

# The effective incident management team during wildfires

By Michelle Kleinhans, Dynamic Incident Management

*Effective incident management teams (IMTs) are the foundation of every successful management of any wildland fire or other related incidents or events*



manage the wildfire on behalf of an agency, organisation or landowner. The incident is not the incident management team's incident; no, they work for the relevant landowner due to their skills, knowledge and experience in managing of wildfires or other related incidents.

## **What is an effective and efficient incident management team (IMT)?**

An incident management team (IMT) is described as "A team of functional personnel that provides on-scene incident management support during wildfires that exceed a jurisdiction's or agency's capability or capacity, thus integrating the incident management system.

A well-developed team comprise of at least three functional levels deep in; the incident commander, command and general staff positions and the important unit level positions within the incident command system structure required to management the incident.

The idea is to put together a trained, qualified and skilled group of people in a specific position,

**H**ead the phrase, "Do you have an effective team?" Does your jurisdiction have an effective and efficient incident management team? Are they trained and qualified incident command system team members? Does your jurisdiction follow the incident command system standardisation or follow their own?

infrastructure that is required to safely, effectively, efficiently and with an integrated coordinated effort manage the wildfire incident from beginning to end.

It is important to understand that an incident management team will require delegation of authority that includes scope of authority to

Effective incident management teams (IMTs) are the foundation of every successful management of any wildland fire or other related incidents or events. An effective IMT is a team in which each member brings his or her knowledge and skills to the table, which contribute to the overall success of the management of the incident and the resources as one team with one plan.

An incident management team is deployed to manage the logistical, fiscal, planning, operational, safety and community issues related to the wildfires and provides the command and control



*A well-developed team comprise of at least three functional levels deep in; the incident commander, command and general staff positions and the important unit level positions within the ICS structure*



# BEYOND FIRST RESPONSE

Dynamic Incident Management is a LG SETA accredited Training Service Provider and specialise in Integrated Incident/Event Management.

The importance of having trained, competent and prepared response capability from First Response to complex incident/event management personnel is vital in all agencies for effective and efficient incident and resource management.

## OUR TRAINING AND SERVICES INCLUDES:

### INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

- Basic to Advanced ICS (I-100 to I-400)
- Position Specific (All levels)
- Incident Management Teams (IMT)
- Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)
- Control Room Operators/Aviation Dispatch (Expanded Dispatch)
- On Line Incident Command System (per registration – from Mid April 2018)

ICS 100 AND 200  
NOW AVAILABLE  
ONLINE

### FIRE SUPPRESSION AND MANAGEMENT

- Wildland Fire Fighting Training (Basic and Advanced)
- Fire Safety (Awareness, Fire Safety in Buildings and Lodges)
- Prescribe Fire Operations
- Fire Weather
- Wildland Fire Investigation
- Leadership for the Wildland Fire Officer
- Tactical Radio Procedures and Base Radio Operators License

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Basic Communications and Office Etiquette
- NLP Life/Work Coaching
- Leadership Programme

### INTEGRATED ALL HAZARDS SUPPORT SERVICES

- Training and Fire and Rescue Equipment packages (Wildland Fire and Structural Fire)
- Establishment/upgrade of Fire Emergency Service (Including Wildland Fire Services)
- Established and trained Incident Management Teams

**DYNAMIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT** (Pty) Ltd  
All Hazard Integrated Incident/Event Management Training

**Michelle Kleinhans**

060 345 5362  
michelle@dynamicincident.co.za  
[www.dynamicincident.co.za](http://www.dynamicincident.co.za)

LG SETA accredited  
training service provider



## Wildfires

- ▶ that can respond to any incident or emergency anywhere in the country to help manage the incident that continue throughout multiple days on behalf of an organisation, province or country. These teams typically have 10 to 20 trained, qualified and skilled personnel available for deployment.

Developing an incident management team is not an easy task. It requires a lot of work, commitment and passion, standard operating procedures, alerting and deployment protocols and constant recruitment and training of members is but the beginning of setting up an effective IMT for the country or jurisdiction.

Standardisation is the key concept for an effective incident management team, instead of each team doing it because “they want to do it”. We will certainly not be able to adopt a national standard until we all agree where we want the standard to take us in developing, maintaining and deploying Incident management teams within South Africa.

Team members should complete certain fundamental and functional ICS courses; take a position specific course of one or more of the various positions within the ICS structure to form a team or to be considered for recruitment within an IMT. Jurisdictions and agencies should avoid forming IMTs that are not qualified or not working according to National Standards

and protocols including the use of national and possibly international ICS documentation to develop the incident action plans during incidents.

Incident management team members should:

- Understand that accountability comes with each position, especially the incident commander or unified commanders
- Provide a strategic, well developed plan of action
- Provide clear objectives
- Have a defined integrated structure, use common terminology and ICS standardisation
- Follow a proper planning process and tracking of resources
- Proper briefing sessions to all resources
- Complete incident action plans per operational period in the incident documentation pack for handover to owner of incident
- Regularly be part of refresher training and simulated exercises

Not all agencies/organisations feel comfortable asking for an IMT to manage an incident on their behalf, especially if they are not used or familiar with an incident management team and their operations.

To ease this feeling, they should remember that the jurisdiction always remains in charge and that the IMT works for the agency administrator that provides the IMT with a delegation of authority

outlining the expectations, clear mission and assignment and outcomes to the incident management team incident commander and staff and all incident documentation stays the property of the relevant jurisdiction.

Think of this when building an effective team!

- Must have a qualified incident commander and staff members
- Must have clear objectives
- Requires balanced skills, roles and responsibilities to achieve overall objectives
- Implement effective ICS processes, effective information systems and coordination of resources
- Provide good communication across the team and for the community
- Follow appropriate trusted leadership
- Pledge support and trust by listening and giving support
- Conduct openness and conflict management professionally
- Always insist on mutual cooperation
- Ensure individual development
- Work towards sound inter-group relations and respect for each other
- Seek regular performance and goals review as a team member

Now ask the question again, “Do you have an effective team?” If you do not have an effective team, we do! Contact us for our team assistance or for training your own team.



*Do you have an effective team?*



*Standardisation is the key concept for an effective incident management team*