



WILDFIRE FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLAND

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Wildfire is an increasing threat to a very wide range of interests, in all parts of England.
- 1.2 A coordinated approach is essential to mitigate the impacts of wildfire to people, property, habitats, livestock, natural capital and wildlife, and to plan the most effective response to wildfire incidents.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The framework identifies responsibilities, clarifies relationships and facilitates coordination at government level and between key wildfire stakeholders, in England.
- 2.2 More detailed information will be provided in supporting documents, where required.
- 2.3 The framework is intended to provide a solid foundation for a more integrated multi-sector approach to wildfires in England.
 - 2.3.1 The infrequency of wildfire incidents in any single area has often hindered the development of a coherent, coordinated response to wildfire.
 - 2.3.2 There is a need to prepare for such infrequent, but high-risk threats.

3 Stakeholders

- 3.1 The framework outlines the roles of, and the relationships between, the following wildfire stakeholders:
 - 3.1.1 Government departments with responsibilities for wildfire: The Home Office, Defra and the Cabinet Office,
 - 3.1.2 The fire and rescue services, represented by the National Fire Chiefs Council,
 - 3.1.3 The England and Wales Wildfire Forum,
 - 3.1.4 Regional Fire Groups,
 - 3.1.5 Local communities and Local Resilience Forums,
 - 3.1.6 The Met Office, and
 - 3.1.7 *(To be considered)* UK Health Security Agency – with regard to the public health impacts of wildfires.

Roles of Key Departments and Organisations

3.2 The Home Office

- 3.2.1 Currently, the lead government department for wildfire.
- 3.2.2 Coordination of wildfire issues within government.
- 3.2.3 Establishing liaison meetings and discussion as deemed appropriate.
- 3.2.4 Standing-up LGD Meetings and incident response structures during major incident; coordinating with the Fire Duty Officer and other government departments to build situational awareness and (where required) SitReps.
- 3.2.5 Provide data on wildfire risks and impacts to support Cabinet Office in preparation of the National Security Risk Assessment¹.
- 3.2.6 Accurately recording the scale and scope of wildfire incidents, through the Incident Recording System, and developing this system as required to support this requirement.
- 3.2.7 Engage with NFCC to coordinate pro-active public communications during periods of high wildfire risk.

3.3 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

- 3.3.1 Review land management inputs to manage fuel load in all parts of the country, including urban and rural areas, and the rural/urban interface.
- 3.3.2 Promote wildfire mitigation and adaptation planning to land managers including identification of management practices that will assist the emergency response to wildfire incidents².
- 3.3.3 With partners including Forestry Commission and Natural England, consider the impact of wildfire on the conservation status of land.
- 3.3.4 Impact of wildfire on carbon storage and emissions as part of the Climate Change Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Programme.
- 3.3.5 Impact of wildfire on delivery of Defra's 25-year Environment Plan, Clean Air Strategy, Peat Action Plan and Trees Action Plan.
- 3.3.6 Engage with Land Managers to coordinate pro-active public communications during periods of high wildfire risk.
- 3.3.7 Responsible for encouraging sustainable land management practices that mitigate against wildfire risk.

3.4 Cabinet Office

- 3.4.1 Advise the Cabinet on the activation of COBR mechanisms at both Official and Ministerial levels for significant wildfire incidents where required.
- 3.4.2 Maintenance of the National Security Risk Assessment and Publicly Accessible National Risk Register.
- 3.4.3 Support to the Lead Government Department in response to national emergencies where required.

¹ The methodology of the NSRA will determine where Wildfires fall relative to other risks.

² Development of which will include close working and consultation with Home office and NFCC.

- 3.5 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
 - 3.5.1 Promote consideration of wildfire as a local risk by Local Resilience Forums (LRF).
 - 3.5.2 Encourage partnership working at a local level, and in particular, engagement between LRFs, the Fire and Rescue Service and local fire groups.
 - 3.5.3 Deploy Government Liaison Officers to provide the Government focal point to LRFs during a major wildfire incident, and share TCG/SCG readouts with LGD and CCS.
- 3.6 Local Resilience Forums
 - 3.6.1 As set out in the Civil Contingencies Act, Category 1 and 2 responders jointly discharge their duties, including, assessing the local risk of wildfires and undertaking planning to respond to and recover from emergencies.
 - 3.6.2 Local Resilience Forum can also include guests such as Forestry Commission, Natural England and National Parks and others.
- 3.7 England and Wales Wildfire Forum (EWWF)
 - 3.7.1 Expand the knowledge and understanding of wildfire, with the overall purpose of reducing the harmful impact of wildfires.
 - 3.7.2 Draw on the knowledge and skill of members to present a cross-sector view of wildfire issues.
 - 3.7.3 Support the development of an evidence base on wildfire issues to guide government decision making.
 - 3.7.4 Encourage partnership working at all levels and promote joint working and collaboration.
 - 3.7.5 Provide support for the establishment and operation of fire groups.
 - 3.7.6 Promote the potential for mitigation measures to reduce the level of damage from wildfires in all parts of the country.
 - 3.7.7 Keep the wildfire risk assessment tools under review and update them as required.
 - 3.7.8 Establish priorities for wildfire research and act as an end-user for research.
 - 3.7.9 The Forum is independent but works in close liaison with the Home Office, as the lead Government Department.
- 3.8 National Fire Chief's Council Wildfire Group (NFCC WG)
 - 3.8.1 Provide wildfire input on behalf of all the fire and rescue services.
 - 3.8.2 Further develop and effectively promote the role of the Wildfire Tactical Advisers.
 - 3.8.3 Lead on the pre-planning, prevention and development of the response to wildfire incidents.
 - 3.8.4 Act as the main consultation route regarding wildfire strategy / policy and its impact on FRS.
 - 3.8.5 Act as the main forum for considering health and safety impacts on fire service attendees at wildfire incidents.

3.8.6 Liaise with National Resilience Assurance Team³ (NRAT) to ensure effective NR supported mobilisation and logistical support to major wildfire incidents.

3.9 Met Office and Natural Hazards Partnership

3.9.1 Production of risk monitoring products including the Fire Severity Index and Daily Hazard Assessment.

3.9.2 Ad-hoc reporting on long term weather trends and seasonal risk intelligence.

4 Review and revision

4.1 As the lead department for wildfire, the Home Office is responsible for the content of this framework, and for reviewing and revising it, as required.

4.2 The Home Office has produced this first draft and will review annually to keep it up-to-date it, in consultation with the Defra, Cabinet Office, DLUHC, the NFCC and EWWF.

³ NRAT is currently delivered by a lead Authority Model hosted on behalf of the Home Office by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.