Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Briefing Package

Saskatchewan
PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY

Forward

The purpose of this briefing package is to:

Familiarize imported personnel with the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA).

To introduce you to fire suppression activities and strategies.

To make your integration into the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency easier.

To advise of any safety concerns you may run into during your stay.

This package briefing will serve to provide a general overview of SPSA in Saskatchewan and a second briefing will be provided when you arrive at the job site, which will deal with the more detailed specifics of your assignment. A department liaison will be assigned to incoming groups to assist in administration and policy interpretation as required.

Introduction

Overview

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Mission:

The SPSA safeguards and protects the people, property and resources of Saskatchewan through partnerships, coordinated planning, education, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery.

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Mandate:

The SPSA provides or supports public safety services for and with the people, municipalities, Indigenous people, public safety service providers and the Government of Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Vision:

Enhance, support and integrate public safety in Saskatchewan.

Boundaries

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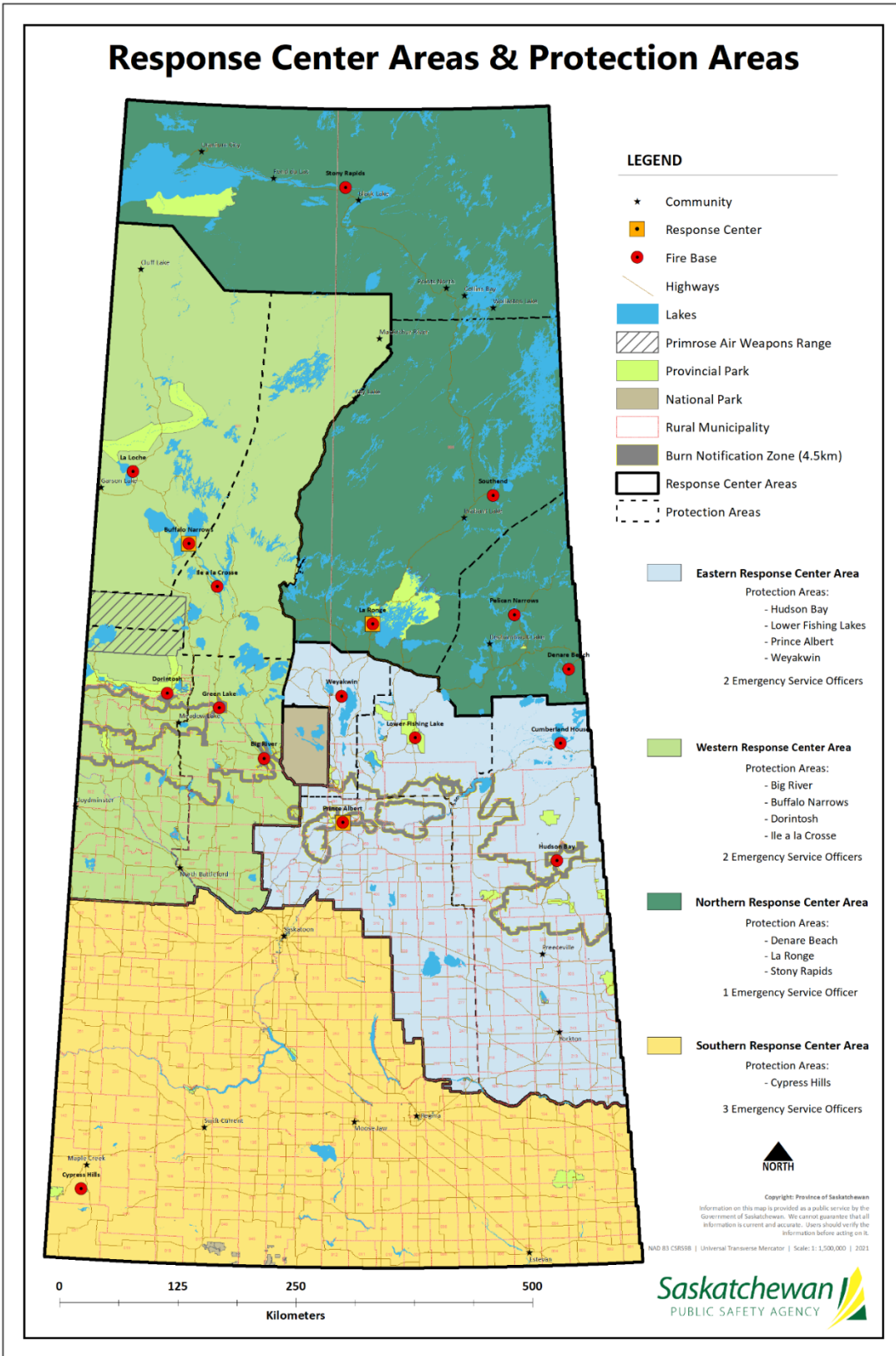
Figure 1 - Response Centre Areas & Protection Areas

Saskatchewan is bordered on the east by Manitoba, on the west by Alberta, the north by the Northwest Territories, and the south by North Dakota and Montana. Saskatchewan's landscape is diverse, consisting of prairie, parkland, forest and lakes. The highest elevation is Cypress Hills in the Southwest of the province, at 1,392 m (4,566 ft) above sea level.

The Provincial Response Centre is located in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

There are four Response Centre Areas (RCA); Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western. Each of those Response Centre Areas consist of Protection Bases as follows:

Northern Response Centre Area:
Protection Bases Located in: La Ronge, Southend, Denare Beach, Pelican Narrows, Stony Rapids

Eastern Response Centre Area:
Protection Bases Located in: Prince Albert, Hudson Bay, Cumberland House, Weyakwin, Lower Fishing Lake,

Southern Response Centre Area:
Protection Base Located in: Cypress Hills

Western Response Centre Area:
Protection Bases Located in: Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Dorintosh, Ile a la Crosse, Green Lake, Big River (Turnor Lake, Patuanak, Dillon, Beauval and Cole Bay)

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Protection Features & Areas

Wildfire Priorities
1. Human life   2. Communities   3. Major public and industrial infrastructure
4. Commercial timber   5. Structures, natural resources and commercial/industrial operations

NORTH

Communities and Structural Features
- Northern Communities
- Southern Communities
- Remote Structures (e.g. homes, lodges, cabins)

Major Public and Industrial Infrastructure Features
- Public infrastructure (e.g. power lines, communication towers, airports)
- Industrial Infrastructure (e.g. mines, power generation facilities, mills)

Timber Areas
- Primary Timber Area
- Secondary Timber Area
- Provincial Parks
- Ecological Areas

Partnership and Agreement Areas
- 4.5 km Burn Notification Area
- Border Agreements
- National Park/Cold Lake Air Weapons Range
- Rural/Urban Landbase
- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Protection Areas
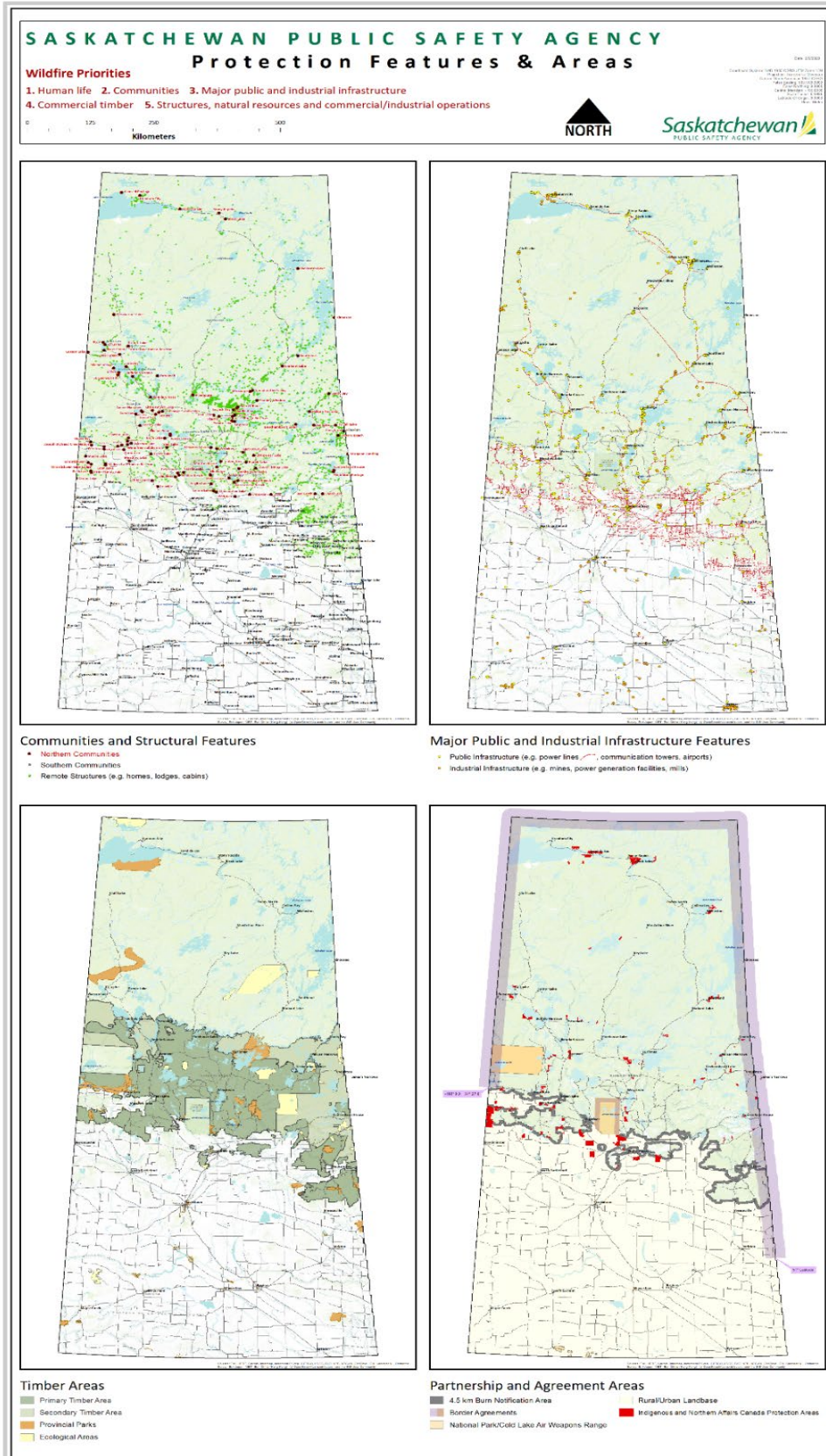
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Figure 2 - SPSA Protection Features and Areas

Topography

More than 53% of Saskatchewan is forested, with many waterways and muskegs. The terrain is difficult to characterize and may be said to be flat to rugged and rocky. Saskatchewan is comprised of 4 eco-zones, which are further divided in to 11 ecological regions. A few of the more predominant wildfire active eco-regions and eco-zones are:

- The Cypress Hills Eco-region: Located in the southwest corner of the province, this area contains unique animal and plant forms undamaged by the last glaciations. The predominant forest in the Cypress Hills region is lodge pole pine. This eco-region is characterized by cobblestone rock and an elevation of 4650 feet (1417 meters).

- The Grassland Eco-regions: Sand hills in the west, short-grass prairie in the south and mixed grass east to Manitoba.

- The Aspen Parkland Eco-region: Rolling hills with trembling aspen and burr oak.

- The Boreal Plain Eco-zone: A mixed wood area, consisting mainly of trembling aspen, jack pine, black spruce, white spruce, balsam poplar and white birch species. This area is characterized by many lakes and streams and is located roughly between the 53rd degree of latitude north and the Churchill River system and is within the Primary Area.

- The Boreal Shield Eco-zone: Characterized by sandy soils south of Lake Athabasca and rocky jack pine cover on either side of Lake Athabasca. This eco-zone takes in the Canadian Shield, has abundant lakes and streams and covers the area north of the Churchill River system. This area exhibits some significant changes in elevation, with deep valleys and high ridges. Typical forest fuels consist primarily of black/white spruce, interspersed with jack pine and trembling aspen stands on higher ground or recently disturbed areas.

- The Taiga Shield Eco-zone: This eco-zone is situated in the far northern part of the province close to the Northwest Territories border. Fuel types consist of small black spruce and lichen duff nestled between many lakes.

Climate and Weather

Saskatchewan has warm to hot summers, receiving more sunshine hours than any other province in Canada. The southern agricultural areas can be affected by drought, consisting of little to no precipitation for long periods of time. La Ronge and north has a subarctic climate with a shorter summer season. Summer temperatures throughout the province can get quite hot, with low relative humidity. Annual precipitation averages 30 to 45 centimeters (12 to 18 inches) across the province, with the bulk of rain falling in June, July, and August. Saskatchewan is one of the most tornado active areas of Canada. Thunderstorm events, some severe, occur in Saskatchewan from early spring to late summer. Hail, strong winds and isolated tornadoes are possible with these summer storms.

Forest and Fuel Typing

(See Section 1.3 for the breakdown of forest and fuel typing regions within Saskatchewan).
The fuel types within Saskatchewan are mixed throughout the north-south ranges of the province- from C1 in the north, continuing through the C2, C3, C4 coniferous fuel types and into the Deciduous D1 and Mixedwood M1, M2 in the central parkland areas and 01a and 01b of the southern grassland areas. The Cypress Hills area of the southwest corner of the province reverts back to the Lodgepole pine C3 fuel type.

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(Fuel types according to the Field Guide to the Canadian Forest Fire Behavior Prediction (FBP) System; Taylor, Pike, Alexander).

Fire Management System

Acts, Legislation and Agreements

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency is mandated to provide wildfire protection within the province under the *Wildfire Act, 2014*. This Act is the primary source of statutory responsibility with respect to fire suppression on forested and prairie land. Under *The Wildfire Act,* SPSA is responsible for managing and/or extinguishing fires in the provincial forest, provincial parks, recreation sites or vacant crown land (does not include crown land under lease) and Wildfire Management Area a 4.5 km strip of land bordering the provincial forest. Outside of this area (excluding the land types as noted previously) rural/urban municipalities are responsible for fire suppression on land within their jurisdiction.

Decisions are made following provincial Legislation including:

- The Wildfire Act, 2014

- Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Act 2019

- Fire Safety Act

- Emergency Planning Act

- Emergency 911 System Act

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency has mutual aid resource sharing agreements in place with partner jurisdictions provincially, nationally and internationally. These agreements include provisions for the exchange of personnel, equipment, aircraft, information, technology, skills, training, research & innovation for prevention, pre-suppression and suppression.

Line of Authority

The SPSA is responsible for the critical task of minimizing losses from wildfires throughout the province (see Page 9 – Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Structure). The SPSA Operational Response (see Page 10 – SPSA Operational Response Structure) is responsible for preventing, detecting, managing, and suppressing wildland fires on a provincial level and is organized into two sections:

Air Operations Section (see Page 11)

Land Operations (see Page 12)

This structure makes it possible for the branch to respond to a diverse range of activities and responsibilities, ranging from legislation to fire research, to fire suppression. To achieve these goals Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency works closely, with SPSA field delivery managers to deliver Saskatchewan's fire program.

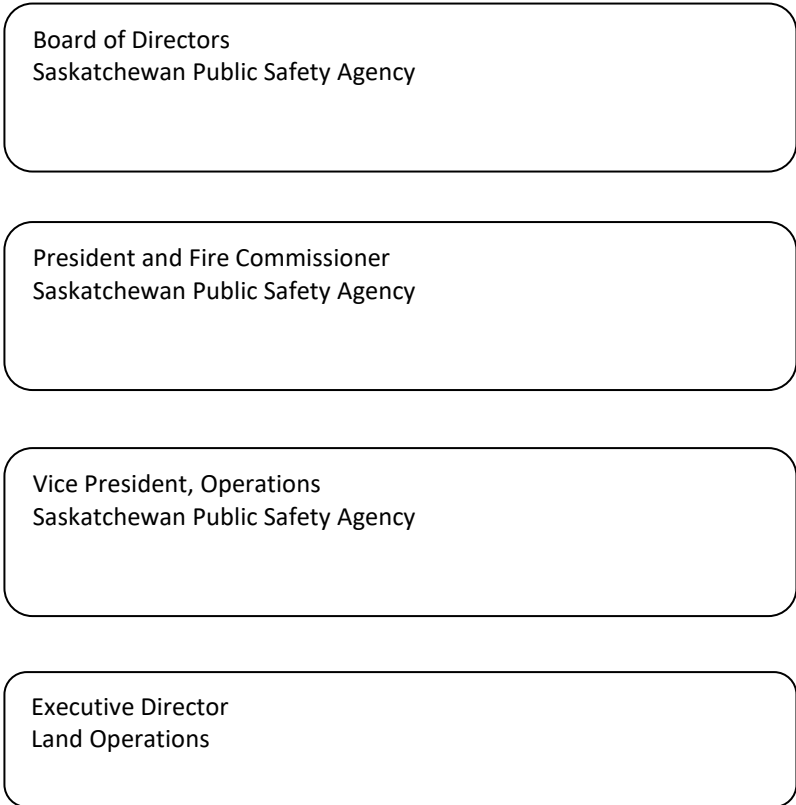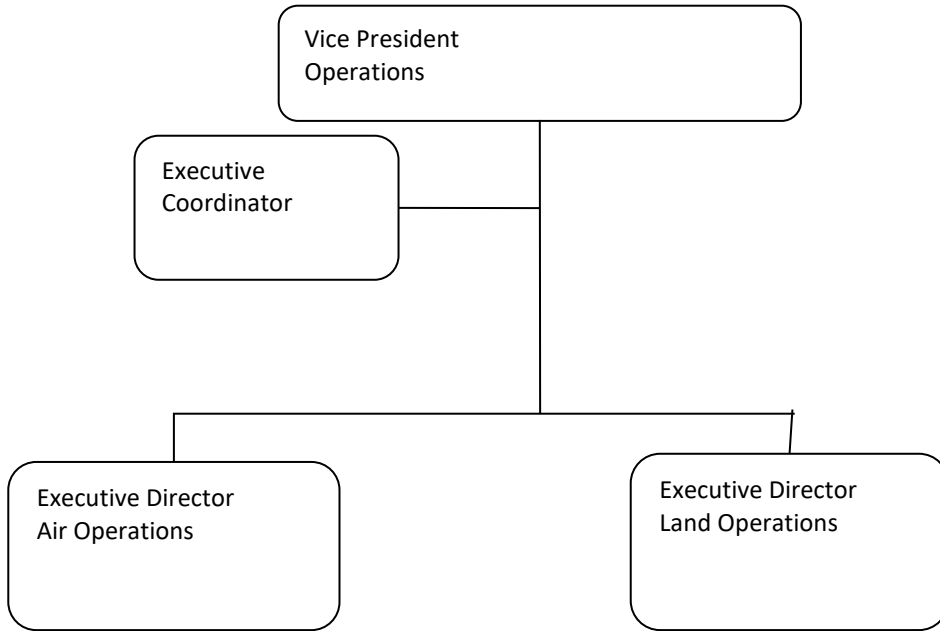Board of Directors
Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

President and Fire Commissioner
Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Vice President, Operations
Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Executive Director
Land Operations

Figure 3 - SPSA Structure

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Vice President          │
│ Operations              │
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────┐
│ Executive       │
│ Coordinator     │
└─────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Executive Director   │        │ Executive Director   │
│ Air Operations       │        │ Land Operations      │
└──────────────────────┘        └──────────────────────┘
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Figure 4 - SPSA Operational Response Structure

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                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                        │ Executive Director      │
                        │ Air Operations          │
                        └─────────────────────────┘
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Executive Director Air Operations

Director, Safety and Assistance Operations Manager

Chief Aircraft Maintenance Engineer

Chief Pilot

Quality Assurance Auditor

Air Attack Program Manager

Business Manager

Aviation Services Coordinator
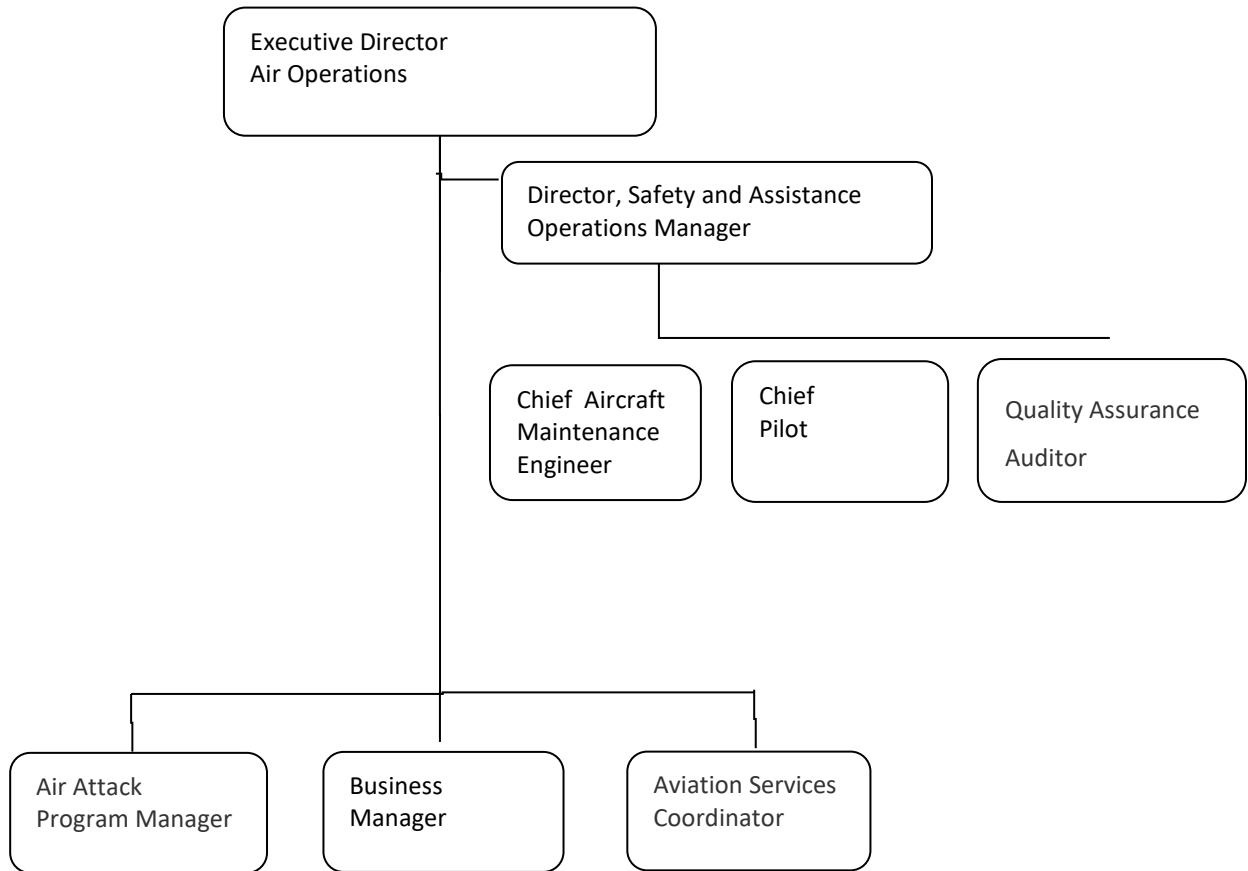
Figure 5 - Air Operations Structure

Headquartered in La Ronge, Air Operations provides Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency with their air tanker needs. Air Operations provides the flight operation, maintenance and support services for the provincial owned and operated firefighting aircraft fleet and ensures a safe aviation program. Air Operations Section manages approximately 113 personnel and owns and operates 20 aircraft.

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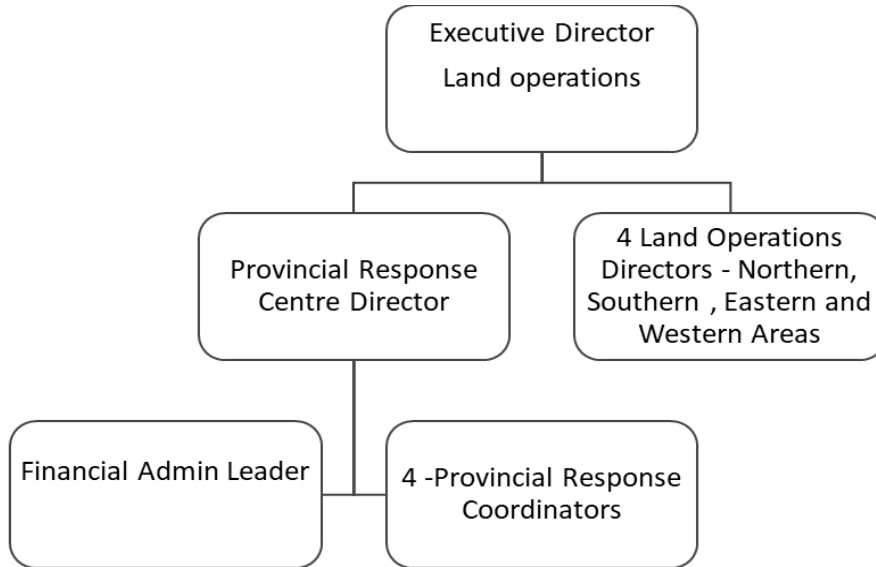
Figure 6 - Land Operations Structure

Under the direction of the Executive Director of Land Operations, the Provincial Response Centre is staffed with personnel that plan and coordinate provincial wildfire activities daily. The Response Centre Coordinators in conjunction with their director – The Provincial Response Centre Director, develop, implement and monitor all provincial wildfire suppression activities. Responsibilities include preparedness planning, air tanker deployments, scarce resource prioritization; inter-provincial resource coordination, management of field operations, dispatch of incident command teams, coordination of field support and aboriginal program development. Central direction and coordination is also provided in the specific areas of emergency contingency planning, fire behavior forecasting, fire weather forecasting and products, aerial ignition, information management, large fire operations and contract fire crew administration as well as the administration of the training component to field staff.

Principles, Strategy and Fire Management Directives and Policies

A structure is in place to deal with wildland fires as they occur. Response Centre Duty Officers determine area priorities, set area preparedness levels, identify hazards and ensure that firefighting needs are satisfied and discuss with the Response Centre Coordinator. The Response Centre Duty Officer reports to the Provincial Duty Desk, Provincial Response Centre Director, and his/her responsibility is to coordinate field delivery firefighting activities through interaction with assigned Protection Officers and the Response Centre Coordinator.

If wildfires escape initial attack, Response Areas coordinate sustained action forces to manage these fires. Personnel in each Response Area are for the most part seasonal staff who are assigned either initial attack or sustained action duties.

If a wildfire becomes too large or exceeds the resources available in the Response Area, an Incident Management Team will be assigned to the wildfire incident or complex. The Incident Management Team will report directly to the Land Operations Director responsible for the Response Centre Area.

If the demand for fire fighters exceeds the availability of SPSA staff, emergency firefighters and contract fire crews from Saskatchewan, the SPSA then utilizes the Canadian Interagency Mutual Aid Resource Sharing Agreement (MARS), the Northwest Compact and the Canada/United States Reciprocal Forest Fighting Arrangement, to access trained wildland firefighting personnel from other jurisdictions (this process is handled by the Provincial Response Coordinator).

Decision Making Process

From a policy perspective the highest "Values" (human life, communities, major public and infrastructure, commercial timber, and structure, natural resource and commercial/industrial industries) are given priority for wildfire suppression efforts. The province is further divided strategy areas for purposes of wildfire management. The five you will most likely encounter in forested areas are:

- Primary Timber Area (PTA)
- Secondary Timber Area (STA)
- North of the Primary and Secondary Area (NTA)
- Wildfire Management Area (4.5 km from a Provincial Forest)
- Prince Albert National Park/Cold Lake Air Weapons Range (PANP/CLAWR)

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency uses centralized decision making within the wildfire program. Provincial Response Centre, located in Prince Albert SK, is the final authority on provincial priorities, resource allocation, and operational policy and procedure.

The Provincial Response Coordinator in consultation with Response Centre Duty Officers are delegated the responsibility to develop daily wildfire preparedness plans. The preparedness plan will define resource allocations, alert levels and is designed in response to predetermined fire priorities and hazards. The finalized preparedness plan is reviewed and approved by the Provincial Response Centre Director.

Resources

Human Capacity

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Staff Crews (Type 1)

Initial attack is the action taken by the first firefighting resources to arrive at the site to halt the spread or potential spread of a fire. Saskatchewan has a strong commitment to pre-suppression preparedness and the control of wildfires upon initial attack. Initial attack resources are specifically used for implementing the initial attack on wildfires (air tankers, initial attack crews). Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency initial attack crews consist of one Type 1 Crew Leader and three Type 1 Crew Members. The province maintains 55 of these crews. In all cases crews must be fully trained with suitable communication, transportation, and equipment. Furthermore, the initial attack status of these crews must be strictly preserved. On completion of their initial attack activities, they are typically replaced with sustained action crews, and returned to their firebase in the Protection Area to maintain initial attack capabilities.

Type 1 crew leaders and crew members may also supervise Type 2 and Type 3 crews on sustained action fires.

Type 1 firefighters have assisted other jurisdictions during wildfire and other emergencies/events when available.

First Nations and Northern Community Wildfire Protection Workers (Type 2 Crews)

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency has established contracts with First Nations and Northern Communities (Saskatchewan Northern Community Wildfire Protection Workers) within and near the commercial forest. These crews provide firefighting services as needed and to work on projects in their home communities and reserves in times of low fire hazard. The crews are utilized by Protection Areas during the fire season with their primary function being sustained action wildfires. In a busy wildfire situation these crews may be requested for initial attack if they meet SPSA's standards and certification requirements.

Emergency Fire Personnel (Type 3)

Emergency Fire crews are made up of personnel who vary in training and experience but all are required to meet Type 3 certification and standards. These fire fighters are geared to sustained action fires. Each crew has 8 fire line personnel including a Crew Leader. These crews will have have an assigned cook depending on the assignment and the cook will report to Task Force Leader.

There are a number of crews in each Protection Area that are traditionally used to action localized fires, and when required are exported to other locations in the province. These personnel are not contract staff but are hired as needed. Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency personnel provide overhead supervision to emergency firefighters to ensure safety and that equipment is taken care of and tactics and strategies are defined and implemented.

Aircraft Capacity

The wildfire program also depends on long- and short-term contracting of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft from commercial air carriers to help detect and suppress wildfires.

In Saskatchewan, the Canadair CL 215, the Canadair CL 215T, and the Convair 580 are the aircraft used to suppress wildfires. The Response Centre Duty Officer requests the dispatch of air tankers as required. Air tankers are used primarily for initial attack and support actions where they can be most effective.

Saskatchewan owns and operates six groups of aircraft as follows:

Group #1 – CV580 (2) and Turbo Commander bird dog

Group #2 - CV580 (2) and Turbo Commander bird dog

Group #3 - CL 215T (2) and Turbo Commander bird dog

Group #4 – CL215T (2) and Turbo Commander bird dog

Group #5 - CL215T (2) and Turbo Commander bird dog

Group #6 – CV580 (1) and Turbo Commander bird dog

Spares: 2 Beechcraft Baron bird dogs and 1 CL215P

Air tankers are initially based in Prince Albert and La Ronge at the start of each season, but may be moved to tanker bases at Buffalo Narrows, Meadow Lake, Hudson Bay, Estavan and Bakers Narrows (near Flin Flon, Manitoba) dependent on fire hazards or proximity to supporting incidents.

A Bird Dog Pilot/Air Attack Officer team is attached to each group, and they are responsible for maintaining communication, air traffic control (controlled air space), and determining attack methods and strategies.

Imported air tanker crews will receive a comprehensive briefing upon arrival in Saskatchewan including information on:

- communications
- personal welfare needs for crews
- fuel/oil requirements
- aircraft and crew qualifications and standards
- policies and operational procedures
- Air Attack Officer kit
- specific flight area information
- air and ground resources available to Air Attack Officer, methods of requesting
- daily briefing requirements
- debriefing/final debriefing

Imported Bird Dog Pilot/Air Attack Officer teams should also expect to have a check ride after arriving in the province and before they are put on an alert status.

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Aircraft/Helicopter Operations

Detection

Detection of wildfires is carried out using a variety of aircraft including fixed wing detection patrol, fire towers with camera detection, as well as loaded helicopter patrols at critical times of the day. Air patrols are coordinated by the Response Centre Duty Officers who determine the time of patrols and the flight lines to be followed.

Helicopters

Saskatchewan utilizes a variety of helicopters in its operations. Helicopters are contracted on a long-term and a short-term basis as required and hiring is based upon preparedness needs. Saskatchewan does not own any helicopters as part of a provincial fleet.

The Aviation Services Coordinator from the SPSA oversees the provincial aviation safety program and ensures that staff and emergency fire fighters are aware of aviation safety programs and procedures. This individual is responsible to develop guidelines and provide input into policy concerning aviation safety and has developed the following publications that incoming personnel should review:

SPSA Aviation Emergency Response Plan. The plan establishes the actions to take in the event of:

- an overdue aircraft;

- an aircraft accident;

- an aircraft incident

- Saskatchewan Pilot's Handbook. An overview of the operating methods and procedures concerning aviation, utilized by the Saskatchewan fire program.

Aircraft Monitoring

As per policy, air tanker position reporting will be monitored via the Saskatchewan WIIN system (satellite resource tracking system) and aircraft operating in the province are expected to have tracking data forwarded to the province. The back-up for the WIIN system will remain the radio check-in and air tanker position reporting that must be given to the closest tanker base every 30 minutes. If contact with the tanker base is not possible, the report may be passed via a Protection Base/Response Centre office, ensure the "ops normal" has been successfully relayed by having the base report back to you.

All other aircraft provide 30-minute check in reports to the Protection Base they are reporting to. These reports are to check in with an "operations normal" to maintain contact for safety reasons or the possibility of a diversion. Saskatchewan does operate an automated satellite resource tracking program as well as the regular radio procedures. All helicopters and most fixed wing aircraft operating and employed by Saskatchewan have tracking equipment installed.

Equipment Capacity

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency uses many different types of equipment in its fire suppression operations, some of which is hired under contract. These include: helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, heavy equipment and transportation services, to name a few. Agreements are used to hire equipment for fire suppression, pre-suppression, reclamation, road maintenance and other projects.

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Suppression

General Information

Fire Numbering

A "MIDAS", (Saskatchewan financial system number) incident project number as well as a "name" is assigned to every wildfire incident that is actioned. Each Protection Area is assigned a series of numbers. All references to this particular wildfire incident must include this number and name to ensure proper tracking of all activities.

Incident Complexity Classification

If a wildfire becomes too large to be effectively fought by the personnel and equipment of a Protection Area, the Protection Officer (PO) in charge shall report the situation at once to the Land Operations Director (LOD) and request assistance.

Resources may be supplied to the Type 2 wildfire level and once the wildfire complexity has grown beyond the Type 2 level, a Type 1 Incident Management Team will normally be called in to handle suppression efforts from that point on. Once control is gained, the wildfire can be returned to the Protection Area for final mop up activities. (Refer to SPSA Standard Operating Procedure OPS321.1-Incident Management Response-Type 1 and 2 and OPS321.2 – Incident Management Team Transition – Type 1 and 2).

Response and Tactics

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) personnel will assess every reported wildfire, as soon as possible after it is reported to determine the appropriate response level.
The wildfire assessment will include the following ***SPSA considerations***:

- Risk to crew safety which is paramount

- Wildfire risk and wildfire growth potential toward values, features and areas'

- Priority of threatened values, features and areas requiring wildfire exclusion.

- Threatened values, features and areas that allow for wildfire inclusion, see Priority of values, features and areas where Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency has been requested to provide a wildfire response;

- Probability of containment and wildfire action success;

- Available resources: (SOP#:OPS311.1)

Operational Period

Your assigned supervisor will monitor and authorize the hours you work in Saskatchewan. Typically shifts of 12 – 14 hours per day are not uncommon; however, we will respect your home agency tour of duty or allowable work hours per day limitations if they are less.

Personnel shall not typically work more than 16 hours' maximum in a 24 hour. During an emergency where there is high risk for physical harm or property damage, an extension (which must be documented) to exceed the 16 hour maximum day may be granted by the following supervisors: Protection Officer, a Director/Manager, Response Coordinator or Incident Commander 1 or 2.

Any personnel working hours beyond their regular shift hours require written authorization from their supervisor or Incident Commander (IC) on an incident, who will be responsible for overtime charges accrued to the incident under his/her authority. (OT authorization forms must be used to authorize the written approval).

While working in Saskatchewan, you will be working under your own union agreement. We will honour the working conditions stated within your agreement.

Mapping

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) uses a Geographic Information System (GIS) to continuously maintain geographic products including maps. Some of the GIS products are designed to forecast fire indices, calculate preparedness levels based on fire indices and run fire behavior models.
Other responsibilities include developing and providing specialized GIS services and products to meet the needs of SPSA for strategic and tactical analysis of fire information. This includes maintaining and updating the fire boundaries database and all other mapping services for strategic uses.

Static maps are provided for the fire weather website and/or the public SPSA wildfire website. Map examples: fire mapping, weather regions map, fire history map, lightning versus man map, tower visibility map, fuel type maps, and orthophoto maps.

Data outputs are provided for the Internet Map Server (IMS). IMS can be accessible to a wide audience while maintaining up-to-date data in a central location. It also allows the user to interact with the data for the user's specific purposes.

Radio Frequencies

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency operates a VHF-FM communications network which utilizes a series of 24 simplex and repeater frequencies as well as mobile telephone capability for all ground and air units. This enables province wide coverage in most situations.

In remote areas, satellite telephones are available to fire camps for their communication needs.

Handheld portable radio units are also distributed to crews, which enables multi-frequency communication capabilities, with limited access to mobile telephone services as well.

Channel and Frequencies of ground radio systems

GROUP	CH POS	DESCRIPTION	TX FREQ	RX FREQ
1	1	F1 - Local	163.260	163.260
1	2	F2 - Repeater	162.600	163.260
1	3	F3 - Local	163.200	163.200
1	4	F4 - Repeater	162.660	163.200
1	5	F5 - Local	163.140	163.140
1	6	F6 - Repeater	162.570	163.140
1	7	AIR - GROUND	None	163.050
1	8	AIR - BASE	None	162.840
1	9	F9 - Local	163.410	163.410
1	10	F10 - Repeater	162.720	163.410
1	11	F11 - Local	163.560	163.560
1	12	F12 - Repeater	162.780	163.560
1	13	F13 - Local	165.690	165.690
1	14	F14 - Repeater	164.760	165.690

Figure 7 - Channel and Frequencies Chart

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GROUP	CH POS	DESCRIPTION	TX FREQ	RX FREQ
7	1	A1 FIRES - Local	166.610	166.610
7	2	A2 FIRES - Repeater	168.400	166.610
7	3	B1 FIRES - Local	167.105	167.105
7	4	B2 FIRES - Repeater	169.750	167.105
7	5	C1 FIRES - Local	168.070	168.070
7	6	C2 FIRES - Repeater	170.425	168.070
7	7	D1 FIRES - Local	168.700	168.700
7	8	D2 FIRES - Repeater	170.450	168.700
Other Quick Reference Channels and Frequencies				
15	1	SASK - EMFS	156.915	156.915
15	3	MAN - Natural Res, Fire	163.290	163.290
9	1	NRT	152.390	152.390
12	1	PANP - Local	166.050	166.050
12	2	PANP - Repeater	166.650	166.050

Figure 8 - Channel and Frequencies Chart - Incident Management Teams

The provincial air attack fleet operates using 6 VHF - FM frequencies that are assigned as bombing frequencies, one to each tanker group. In addition, the fleet is also assigned 7 VHF - AM frequencies for their use in air-to-air communication, and to communicate with the tanker bases.

In addition, each Bird Dog aircraft has a satellite phone to use as required where radio communications are not available.

Saskatchewan utilizes an Air link frequency system to facilitate emergency communication. All Bird Dog aircraft constantly monitor **122.85** on the VHF - AM system. This allows any individual, to reach the Bird Dog at any time in an emergency, or if the operational frequencies within a given fire zone are unknown to the incoming party.

Up to date information on assigned frequencies, communications procedures, and FM frequency conversions are published in the **Saskatchewan Pilot's Handbook,** which is updated on an annual basis.

Air-to-air communication procedures used in Saskatchewan follow the generally accepted procedures used in almost all Canadian jurisdictions. The Bird Dog is in complete control of all air traffic control within the positive fire control zone, and aircraft coming into the controlled airspace around an active wildfire are required to contact the Bird Dog aircraft when they are 10 minutes back from the fire. All instructions from the Bird Dog must be strictly adhered to at all times.

Fire Information

Human resources will not discuss fire/incident ground issues unless they are authorized to do so by the Incident Commander. Human resources will not discuss deployment issues with, or provide information to, the media without prior approval of their Agency Representative (AREP).

Most public information inquiries can be handled by the Provincial Coordination Centre. Operational staff shall brief media and public information staff on the current fire situation and of significant changes as they occur. Only approved information shall be relayed to the public. Answer only for your own program area and refer questions on evacuations, health conditions and highway closures to the appropriate authorities.

Public Website with current wildfire activity, fire danger maps, fire bans, etc. can be found at:
https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/wildfire-in-saskatchewan

Social Media

Social media is an important way of keeping in touch with family, friends and colleagues while on deployment. However, all human resources should always remember they are representing their organization while on deployment.

Do not comment on or share information about operational activities.

Only use social media if it doesn't interfere with your work.

If posting photos from the fire/incident (if you have local approval to do so), please ensure full personal protective equipment is worn and safety requirements are being adhered to.

There is a public perception that you are deployed as an official, to carry out official activities. Any implication that you are engaged in 'tourist' or 'recreational' activities on or off duty can send the wrong impression to your jurisdiction and the Receiving Participant alike (regardless of whether your activities may be perfectly legitimate). Use discretion in the material you post.

Consider the appropriate use of social media in social settings while on deployment.

Lodging

We will provide you with food and lodging while here. Some areas use kitchen trailers with a tent style mess hall to provide food and a dining area. Lodging may be provided in motels, sleep trailers, bunkhouses, your personal tents or prospector tents. A detailed explanation will be given at your assigned location.

Personnel Equipment

Your home organization is responsible for providing personal protective equipment. Each fire fighter is responsible for providing his or her own clothing, toiletries and approved safety footwear.

Saskatchewan often camps fire fighters in the bush close to the fire line. Crews may be camped on islands, lakeshores or other areas that are deemed safe. Food, cooking utensils, shack tents, potable water and supplies are delivered to your fire camp free of charge. Commissary is supplied, and your Agency Representative should discuss commissary-billing arrangements with the Saskatchewan briefing officer prior to dispatch.

If you prefer not to stay in a shack tent you may bring your own personal tents as long as this does not interfere with the CIFFC crewmember standard **65 pounds or 29.5-kilo weight limit** for personal and work gear.

Work/Personal gear recommended by Saskatchewan Wildfire Management includes:

CSA approved work boots	Sleeping Bag	Pants/Sweatpants/ Shorts
Yellow Hard Hat complete with chin strap	Compass/GPS	Underwear
	Personal First Aid kit	Socks
Eye Protection (goggles, mesh visor)	Flashlight	Personal/prescription medication**
	Multi-tool	
Hearing Protection (ear muffs, plugs)	Radio	Sunglasses
	Foam mat/pad	Hat
Nomex shirt	Tent	Camera
Nomex pants	Toiletries	Whistle
T-shirt	Towel	Rain Gear
Duffle Bag	Jacket	Money (for commissary purchases)
Fire line pack	Shoes	
Leather gloves	Shirts	Miscellaneous

** This should include enough medication (if required) to last your entire deployment.
Under miscellaneous items you could include extra eyeglasses or contact lens needs, a lighter or matches, and a small can of mosquito repellent, plus any other items you see fit. It is suggested that incoming personnel bring a minimum of $100.00 with them to cover miscellaneous costs that may come up. The SPSA Liaison Officer assigned to incoming groups will handle financial arrangements for commercial accommodation.

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Level of Preparedness

Each morning the Provincial Response Coordinator conducts a detailed briefing with the Response Centre Duty Officers. The briefing includes updates on the current wildfire situation, observed and predicted fire behavior, current and forecasted weather, prevention and detection plans for the day as well as fire crew and air tanker availability and alert status. This information is provided to each Protection Base in each Response Area through the WIIN system, e-mail, fax, or phone call. **Check with the Protection Officer or Fire Base Supervisor for the time that this information is available as you will be required to attend a safety and operational assignment briefing in the AM.**

To ensure preparedness, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency fire crews and air tanker crews are put on an alert each day, based upon the hazards. The alerts indicate the maximum acceptable time period for crew mobilization whether it is for dispatch to a fire or for a base change. There are four levels of alert as follows:

Red Alert:　　　Crews must be ready to depart from a predetermined staging point immediately after receiving a fire call.

Yellow Alert:　　Crews must be ready to depart from a predetermined staging point within 30 minutes after receiving a fire call.

Blue Alert:　　　Crews must be ready to depart from a predetermined staging point within 60 minutes after receiving a fire call.

Green Alert:　　Crews are on a 24-hour stand down or deployed to other projects.

The levels of alert are included on the daily Alert Status form each morning. When crews are working out of a specific protection base in a Response Area, the Protection Officer or Fire Base Supervisor will inform the crew of the alerts. Air tankers and bird dog aircraft are coordinated and dispatched from the assigned tanker base by the Provincial Duty Desk.

Fireline Activities

The Saskatchewan fire line organization is based upon the Incident Command System and the following organizational premises:

> An initial attack crew should consist of 3 crew members and an initial attack crew leader. Crew size would vary depending on the availability of intermediate and medium lift helicopters. Initial attack crew configuration is normally 4 persons utilizing a medium helicopter, or a fixed wing aircraft with floats.

> A basic sustained action fire crew should consist of (8) firefighters including the crew leader.

> No Task Force Leader should supervise more than five Unit Leaders.

> No Division Supervisor should supervise more than five Task Force Leaders.

> No Operations Chief should supervise more than five Division Supervisors.

IMT

Large incidents demand the most resources and commitment from firefighters and management. The routine fire suppression structure in a Protection Area is based upon initial attack, with most fires controlled in the first burning period. Incidents require more specialized, intensive management. To accommodate this, specialized teams are developed to assist the Protection Areas with the management of incidents, as they occur. Saskatchewan utilizes Type 1 Incident Management Teams to handle large incidents. The Type 1 teams are typically formed as required from qualified personnel throughout the province. Similarly, Type 2 Incident Management Teams are created as needed, but from available staff within the Response Centre Area. Type 2 Incident Management Teams handle smaller incidents or ones with less complexity.

The complexity of a wildfire is determined by considering fire behaviour, values being threatened and the level of resources required to action the wildfire. Typically, the Land Operations Director will assess and determine the complexity of each escaped wildfire incident. A typical incident that would require a Type 1 Incident Management Team would have 150+ basic fire line personnel assigned to it. The number of personnel assigned to large incidents in Saskatchewan has been as high as 1500 fire line personnel.

Type 1 Incident Management Teams are composed of six key personnel: Incident Commander, Plans Section Chief, Operations Section Chief, Air Operations Branch Director, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief, that are qualified to manage escaped wildfires at the division or campaign level, including multiple project wildfires. Resource buildup will normally consist of over 150 basic fire line personnel and involve those wildfire incidents that have significant social and economic impacts to the area. Values at risk, anticipated fire weather and the complexity of the expected fire operation are other factors that will determine the need of an Incident Management Team.

Command Section

The Incident Commander is delegated his/her authority from a letter of direction, and from that point has overall authority and responsibility for the development, coordination, and implementation of a coherent suppression and service plan. This position is responsible to the assigned Land Operations Director and has full responsibility and authority for managing the fire control operation. The Incident Commander has the primary responsibility to organize and direct the fire organization for efficient and complete control of the wildfire.

Plans Section

The Plans Section Chief is responsible for collecting and analyzing information that is pertinent to the incident and developing the information into a comprehensive action plan for the wildfire. This is used by the Incident Commander and serves to document all actions on a particular fire.

Operations Section

The Operations Section Chief assists in formulating a plan of action to suppress wildfires in a safe and cost efficient manner. This position should not supervise more than three division bosses and is responsible to provide field direction to control the wildfire in accordance with the approved plan and see that work is accomplished in a safe and efficient manner. He/she has the latitude to make decisions within the limits of the plan developed for the incident.

The Air Operations Branch Director is responsible and accountable for the safe and efficient operation of all fixed wing and rotary aircraft assigned to the incident. This position is responsible to manage all flight duties and aircraft logistical and/or tactical exercises safely.

Finance and Administration Section

A Finance/Administration Section Chief is included in the organization and is responsible to control expenditures, approves purchases, directs, controls, monitors and concludes all accounting/expenditure transactions for the project fire assignment. In addition, this position oversees assigned personnel management for the fire assignment.

Logistics Section

The Logistics Section Chief is responsible for day-to-day logistics. She/he ensures fire personnel will receive equipment, food supply, and transportation. The Logistics Section Chief will also be responsible for base camp servicing, fuel storage, medical requirements and security.

Debriefing

Upon leaving Saskatchewan, imported personnel will receive a debriefing and an evaluation of performance will be provided either at the debriefing or by mail.
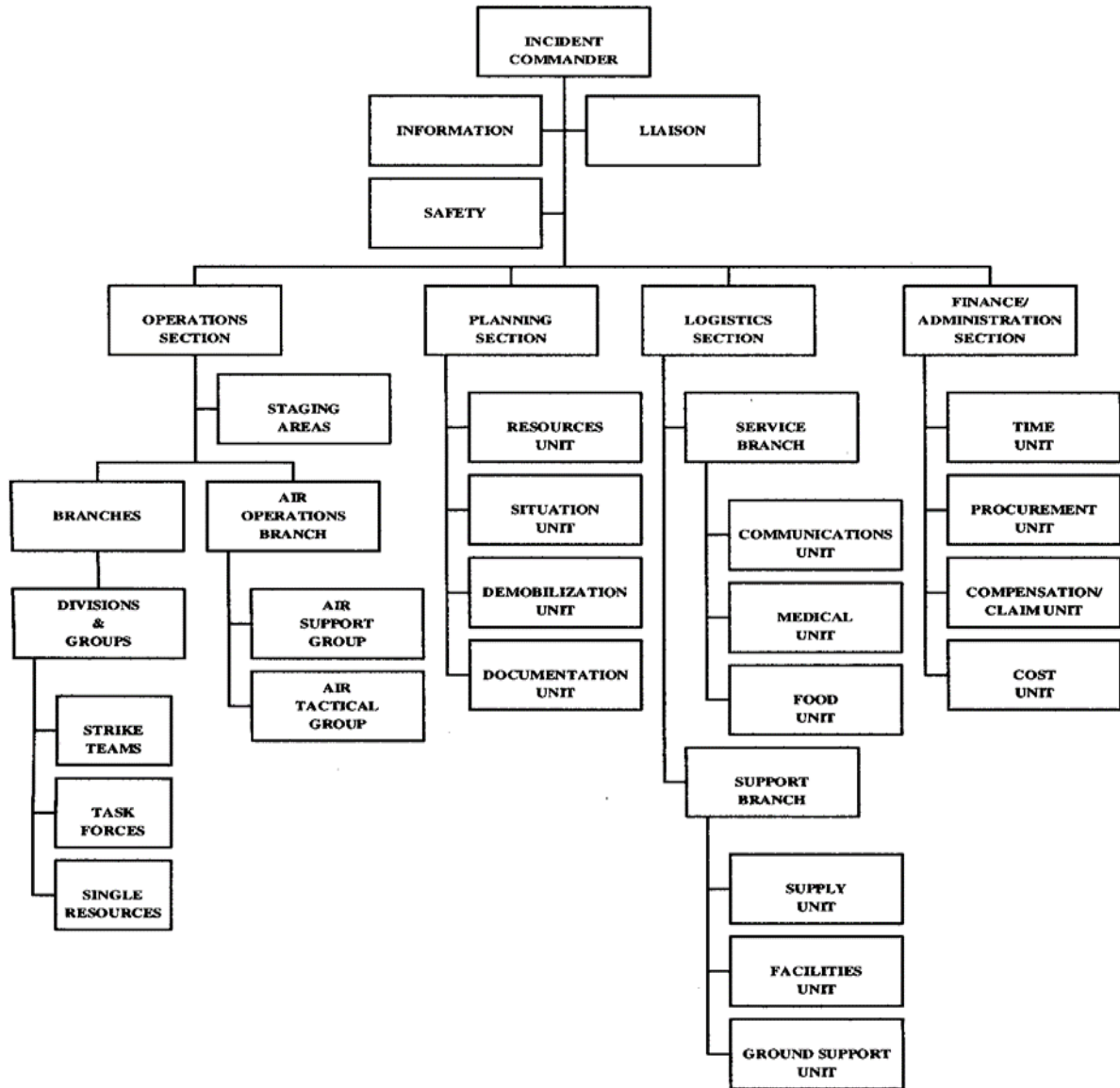
Figure 9 – Type 1 Incident Management Team

Safety

Agency Safety Policy and Procedures

In Saskatchewan the safety of personnel is always the first priority and if you feel unsafe in any task assigned to you, step back and discuss with your supervisor or Agency Representative (AREP). If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to bring them up. Incoming crews will not be required to action structural fires and Saskatchewan policy dictates that fire-fighting personnel are not to enter burning structures in attempts to suppress these fires. Firefighting at night is not a normal practice in Saskatchewan and is governed by standard operating procedures. Upon arrival imported firefighting personnel will be informed of any requirement for night firefighting and the procedures that must be followed.

Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency recognizes the importance of pre planning for emergency situations and will ensure that emergency plans, where required, are established to provide safe working environments and standardized procedures.

Agency Safety Concerns

Wildlife and Plants

Saskatchewan has diverse and bountiful animal and plant populations with only a few being a hazard to wildland fire fighters.

These include such species as bears, poisonous snakes, insects, and several plant species.

Bears: Saskatchewan is populated by the common black bear. Sightings and encounters with bears on the fire line and\or fire camp is a common occurrence. If the bear becomes a problem, report it to your Saskatchewan supervisor or contact person. Saskatchewan has trained fire staff and Conservation Officers who will deal with the bear if it poses a threat or danger to personnel.

Snakes: Saskatchewan has only one species of poisonous snake. This is the Western Prairie Rattle Snake and it is found only in south-western Saskatchewan close to the U.S./Canada border. Its bite is seldom fatal but medical attention should be sought immediately.

Insects: One of the most common dangers to wildland fire fighters is from insect stings and bites. Northern Saskatchewan abounds with mosquitoes, black flies, sand flies, wood ticks and other small pests. The danger comes from other larger insects such as wasps, hornets and bees; seek medical attention if bit or stung. Carry medication if allergic to these types of stings.

Plants: Saskatchewan has several hazardous plants the most common of these being the Stinging Nettle that causes irritation and rash to the bare skin it has come in contact with. In the southern part of our Province we have plants such as poison ivy. **Do not eat any berries or mushrooms that you cannot positively identify.**

Water: If absolutely necessary, the water in most of Saskatchewan's northern lakes is clean enough to drink untreated, but it is highly recommended that lake and stream water be treated before drinking. The possibility exists with any natural water source that harmful bacteria or other organisms may be present. Potable water is delivered to the fire camps and base camps where it is distributed to the fire fighters. Leeches and\or bloodsuckers are in most of the waterways. They are not poisonous but may require attention.

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Incident Reporting

Reports on incident actions are required in Saskatchewan and should be completed as accurately and quickly as possible. The Base Supervisor or Protection Officer will assist you with these.

Wildfire Incident Report on SK Dispatch

Saskatchewan uses a computer database called SK Dispatch, formerly known as the Wildfire Integrated Information Network (WIIN). Incidents are entered into this database and this information is available in real time to all users of the network. Decisions are often made on the information provided on the Incident comments that are recorded in Dispatch. It is imperative to keep information up to date and complete in a timely manner.

A Wildfire Incident Report contains all information and activities on a fire and is accompanied by a detailed map indicating area burnt, for applicable fires. These are filled in by the firebase once the fire has been confirmed and updated frequently until it has been extinguished. Your notes may be important to complete the required daily wildfire incident report.

Figure 10 - Example of an Incident entered on the WIIN database

Incident Status

Saskatchewan utilizes the following statuses for managing fire incidents:

Contained	Suppression action is taking place and the wildfire is not expected to grow in size within the next 24 hours.
Finalized	Incident is complete and the report has been signed off by the PO as accurate and correct.
Not Contained	Suppression action is taking place but the wildfire is expected to grow in size
Ongoing Assessment	The incident is being monitored regularly to assess risk to values in the area.
Out	No further action required.
Protecting Values	The incident is active and action is focused on protecting values which may be at risk.

Figure 11 - Incident Status

Medical Care Procedures

First Aid

Incoming crews must meet the requirements of their agencies Occupational Health & Safety Act and Regulations concerning first aid. Each crew should have one member trained in OHS & First Aid. If this is not the case, please inform your Saskatchewan supervisor.

Emergency First Aid Services

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency has contracted EMS companies, whereby EMS personnel complete with EMS kits (meeting Occupational Health & Safety requirements) is available on site at large fires. These personnel are expected to deal with serious injury and illness that may occur on the fire line or at the base camp. All injuries must be reported to the safety officer assigned to the fire camp or base camp or your direct Saskatchewan assigned supervisor.

Human Resource Policies

Code of Conduct

Human resources will be required to carry out their assignment in an efficient and competent manner. Human resources will not seek assignments for which they are not certified for. They are to avoid behaviour that might impair their fitness for duty.

Standards of Personal Behaviour

Human resources are expected to maintain high standards of personal behaviour whilst at the workplace and their camp or accommodation area.

Human resources are expected to ensure that their conduct and personal behaviour outside the workplace and while in transit, on Days of Rest (DoR) does not affect their fitness for duty, or reflect discredit on the Receiving Participant, their agency or Canada.
Behaviour which is considered unacceptable includes:

- Consumption of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverage while engaged on the deployment.

- Discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, retaliation (participation and/or opposition), sexual orientation, political beliefs and marital and/or family status.

- Falsifying records and/or giving false information.

- Driving while under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal drugs.

- Making statements or gestures to any colleagues that are derogatory, insulting or otherwise abusive. Making inappropriate comments to the media, governing bodies, co-workers or public.

- Refusal or failure to follow reasonable instructions from Receiving Participant management of human resources.

- Unauthorized use or misuse of Receiving Participant vehicles.

- Failure to follow the "chain of command" and abide by "reasonable" instructions.

- Raucous, aggressive, destructive and other such behaviour.

- Fit for work and impairment:

A judgment on a medical condition or problem should never be attempted or made, and assessments should be limited to an individual's fitness for work and/or ability to perform work and associated duties.
To be considered 'fit for work', deployed human resources must be in a physical, mental and emotional state that enables them to perform assigned tasks competently and, in a manner that does not threaten the safety or health of themselves or others.

Deployed human resources are ambassadors for their agency, Province/Territory/Federal and Canada, and as such high standards of behaviour and ethics are expected at all times. You should keep in mind that deploying is a valuable development opportunity and with this opportunity comes responsibility. By making yourself available for this deployment, you are agreeing to abide by the SPSA's as well as your home agency's requirements concerning Code of Conduct.

Human resources who do not comply with the principles or the standards of conduct will be returned to their home agency at their agency's expense.

Discrimination and Harassment

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency is committed to maintaining a respectful workplace, free from discrimination and harassment. Employees have the right to fair and equitable conditions of employment without discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, sex, and age. Harassment, a form of discrimination, includes threats, gestures, innuendos, jokes, slurs, display of offensive material, and comments on a person's physical appearance. Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency **will not tolerate** workplace discrimination and harassment on or off the work site. Any incidents shall be immediately reported to your supervisor.

Alcohol, Cannabis, Tobacco and Drugs

SOP#: ADM114.3 (exerpt):

Government has adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy with regard to the possession or consumption of any drugs or alcohol at the workplace or worksite (includes on the fireline, or in any temporary base camp facilities connected with fire fighting etc.).

This policy and procedure will apply equally to SPSA staff, Government staff from other Ministries and Agencies, Emergency Fire Personnel (EFP), and all contractors, pilots, engineers, or any other individuals associated with any aspect of the suppression efforts.

Any individual found under the influence of illegal drugs, narcotics or alcohol while on duty should be removed immediately from duty and dealt with according to disciplinary consequences and notification to the RCMP if applicable.

Provisions of this policy and procedure dealing with consumption/possession shall apply to out of province/country personnel exchanges.

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Diversity

Purpose is to improve representation of Aboriginal people, people with physical/ mental disabilities, members of visible minority groups, women in management and non traditional occupations in the public service. The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to an employment system which provides equality of opportunity and which leads to equality of results for individuals from the designated groups.
There are three goals of the Government of Saskatchewan's Workplace Diversity Program:

- To eliminate employment barriers caused by discrimination and disadvantage;

- To remedy the past effects of, and prevent future, discrimination and disadvantage; and

- To create a workplace that reflects the equitable distribution of designated groups in the labour market.

Reporting

The Provincial Response Centre is located in Prince Albert, with four field delivery Response Areas, located at Buffalo Narrows, La Ronge, Prince Albert and Saskatoon. These four Response Centre Areas maintain control of designated protection bases and staging areas.

The Western Response Centre in Buffalo Narrows maintains administrative control of the Dorintosh, Big River, Buffalo Narrows (La Loche), and Ile a la Crosse operations.

The Eastern Response Centre in Prince Albert maintains administrative control of the Weyakwin, Lower Fishing Lakes, Hudson Bay, Prince Albert, Cypress Hills operations.

The Northern Response Centre in La Ronge maintains administrative control of the Stony Rapids, Denare Beach (Pelican Narrows), and La Ronge (Southend) operations.

The Southern Response Centre in Saskatoon maintains administrative control of the Cypress Hills operations.

The Protection Officer (PO) manages an assigned Protection Area. The PO reports to a Land Operations Director who in turn reports to the Director of Land Operations (see Page 12).

Contact List

The Protection Area or Incident Management Team you are assigned to will provide your Agency Rep or Crew Leader with a list of the necessary local contact numbers and radio frequencies on request. (See Page 19 For radio frequencies).

If any contact is unavailable phone the **Provincial Duty Desk at 306-953-3430.**

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Annex List

Agency Map

Fuel Types Map

Radiocommunications Network

Radiocommunications Frequencies Chart

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