



Multi Agency Coordination System Publication

Specialist Group Member Orientation  
MACS 410-8

April 2025

This document contains information relative to the Incident Command System (ICS) component of the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS). This is the same Incident Command System developed by FIREScope.

Additional information and documentation can be obtained from the following resources:

OES - FIREScope - OCC  
Document Control  
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(951) 782-4174  
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[www.firescope.caloes.ca.gov](http://www.firescope.caloes.ca.gov)

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## Historical Overview

Welcome to your assignment to a FIREScope Specialist Group. This assignment shows both your home agency's and the FIREScope organization's collective faith in your skills and commitment to the fire service. This document is intended to provide basic information about FIREScope and to outline the expectations of your participation in the organization.

You are now poised to directly contribute to the advancement of all hazard incident management and interagency cooperation that has been the FIREScope mission since its founding in 1972. Over the years, the organization has relied on individuals from many agencies to design and maintain the FIREScope programs including the Incident Command System (ICS) and the Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS).

As a member of a Specialist Group (SG), you will be expected to represent your agency and the California fire service. You should be prepared to provide input in the development of guidance and procedures that contribute to effective incident command through ICS. Your SG is a collaborative committee that focuses on collective solutions to industry challenges directly pertaining to your field of expertise. Although the organization was founded in the fire service, we address all hazards and cross disciplines.

## FIREScope Mission Statement

*"The mission of FIREScope is to provide recommendations and technical assistance to the Office of Emergency Services (OES), to maintain the FIREScope Decision Process, and to continue the operation, development, and maintenance of the FIREScope Incident Command System (ICS) and the Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS). The mission of the OES Fire and Rescue Services Advisory Committee is to provide professional recommendations and technical assistance to the Director of OES and the OES Fire and Rescue Branch on program elements."*

FIREScope, an acronym from its full title, **F**irefighting **R**ESources of **C**alifornia **O**rganized for **P**otential **E**mergencies, remains the leader in incident management development. Under provisions set forth by Senate Bill 27, chartered on October 2, 1989, under Health and Safety Code Section 13070, the Office of Emergency Services (OES), the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the State Fire Marshal (SFM) are to jointly establish and administer the FIREScope Program.

ICS is recognized at a national level as the incident command element of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as administered by Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). The system has been accepted internationally as a model of effective incident management. As effective as the current ICS model may be, it is a living system that requires continual review and updating to assure that it meets current incident command and resource management practices. Your work with FIREScope is important and may ultimately have international influence.

## **FIRESCOPE Organization**

The FIRESCOPE organization currently operates using five primary levels of committee, each one reporting up to the next level. Each group has representation from a broad spectrum of fire and emergency management agencies providing input ranging from federal to volunteer perspectives. FIRESCOPE relies on the “consensus” decision-making process that creates buy-in among diverse local, state, and federal agencies toward a common goal. Active participation from all members is expected during discussions and product development.

### **Board of Directors:**

The Board of Directors (BOD) is comprised of Chief/Director/President/Executive Director level members from a variety of federal, state, and local agencies who are responsible for charting the overall direction of FIRESCOPE programs.

The BOD meets four times a year in January, April, July, and October for a two- day meeting. The meeting locations alternate between the north and south regions. Additional conference call meetings are arranged by the BOD Chair as needed to assure continuity of FIRESCOPE business.

### **Operations Team:**

The Operations Team (Ops Team) is made up primarily of Chief Officers at the Division, Assistant, Deputy, or higher level in their home agencies. The group’s primary responsibilities are to provide technical expertise to the Board of Directors and professional direction to the Task Force. The Ops Team further serves as the reviewing body for products forwarded from the TF and determines when products and issues provided by the Task Force are ready to be forwarded to the BOD for consideration and direction.

The Ops Team holds an in person two-day meeting quarterly, in March, June, September, and December. These meetings are normally on dates immediately following TF meetings to facilitate common travel and attendance. Additional conference call meetings are arranged by the Ops Team Chairperson as needed to assure continuity of FIRESCOPE business.

### **Task Force:**

Task Force members typically hold the rank of Battalion or Division Chief. The TF’s main function is to provide operational and functional expertise in the areas of mutual aid, ICS, and MACS. At the direction of the Ops Team, the TF maintains the ICS 420-1 Field Operations Guide and manages projects as assigned to define and clarify ICS functions as they apply to a variety of disciplines.

The TF meets monthly. The meetings are held at different locations around the state and typically cover two days. Length of the meeting may be adjusted by the chair as needed to handle the current workload. Meeting dates and locations are determined by

collective agreement of the TF members. Meeting sites and accommodations are coordinated by a hosting member of the TF.

There are four fixed meeting months for co-located meetings with the Operations Team: March, June, September, and December.

The December Task Force and Operations Team meetings will also include the subcommittee executive staff to present their group's annual plans of work, charters and rosters for the upcoming year.

A MAC Group Exercise managed by the Task Force occurs annually in May and alternates between northern and southern California and also rotates through all Cal OES Regions.

The TF maintains the management of projects that are assigned by the Ops Team and listed in the FIREScope Plan of Work. Some projects are completed by members of the TF while some are delegated to Specialist Groups & Subcommittees that are organized by specific disciplines. The TF also has the responsibility to bring issues to the Ops Team that are determined to need attention.

### **Specialist Groups:**

Specialist Groups (SG) are assembled to assist the Task Force in the development, implementation, and maintenance of FIREScope products. Specialist Groups review and deconflict the products proposed by the subordinate Subcommittees. Representation on these groups is comprised of members of the subordinate Subcommittees. Two members of each Subcommittee are elected to sit on the respective Specialist Group.

There are currently 6 Specialist Groups that address specific disciplines and oversee Subcommittees: Currently, the groups include:

Health and Safety Special Operations Incident Technology Emergency Operations Air Operations Training and Education

Each Specialist Group will have at least two Task Force members assigned as Liaisons which are responsible for providing their group with direction as needed.

The Task Force liaisons from each subcommittee shall meet with their assigned specialist group and will ensure two specialist group meetings occur annually (spring/fall) The liaisons will provide direction and support to their respective group as needed.

### **Subcommittees:**

Subcommittees are assembled to assist the Task Force in the development, implementation, and maintenance of FIREScope products. Representation on these groups is determined by the issues being addressed and the subsequent level of technical expertise required. Each Subcommittee will elect two members to serve on the

respective Specialist Group that oversees their Subcommittee. Subcommittees will either be “Standing” or “Ad Hoc”. Standing Subcommittees are established to address long-term needs while “Ad Hoc” Subcommittees are established to address a specific need or short-term issue. Once the need or issue has been addressed, the Ad Hoc Subcommittee will be disbanded.

The list of current subcommittees is listed on the link below:

<https://firescope.caloes.ca.gov/ICS%20Documents/FIRESCOPE%20Organizational%20Chart.pdf>

Each Subcommittee will have at minimum, two Task Force members assigned as Liaisons responsible for providing their respective group with direction and support as needed.

## **Document Approval Process**

As FIRESCOPE products are developed, they are to be submitted to the next higher organizational level group for review and approval. After review, the materials should be either:

1. Approved as submitted and moved to the next level
2. Returned with comment for additional editing
3. Amended as determined by the approving group and moved to the next level of the approval process.

Prior to publication, FIRESCOPE products shall pass through the decision process which may include the approval by the Board of Directors as recorded in their meeting minutes.

## **Participation and Attendance**

As a SG member and SC liaison, it is important that you are present at all scheduled meetings. Although all members hold important responsibilities at their home agency, they are expected to attend the subcommittee and SG meetings. The home agency of each member has pledged their support for FIRESCOPE and is expected to honor that support by allowing your attendance at the meetings. Each member's input and representation are vital to the collective mission of FIRESCOPE. It is critical to the team effort that we establish and maintain solid and productive working relationships amongst our members.

Appropriate attire at all FIRESCOPE meetings is business casual or department uniform.

For the sake of continuity and productivity, it is highly recommended that each member provides a succession plan for their replacement if they leave the group. There is a great value in the exposure to the group's meetings and practices prior to assuming a full participatory seat.

## **Liaison Responsibilities**

Every TF member is assigned primary and alternate liaison responsibility to a specialist group and designated subcommittees.

Consideration for assignments is made according to each member's area of interest or expertise. Attendance at SG/SC meetings is required.

The Liaison responsibilities include:

- Attendance at all SG/SC meetings.
- Delivery of assignments to the SG/SC from the TF.
- Monitoring the work of the SG/SC and assuring that the work follows FIREScope process and standards referencing FIREScope MACS publications.
- Deconfliction of work products between subcommittees.
- Validation/support and collaboration from other affected subcommittees
- Reporting back to the TF on all activities of the SG/SC.
- Forwarding recommendations for Plan of Work items back to the TF.

## **Meeting Accommodations and Travel Arrangements**

All SG meetings are coordinated by a member of the group. The member is expected to arrange a meeting place and hotel availability at a conveniently close facility.

Typically, the meeting place is at a departmental facility of the member's home agency.

Since a number of the SG members are restricted by travel cost caps, arranging a block of hotel rooms at a negotiated "State Rate" is expected. Individual reservations are the sole responsibility of each member.

Another common restriction placed on travel by home agencies is advanced notice. It is expected that the SG member hosting the meeting will finalize accommodations and post a flyer to the FIREScope web site through the TF Liaison. The meeting flyer should be posted at least 45 days in advance. The TF will designate their meeting dates and locations 6 months in advance and include the locations in the group's monthly meeting minutes. SG meetings should not conflict with the scheduled TF meeting dates.

SG members are responsible for arranging their own travel in accordance with their home agency's policies. As a part of the assignment to the SG, the member's home agency has committed to fiscal support of the individual's FIREScope travel requirements. Pay for the SG member's time commitment is part of the home agency's financial support of the FIREScope assignment. FIREScope does not provide reimbursement for hours worked or travel costs.



## **Further Information and Research**

To better understand the FIRESCOPE organization, mission, and goals it is highly recommended that each SG member explore and review the FIRESCOPE web site <https://firescope.caloes.ca.gov/> Specifically, the document *MACS 410-4 Articles of Organization and Procedures*, provides a complete description of FIRESCOPE operational structure.

All TF members are available to help with any questions that may arise.