

# Massachusetts Emergency Support Function 4

## ***FIRE FIGHTING***

### **Responsible Agencies**

#### **State Agencies**

##### *Primary State Agency*

Department of Fire Services

##### *Supporting State Agencies*

Department of Conservation & Recreation

Massachusetts Fire Mobilization Committee

#### **Supporting Organizations**

Massachusetts Fire Districts

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose

The Massachusetts Emergency Support Function 4 (MAESF-4) *Fire Fighting*, provides a framework for coordination and cooperation across state agencies to provide state support to local governments for detecting and suppressing urban, rural, and wildland fires resulting from, or coincidental with, an emergency or major disaster.

### 1.2 Scope

The following are the objectives of MAESF-4:

- Establish a framework for state level disaster-related fire service preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery activities.
- Provide situational awareness on the status of fire service assets in Massachusetts.
- Coordinate the activation and use of the Massachusetts Fire Mobilization Plan.
- Share information and coordinate fire service-related response activities across state agencies in a manner that ensures consistency with established plans, policies, and procedures.
- Assist local entities in managing and coordinating urban, rural, or wildland fire detection and suppression efforts, to include mobilizing and providing state assistance as needed.
- Coordinate with other MAESFs as incident response needs dictate.

### 1.3 Policies

- This annex is intended to support, and not to supplant, existing local, state, or Federal plans or policies related to the fire service, including the Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan.
- Local Incident Commanders will have primary responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs and will have tactical control of on-scene resources.
- State assistance provided to cities and towns may consist of personnel, equipment, facilities, materials and supplies, and/or subject matter expertise.
- State assistance through MAESF-4 will only be provided once a city or town has fully committed all fire service resources available to it, including resources available through existing mutual aid agreements and private-sector resources that the jurisdiction may have contracted.

## 2.0 SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

### 2.1. Situation

The management and coordination of a large firefighting operation is complex and may involve multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Fires that are potentially of disastrous proportion, or which are coincident with another disaster situation, will place stress on the resources of local entities. A major disaster or emergency incident may result in numerous urban, rural, and wildland fires. Ignition sources normally of little concern can become more dangerous under a disaster condition.

In disaster conditions, fires can spread rapidly, cause severe damage, and seriously threaten lives and property. Fire departments in the immediate vicinity of the disaster will likely become fully committed and stretched beyond response capacity. Local fire agencies and other firefighting resources will be difficult to obtain, manage, coordinate, and utilize due to the disruption of communication, transportation, utility, and water systems within disaster localities.

### 2.2. Planning Assumptions

- Local governments have emergency management resources, plans, and procedures already in place.
- Most incidents that require fire service assets are local in scope and can be addressed by local or state agencies as part of their normal day-to-day operations or existing mutual aid systems, using resources that are readily available to them.
- When an incident occurs, local governments will use their own response resources first, supplemented as needed by resources available through mutual aid or private sector contracts. Local governments will only request assistance via the Fire Mobilization Plan in the event that the impact of an incident exceeds or is expected to exceed their own capability to respond to it.
- Secondary events or disasters will threaten lives and property as well as firefighting personnel.
- Demand on local resources in anticipation of a major threat may outstrip local fire service capabilities.
- In a “no-notice” event, local resources may be damaged and potentially unavailable to support firefighting activities, requiring immediate assistance from outside the jurisdiction.
- Access to impacted areas may be severely limited and only reachable via air, water, or off-road vehicle.
- MAESF-4 response agencies have developed internal plans and procedures for implementing response activities in their respective areas of responsibility.

- Maintaining state-level communications capabilities across agencies with responsibilities detailed in this MAESF-4 annex will be critical to maintain situational awareness regarding fire conditions and resource needs.
- The state has resources and expertise that can be used to supplement local efforts. Federal assistance will be requested to support state and local efforts if an incident exceeds state and local capabilities.
- Depending on the magnitude of the incident, resources from other states or the federal government may not be available for use in Massachusetts for as long as 72 hours after the incident occurs.

## **3.0. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

### **3.1. General**

This annex will be activated at the direction of MEMA when there is potential for or an actual disaster situation impacting fire service assets and/or requiring statewide coordination of fire service resources. MEMA will notify the primary agency at the time of State Emergency Operations Center activation to provide overall coordination of MAESF-4. All other agencies with responsibilities under MAESF-4 will serve as support agencies. The primary agency will provide direction to and work in conjunction with the support agencies to cohesively coordinate the activities of MAESF-4.

MAESF-4 reports to the SEOC Operations Section, with an indirect report to the Planning Section. Depending on the size, scope, and complexity of the incident, the SEOC organizational chart may be expanded, to ensure proper Span of Control is maintained. To accommodate this, the ESFs may be aligned in appropriate Branches, with similar MAESF's grouped together. In this scenario, MAESF-4 will be organized under the Emergency Services Branch, together with MAESF's 9 and 13.

### **3.2. Organization**

- All personnel and activities associated with MAESF-1 will operate under the Incident Command System.
- The Department of Fire Services (DFS) has been designated the primary agency for MAESF-4
- Each requested agency shall designate a minimum of two persons who can serve as a representative for their agency at the SEOC to support MAESF-4 activities. Designated agency representatives should have the capability and authority to reach back to their own agency to request resources and obtain necessary information to support the response to the incident.

### **3.3. Notification**

MEMA will notify the MAESF-4 points of contact for each activated organization or agency to report to the State Emergency Operations Center for coordination and implementation of firefighting-related requests for assistance and maintain situational awareness on the status and capacity of firefighting assets. Each MAESF-4 organization and agency is responsible for securing sufficient staff on a continuous basis to support and to carry out the activities tasked to their agency.

### **3.4. Activities**

Response agencies for MAESF-4 should conduct the following actions:

#### **a. Prevention Actions**

- Communicate and share information across agencies with fire service responsibilities.
- Collaborate and coordinate on fire prevention initiatives.
- Conduct public education and outreach to the general public on fire prevention and safety.

#### **b. Preparedness Actions**

- MEMA will convene regular meetings of MAESF-4 stakeholders and/or Emergency Support Function Team to review and update the MAESF-4 annex and standard operating procedures.
- Develop and maintain internal agency operational plans and procedures to support MAESF-4 activities.
- Maintain current inventories of agency facilities, equipment, and materials and supplies.
- Complete appropriate training.
- Ensure that MAESF-4 agencies have pre-designated staff available to support SEOC operations.
- Ensure that MAESF-4 stakeholders notify MEMA of staff changes.
- Participate in exercises and training in order to test, validate, and provide working experience for MAESF-4 liaisons on this annex and related procedures.

#### **c. Response Actions**

##### **Pre-Impact**

Upon receiving notification to report to the SEOC in preparation of an incident, MAESF-4 agencies and organizations will complete the following actions commensurate with emergency priorities within the state and based on the availability of resources:

- Provide appropriate representative(s) to the SEOC to support MAESF-4 pre-incident planning activities.

- Maintain communications with the SEOC, obtain status reports, and keep the SEOC informed of progress of assigned tasks.
- Notify the appropriate points of contact at each respective agency and organization to pre-position resources and response personnel as needed.
- Review existing plans and procedures.
- Ensure agency decision makers are kept informed of the situation.
- Test communications systems.
- Mobilize and pre-position response resources when it is apparent that state firefighting resources will be required.
- Monitor forested areas for signs of wildland fires, as needed.
- During periods of high fire danger, coordinate resources to support fire patrols and surveillance of forested areas.
- Coordinate with MAESF-15 *Public Information and External Affairs*, on messaging to the general public regarding fire safety and fire prevention.

### **Initial Response**

- If agency has not already done so, provide appropriate representative(s) to the SEOC to support MAESF-4.
- Designate appropriate staff to support response.
- Gain and maintain situational awareness in order to plan effective response actions.
- Verify inventories of available fire service resources and services and provide a summary listing to the SEOC Operations Section.
- Establish communications with appropriate agency field personnel to coordinate response efforts.
- Implement predetermined cost accounting measures for tracking overall MAESF-4 personnel, equipment, materials, and other costs incurred during emergency response actions.
- Preposition response resources when it appears that state fire service resources will be required.
- Use existing fire service mutual aid agreements to coordinate with other state and local agencies, other MAESFs, and the Commonwealth's fire mobilization coordinators in the commitment of firefighting, transportation, and resource procurement from outside the affected areas(s).
- Coordinate resources to support requests from local jurisdictions or state agencies.
- Coordinate with MAESF-8 *Public Health and Medical Services*, regarding medical assistance and the transportation of victims beyond the established collection sites.
- Coordinate with MAESF-9, *Search and Rescue*, regarding urban search and rescue efforts.

- As needed, coordinate with MAESF-15 *Public Information and External Affairs* on public messaging regarding fire prevention or fire safety.
- Coordinate with federal Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) as needed.

### **Continuing Response**

- When appropriate, coordinate and oversee requests for Federal fire suppression assistance and other Federal firefighting resources.
- Reassess priorities and strategies according to the most critical fire service needs.
- Tracks committed firefighting resources and provide regular updates to the SEOC Operations Section on the status of all missions assigned to MAESF-4.
- Coordinate federal firefighting assets.
- Coordinate out-of-state aviation assets.
- Continue to coordinate with MAESF-8: *Public Health and Medical Services*, regarding medical assistance and the transportation of victims beyond the established collection sites.
- Continue to coordinate with MAESF-9, *Search and Rescue*, regarding urban search and rescue efforts.
- Provide information to the SEOC Planning Section as needed to update Situational Awareness Statements and SEOC Rosters.
- Draft recommendations for after-action reports and other reports as needed.

### **d. Recovery Actions**

- Coordinate with support agencies to ensure financial tracking of all deployed assets and adequate cost accounting measures are being used. Generate summary reports and share with the SEOC.
- Participate in after-action reviews.

### **e. Mitigation Actions**

- Identify potential firefighting issues and collaborate to develop or recommend plans, protocols, procedures, and policies to prevent or mitigate their effects.
- Conduct assessments of MAESF-4 capabilities to identify potential resource shortfalls.
- Develop plans to mitigate identified shortfalls of resources.

## 4.0. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1. MAESF-4 Primary Agency Responsibilities

- Regularly meet and coordinate with MAESF-4 supporting agencies, to:
  - a. Maintain a list of critical contacts, noting any changes to MEMA
  - b. Maintain a list of ESF-specific assets which could be deployed during an emergency
  - c. Maintain the ESF-4 Toolkit
  - d. Report any unmet needs to MEMA
- Maintain Situational Awareness, monitor weather conditions, and ensure a state of readiness for the ESF.
- As needed, pre-stage resources to support MAESF-4 requirements.
- Identify and coordinate MAESF-4 staffing requirements at the SEOC and at MEMA Regional Emergency Operation Centers (REOCs) as the situation may dictate.
- Coordinate with support agencies and MEMA to coordinate firefighting resources and prioritize resource needs according to incident priorities and objectives.
- Support the actions of other MAESFs in accordance with established priorities.
- Provide regular updates on ongoing MAESF-4 operations to the SEOC Operations and Planning Sections.
- While Primary Agencies are designated in advance, this may be subject to change during an SEOC Activation, dependent on the specific circumstances and needs of the incident, and therefore the agency most appropriate to take the primary assignment.

#### a. Department of Fire Services

- Provide situational awareness on status of DFS facilities, assets, and operations.
- Coordinate implementation of the Massachusetts Fire Mobilization Plan.
- Conduct public education and outreach to the general public on fire prevention and safety.
- Coordinate with DCR for specialized equipment and personnel needs.

### 4.2. MAESF-4 Supporting Agency Responsibilities

#### a. Department of Conservation and Recreation

- Provide situational awareness on status of DCR firefighting assets and operations.



- Provide assets and technical assistance to assist cities and towns with preventing, detecting, and suppressing wildland fires.
- Coordinate resources to support the construction and maintenance of fire breaks and water holes, and engage in general fuel reduction activity within forested areas.
- Coordinate resources to support monitoring activities in forested areas to detect signs of wildland fires.
- During periods of high fire danger, coordinate resources to support the conduct of fire patrols of forested areas.
- Coordinate specialized equipment and personnel with DFS.

## **b. Fire Districts**

- Provide situational awareness on status of firefighting assets within the 15 fire districts.
- Coordinate requests from and of the Massachusetts Fire Mobilization Plan for their respective fire districts.

## **4.3. Other Agencies**

Other agencies not explicitly named in this annex may have authorities, resources, capabilities, or expertise required to support MAESF-4 activities. These agencies may be requested to support MAESF-4 activities as needed.

# **5.0. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

## **5.1. Staffing**

As required by Massachusetts Executive Order 144, all MAESF-4 stakeholders must designate at least two personnel to act as SEOC liaisons. These liaisons should be knowledgeable about the resources and capabilities of their respective agencies and have access to the appropriate authorities for committing said resources and capabilities.

## **5.2. Mutual Aid**

Firefighting mutual aid, both from within Massachusetts and from abutting states, will be governed by applicable mutual aid agreements, to include the Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan and Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact. The process for requesting mutual aid from other entities outside of Massachusetts not otherwise addressed by these mutual aid agreements is described in the "Mutual Aid" section of the State CEMP Base Plan.

## **5.3. Annex Review and Maintenance**

This annex will be updated every two years at a minimum, in accordance with the Emergency Management Program Administrative Policy, and will ensure that appropriate stakeholder input is incorporated into updates. Additionally, the annex will be reviewed following any exercise or activation of the plan that identifies potential improvements. Revisions to this annex will supersede all previous editions and will be effective immediately.

## **6.0. AUTHORITIES, RESOURCES AND REFERENCES**

### **6.1. Authorities**

See Authorities section of the State CEMP Base Plan.

### **6.2. Resources**

See Resources section of the State CEMP Base Plan.

### **6.3. References**

- Massachusetts Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
- Massachusetts Executive Order 144
- Massachusetts Radiological Emergency Response Plan
- Massachusetts Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan
- SEOC ESF SOP Guidance Document
- Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA)
- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA)
- State Hazard Mitigation Plan