

Appendix C: Fire Management Policy for Ontario

**Ministry of
Natural
Resources
Ontario**

Subject Forest Fire Management Policy for Ontario	Policy No. FM:1:01	New []
Compiled by - Branch Aviation and Forest Fire Management	Section Forest Fire Management	Date Amended June 3, 2002
Replaces Directive Title Same as above	Number AF.03.01	Dated March 8/89
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Associated Policy: Forest Fires Prevention Act, Emergency Plans Act, Municipal Act, Fire Strategies		

INTENT AND DIRECTION

- BASIC PRINCIPLE

Fire has always been a significant factor in the forests of Ontario, and will continue to have an impact on people and their environment. Forest fire management is, therefore, an integral part of land and resource management.

- DEFINITION

Forest fire management is the strategy of fire control and fire use practised in concert with land use objectives and conducted in a manner that considers environmental, social and economic criteria.

- RESPONSIBILITY

Associated with a mandate for managing the land, land ownership carries the responsibility for controlling forest fires occurring on the owned land.

Under the Forest Fires Prevention Act R.S.O., the Minister of Natural Resources has a mandate to lead forest fire management efforts in the fire region of Ontario. This does not extend beyond the fire region, i.e. does not extend to all of Ontario.

Outside the fire region MNR has responsibility for fire protection on lands owned by the Crown, and on some lands managed by MNR, as directed by agreements. MNR may provide assistance to municipalities and landowners.

The Minister of Natural Resources has lead Ministry responsibility for dealing with forest fire emergencies, as defined under the Emergency Plans Act R.S.O., with associated Order in Council 1653/2001 and subsequent Orders in Council.

Municipalities inside the fire region are assigned forest fire control responsibilities for lands in

their boundaries (Forest Fires Prevention Act, Section 21).

Municipalities outside the fire region may provide fire fighting and fire protection services (Municipal Act, Section 31).

- **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

To prevent personal injury, value loss and social disruption resulting from a forest fire.

To promote understanding of the ecological role of fire and utilize its beneficial effects in resource management.

DIMENSION AND STRATEGY

1. FUNCTION

The Forest Fire Management Program performs a support function that provides expert knowledge and specialized services in matters of fire control and fire use to client groups within and outside the Ministry.

These services are carried out by:

- Protecting values at risk through measures that:
 - ▶ Prevent the occurrence of wildfires;
 - ▶ Control those wildfires threatening values; and,
 - ▶ Using prescribed fire as an approved resource management technique.

2. DESIGN

The Forest Fire Management Program is designed within a comprehensive planning system and implemented in accordance with:

- Regional Fire Strategies that describe the fire management objectives for a given land base or fire management zone.
- Fire Operations Plans that describe the administrative procedures and operating guides necessary to accomplish the fire management objectives set out in the regional fire strategies.

3. APPROACH

In line with the responsibilities of the MNR, the fire management objectives for the control of wildfires is achieved through a coordinated approach that includes adequate capability, proper preparedness, appropriate deployment, and effective action to ensure that:

- Every fire in Ontario receives a response; and,
- Each response is governed by:
 - ▶ The predicted behaviour of the fire;
 - ▶ The potential impact of the fire on persons, property, and values; and,
 - ▶ The estimated cost of the response

4. DELIVERY

The Forest Fire Management Program is performed in a well-planned, safe and cost effective manner while ensuring that:

- Legislated obligations are met;
- Ministry obligations are fulfilled; and,
- All land and resource management requirements, relative to fire, are met to the extent possible.

5. THRUST

The Forest Fire Management Program maintains its standards and momentum by:

- Engaging modern research and systems support techniques;
- Transferring available technology into practical applications; and,
- Recognizing personnel as the prime component of the program