

Assist with forest and moorland fire fighting

Overview

This standard is about assisting with forest and moorland fire fighting. It is aimed at those who work in forestry, farming, game or environmental conservation on either a full- or part-time basis.

You will be able to carry out the following activities:

- use firefighting tools in an appropriate and competent manner
- follow organisational fire procedures
- operate safely on the fireground
- support others operating on the fireground
- react appropriately, within company working practices and industry good practice, to a fire incident

Your work must conform to all relevant legislation and codes of practice when carrying out this work.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. assess the risks and identify hazards likely to be found on the fireground
2. select and use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the work
3. identify your own role and the role of the organisation within the fire procedures
4. prepare, maintain and use tools and equipment for fire fighting
5. prepare, check condition of, and use the appropriate personal protective equipment
6. confirm your objectives with the relevant person and provide them with timely reports
7. assess the fire situation in forest and moorland on arrival at the fireground, and communicate the key fire information to an appropriate person
8. assist with extinguishing forest and moorland fires within your remit, using the appropriate tactics, tools and equipment
9. continuously assess, report and take the appropriate action to minimise risk to yourself and others
10. use the appropriate methods to ensure access for the fire and rescue service and other agencies
11. maintain effective communications with the appropriate people throughout the fire-fighting activities
12. follow the LACES safety system at all times
13. return and secure fire-fighting resources to their correct location and report any defects or deficiencies
14. maintain the health and safety of yourself and others at all times, in accordance with relevant legislation

Assist with forest and moorland fire fighting

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. how to identify hazards and assess risks
2. the personal protective equipment required for forest and moorland fire fighting
3. why nylon, elastic or other synthetic clothing must not be worn
4. the forest or estate fire plan, fire maps, symbols and other company working practices and industry good practice
5. your own role within company working practices and industry good practice in assisting with fire fighting
6. the role of the fire and rescue service and how to identify and communicate with the incident commander
7. the lines and methods of communication and reporting during a forest and moorland fire
8. the fire-fighting techniques and when to use them
9. the elements (heat, fuel, oxygen) that are required for fire to exist
10. the phases of combustion (pre-heating, gas combustion and charcoal combustion)
11. how weather, topography and fuels affect fire behaviour, including the rate of spread and fire intensity
12. fuel types and loads and the characteristics of grass, heather, forests and peat fires
13. the tools used and the limitations of each tool when used on different types of fire
14. the role of helicopters in fighting forest and moorland fires
15. the purpose and value of firebreaks
16. the potential impact of forest and moorland fire-fighting activities on the environment
17. the operations likely to occur in the three phases of forest and moorland fire-fighting operations: knockdown, containment, mop up and patrol
18. the three main fire-fighting strategies: direct, indirect and flanking attack
19. how to control the following types of fires: heather or shrub fire, grass fire, lop and top fire, forest fire
20. the requirements of the LACES safety system
21. the importance of maintaining fire-fighting resources
22. your responsibilities under relevant environmental, health and safety legislation and codes of practice

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Scope/range related to performance criteria

Continuously assess:

- size of fire
- wind direction and speed
- vegetation type/height
- people/assets threatened
- rate of spread at head of fire
- flame height
- escape routes
- water sources
- weather conditions
- for any other problems

Glossary

Fire behaviour: the manner in which fire reacts to the variables of fuel, weather and topography described in terms of fire intensity and rate of spread

Fuels: the type, quantity, arrangement, distribution, and moisture content of the vegetation. Can be: ground (peat), surface (heather and litter layer) or aerial (trees) fuels

Fire type: ground fire, surface fire or crown fire, most common type is surface fire

Fire intensity: the pulse or rate of energy release that travels upwards from the fire

Flank: the sides of the fire

Direct attack: firefighting activity directly on the fire

Indirect attack: firefighting activity away from the fire edge, e.g. backburning

Flanking attack: most common direct attack strategy, that starts firefighting activity from rear of the fire to the sides and front of the fire

LACES: Lookouts, Awareness, Communications, Escape routes and Safety Zones

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