



WHITE PAPER

July 11, 2024

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

FROM: FIRESOPE Operations Team, Task Force & Rapid Extraction Module Support (REMS) Subcommittee

SUBJECT: NWCG REMS PMS 552 ADOPTION TO FIRESOPE OSD ICS-162-4

SUMMARY

Wildland firefighting is an inherently dangerous profession. While safety is the primary concern during all operations, unintended incidents can result in injury or illness to wildland firefighters. The REMS team provides firefighters who cannot egress under their own power with safe and secure transport off the fire line while simultaneously receiving the appropriate medical care.

In 2021, A FIRESOPE REMS Working Group was convened to develop typing for REMS teams. In April 2022, the FIRESOPE Board of Directors approved the updated Rapid Extrication Model Support, ICS 223. FIRESOPE subsequently contacted the NWCG to coordinate efforts and assist in creating a national REMS document. The intent of this document was to standardize REMS across the nation using the FIRESOPE REMS ICS-223 (2022) as a starting point. The NWCG added revisions of REMS to their Plan of Work and invited FIRESOPE members to join the NWCG REMS subcommittee.

The NWCG REMS subcommittee, consisting of subject matter experts, met every second Tuesday of the month for one year. Subcommittee members were assigned specific topics to conduct thorough research. These topics included technical backcountry rope rescue equipment, UTV operations, backcountry emergency medical services, medical unit leaders, REMS Leaders, and hotshot supervisors' feedback from the boots on the ground.

On May 21, 2024, The NWCG Executive Board approved the REMS PMS 552.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

The REMS Subcommittee recommends adopting the NWCG REMS PMS 552 document into the FIRESCOPE ICS 162 OSD series as ICS 162-4 REMS. The intent is to have only one REMS document used for REMS across the nation while maintaining a FIRESCOPE product for future edits.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Once approved by the FIRESCOPE BOD, the NWCG REMS PMS 552 will be implemented. This document will replace the FIRESCOPE REMS ICS 223 and become part of the FIRESCOPE ICS 162 series as 162-4. Chapter 6 and appendix C (MEL) of the current ICS 162, will be removed.

FINDINGS

The FIRESCOPE REMS ICS-223 was approved by the BOD in 2022. This document outlines the typing, training, qualifications, and minimum equipment list for REMS teams.

After researching how to enhance the REMS program, the team realized that there's a national need to add a utility task vehicle, ALS/BLS capabilities, and extrication equipment to the REMS teams. Currently, in California, REMS teams don't have the medical equipment to treat firefighters experiencing an IWI but are Emergency Medical Technicians or Paramedics. REMS teams have saved firefighters on the fire line because they brought a fire-line medic pack with them (CAL FIRE BTU-North Complex 2020).

Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs) are being used more on the fire line, especially for remote rescues. These vehicles are the correct vehicle for performing rapid extractions; however, they can be dangerous if not operated using a risk vs. gain analysis in the backcountry.

Vehicle extrications are occurring on the fire line more than ever. REMS teams have performed many extrication rescues from vehicles over the side (CAL FIRE MMU—OAK 2022). The REMS teams need extrication tools, and now this document supports that. The above program enhancements will benefit the firefighter experiencing the IWI.

CONCLUSION

In closing, the NWCG and FIRESCOPE REMS Subcommittee collaborated to create this document. This product was one of the first documents to involve both respectable entities. The primary objective of this document was to ensure that all 50 states have the flexibility to order the type of REMS team that will best fill their mission needs, with firefighter safety paramount. It was an honor to be a part of this document, and we are hoping that the BOD will approve our request for the NWCG REMS PMS 552 adoption into the FIRESCOPE OSD ICS 162-4 REMS.



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REMS NWCG & FIRESCOPE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Todd Miranda (Chair)	Sedona Fire (NWCG)
Robert Sepulveda Jr. (Chair)	Pasadena Fire (FIRESCOPE)
Jayson Coil	Sedona Fire (NWCG)
Drew Maxwell	IHC USFS (NWCG)
Shanna Ellis	R8 USFS (NWCG)
Leonard Johnson	McLane Black Lake Fire Department (NWCG)
Nick Stepanian	Ontario Fire Department (FIRESCOPE)
Nick Wydra	Lewis and Clark IHC (NWCG)
Bryan Howell	Oceanside Fire Department (FIRESCOPE)
Dr. Michelle Curry	USFS Medical Director (NWCG)
Dr. Paul Craven	LEMA R6 (NWCG)
Dr. Chris Peluso	LEMA R8 (NWCG)