

# STRUCTURE PROTECTION NOTES

- **INTRODUCTION.**
  - The following discussion points were presented at the North Regional Operations Bureau Wildland Training that was held on Monday 5/9/2005 at Fire Station 126, as part of a segment on Structure Protection Concepts.
- **PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING. STRUCTURES LOST VS. ACRES BURNED.**
  - How are we graded?
    - 10 Acre fire w/ 5 structures lost
    - 11,000 acre fire with no structures lost
    - Which is the more successful fire??
- **RELATIONSHIP OF STRUCTURE PROTECTION TO PERIMETER CONTROL.**
  - Both have to be accomplished in order to be successful.
  - May have to be accomplished simultaneously
  - Need to establish priorities when you have limited resources available.
- **INITIAL ATTACK IC/OSC CAN OFTEN BE OVERWHELMED EARLY INTO THE INCIDENT, AND NEEDS TO SHED SOME OF HIS/HER RESPONSIBILITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**
  - LAFD PIA for the Western IC fire. (Captain Joe Dupee) Human brain can process a maximum of 7 inputs at one time. The higher the stress, the less efficiently you deal with the inputs. Can be as low as 3 or 4.
  - Establishment of DIV's/Grp's helps;
    - **SAFETY** - by allowing more direct supervision of resources.
    - **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT** - by allowing the IC/OSC to concentrate on specific tasks, while delegating others.
    - Maintain **SPAN OF CONTROL**.
- **STRUCTURE PROTECTION BRANCH VS. GROUP.**
  - I prefer to go directly to SP Branch. This allows for,
    - Easier expansion later. Structure Protection Branch Director Position is already identified, allowing us to merely add additional SPG's as needed.
    - Assigns responsibility for all structure protection on the incident to one person, thus allowing the OSC to focus on perimeter control issues.
    - Limits span of control issues by reducing the number of units that report directly to the OSC.

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- **NAMING SPG'S VS. NUMBERING SPGS. WHY???**
  - Name groups geographically so that they can be easily identified and located.
    - Dockwieller Group (Dockwieller housing tract)
    - Sierra Group (Structures along Sierra Highway)
    - Aliso Group (All Structures in Aliso Canyon).
  - Numbering of Groups causes confusion.
    - Branches are numbered.
    - **CAN YOU REMEMBER THE CURRENT LOCATION OF 3 OR 4 SPG'S IF THEY ARE NUMBERED AND CONSTANTLY MOVING??**
    - No indication where the group is actually located.
    - If the SPG #1 is relocated it's even more confusing. People were used to thinking that SPG#1 was located one place, now it is located somewhere else.
- **AFTER THE THREAT HAS PASSED.**
  - Do not abandon a Group area completely. **ALWAYS LEAVE SOMEONE BEHIND TO PATROL.** Many structures are lost more than an hour or two after the fire has burned through, and are lost because of hidden fire that has taken hold in attics, under eaves, or on wood roofs.
  - Keep the Group name in place throughout the remainder of the incident, even if it is dark (Un-staffed).
  - Re-assign excess resources as soon as practical. Bump them ahead.
  - Designate new SPG's as the need arises.
  - **PLAN AHEAD.** Don't wait until the last minute to order and/or assign resources. It takes longer than you think to make things happen. Especially if resources are not familiar with the area.
- **PRE-PLANNED SPG'S. WHY???**
  - Existing Pre-Attack plans are limited and have never been updated.
  - Future Aerial Mapping Program may be beneficial but will not be in place for this fire season.
  - Identify possible SPG's ahead of time on a simple 1-page map that shows the area, names the group, identifies the Thomas Brothers Map Grid, identifies the staging area, and estimates the minimum resources required.
  - Can be accomplished NOW during annual Brush Inspections.
- **STRUCTURE PROTECTION LESSONS LEARNED.**
  - **DON'T** under-estimate SPG needs for the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>. day.
    - **Keep the resources you have assigned, until you are sure that the threat has been abated.**
    - Example on the Foothill Fire.
  - Keep resource orders realistic.
    - What would I like to have vs. what is the bare minimum I need to get the job done.

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- Formulas may be of no value when you have limited resources available to you.
- Immediate Need vs. Strike Teams from the basin.
  - Impact on service delivery in the affected areas.
  - If needed, be firm when you make the request.
  - Be prepared to release some of these companies back to district as soon as practical.
- Allowing SP Branch Director to order resources directly from Staging.
  - Designate type of resources he can have.
  - Identify the maximum number of resources to be assigned before further approval of the OSC is needed.
- Co-ordination between SPG's and DIVS.
  - Equal authority under the ICS org. chart.
  - In reality, they need to coordinate their activities so that they do not hinder or prevent the others planned actions.
- FRA, SRA, and LRA issues when it comes to Structure Protection.
  - Should not be a factor during the initial Operational Period.
    - Structures in the National Forest are our responsibility
    - Structures on SRA land are our responsibility as agents for CDF.
    - Structures on Contract City land or un-incorporated County land are always our responsibility.
  - May be a factor on SRA land during subsequent Operational Periods.
- Consider assigning the Structure Protection Branch to a separate Tactical Frequency. SP Branch Directors and Group Supervisors will still need to monitor the Command Frequency.