



Washington State Patrol State Fire Service Mobilization Report

2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington State Patrol (WSP) is required under RCW 43.43.965 to report on an annual basis the following information for each emergency or disaster in which the Washington state fire service mobilization plan was used for purposes other than fire suppression, and reimbursement was made under RCW 43.43.961:

- The type and nature of the disaster or emergency;
- The reasons why the host jurisdiction and mutual aid resources were exhausted;
- The additional risk resources provided under the mobilization plan;
- The cost incurred by the state patrol;
- The amount of reimbursement made under RCW 43.43.961 to the host jurisdiction and to each non-host jurisdiction providing all risk resources; and
- An assessment and any recommendations of actions that can be taken by the host jurisdiction and its mutual aid network to prevent future use of the fire mobilization plan for similar disasters or emergencies.

STATE FIRE SERVICE MOBILIZATION

The State Fire Service Mobilization was authorized one time for an incident other than fire suppression:

On April 10, 2020, at the direction of Governor Inslee (letter attached), Chief John R. Batiste authorized the use of the Mobilization Plan to assist in the statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some local, county, and state agencies, at the time, did not have qualified incident management personnel/teams or had exhausted their pools of available personnel to positions within incident management organizations.

RESOURCES

The resources provided to other state and local agencies were qualified incident management personnel, who assisted local, county, and state agency incident management teams in their activities.

COST

As of November 30, 2020, the cost incurred by WSP is \$17,197.05, and the amount reimbursed to local jurisdictions is \$144,188.41. The WSP anticipates reimbursing an additional \$16,000 (estimated) for invoices not yet received from local jurisdictions.

ASSESSMENT

There are a limited number of organized Type 3 Incident Management Teams (IMT) within the State of Washington that accept assignments other than wildfire suppression or other emergency responses. Nearly all of the members of those IMT's have regular jobs that require some level of emergency response or incident management, which impacts their ability to fully participate in IMT assignments. The duration of IMT activations during the COVID 19 response also heavily taxed the ability of IMT's to continue to fill positions within their organizations.

Additionally, the number of Type 2 IMT's in the Pacific Northwest Region (defined by the United States Forest Service as Washington and Oregon) has declined over the past three years, and many members of the remaining IMT's also participate in local Type 3 IMT's. This dual participation taxes the system, particularly during periods of increased wildfire activity.

Nearly all of the standing IMT's are "interagency" in nature, meaning their members come from a variety of agencies and disciplines. The diversity of the teams' membership broadens and deepens their skill sets, and makes them highly effective in managing incidents of all types.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Washington State Patrol recommends that local, county, and state agencies continue to support the sponsorship of, and participation in, interagency Incident Management Teams of all types. This is to include providing employees the time to participate in training, exercises, and deployments, as well as supporting the technology and infrastructure needs of those IMT's.

Local, county, and state agencies should also continue to evaluate the likelihood of having to manage a prolonged incident, continually assess their own capacity to manage those incidents, and establish/maintain their own incident management capacity.

JAY INSLEE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Office of the Governor

April 10, 2020

John Batiste
Chief
Washington State Patrol
PO Box 42600
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Chief Batiste:

The Washington State Fire Defense Committee (Committee) recently voted unanimously to request that I direct the Washington State Patrol to adjust the Washington State Fire Services Resource Mobilization Plan to allow for the mobilization of fire service resources in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis. Deterioration of fire service capability due to the isolation and quarantine of personnel, and the increasing complexity of the COVID-19 pandemic, have generated concern in the fire community. The Committee further anticipates the utilization of fire service resources for non-traditional, all-hazards response with the expectancy of the COVID-19 emergency continuing into the 2020 fire season. The Committee's perspective is that the state's management of the emergency response should utilize all available means to meet this crisis. I share their concerns and perspective.

Current and emerging conditions point to an urgent need for proactive engagement within the fire service community to posture the state of Washington for maximum wildfire readiness while maintaining support to the statewide COVID-19 response. To that end and in accordance with my directive to State Agencies in Emergency Proclamation 20-05, I hereby direct you to authorize a mobilization of fire service resources in support of the statewide COVID-19 response. Further, under the emergency powers of this office, I direct you to waive any requirement or element of the Washington State Fire Services Resource Mobilization Plan which would impede its use for state fire service resource mobilization in support of non-fire service local and state agencies during the COVID-19 response.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jay Inslee
Governor

