



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FIRE PROTECTION STANDARDS FOR FOREST OPERATIONS

Forest fire protection rules now specifically address protection standards for “forest operation” activities during the closed fire season (May 10 through Oct. 20). The rules were amended in 2019 in Idaho Administrative Code ([IDAPA 20.04.01 - Rules Pertaining to Forest Fire Protection](#)). Idaho Administrative Code covers rules based on laws in Idaho Code. The new IDAPA fire protection rules now include standards for forest operation activities conducted on all forest lands within Idaho, including privately-owned land.

Q When can forest operators and forest landowners expect the new forest operation fire protection standards to take effect in 2019?

A The new rules establishing fire protection standards for forest operations went into effect at the conclusion of the 2019 legislative session (April 2019).

Q What forest management activities are considered to be a forest operation under the new rules?

A Forest operation is defined as an activity or service conducted by a forest operator or landowner where an IDL Certificate of Compliance is required to be on-file with IDL:

- The harvesting of trees using equipment that includes, but is not limited to, felling, bucking, yarding, delimiting, and decking operations.
- Thinning or mastication operations for stand improvement, stand density management, or fuel reduction purposes.
- Road construction or reconstruction of existing roads including installation or improvement of bridges, culverts, or structures.
- Slash management including chipping, grinding, or other mechanized reduction activities.

Q What are the new standards that are now in effect?

A The new rules include:

- **On-site Water Supply and Equipment:** On-site water supply and fire protection equipment are required for all cable logging operations or for a forest operation utilizing metal tracked harvesters from July 1 through Sept. 30.
- **Operation Area Fire Prevention:** Forest operators and landowners using cable logging systems must implement specific fire prevention practices to mitigate the risk of their operation starting a fire.
- **Fire Watch Service:** When Stage 2 Fire Restrictions are in effect, forest operators and landowners conducting a forest operation will be required to conduct a three (3) hour fire watch over the operation area after all power-operated equipment has ceased operations for the day.
- **Variance:** Forest operators and landowners conducting a forest operation may propose an alternative practice, for approval from a local IDL Fire Warden, that will provide equal or better protection than the fire protection standards prescribed in the administrative rules.

Q What are the requirements associated with the new on-site water supply and equipment rule?

A Forest operators and landowners conducting a forest operation using a cable logging system or metal tracked harvester from July 1 through Sept. 30 must have the following equipment on-site:

- Either a self-propelled motor tanked vehicle or trailer containing a minimum of 200 gallons of water.
- A water pump capable of delivering an output of 20 gallons per minute (GPM) through 50 ft. of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch hose through an adjustable nozzle.
- A minimum hose complement of 500 ft. of serviceable $\frac{3}{4}$ inch or larger hose of which 200 ft. of hose is connected to the pump ready for immediate use.

Q What are fire prevention practices specific to cable logging operations from July 1 through Sept. 30?

A If using a cable logging system the following fire protection equipment must be provided and the following prevention practices must be implemented:

- Clear ground of all flammable debris for a minimum of 10 ft. slope distance under active blocks used to yard or haul logs to a log landing.
- At each active block, provide a 5 gallon pump-equipped water can or water bladder and round pointed shovel (size 0 or larger)
- Provide for on-site water supply and fire protection equipment previously specified above.
- Prevent line rubs on rock or woody fuels which may generate sparks or may cause ignition of fuels.

Q What must a forest operator or landowner include in their alternative practice variance request?

A Forest operators and landowners proposing a variance/alternative practice to the local IDL Fire Warden will need to provide the following information in their alternative practice request:

- Description of the specific operation areas where the alternative practices will be applied.
- Description of the conditions that necessitate the alternative practice.
- Description of the alternative practice to be employed and how the proposed practice will provide equal or better fire protection than the fire protection practices prescribed in the fire protection rules.

Q How soon can they expect a decision from IDL regarding the variance?

A The Fire Warden is expected to respond within five (5) business days.

Q If I am operating on a timber sale with multiple active harvest units where several operators are conducting harvest operations, do I need to provide on-site water supply and fire watch service for each active harvest unit?

A Timber sale projects that have multiple active logging sites not adjacent to each other or that are geographically separated so that access to on-site water equipment would be delayed; or when a single person providing fire watch service is unable to adequately provide observation coverage over all of the active operation areas; the forest landowner or operator may be required to provide additional on-site water supply equipment and a separate fire watch service for each logging site.

Q When is a Basic Fire Cache required and what fire-fighting tools must I have on-site?

A During closed fire season, forest operators and landowners conducting a forest operation are required to have a fire cache available for logging crews to use on all active logging sites. The number of tools required is based on the number of logging personnel working in the active operation area.

The table below illustrates the ratio of people to tools within the fire cache. For operation areas containing more than 10 logging personnel, multiples of any of the columns in the table can be used to determine the correct tool distribution ratio.

People in Operation	2 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10
Tool Box	1	1	1
Shovels	2	4	5
Pulaskis	2	4	4
5 gallon pump cans or bladder bags	1	1	2

Q If I am a small-scale forest operator conducting a harvest operation on a 20-acre parcel for a non-industrial forest landowner and my logging operation only contains a crew of two crew members, am I required to organize my employees and function as a fire crew to provide a response to fire starts within my operation area?

A Yes. The amended Fire Crew rule requires forest operators who conduct a forest operation during closed fire season to make a reasonable effort within the scope of their knowledge, skills, and abilities to suppress any fire started within the operation area, regardless of the size of the operation.

Q Where can I find more information about the fire protection standards for forest operations in Idaho?

A IDAPA 20.04.01 – Rules Pertaining to Forest Fire Protection can be found at <https://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/20/200401.pdf>

For questions or additional information please contact the IDL Coeur d'Alene staff office at (208) 769-1525 or your local IDL [area office](#).