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PURPOSE

The Fire Management Assistance Grant program (FMAG) provides supplemental assistance to State, Tribal, and Local Governmental entities for the mitigation, management, and control of any fire on public or private forest land or grassland that threatens such destruction as would constitute a major disaster.

The FMAG program is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The decisions made regarding FMAG are made by FEMA on the Regional level.

- Generally the program is run or administered similarly to the Recovery Public Assistance Program
- See 44 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 204 for specific details and programmatic rules
- Grants Management Rules may be found in 2 C.F.R. Part 200.317 through Part 200.326. (the Supercircular)
FIRE COMPLEX

A fire complex occurs when two or more fires are being considered for the purposes of obtaining an FMAG.

To qualify as a fire complex:

- All fires in the complex should be burning in the same general area, and

- All firefighting operations in the complex should be under the same incident commander, at the same time,

- Although the fires are requested as one for the FMAG declaration, sometimes costs associated with one or more of the fires in the declared fire complex could be determined to be ineligible for reimbursement. An example would be for a smaller fire in the same general area, burning uncontrolled and at the same time, but at the time the complex was declared for FMAG, was not posing a threat of endangerment to lives or improved property.)
COST SHARE

All FMAGP grants are subject to a cost share. The Federal cost share for a FMAGP grant is 75 percent.

The local responding entity (the local jurisdiction where the fire is located) pays half (12.5%) of the NON FEDERAL cost Share, with the State of Florida paying the remaining half (12.5%).

When other entities act as mutual aid to the State of Florida, the State of Florida picks up the full non federal cost share (25% of the total cost).

Donated resources can be used to pay a PORTION of the non-Federal cost share.
FIRE COST THRESHOLD

Before an FMAG may be granted by FEMA, at least one of two thresholds must have been reached for the state in which the fire is burning.

Cumulative Yearly Threshold:

- Based on all ELIGIBLE wildfire fighting costs accrued by the state in a calendar year
- The state’s cumulative threshold is set based on a per-capita number; for Florida in calendar year 2019 the cumulative threshold is $4,230,294.75

Single Fire Threshold:

- Based solely on ELIGIBLE costs accrued by the state in fighting a single wildfire (or fire complex) being considered for FMAG
- The state’s single fire threshold is one-third (1/3) of the cumulative threshold; for Florida in calendar year 2019, the single fire threshold is $1,410,098.25
FMAG DECLARATION PROCESS

FEMA will use four criteria to evaluate the threat posed by a fire for the purposes of granting or denying an FMAG declaration. They are:

- Threat to lives and improved property, including threats to critical facilities, infrastructure, and critical watershed areas; and
- Availability of State and local firefighting resources; and
- High fire danger conditions, as indicated by nationally accepted indices such as the National Fire Danger Ratings System and KBDI; and
- Potential major economic impact if the fire continues burning uncontrolled

The FMAG declaration process operates in real time—day or night!

An FMAG MUST be requested while the fire is still burning uncontrolled. The initial request is made by telephone by the Governor or the Governor’s Authorized Representative (GAR), to the FEMA Regional Administrator while the fire is still burning uncontrollably.
**FMAG DECLARATION PROCESS**

- The fire must threaten such destruction as would constitute a major disaster, and
- Addresses the criteria set forth in 44 CFR §204.21 with factual data and professional estimates on the fire or fire complex

**At a minimum, FEMA will require the following information for the initial phone request, and the later written requests:**

- The size of the fire (either in acres or square miles)
- The name, location and population of the communities being threatened
- The number of primary and secondary residences and businesses being threatened
- Distance from the fire’s current leading edge location to the nearest threatened community (in Florida, we can retrieve this information from the GATOR program)
- Number of persons already evacuated from the fire’s path
FMAG DECLARATION PROCESS

- Predicted weather conditions (24 hours), and

- The degree to which the state and local resources are committed to this, as well as other fires, regardless of the type of other fires (this information can be retrieved from the Incident Commander)

The written request MUST be received within 14 days of the initial phone request. It is called the FF-078-0-1. The information on the written request MUST be consistent with the information transmitted via the phone.

Additional (written and/or physical) documentation that may be submitted in support of the FMAG request includes the following:

- Fire Severity Maps

- Geographic, topographic, and/or land assessment maps

- Incident status summary reports (ICS-209 forms where available)

- Photographs
FMAG DECLARATION PROCESS

The FEMA Regional Administrator is provided technical expertise in making decisions on whether or not to grant the FMAG by the FEMA Principal Advisor. The Principal Advisor will contact Incident Command in the field to obtain information on the fire or fire complex.

The FMAG process facilitates expedited declaration when warranted.

However:

This does not mean you will get an answer over the phone on the initial call. The actual determination is often given the same day as the request, but there are no such requirements imposed on FEMA to do so.
FMAG DECLARATION PROCESS (Cont’d)

1. Uncontrolled Fire
2. Governor’s Request
3. Declaration
4. PW Approval
5. Grantee and Subgrantee Grant Applications and Project Worksheets (PWs)
6. Funding to Grantee
7. Funding to Subgrantee
8. Closeout
9. Audits and Document Retention
THE INCIDENT PERIOD

As in a major disaster declaration, if an FMAG is declared, the incident period will be set through negotiations between the State and FEMA.

- The incident period will typically be set to open on either:
  - On the day of declaration, or
  - When the initial firefighting actions were undertaken
- The incident period will typically close at the end of the firefighting shift where the fire is declared to be under control
  - The End of the Incident period is negotiated with FEMA
APPEALS

Any decision made by FEMA in the declaration process that is adverse to the State’s interests may be appealed.

- Unlike appeals of a project worksheet in the Public Assistance Program, there is ONLY ONE APPEAL allowed for the FMAG declaration issues
- The appeal must be sent to the FEMA Regional Administrator at the Regional Office within 30 days of the initial decision
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- As in the Public Assistance (PA) Program, the Governor will sign a FEMA/State Agreement.

- Unlike the PA Program, the FEMA/State agreement for FMAG’s will cover ALL FMAG’s eventually declared for that State, during that same calendar year.

- Additional FMAG’s will be brought into the Master Yearly Agreement by signing a new “Amendment to the FEMA-State Agreement for the Fire Management Assistance Program” (Exhibit E) for each new FMAG declaration.

- No Joint Field Office (JFO) will be established for an FMAG declaration.

- The State can request a JFO if there is sufficient damage from the FMAG covered fire complex to warrant a Major Disaster Declaration.
ELIGIBLE COSTS

Only two types of costs are reimbursable under FMAG declarations

Category “B” Essential Assistance (similar to PA’s Emergency Protective Measures)

Essential Assistance actions are taken to reduce or minimize immediate threats to life and property, and include, but are not limited to:

- Police barricading and traffic control
- Extraordinary Emergency Operations Center (EOC) expenses
- Evacuations and sheltering (this includes household pets)
- Search and Rescue Operations
- Arson Patrols and investigation teams (if there is a continuing threat)
ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Public Information dissemination
- Limited removal of burned or unburned trees

Category “H” Fire Fighting Activities

Examples of eligible Category “H” (fire Fighting) costs include, but are not limited to:

- Equipment and Supplies
- Labor Costs
- Overtime for all Force Account labor; Regular time for force account labor performing fire suppression activities where that particular activity is NOT the employees NORMAL job
- Over Time and Regular Time for all temporary and/or contracted employees performing fire suppression activities
ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Travel and Per Diem (including field camps and meals offered in lieu of per diem)
- Pre-positioning costs (FEMA tends to scrutinize these particular costs more than other costs)
- Temporary repairs of damage caused by firefighting efforts
- Mobilization and Demobilization Costs

In Florida, one Project Worksheet (PW) is written for all FMAG costs, with the State of Florida as the subrecipient.

Each responding entity’s claims are written as a separate line item within the PW scope of work and are paid by the state once the PW is obligated by FEMA.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACRONYMS</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CFFDRS</td>
<td>Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
<td>Code of Federal Regulations</td>
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<td>EMAC</td>
<td>Emergency Management Assistance Compact</td>
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ACRONYMS (Cont’d)

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Keetch Byram Drought Index</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>NIMS Integration Center</td>
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<tr>
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<td>National Incident Management System</td>
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<td>Office of Management and Budget</td>
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<td>PL</td>
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<td>Request for Fire Management Assistance Subgrant</td>
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<td>SMP</td>
<td>State Mitigation Plan</td>
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<td>USFS</td>
<td>U. S. Forestry Service</td>
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Contact Information

More information is available by contacting:

Florida Division of Emergency Management
Recovery Bureau
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100
Office: (850) 815-4002