



## WHITE PAPER

January 15, 2026

TO: FIRESOPE Board of Directors  
23300 Castle Street  
Riverside, CA 92518-2200

FROM: FIRESOPE Operations Team, Task Force

SUBJECT: Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to Further Investigate Heavy Equipment All-Hazard Task Force (HEAT)

APPROVAL: The FIRESOPE Board of Directors approved this document on January 15, 2026

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this proposal is to enhance the FIRESOPE framework by creating an Ad-Hoc Subcommittee tasked with evaluating the feasibility of developing and standardizing a Heavy Equipment All-Hazard Task Force (HEAT) resource within FIRESOPE.

Heavy equipment continues to play an increasingly vital role in emergency operations across all-hazard incidents involving IDLH, including Wildland, HazMat, Structure Fire, and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) responses, as well as floods, debris flows, and large-scale operations. While FIRESOPE provides strong guidance for many specialized resource types, there is currently minimal standardized all-hazard typing or deployment model that defines how heavy equipment is utilized, managed, or integrated into these operations.

The proposed Ad-Hoc Subcommittee will examine current practices statewide, identify gaps in training and resource typing, and assess whether a standardized HEAT resource, aligned with existing FIRESOPE systems, would improve interoperability, safety, and operational effectiveness during these complex incident types.

By advancing this initiative within FIRESOPE, the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee will work toward a unified framework for safe, consistent, and efficient heavy-equipment utilization across all-hazard disciplines, strengthening California's overall emergency response capability.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

FIRESOPE should establish a Heavy Equipment All-Hazard Task Force (HEAT) Ad-Hoc Subcommittee with the following objectives:



1) **Feasibility Assessment:**

Evaluate the operational, logistical, and fiscal feasibility of developing a standardized FIRESCOPE Heavy Equipment All-Hazard Task Force (HEAT) resource for HazMat, Structure Fire, USAR, and other all-hazard incidents.

2) **Standardization Review:**

Identify current heavy-equipment practices across California fire and public safety agencies, focusing on:

- Equipment typing and capability standards
- Operator qualifications and training equivalencies
- Safety protocols and ICS integration
- Resource ordering, mobilization, and tracking procedures

3) **Stakeholder Collaboration:**

Engage stakeholders to identify existing equipment in use and assess each stakeholder's ability to support a standardized HEAT resource if established.

4) **Report Development:**

Produce a comprehensive report summarizing findings, recommendations, and a proposed framework for potential HEAT resource development under FIRESCOPE

FISCAL IMPACTS / COST ANALYSIS

Fiscal impacts are expected to be minimal during the feasibility and assessment phase, limited primarily to administrative and travel expenses for participating members. Should the subcommittee recommend creation of a standardized HEAT resource, additional fiscal impacts may include:

- Training program development and delivery
- Equipment modifications or upgrades to meet FIRESCOPE typing
- Administrative support and coordination costs

Long-term, a standardized approach is anticipated to reduce operational risk and liability, while improving efficiency and readiness across multiple response disciplines.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. **Proposal Approval:**

Submit this white paper through the FIRESCOPE Decision Process for authorization to establish the HEAT Ad-Hoc Subcommittee.

2. **Committee Formation:**

Upon approval, appoint representatives to form the Subcommittee. Establish a Charter, Roster and Plan of Work for the Ad Hoc for 2026.



3. **Assessment Phase:**

Conduct a statewide review of heavy-equipment utilization across HazMat, Structure Fire, USAR, flood, debris flow, and other all-hazard incidents to identify gaps and opportunities for standardization.

4. **Deliverables and Timeline:**

The subcommittee will develop and present a feasibility and recommendations report within 12-24 months of formation for review by the FIRESCOPE Task Force.

## FINDINGS

1. **Growing Multi-Disciplinary Use:**

Heavy equipment is utilized in Wildland, HazMat, Structure Fire, and USAR incidents, as well as debris removal, flood mitigation, and large-scale operations, yet lacks standardized guidance within FIRESCOPE.

2. **Operational Variability:**

Agencies currently rely on local resources or private contractors, resulting in inconsistent integration, safety practices, and ICS documentation.

3. **Training and Safety Needs:**

Operators and support personnel require consistent training and qualification standards to ensure safe and efficient operations in dynamic, multi-hazard environments.

4. **Interoperability and Resource Typing:**

Establishing standardized HEAT typing and deployment models will improve coordination between agencies, strengthen mutual-aid systems, and enhance overall mission readiness across California.

## CONCLUSION

Establishing a Heavy Equipment All-Hazard Task Force (HEAT) Ad-Hoc Subcommittee will allow FIRESCOPE to evaluate the feasibility of developing a standardized heavy-equipment resource applicable to HazMat, Structure Fire, USAR, and other all-hazard incidents.

This initiative represents a proactive step toward improving safety, interoperability, and operational consistency statewide. The subcommittee's findings will guide future FIRESCOPE actions on whether to move forward with full development and integration of a standardized HEAT resource within the Field Operations Guide (FOG).