

## Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

---

### ESF Coordinator:

Department of Agriculture/Forest Service  
Department of Homeland Security/Federal  
Emergency Management Agency/Fire  
Administration

### Primary Agency:

Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

### Support Agencies:

Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
Department of Homeland  
Security/U.S. Coast Guard  
Department of Homeland  
Security/Federal Emergency  
Management Agency/Fire  
Administration  
Department of the Interior  
Department of State  
Environmental Protection Agency

## INTRODUCTION

---

### Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4 – Firefighting provides Federal support for the detection and suppression of wildland, rural, and urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, an all hazard incident requiring a coordinated national response for assistance.

### Scope

---

ESF #4 coordinates firefighting activities and provides personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area agencies involved in wildland, rural, and urban firefighting operations.

## RELATIONSHIP TO WHOLE COMMUNITY

---

This section describes how ESF #4 relates to other elements of the whole community.

### State, Territorial, Tribal and Local

---

Firefighting is an inherently local responsibility. Local fire resources often receive assistance from other fire departments/agencies through established mechanisms identified in local mutual aid agreements. Further assistance can be obtained through an established intrastate mutual aid system. If additional assistance is required, firefighting resources can be requested from other jurisdictions through processes established under mutual aid agreements, state-to-state or regional compacts, or other agreements. If the governor of the affected state has declared an emergency, firefighting resources may be requested through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). If the President has declared an emergency or major disaster under the Stafford Act, firefighting resources may also be requested through ESF #4. Using existing authorities and agreements, ESF #4 can mobilize wildland and structure firefighting resources from across the country and from several foreign countries through the national firefighting mobilization system to incidents anywhere in the United States.

## **Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex**

---

Except where specified in agreements or through a formal delegation of authority, assisting firefighting resources report to and become part of the command structure of the requesting jurisdiction.

Coordination with and support of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area fire suppression organizations is accomplished through the state (or equivalent) forester, state fire marshal, state emergency management agency, or other appropriate state, tribal, territorial, or insular area agency or tribal fire suppression organization. Responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs lies primarily with the local Incident Commander.

Shortages of critical firefighting resources are adjudicated at the lowest jurisdictional level.

Many firefighting agencies provide additional functions such as emergency medical services, technical rescue, and hazardous materials response. During a Federal response, these resources may support multiple ESFs in support of different core capabilities.

### **Private Sector/NGO**

---

Private-sector resources for firefighting support are mobilized through standard contract procedures.

### **Federal Government**

---

All requests for wildland or structural firefighting resources through ESF #4 will be coordinated through the existing national firefighting mobilization system managed by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service.

USDA Forest Service will coordinate at the national and regional levels with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); appropriate state, tribal, territorial, and insular area agencies; and cooperating agencies on all issues related to response activities.

FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration will coordinate with appropriate state, tribal, territorial, and insular area agencies and local fire departments to expand structural firefighting resource capacity in the existing national firefighting mobilization system and provide information on protection of emergency services sector critical infrastructure.

Specific information on Federal Government actions is described in the following sections.

## **CORE CAPABILITIES AND ACTIONS**

---

### **ESF Role Aligned to Core Capabilities**

The following table lists the response core capabilities that ESF #4 most directly supports along with the particular ESF #4 actions related to each of these core capabilities. Though not listed in the table, all ESFs support the core capabilities of Planning, Operational Coordination, and Situational Assessment.

## Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

Core Capability	ESF #4 – Firefighting
<b>Public and Private Services and Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtains an initial fire situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures; determines the appropriate management response to meet the request for assistance; and obtains and distributes, through appropriate channels, incident contact information to emergency responders mobilized through ESF #4.</li> <li>• Analyzes each request before committing people and other resources; ensures employees will be provided with appropriate vaccinations, credentials, and personal protective equipment to operate in the all-hazard environment to which they are assigned; and ensures that all employees involved in all-hazard response will be supported and managed by an agency leader, agency liaison, or interagency incident management team.</li> <li>• Ensures that an all-hazard incident-specific briefing and training are accomplished prior to task implementation. This preparation will usually occur prior to mobilization where incident description, mission requirements, and known hazards are addressed. Key protective equipment and associated needs for tasks that employees do not routinely encounter or perform will be identified.</li> <li>• Provides command, control, and coordination resources, to include incident management teams, area command teams, and multi-agency coordination group support personnel, to local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal agencies in support of emergency operations.</li> <li>• Provides staff to support incident facilities, facility, property, telecommunications and transportation management.</li> <li>• Provides direct liaison with local, state, tribal, territorial, or insular area emergency operations centers (EOCs) and fire chiefs in the designated area, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Provides support to enhance the resilience of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area firefighting agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides engineering and contracting/procurement personnel and equipment to assist in emergency removal of debris, demolition, and repair of roads and bridges.</li> <li>• Provide resources (personnel and equipment) necessary to clear fallen trees, brush and debris from city, county, and state roads to facilitate emergency access in disaster area.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides engineering and contracting/procurement personnel and equipment to assist in emergency removal of debris, demolition, and temporary repair of essential public facilities, water supply, and sanitation.</li> <li>• Provides expertise and personnel to assist with assessment of emergency services sector critical infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Health and Medical Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides appropriate personnel, equipment, and supplies, primarily for communications and aircraft for deployed Federal public health and medical teams.</li> </ul>

## Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

Core Capability	ESF #4 – Firefighting
<b>Operational Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides radio communications systems to support firefighters, law enforcement officers, and incident response operations.</li> <li>Provides engineers, technicians, and liaison staff to assist Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, and Office of Emergency Communications managers.</li> <li>Provides National Interagency Radio Support systems for use by damage reconnaissance teams and other applications.</li> <li>Provides appropriate communications personnel to accompany radio systems for user training and operator maintenance indoctrination.</li> </ul>
<b>On-Scene Security and Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May provide trained public safety, law enforcement, investigations, and security resources if appropriate authority is provided</li> </ul>
<b>Mass Search and Rescue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides equipment and supplies from the Interagency Cache System and use of Interagency Fire Center contract aircraft during incidents, based on standby agreements and contingency plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Mass Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides appropriate resources (e.g., cots, blankets, sleeping bags, personnel) for shelters.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Response/Health and Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures, evaluates, and monitors the impact of the emergency incident on National Forest System and Department of Interior lands.</li> <li>Provides technical assistance and logistical support.</li> </ul>

### Agency Actions

Primary Agency	Actions
<b>Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Forest Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates Federal firefighting activities. This function is accomplished by mobilizing firefighting resources in support of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area wildland, rural, and urban firefighting agencies nationwide.</li> <li>Provides qualified ESF #4 personnel to serve at the national and regional/area levels during Stafford Act incidents.</li> <li>Provides support personnel at the national, regional, and incident levels.</li> <li>Requests assistance from supporting agencies as necessary to accomplish ESF #4 responsibilities.</li> <li>Provides logistics support through the appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center and/or National Interagency Coordination Center for mobilizing resources for firefighting.</li> <li>Assumes full responsibility for suppression of wildfires burning on National Forest System lands and joins in a unified command with the local jurisdiction on incidents threatening National Forest System lands.</li> <li>Provides and coordinates firefighting assistance to other Federal land management; state forestry; and local, tribal, territorial, and insular area fire organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the National Response Framework (NRF).</li> <li>Arranges for and provides direct liaison with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs and fire chiefs in the designated area, as appropriate, to coordinate requests for firefighting assistance in structural or industrial fire detection, protection, and suppression operations.</li> </ul>

## Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

Support Agency	Actions
<b>Department of Commerce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides fire/weather forecasting as needed from the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID, or from a nearby National Weather Service Forecast Office under the terms of existing interagency agreements.</li> <li>• Provides urban and industrial hazard analysis support through the Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.</li> <li>• Provides fire/weather support under the terms of the National Agreement for Meteorological Services in Support of Agencies with Land Management and Fire Protection Responsibilities.</li> <li>• Provides forecasts of the dispersion of smoke in support of planning and response activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Defense (DOD)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes full responsibility for firefighting activities on DOD installations.</li> <li>• Supports firefighting operations on nonmilitary lands with personnel, equipment, and supplies under the terms of the current interagency agreement between DOD, USDA, and DOI, including the arrangement of liaisons as required.</li> </ul> <p><b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides contracting services through ESF #3 to urban and rural firefighting forces to obtain heavy equipment and/or demolition services as needed to suppress incident-related fires.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Homeland Security (DHS)</b>	<p><b>FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides qualified ESF #4 personnel to serve at the national and regional/area levels during Stafford Act incidents.</li> <li>• Establishes liaison with EMAC personnel on governor to governor requests for firefighting resources to ensure the ESF#4 primary agency and appropriate support agencies are aware of any firefighting resources provided through EMAC.</li> <li>• Assists with identification of local structure fire resources not currently available through the existing national firefighting mobilization system, and assist with incorporating these resources into the system.</li> <li>• Provides contact with appropriate fire service organizations/ associations at the national level to ensure any actions by these organizations relative to disaster planning, preparedness or response are coordinated with the ESF #4 primary agency and other appropriate support agencies.</li> <li>• In conjunction with the ESF #4 primary agency and other appropriate support agencies, provides direct liaison with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs and fire chiefs in the designated area, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Disseminates information and provides subject matter experts to improve the infrastructure protection efforts within the emergency services sector.</li> <li>• Provides assistance with assessment of impacted emergency services sector critical infrastructure.</li> </ul>

## Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

Support Agency	Actions
<b>DHS (continued)</b>	<p><b>U.S. Coast Guard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides marine firefighting assistance as available, commensurate with each unit's level of training and the adequacy of available equipment.</li> <li>• Has the responsibility and direct authority for safeguarding ports and may exercise Federal control over vessels, ports, and harbors and waterfront facility operations and vessel movements as deemed necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of the Interior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes full responsibility for fighting wildfires burning on lands within its jurisdiction and joins in unified command with the local jurisdiction on incidents threatening lands within its jurisdiction.</li> <li>• Assists the USDA/Forest Service in managing and coordinating firefighting operations.</li> <li>• Provides firefighting assistance to other Federal land management; state forestry; and local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area fire organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the NRF.</li> <li>• Provides qualified ESF #4 personnel and support personnel at the national, regional, and incident levels during Stafford Act incidents.</li> <li>• In conjunction with the ESF #4 primary agency and other appropriate support agencies, provides direct liaison with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs and fire chiefs in the designated area, as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of State</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates with foreign governments on identification and movement to the United States of assets and resources for firefighting assistance.</li> <li>• Coordinates with foreign states concerning offers of support, gifts, offerings, donations, or other aid.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Protection Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides technical assistance and advice in the event of fires involving hazardous materials.</li> <li>• Provides assistance in identifying an uncontaminated, operational water source for firefighting.</li> <li>• Provides assistance in identifying critical water systems requiring priority restoration for firefighting.</li> <li>• Provides technical assistance on issues concerning the impacts of firefighting chemicals on wastewater treatment facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State forestry organizations in most states are responsible for wildland firefighting on non-Federal lands. Local fire departments are typically responsible for structural firefighting. Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, including state forestry organizations and local fire departments, may assist other local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments and Federal agencies in firefighting operations through existing agreements. Private sector resources are mobilized through standard contract procedures.</li> </ul>