

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Tasking 2021-12

June 9, 2021

To: Fire Management Board

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

Subject: Incident Management Remote Response Recommendations

In the spring of 2020, a grass roots effort began with a goal of organizing and connecting incident management practitioners to share best management practices and other advancements for incident management in a pandemic environment. This effort, known as “Incident Management Remote Response” (IMRR) sponsored a survey in the fall of 2020 to gather best management practices and recommendations for improvement from the fire community.

In the spring of 2021, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) tasked the National Incident Commander/Area Commander Council (NICACC) with compiling and organizing the survey results and providing recommendations to NMAC.

NICACC provided 5 recommendations; two of these recommendations fall under the purview of the Fire Management Board (FMB) groups, Wildland Fire and Information Technology Board (WFIT) and the Incident Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) Change Board. These two summarized findings/recommendations are:

Finding:

There are a variety of concerns related to the availability and adequacy of technology to meet agency and responder expectations. Some primary concerns are inadequate connectivity; service interruptions during transitions; host unit expectation that cannot be met; limited funding for technology needs; and lack of agency support.

Recommendation:

Recommend NMAC assign this issue to the Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) program. Develop and provide a national contract for internet connectivity. When a Type 1 or Type 2 IMT is ordered, a data contract is ordered at the same time (like caterer and shower contracts).

Finding:

In IROC, current resource “Availability Area” is recorded as either available local, state, GACC, or national. There is no way to account for responders who are available to support but not available/required to travel to an incident location. Personnel working in a remote capacity, because they are typically required to travel to a work location, are covered in the current responder “Available Area” categories.

Recommendation:

Recommend NMAC request IROC Change Board add “Virtual” as a Resource Availability Area in IROC.

NMAC requests that WFIT and the IROC Change Board evaluate these recommendations and take appropriate action. The complete recommendation documents are attached.



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Please contact Josh Simmons, Chair, National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group if you have any questions.

/s/ Joshua Simmons Chair, NMAC

Attachment 1 – NMAC Tasking 2021-01 Response_Technology_Final.pdf

Attachment 2 – NMAC Tasking 2021-01 Response_Virtual_Status_IROC_Final.pdf



National Incident Commander/Area Commander Council

March 15, 2021

To: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)
From: National Incident Commander/Area Commander Council
Subject: Response to NMAC Tasking 2021-01

IMRR Finding:

There are a variety of concerns related to the availability and adequacy of technology to meet agency and responder expectations. Some of the primary concerns are:

- Inadequate connectivity at ICP and Spike Camps
- Service interruptions that are common when IMT's transition
- Host unit expectations that cannot be met due to the IMT members not having training or expertise in what is being requested
- Limited funding for infrastructure, equipment, staffing & contracts
- Lack of agency support of personnel and equipment

Recommendation:

- Develop and provide a national contract for Internet Connectivity. When a Type 1 or Type 2 Incident Management Team is mobilized, initiate the Internet Connectivity Contract, especially if there is limited connectivity and a system needs on-site development.
- Identify ICP locations in the Mob Guide which have internet capabilities or where internet capacity can be obtained quickly
- Build on Firenet capabilities including continued training
- Design processes that minimize the needs for data transfer (i.e. Instead of transferring all the forms and attributes of the maps, transfer only the data or data changes)
- Establish open and honest communication with Agency Administrators about their expectations
- Expect host units/requesting units to identify their expectations for the use of remote and virtual processes and equipment. Agency Administrators clarify their expectations around virtual briefings, virtual meetings, use of remote camps etc. Clear expectations for the IMT upon arrival on the incident will allow the IMT to identify the technology and connectivity needed to meet those expectations.
- Changes in the USDA – CIO organization and policies have affected IMT's ability to support agencies and the public that the IMT's serve. Recommend that IMT's identify their requirements for incident support and seek solutions from the USDA-CIO organization. Issues that need USDA – CIO solutions:
 - Internal messaging for Incident within an Incident
 - Obtaining and maintaining the minimum bandwidth needed to support an incident including transfer rates and total bandwidth needs
 - Use of specific Apps that are not now available to IMT's

National Incident Commander/Area Commander Council

- How to provide continuity through IMT transitions. This includes having licenses that are assigned to an incident and not an individual, consistent email systems that maintain mailing lists, consistent meeting protocols and identifying methods to reduce the data transfer during transitions.

Recommended organization to act upon the recommendation:

Recommend NMAC assign this issue to the Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) program.

Develop and provide a national contract for internet connectivity.

When a Type 1 or Type 2 IMT is ordered, a data contract is ordered at the same time (like caterer and shower contracts).

National Incident Commander/Area Commander Council

March 15, 2021

To: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)
From: National Incident Commander/Area Commander Council
Subject: Response to NMAC Tasking 2021-01

IMRR Finding:

In IROC, current resource “Availability Area” is recorded as either available local, state, GACC, or national. There is no way to account for responders who are available to support but not available/required to travel to an incident location.

Personnel working in a remote capacity, because they are typically required to travel to a work location, are covered in the current responder “Available Area” categories.

Recommendation:

Submit request to the IROC change board to add “**Virtual**” as a resource availability area.

Adding “Virtual” status to IROC would:

- Give a more realistic picture of resource availability. Possible inclusion of full or part-time availability would further outline responder availability.
- Improve resource availability in functional areas that are of the highest need and most understaffed, including: Finance, Planning, Public Information, Liaison, and some Logistics.
- Reflect the current reality in incident support and will assist with including more of the workforce into incident management.
- Improve efficiencies, reduce cost, and reduce risk for some incident responders.
- Reduce burden of tracking availability of virtual resources on local dispatches.
- Reduce burden on IMTs to find through word of mouth and name request people to fill unstaffed positions on rosters or in support functions.
- Allowing virtual work promotes employee physical and mental health.

Recommended organization to act upon the recommendation:

Recommend NMAC request IROC Change Board add “**Virtual**” as a Resource Availability Area in IROC