



# California Fire Services User's Guide To:

- Disaster Declarations
- Agreements for Cooperation

## KEY TERMS

- Mutual Aid
  - Assistance By Hire
    - Local Agreements
      - Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement (4 Party Agreement)
      - Direct Protection Area (DPA)
      - Cooperative Agreement For Local Government Fire Suppression Assistance (5 Party Agreement)

## INTENT

*This document is designed to familiarize the fire agencies statewide with various means of sending and receiving aid to wildland fire incidents and some examples of how reimbursement may or may not occur. This is not intended to define the only means by which this may occur or to set policy on these issues.*

## DISASTER DECLARATIONS

There are several levels of disaster declarations and each level presents different possibilities of response, fiscal responsibilities and reimbursements (if any).

Local Declaration. A local disaster can be declared by the local governing body, such as but not limited to the Mayor, City Council, County Board of Supervisors. A local declaration will suspend the rules with respect to bidding of short-term contracts for services required to assist in mitigating the emergency and provide temporary relief from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other items as specified in your local ordinances. Should this be the highest level of declaration, there is no reimbursement from the next level of government.

Gubernatorial Declaration. Prior to the Governor of the State declaring a disaster, the local government must show evidence that local resources are expended and that the capabilities of the resources will not provide timely relief. Declarations from the Governor may provide qualifying State funds to local governments and assisting agencies for overtime and mileage cost directly attributable to the responses. At this level of declaration, the State may reimburse 75% of the eligible costs and other expenses, the remaining 25% is the fiscal responsibility of the local government.

Presidential Declaration. Prior to a Presidential Declaration of Disaster being issued the same basic criteria must be met by the State. A Presidential Declaration may provide qualifying Federal funds to State and local governments. The funds may provide a wide variety of relief, depending on the extent and types of disaster. At this level of declaration, the Federal Government may reimburse 75% of costs associated with overtime, mileage, and other expenses directly attributable to responses. The State is responsible for reimbursing 75% of the remaining 25% (18.75%) and the local government is responsible for the remaining 6.25%.

## Agreements for Cooperation

It's in the best interest of both State, Federal, and local government agencies to cooperate to achieve objectives of common interest and concern. The concept of a functionally integrated fire protection system, involving Federal, State and local government resources, is the most effective method of delivering fire protection where life, property and natural resource values are at risk.

There is an array of agreements at various levels of governments and between agencies that allow for and provide assistance during times of emergencies. These agreements may provide assistance in the form of **MUTUAL AID**, where assistance is rendered free of charge (non-reimbursable, generally a short duration assignment) or **ASSISTANCE BY HIRE** where the assistance will be paid for (reimbursed) by the user.

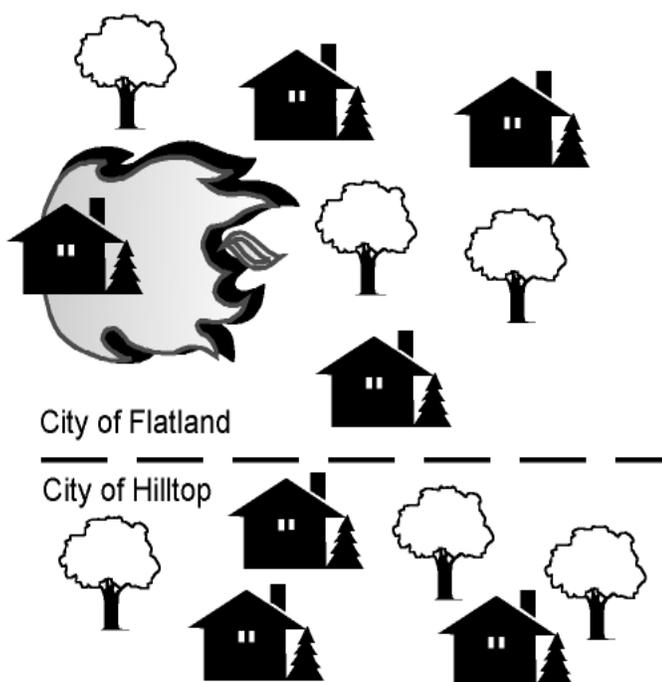
**LOCAL AGREEMENTS** are voluntary agreements between two or more local entities that describe the initial responses to incidents occurring within adjoining areas or in areas of close proximity. The agreements will determine whether the responses are mutual aid, or assistance by hire.

The **COOPERATIVE FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENT**, referred to as the **4 PARTY AGREEMENT**, is an agreement between the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service (collectively known as Forest Agencies). The Forest Agencies acknowledge that differences exist between agency missions, but that each will represent the other agency's interests and must possess the recognition, knowledge and understanding of each other's mission objectives, authorities and policies. Wildland fires on intermingled or adjacent lands, managed by State and Federal Agencies, present a threat to the lands of the other. State and Federal Agencies have recognized a need to assist each other on suppression of wildland fires on lands adjacent to each other. These lands are commonly referred to as **DIRECT PROTECTION AREA (DPA)**. Basically, DPA is described as an area delineated by boundaries regardless of statutory responsibility and the protection is assumed by administrative units of either the Federal Agencies or the State. The agency with the direct protection responsibility, known as the Protecting Agency, has assumed both fire suppression and fiscal responsibilities as agreed.

However, at times of severe wildland fire conditions the Forest Agencies may have a need of local government apparatus to provide structural protection or to supplement their respective agency-controlled resources to aid in the suppression effort. The **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSISTANCE**, referred to as the **5 PARTY AGREEMENT**, is the instrument that endorses this cooperation. The agreement makes California Office of Emergency Services and/or various local government jurisdictions emergency apparatus, in the spirit of cooperation, available for dispatch and use through the STATE FIRE & RESCUE MUTUAL AID SYSTEM, to the Forest Agencies. Reimbursement begins 12 hours after the initial dispatch and is retroactive to the time of the initial dispatch. If the duration of the assignment is less than 12 hours, there is no reimbursement.

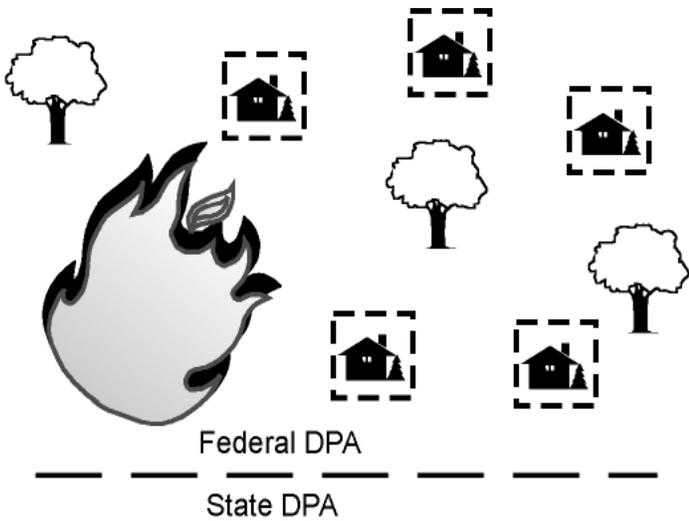
In other words, the 5 PARTY AGREEMENT allows the Forest Agencies to tap into the pool of available resources through the STATE FIRE & RESCUE MUTUAL AID SYSTEM. In the truest of terms Forest Agencies are not signatory to the STATE FIRE & RESCUE MUTUAL AID SYSTEM, and do not actively participate by providing resources but are frequent users of the systems.

THE FOLLOWING SIX SCENARIOS DO NOT SET PRECEDENT.  
Each real incident will have its own unique decisions.



The Cities of Hilltop and Flatland are adjacent neighbors. A structure fire in Flatland, close to the boundary with Hilltop, has spread into the surrounding wildlands of the city LRA. **The location of the incident is covered by a local Voluntary Mutual Aid Agreement developed by both cities during joint emergency operations planning.** Both cities respond with significant fire fighting resources to deal with the threat. There is no involvement from wildland (forest) agencies. Eventually the wildland fire is successfully controlled before actually burning into Hilltop's jurisdiction. The City of Hilltop incurred unbudgeted expenditures associated with their response to assist their neighbor. This expense happened in spite of the fact that Hilltop did not suffer any loss within their area. **The City of Hilltop was not reimbursed for these unplanned costs.**

Mutual Aid at the local government level, occurs daily throughout the State. This process is designed to provide assistance from one neighboring jurisdiction to another, related to numerous fire service activities. The premise is that no community has the resources sufficient to cope with all emergencies for which potential exists. In the spirit of cooperation Hilltop assisted Flatland without reimbursement. Next time it may be the other way around.



The scattered houses are on SRA land totally within the Federal DPA. The Federal agency (FED) has wildland fire protection responsibility for all federal lands, private lands in this area are SRA. The county fire department (CTY) has structure protection responsibility in this area. The fire is managed by a Unified Command with county fire department concerns being met by participating as a member of this Unified Command. The IC's jointly agreed to order five (5) strike teams of engines for structure protection through the Unified Ordering Point to assist in perimeter control. The strike teams come under the 5 Party Agreement. The strike teams are reimbursed under this agreement by the federal agency who ordered them. Any County fire department resources responding as part of these strike teams are not reimbursed.

Example of the request for 5 strike teams would be Incident #FED-12345, Request FED-E-10 through FED-E-14 for 1 each S/T Engine Type 1 or Type 2 per request number.

Sunshine City is an incorporated city with its own fire department (SSC). The structures located outside the city are protected by the county (CTY), but are on SRA lands within the federal DPA. The fire is managed as a Unified Command between the federal agency, county fire, and the city. The joint decisions was for the federal agency to order one strike team of engines to protect the structures in close proximity to the wildland fire and assist with perimeter control and the city to order 10 strike teams of engines to protect the city. The federal order is through the 5 Party Agreement, and the city order is under State Master Mutual Aid Agreement. The one strike team is reimbursed by the federal agency and the 10 strike teams are furnished at no cost to the city. The county resources that assist in the effort will not be compensated by the Federal agency.



Example of the federal request for 1 strike team would be Incident #FED-12345, Request FED-E-10 for 1 each S/T Engine Type 1 or Type 2 per request number.

Example of the city request for 10 strike teams would be Incident #FED-12345, Request SSC-E-11 through SSC-E-20 for 1 each S/T Engine Type 1 or Type 2.

*(In this scenario it is important to recognize that it is a unified command and it was a joint decision for the city to order the engines to protect the city through State Master Mutual Aid.)*



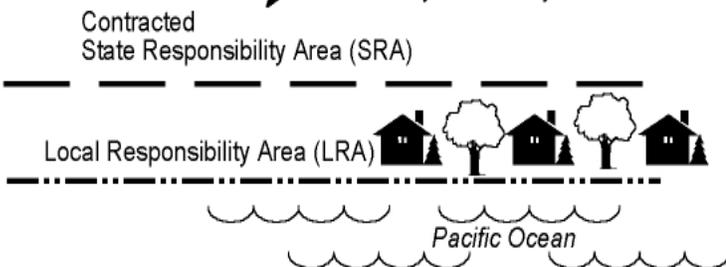
CDF has six (6) contract counties (LAC, KRN, ORC, VNC, SBC, & MRN) to provide wildland fire protection for State responsibility lands in their counties.

A fire is burning SRA land in Los Angeles County (LAC) and an area of LRA needs protection. The CDF Agency Representative and the Incident Commander have negotiated that 5 strike teams of engines will be ordered under Master Mutual Aid and 5 strike teams of engines ordered under the 5 Party Agreement.

Example of the request for 5 strike teams of engines, Master Mutual Aid, is Incident #LAC-1234, Request LRA-E-1 through LRA-E-5 for 1 each S/T Engine Type 1 or Type 2 per request number.

Example of the request for 5 strike teams of engines, 5 Party Agreement, is Incident #LAC-1234, Request SRA-E-6 through SRA-E-10 for 1 each S/T Engine Type 1 or Type 2 per request number.

*(Local government resources ordered by Forest agencies for assistance may not always be under the provisions of the 5 Party Agreement. Resources may be provided to the Forest Agencies through local Assistance by Hire or Mutual Aid agreements.)*

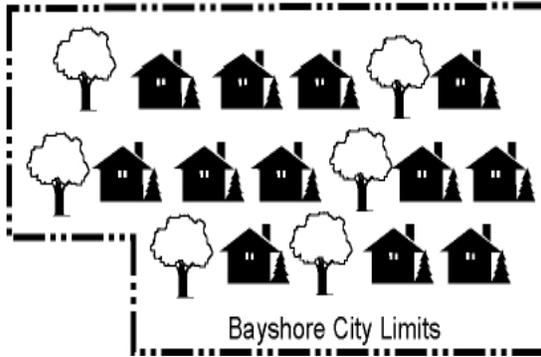




National Forest Boundary  
Federal DPA

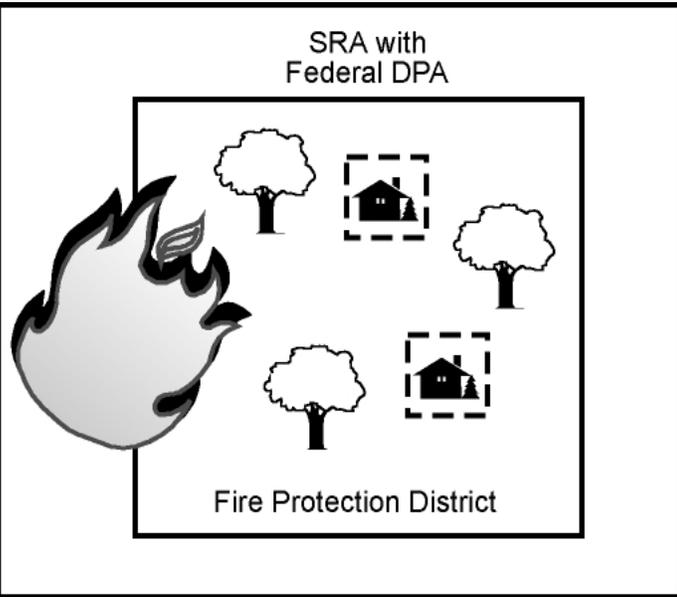
The City of Bayshore (BAF) is an incorporated city and contracts with the County for structural fire protection. The Bayshore city limits stop at the USFS Direct Protection Area (DPA) boundary. A wildland fire starts on Forest Service land protected by the Forest Service (FED). The fire spreads rapidly and is threatening the City of Bayshore. A unified command is established between the Forest Service and the County Fire Department (CTY). A joint decision by the Incident Commanders is made to order 10 strike teams of engines for structure protection through the 5 Party Agreement for perimeter control. Because of the threat and risk to the Bayshore City LRA, there is joint IC's agreement to share the cost of the 10 strike teams equally, 50%/50%.

Local  
Responsibility  
Area  
(LRA)



Example of the federal request for 5 strike teams of engines would be Incident #FED-12345, Request FED-E-10 through FED-E-14 for 1 each S/T Engine Type 1 or Type 2 per request number.

Example of the county request for 5 strike teams of engines would be Incident #FED-12345, Request BAF-E-15 through BAF-E-19 for 1 each S/T Engine Type 1 or Type 2 per request number.



A wildland fire is burning on SRA lands within Federal DPA. The fire is also within a Fire Protection District. Forest Agencies normally will not enter into a Unified Command with a Fire Protection District unless there is an agreement to share costs; or if there are other reasons for the Fire Protection District to enter into a unified command.

Incident Command has made a decision to order resources through the 5 Party Agreement consistent with Forest Agency's agreements of structure protection on SRA lands. Local agency resources ordered under the 5 Party Agreement will be reimbursed within the terms of the agreement. If the Fire Protection District chooses not to be a part of the Incident Command and they order local government resources via independent dispatch channels the costs of those resources will not be the responsibility of any agency involved in the management of the incident.

*This document is not policy. It is each fire agencies responsibility to understand the many procedures of providing and receiving assistance. The financial obligations when involved with emergency/disaster responses are variable. If you have other questions you should contact your agency administrators.*