



Fire Management Handbook
Policy 822

Railroad Fire Prevention and Suppression

This guidance document is not a new law. This document is an agency interpretation of existing law, except as authorized by Idaho Code or incorporated into a contract.

Agency Contact

Chief, Bureau of Fire Management

Purpose

Define the roles and responsibilities of the Idaho Department of Lands and railroad companies, including railroad fire prevention and suppression.

Applicability

IDL Fire Wardens who administer the Railroad Fire Prevention Inspection Checklist process.

1. Associated Policies

- A. Title 38, Section 107, Idaho Code
- B. Title 38, Section 118-120, Idaho Code
- C. Fire Management Handbook, 800 Series

2. Definitions

None

3. Policy

Idaho Code requires railroad employees to report fires on or near the right-of-way, or other operating property of the railroad, and for the employee or any other person in authority to take measures to control and extinguish such fires.

In addition, Fire Wardens should assure that all common carrier railroad rights-of-way, station grounds, or operating areas in or near timber or range land are reasonably free from combustible and flammable material(s).

4. Procedures

A. Notification

Immediately upon notification of a fire burning on a railroad right-of-way, station grounds, or other operating property, the Fire Warden shall offer assistance, on a reimbursement basis, to control and extinguish the fire.

Upon notification of a fire having spread from the railroad right-of-way, station grounds, or other operating property to forest or range lands, the Fire Warden shall take charge of the suppression action. The Fire Warden may issue instructions to the railroad for reasonable and prudent measures necessary to control or extinguish the fire. The railroad shall be liable for the costs incurred by the Idaho Department of Lands, or its authorized agencies, in controlling or extinguishing the fire. Suppression cost will be collected as per Fire Origin and Cause Investigation, FMH 862.

B. Coordination

Fire Wardens will maintain a coordinated and cooperative effort with railroad personnel. The procedures are as follows:

1. Fire Wardens, railroad officials, and the local interagency dispatch office should exchange personnel directories which list personnel available, off-duty telephone numbers, etc.
2. Fire Wardens will notify the railroad immediately when any fire occurs on railroad property or as the result of railroad activity. Location should be given by railroad milepost, if known.
3. Fire Wardens will request a detection and suppression patrol behind trains when burning conditions warrant. Such conditions might be whenever the fire danger is at the Fire Preparedness Level IV (very high or extreme).
4. Railroad crews may participate in fire training sessions when space is available.
5. Railroad officials should be kept informed of burning conditions, special precautions required, etc.

C. Inspections

The railroad district superintendent or local road master should be contacted prior to the start of the fire season and requested to participate in a joint inspection of right-of-ways and operating areas.

IDL inspecting officers should point out needed improvements as the inspection progresses, as well as recording all items that need correcting. The **Railroad Fire Prevention Inspection Checklist, Attachment 1**, is used as a guide when making inspections. A copy of the recorded deficiencies will be given to the railroad's representative.

Items to consider when inspecting right-of-ways and switch yards are:

1. Piles of discarded ties which pose a fire hazard.
2. Slashings and other debris on the right-of-way which pose a fire hazard.

3. Grass or brush growing close to tracks which could be ignited by sparks from exhaust or brakes.
4. Areas where firebreaks are needed to prevent escape of fire.

5. Exception Authorization

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Chief, Bureau of Fire Management.