfire Service - Training and Equipment Standards Compliance**

- a. Third-party resources requesting access must be currently trained and equipped to meet the apparatus and personnel standards as set out within the IAA or equivalent for resources and personnel.
- b. The AHJ may recognize the following WUI Position/NWCG equivalencies:

<b>BCWS WUI Position</b>	<b>NWCG Classification</b>
Apparatus Member	Firefighter II, Firefighter I
Structure Protection Crew Member	Firefighter II, Firefighter I
Crew Leader	Engine Boss
Strike Team Leader or Task Force Leader	Task Force Leader
Structure Protection Specialist	Resource Liaison

- c. The AHJ may accept third-party resources personnel incident qualification and certification systems as proof of proper classification for determination of BCWS IAA equivalency.

5. **Third-Party Resources - Resource Identification**

- a. All third-party resources should be identified in a manner such that they do not appear to be a public fire first responder resource and shall not have or use emergency lights or sirens.
- b. The AHJ shall provide some means of credential to facilitate and streamline incident access at checkpoints or law enforcement or military roadblocks. The AHJ shall notify all personnel fulfilling roadblock responsibilities of the presence of third-party resources.

6. **Pre- Incident Communications Protocol**

- a. Prior to or at the time of mobilization of third-party resources towards an

incident, the third-party resources will email both the BC Wildfire Service Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer (PWCO) and the BCWS Structure Protection Coordination Officer (SPCO) to notify their intention to deploy and destination.

- b. These email notifications will be sent to:
  - i. BC Wildfire Service Provincial Wildfire Coordination Officer – [bcws.pwco@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bcws.pwco@gov.bc.ca) , and;
  - ii. BC Wildfire Service Structure Protection Coordination Officer (Logistics) – [bcws.spplogistics@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bcws.spplogistics@gov.bc.ca) .
  - iii. AHJ, if possible

BC Wildfire Service or the IC will inform the AHJ of Third-Party resources intention to work within evacuated or restricted zones.

The BC Wildfire Service and the AHJ will work together to determine access with the AHJ having ultimate authority for the decision to allow or deny access.

- c. The email notification sent by the third-party resource must include an Incident Submittal Package which shall include:
  - i. Client Invitation Letter, including list of properties.
  - ii. Geographic location of deployment and AHJ wildfire incident number, if known.
  - iii. Responding personnel.  
Description (type and number) of resources being deployed, including equipment manifests with engine designations.
  - iv. Dates/time of deployment
  - v. Intended Port of Entry if third-party resources originate outside of Canada.
  - vi. ETA to the Port of Entry
  - vii. ETA to the wildfire incident.
  - viii. Contact information for the WDS third-party resources representative who will be onsite with resources.
- d. Third-party resources shall, in a reasonable amount of time, communicate any changes in the documentation and information provided.
  - i. Third-party resources shall acknowledge any site-specific information provided by the PWCO and/or SPCO.
  - ii. The PWCO and/or SPCO shall confirm receipt of the information.

## **7. Incident Arrival Protocol**

- a. Third-party resources are required to check in with the AHJ and obtain access authorization and credentials before entering any designated evacuation order area/restricted zones .
- b. Third-party resources must provide the AHJ with a list of their responding resources including equipment identification numbers.
- c. Third-party resources must then check in with the Incident Commander or designate at the ICP with proof of approval/permit from the AHJ to access order area/restricted zones and a list of their responding resources including equipment identification numbers.
- d. Third-party resources must receive a safety briefing from the Operations Section Chief, Structure Branch Director or Division Supervisor before proceeding.
- e. Third-party resources shall be considered a cooperating agency by the AHJ and report to the operations section and if established the Structure Branch.
- f. Third-party resources shall be included in the Incident Action Plan (IAP) to indicate that access to the incident has been granted.
- g. Third-party resources will be expected to inform the planning section or Structure Branch Director of their planned activities for the next operational period by filling out ICS 204.

## **8. IMT Briefing Guideline**

- a. Third-party resources shall follow the standard check-in and check-out Guidelines required of all resources on the incident.
- b. A message shall be included in the IAP and announced during operational briefings that third-party resources are authorized to operate within the incident and shall be communicating with BCWS Operations Section and/or Structure Branch throughout the course of their operations.

## **9. Agency Liaison**

- a. Third-party resources shall provide an agency liaison available to incident command, reporting to the IC, Operations Section Chief, Structure Branch Director, Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or designate. The liaison must be able to contact third-party resources at any time. If requested by the IMT, this liaison shall attend any planning and operational briefings as required. This liaison may be reached by radio or cellular communication.

## **10. Communications**

- a. The third-party resource Commander, or their authorized designee, is responsible for communicating third-party resources location and movements.
- b. Third-party resources shall monitor incident command radio frequencies assigned to a particular incident, where radio network authorizations have

- been provided. Third-party resources shall not communicate on incident command radio frequencies without approval from Incident Command.
- c. Third-party resources shall have available their own radio frequency for their internal communications.
  - d. The Third-party resources shall observe and follow the incident communications plan.
  - e. Third-party resource must abide by all relevant CRTC radio communication rules, policies, and standards.