



## Understanding the IMSR

The national Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR) provides a synopsis of national wildland fire activity that occurred the previous day (or week during weekly reporting). It also reports non-fire incidents whenever a significant number of wildland fire resources are committed to these incidents. The report is produced daily at national Preparedness Level 2 and above, or whenever activity warrants daily reporting. The IMSR is produced weekly during periods of minimal or low fire activity (at Preparedness Level 1). The report is posted to the web at 5:30 a.m. Mountain Time during daily reporting, or 8:00 a.m. Mountain Time during weekly reporting periods. The IMSR is comprised of five sections: header table showing national fire activity and special statements (if any); individual significant fire summaries for Geographic Areas experiencing significant fire activity; an Active Incident Resource Summary which tracks fires and resources assigned nationally; and tables containing daily and year to date statistics by Geographic Area and agency; a national weather statement and a 6 Minutes for Safety topic.

The IMSR document is produced by the Predictive Services Intelligence Section at the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), a branch of the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho. Information included in the IMSR comes from a variety of sources. All wildland fire activity information comes from Situation Reports and Incident Status Summary (ICS-209, or "209") reports submitted in the Sit-209 program within the Fire and Aviation Management Web applications system (FAMWEB). This includes current fires and acres and large incident information from 209 reports, as well as year to date fire and acre totals for each Geographic Area and agencies. The Predictive Services weather discussion is prepared by a Predictive Services meteorologist at the NICC. The *6 Minutes for Safety* topic comes from the 6 Minutes for Safety web page (<http://www.wildfirelessons.net/uploads/6mfs/home.html>).

Title information at the top of the IMSR includes the national preparedness level (PL), which is determined by fire activity levels, number and kind of resources committed to incidents, and other factors. More about preparedness levels can be found at: [http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references/Definition\\_of\\_PL\\_Levels.pdf](http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references/Definition_of_PL_Levels.pdf). Fires that meet the national significant fire criteria are reported in the IMSR under the Geographic Area that the fire occurs within. The NICC criteria for significant fires are those that exceed 300 acres in grass and brush fuels (fuel models 1 through 7), 100 acres in timber fuels (fuel models 8 through 13), or have a Type 1 or 2 team assigned. Non-fire incidents will be reported if a significant number of wildland fire fighting resources are assigned. Fire and non-fire incidents must submit an ICS-209 to be included in the IMSR (if the incident meets the above size and complexity criteria).

The national fire activity table at the top of the IMSR provides a synopsis of activity that occurred since the last IMSR report was produced. It shows the national initial attack activity level, the number of new fires reported, the number of new significant fires (denoted by an asterisk), the number of contained and uncontained significant fires, and the number of incident management teams assigned.

Example

**National Fire Activity**

Initial attack activity:	Light (119 new fires)
New large incidents:	1 (*)
Large fires contained:	2
Uncontained large fires: **	32
Area Command Teams committed:	0
NIMOs committed:	1
Type 1 IMTs committed:	7
Type 2 IMTs committed:	12

\*\* Uncontained large fires include only fires being managed under a full suppression strategy.

National initial attack activity levels are based on the total number of *new* fires reported on dispatch center Situation Reports: **Light: 0 – 199 fires Moderate: 200 – 299 fires Heavy: 300 fires and above**  
During weekly IMSR reporting periods, activity levels are determined by taking the total number of fires reported for the week and dividing that number by seven to get a daily average for that week.

New large incidents are those that have not previously been reported in the IMSR, and are denoted with an asterisk before the incident name in the narrative and table. Significant full suppression fires within complexes are counted as uncontained large fires (the number of significant uncontained fires within a complex appears in parenthesis after the fire name in the fire narrative, as shown below). (Note: in order to determine significant uncontained fires within a complex, the incident must report the name, the percent of containment and management strategy for each significant fire within the complex in the ICS-209 report.) *Only significant fires managed under a full suppression strategy are counted as uncontained fires in the IMSR. Significant fires that are being managed with multiple strategies (not full suppression) are not counted as uncontained significant fires in the IMSR.* (See page 4 for more information about multiple strategy fires.)

Special statements may be included below the National Fire Activity table. Special statements can include fatalities that occurred on an incident (fatalities that are not associated with an actual incident are not reported in the IMSR), international and military assistance to U.S. fire suppression operations.

Example

Two MAFFS from the 146<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing (California Air National Guard) are supporting wildland fire suppression operations out of Channel Islands Air National Guard Station, CA.

Below the national fire activity table is the Active Incident Resource Summary. This table contains data on ALL fires, regardless of size, that are reported in the ICS-209 program within the last week that have resources committed, (including 100% contained incidents). This table also includes the fires and acres that are reported in the Geographic Area large fires portion of the IMSR.

The Active Incident Resource Summary is updated with each new posting of the IMSR. The intent of this table is to give fire management and overall picture on how many active fires and acres are burning by Geographic Area and the resources committed to these incidents. An ICS-209 with resources committed must be submitted within the last week to have its information included in this table. Any ICS-209 report that hasn't been updated in more than a week will not be included in this table.

The Geographic Area significant fire section provides information on active incidents within each Geographic Area. In the example below the number of large uncontained fires is five (four in the Delta Complex, plus the Eagle Trail fire). The Applegate and Toklat 2 fires are being managed with multiple strategies. The way to determine this is by the "Comp" in the "Ctn/Comp" in the table. Also, the Eagle Trail fire is a new large incident. (denoted by the asterisk next to the fire name in both the narrative and the table).

\* **Eagle Trail**, Tok Area Forestry, Alaska DOF. IMT 2 (Allen). One mile south of Tanacross, AK. Spruce and tundra. Active fire behavior.

**Delta Complex** (4 fires), Delta Area Forestry, Alaska DOF. Twenty miles north of Delta, AK. Spruce. Smoldering.

**Applegate**, Tanana Zone, BLM. Started on state land 25 miles northeast of Manley Hot Springs, AK. Black spruce. Creeping with isolated interior torching.

**Toklat 2**, Tanana Zone, BLM. Started on state land 25 miles southwest of Nenana, AK. Black spruce and tundra. Creeping and smoldering. Numerous structures threatened.

*Example*

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
* Eagle Trail	AK-TAS	1,200	---	12	Ctn	9/6	176	---	4	8	2	0	NR	ST
Delta Complex	AK-DAS	2,300	210	65	Ctn	9/21	119	-1	3	1	2	0	120K	BLM
Applegate	AK-TAD	3,454	0	85	Comp	9/5	45	-10	1	0	1	0	340K	ST
Toklat 2	AK-TAD	650	89	56	Comp	9/28	14	3	0	1	1	0	218K	ST

A table for each Geographic Area, similar to the national synopsis table, appears above the list of large fires burning within that area. Next to the Geographic Area name is the preparedness level (PL) for that Geographic Area. Geographic Area preparedness levels (PL) come from GACC Situation Reports, GACC web sites, or by other means.

*Example*

**Alaska Area (PL 4)**

New fires: 4  
 New large incidents: 1  
 Uncontained large fires: 8  
 Type 2 IMTs committed: 2

Significant fires are reported in the IMSR beneath the Geographic Area table. Uncontained fires have a narrative briefly describing the current situation for that fire. This information comes directly from the Incident Status Summary (ICS-209). There are six key components to a large fire narrative: incident name; agency responsible for managing the incident (not necessarily the owner of the land the fire is burning on); name of the incident management team (if one is assigned); incident location (in miles from the nearest identifiable town); fire behavior; and resources threatened. Other pertinent information may also include evacuations, closures, and other significant events.

Contained fires do not get a narrative, but are reported in the large fire table for that Geographic Area. Unit identifiers for contained fires appear below the table so readers can identify the agency responsible for the fire only if that unit identifier is not spelled out elsewhere in the report. If the information needed for the large fire narrative isn't provided on the ICS-209 report, the IMSR narrative for that incident will include the statement, "No further information received." If the information provided on the ICS-209 doesn't have a descriptive fire behavior, the IMSR narrative for that incident will include the statement, "No fire behavior received."

The large fire table contains statistical information about each large fire in that Geographic Area. Contained fires appear below uncontained fires in the table. The table lists the unit identifier for the managing agency, current acreage, change in size since last report (in acres), percent contained or completed, estimated containment/completion date, total personnel assigned, change in number of personnel since last report, number of crews, engines and helicopters, structures lost, estimated suppression costs to date and land ownership at the point of origin. Like the narrative, all of this information comes from the ICS-209 report.

Example

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Golem	GA-GAS	350	75	55	Ctn	9/14	82	-22	1	2	0	1	NR	ST

The change in size field in the table will show a negative value if the acreage is reduced from the previous ICS-209. This can be the result of better mapping or estimation of size from the previous ICS-209. Personnel change shows the increase or decrease in personnel from the previous report. Origin ownership identifies whose land the fire started on. Agency unit identifier information is available on the web at:

[http://www.nifc.blm.gov/nsdu/unit\\_id/Publish.html](http://www.nifc.blm.gov/nsdu/unit_id/Publish.html).

New fires, or previously reported fires, will have three dashes placed in the size and personnel change columns. An 'NR' (for not reported) appears if no information is provided on the ICS-209 for percent contained (% Ctn), estimated containment/completion date (Est), structure losses (Strc Lost), costs to date (\$\$ CTD), and sometimes other fields that are missing information. The estimated containment/completion field (Est) gets an 'UNK' (unknown) if the date stated on the ICS-209 has passed. **Fires being managed with strategies other than full suppression will show 'Comp' in the "Ctn/Comp" column to represent the percentage of incident objectives completed. 'Comp' means that the incident is using a strategy other than full suppression i.e. Monitor, Confine, Point Zone Protection, etc. The percentage of completion reflects progress towards completion of all incident objectives for that incident.**

In the example below the View incident is a multiple strategy incident, and is not counted as an uncontained suppression fire. Notice that 'Comp' is in the "Ctn/Comp" column and 'NR' is in the "Est" column since they did not report a date. The Oak fire is a new large fire (\*) that did not report percent contained (% Ctn/Comp) or cost to date (\$\$ CTD), so NR was put in those fields. The Abel Mountain fire reported estimated containment date (Est) has passed, therefore UNK was put in that field.

Example

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
* Oak	OR-RSF	494	---	NR	Ctn	9/6	576	---	14	20	5	0	NR	FS
View	OR-MHF	4,757	21	60	Comp	NR	537	-123	14	8	5	0	8.6M	FS
Abel Mountain	OR-WIF	3,454	0	35	Ctn	UNK	99	-10	2	2	2	0	4M	PRI

Geographic Areas should prioritize their large fires in the Geographic Area Situation Report. Prioritized fires appear in the IMSR in the order set by the Geographic Area. Fires that are not prioritized by the Geographic Area Coordination Center will be prioritized at NICC. Geographic Areas are prioritized in the IMSR by NICC staff using several factors, including current and expected fire activity, complexity of current large fires, weather conditions and resource commitment. **If a team is managing multiple incidents, each incident will be listed on the IMSR immediately following the first incident listed by priority that the incident management team is managing regardless of GACC prioritization.**

Large fires that are being managed under a full suppression strategy appear in the IMSR every day that an ICS-209 is submitted until the fire is contained. If an active incident doesn't submit a 209 two consecutive days in a row the incident will be dropped from the IMSR. The IMSR narrative will include the statement, **"No new information"** on the first day that no 209 is received. The statement, **"Last report unless new information is received"** is added after the second day that no 209 is received. On the third consecutive day that no 209 is submitted, the incident is dropped from the IMSR.

**A large fire that is being managed with multiple strategies will initially be reported in the IMSR for one day with a narrative stating, "Last report unless significant activity occurs."** The fire will be dropped from the IMSR

until it reaches 1,000 acres in size at which time it will appear again in the IMSR for one day. The fire will again appear in the IMSR each time the fire increases 1,000 acres in size until the fire is contained.

If a Type 1, 2 or WFMT team is assigned, or the management strategy changes to full suppression, the fire will appear in the IMSR every day until it's contained, or the team is released. If a multiple strategy fire is not contained at the time the team is released, it will be dropped from the IMSR the following day, and reinstated only when significant activity occurs (as defined above). A significant commitment of resources will also keep a multiple strategy fire in the IMSR daily, even if little or no activity is occurring and no team is assigned.

Below the last Geographic Area section are the fire summary tables. The tables depict current and year to date data on the fire season nationwide. Below are descriptions for the tables.

**Fires and Acres Yesterday** (or last week during weekly reporting cycle) are derived directly from Situation Reports submitted by individual units through their Geographic Areas. The ICS-209 program does not provide data for this table. Note: this table represents fires and acres by the protecting agency (not by ownership).

**Fires and Acres Year to Date** is derived directly from Situation Reports submitted by individual units. The ICS-209 program does not provide data for this table. Note: this table represents fires and acres by the protecting agency (not by ownership).

**Ten Year Averages** are derived from a spreadsheet maintained by the NICC Intelligence Desk.

**Prescribed Fires and Acres Yesterday** and **Prescribed Fires and Acres Year to Date** are derived the same way as Fires and Acres described above. This table depicts prescribed fire project accomplishments. Note: these tables represent fires and acres by the ownership agency (not by protection).

**Predictive Services Discussion** is a brief snapshot of the national weather forecast for the nation. While providing information on the weather synopsis nationally, it will emphasize the predicted weather in Geographic Areas with fire activity.

**Canada Fires and Hectares** are provided by the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. They report from May to the end of the Canadian fire season (usually September or early October). Beneath the table is a Hectare to Acre conversion rate.

**6 Minutes for Safety** is a daily safety subject with a wide range of topics. The subject is taken from the corresponding IMSR date and can be found at <http://www.wilfirelessons.net/6minutesforsafety>.

Each day the IMSR is produced, several maps are created depicting the locations of the significant fires shown in the report. One map shows all significant fires reported in the IMSR, and the other shows only the newly reported large fires in the IMSR. These maps can be found on the web at:

[http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us/lg\\_fire2.php](http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us/lg_fire2.php) (all large fires)

[http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us/Lg\\_fire2.php?new](http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us/Lg_fire2.php?new) (new large fires)

As of 2010 Hawaii and Alaska also have their own significant fire maps available at the above web sites.

Direction for submitting Situation Reports and ICS-209 reports can be found in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide and Geographic Area Mobilization Guides at:

<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm>

<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/> (Click on the map to go to a particular Geographic Area.)

More detailed information about Predictive Services and intelligence can be found at

<http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/predictive.htm>, and in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide:

<http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/mobguide/index.html>

## Q & A

Why do other sources of wildfire information seem to contain more current or updated information?

*The purpose of the IMSR is to provide a synopsis of significant wildfire activity for the previous 24 hours. The information included in the IMSR comes from Situation and ICS-209 reports, which are typically updated once a day in the evening. Both the Situation Report and the ICS-209 program are designated authoritative sources by federal land management agencies.*

I submitted a 209 report, but my fire wasn't included in the IMSR. Why?

*There are many reasons why a fire doesn't get reported in the IMSR. If the fire doesn't meet the national minimum large fire criteria, it won't be included in the IMSR. A 209 submitted several days after a large fire was contained will not be reported in the IMSR (unless the IMSR is being published weekly, in which case it includes all active or contained fires reported during the previous week).*

Why did my uncontained fire get dropped from the IMSR?

*Active uncontained fires may be dropped from the IMSR if no 209 is submitted for three consecutive days. An incident gets a three day grace period to submit an updated 209 report. More about this on page three above. An uncontained fire may also get dropped from the IMSR if no significant activity has occurred for a long period of time and/or little activity is expected until containment.*

Why does the Fires and Acres Yesterday table show no fires for an agency in a GACC when the large fire section reports a new large fire in that Geographic Area?

*Any large fire that's reported in the IMSR for the first time is a "new large fire." However, the fire may have actually started several days ago, and either wasn't reported on a 209, or didn't meet large fire criteria until the day before it appeared in the IMSR. The Fires and Acres Yesterday table in the IMSR depicts only new fires that started the previous day. Also, if a dispatch center doesn't submit a Situation Report, or count the new large fire on their Situation report, a new large fire won't be included in the Fires and Acres Yesterday table.*

What fires get counted in the 'Active Incident Resource Summary' table in the IMSR represent?

*This table was added to the IMSR in 2015 at the request of the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC). The table is a summary of all active fires with resources committed (those that submitted 209 reports in the previous seven days) including fires reported in the large fire section of the IMSR and fires that are 100% contained with resources still committed. The table provides a more inclusive picture of active fires burning across the country, regardless of size or management strategy.*

Is the first large fire reported in the IMSR the nation's top priority fire?

*Not necessarily. Each Geographic Area Coordination Center may prioritize the fires burning within their GACC. The National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) prioritizes Geographic Areas that have large fires using a number of factors, including number of large fires, teams assigned, complexity of the fires, resources assigned, and current and expected fire activity within a GACC. So the number one fire in the Geographic Area that is placed at the top of the IMSR becomes the first fire in the IMSR by default.*

The top fires listed in the IMSR get scarce resources before other fires near the bottom of the IMSR.

*Not true. Scarce resources are allocated at the Geographic Area and national levels using many different criteria, which may or may not include ICS-209 information.*

An incident management team (IMT) got assigned to the fire, but the IMSR doesn't report that. Why?

*The IMSR is based on information provided by ICS-209 reports. If the 209 doesn't show an IMT committed, and the team commitment can't be confirmed by other reliable sources, then no IMT information will be included in the IMSR until the information can be confirmed.*

If the deputy incident commander for a team is managing the fire, why doesn't his or her name appear in the IMSR?

*The NMAC has directed that the IMSR should include only the name of the officially designated incident commander for a team, even if that incident commander isn't directly managing the incident.*

We put a location in block 25 of the 209, but the IMSR reports a different location. Why?

*Very often the location reported in block 25 of the 209 doesn't provide sufficient information to determine distance from a nearby town. In these cases the NICC intelligence staff will try to determine a location from a nearby town to put in the IMSR report. For example, the 209 may state the location as "the crossroad of forest roads 239 and 114." Or, "Whiskey Jack Basin." These are not suitable locations for the IMSR. In these cases a location from a nearby town will be determined using the latitude and longitude provided in the 209 report.*

Why is there sometimes no fatality statement included in the IMSR the day after an accident occurs?

*A fatality statement will appear in the IMSR only after an official agency announcement about the accident is released to the media and public, which may not be for several days. This is to ensure that the IMSR statement includes accurate information and does not supersede any official accident announcement.*

*\* As a rule of thumb, if information about an incident isn't included in the 209 report, then it will likely not be included in the IMSR.*