

DNRC Wildfire Support

Quick Reference Guide



Terminology

- **DNRC Helicopter:** Either a state owned, or a state authorized, helicopter that supports local government wildfire suppression.
- **Helitack Crew:** A 3-5 person wildfire crew that arrives on a DNRC helicopter. These personnel can be utilized for non-aviation activities on a fire.
- **Air Attack:** The common term for an Air Tactical Group Supervisor in a fixed wing plane who manages airborne aircraft on a wildfire. They can also provide good intelligence on wildfire activity and access.
- **Air Tanker:** A fixed wing aircraft configured to drop retardant, or water, on a wildfire.
- **Lead Plane:** A fixed wing airplane operated by a air tanker pilot who recons placement of air tanker drops, then leads the air tankers.
- **Hand Crew:** Generally refers to a 20 person wildfire crew utilized for wildfire suppression.
- **County Assist:** A process where the DNRC has determined Mutual Aid is no longer appropriate. This is typically related to the cost of suppressing the fire. At this point, the County becomes the avenue for resources through the County's Cooperative Fire Control Agreement with DNRC.

Initiation Process

- There is no defined list of what can be requested from DNRC through mutual aid, so ask for what you think you need.
- Place requests through Gallatin County Dispatch stating that you are "requesting mutual aid from DNRC for 1 helicopter and an Air Attack."
- DNRC will always loop back to the Fire Warden to confirm the request at which point the Fire Warden will confirm the situation, or seek more information. It is not uncommon for wildfire resources to be spread thin and get triaged, so it is important to provide a clear assessment of the fire and values at risk.
- Once a Fire Warden is engaged in the incident, wildfire resources will be coordinated through them.
- If an incident transitions from mutual aid to a County Assist, the Fire Warden will take care of this process behind the scenes. However, at this point the County becomes an Agency Having Jurisdiction for the wildfire with the Fire Warden as the Line Officer.

Considerations

- Be prepared to receive a helicopter by monitoring the Air to Ground channel and having an assignment ready. Also know if you want a recon of the fire before the helicopter configures for water drops.
- If considering air tankers, order early. There is often great competition for them and they may be coming from a long way away. This is a high cost item that will require qualified management before being approved.
- Interagency resources (engines and crews) can be a great resource to relieve local engines and support extended attack/ mop up. There is often lead time and travel in order for them to get here, so plan ahead.
- Involve the Fire Warden early in incidents that are escalating. They can grease the process and get resources escalated.

Reference

Gallatin County Emergency Management (406) 451-0672	Billings Interagency Dispatch (406) 896-2900
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