

DIRECTOR'S GUIDANCE FOR PREVENTION MEDIA RELEASES



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Washington, DC 20240

MAY 14 2012

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors
Attention: Forestry/Fire Management

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: Wildland Fire Media Relations Guidance

Promoting Indian self-determination and protecting lives, property, and resources while restoring and maintaining healthy ecosystems through cost-effective and creative fire-management programs and collaboration is BIA's fire management mission. To fulfill this mission, the following guidance regarding the release of wildland fire related media information is intended to provide clear direction for agency Line Officers, unit Fire Management Officers and local prevention and fuels specialists. This guidance clarifies the 90 IAM 1.2A (15) which states:

"The Bureau will enhance knowledge and understanding of wildland fire management policies and practices through internal and external communication and education programs. These programs will be continuously improved through the timely and effective exchange of information among all affected agencies and organizations."

Clarifying Guidance

During dynamic events such as wildland fire, providing accurate information is critical for public safety. To be effective, communication must be timely, if not immediate. For this reason, news bulletins and routine fire information pertaining to the topics listed below are authorized for media release on behalf of the BIA, Division of Wildland Fire Management (DFWFM).

For cases that may include multiple agency jurisdictions, these news releases are also approved for use.

The DFWFM media release template and approved supporting fire messages can be found on the BIA-NIFC SharePoint Site inside the Indian Affairs Collaboration Tool (IACT):
<https://sp.ia.doi.net/sites/BIA/ots/dfwfm/nifc/comm/DFWFM%20Public%20Relations%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Local units are encouraged to tailor messages to meet individual unit needs; however, the template should not be altered except to revise address, contact names and phone numbers. All documents released to the media must follow the DFWFM branding. This includes providing:

- The Bureau of Indian Affairs Logo
- The Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management Logo
- BIA agency address and contact information
- The name and phone number of a fire management specialist a media inquiry can contact.
- The conclusion of the release will be indicated by: “#BIA-FIRE#”
- The www.bia.gov/nifc/ website link
- The DFWFM Facebook Link
- The website link where the release can be found if published and posted online
- The DFWFM footer:

Protecting Human Life | Restoring Cultural Landscapes | Supporting Indian Self-Determination

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that field specialists who are asked to speak to the media successfully complete basic Fire Information Officer training (S-203) and be a minimally qualified Public Information Officer, Type 3 (PIOF). During complex situations, if an Information Officer is unavailable on the home unit, the Agency can always order a qualified individual through the interagency dispatch system.

Table of Approved Wildland Fire Management Topics for Media Release

Wildland Fire Prevention	Fire Operations, Fire Use, and Fuels Management	Burned Area Emergency Response	Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Danger Alerts • Fire Restrictions/Burn Bans • Burn Permits • Fire Preparedness Activities • WeTip • FIREWISE • Arson Prevention • Juvenile Fire Setter Prevention • Seasonal and Holiday Wildfire Precautions • Outdoor Cooking • Debris Burning • Campfire Safety • Fireworks Safety • Equipment/Vehicle Safety • Other specific Wildland Fire Prevention Message specific to a home unit that may target a <i>cause</i> of wildland fire starts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuations • Road Closures • Smoke in Area • Fire equipment use • Incident Management Team Mobilizations/ Status updates • Multiple objectives being met through use of natural wildfires. • Prescribed Fire Planned/Complete • Mechanical Treatment Planned/Complete • Annual Refresher Announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAER Team Status updates • Closures • Treatment Planned/ Completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring Season • Administratively Determined Announcements • Special Training Sessions • Indian Country Fitness Challenge

Restrictions

For serious accidents or fatalities that occur while on a wildland fire, Agency Administrators must follow the guidance outlined in Chapter 18 of the Wildland Fire and Aviation Program Management and Operations Guide.

Any topics outside the scope of local level fire management activities as listed above are NOT authorized for release without following established protocols. This includes commentary on fire policy or any fire management issues that are regional or national in scope.

Fire management related questions that are regional or national in scope, the local unit will defer to the Regional Office who can contact the Fire Communications Specialist at NIFC for wildland fire specific information/media response or the Indian Affairs Communications Director for guidance / media response.

Contact Robyn Broyles, Fire Communication and Education Specialist at (208) 387-5473 for questions pertaining to this guidance.

Attachments