

Kansas Wildland Firefighter

Lesson 6 – Tactics

Tactical Options

- Three primary tactical options:
 1. Direct attack – attacking the fire directly on the fire's edge.
 2. Indirect attack – backing a fire to stop the fire
 3. Point protection – used when extreme fire conditions do not allow for either direct or indirect attacks.

Direct Attack

- Advantages:

1. Safety zone is with you as you fight the fire.
2. Maintains a secure anchor point.
3. No unburned fuel between FFs and fire.
4. Allows FFs to ensure tactics are effective.

Direct Attack

- Challenges:
 1. FFs may be exposed to extreme heat.
 2. Terrain and/or soil conditions.
 3. Extension or exhaustion of resources.



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Kari
Greer

Direct Attack

- Challenges (cont.):
 4. Rate of spread may exceed the rate of extinguishment.
 5. Potential need for tremendous amount of water.
 6. The fight against various fuel types.

Fuel Type Considerations

- Tactical considerations:
 - Grass – usually involves a mobile attack to stop high rates of spread.



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Fuel Type Considerations

- Tactical considerations (cont.):
 - Timber/brush – may involve handlines or hose lays due to limited access, but with a slower rate of spread than grass fuel.



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Direct Attack – Aviation Support

- SEATS are very effective in grass and lighter fuels to support direct attack.



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Direct Attack – Aviation Support

- SEATS can slow the rate of spread to allow ground units to follow up after the drop.



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Direct Attack – Aviation Support

- Helicopters may be used in grass in a similar way as SEATs.



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Direct Attack – Aviation Support

- Helicopters may be able to provide a quicker drop-to-drop time (5 minutes vs. 20+ minutes for a SEAT).



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Direct Attack – Aviation Support

- In heavier fuels, a helicopter can be more effective than a SEAT in allowing water break through the canopy.



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Indirect Attack

- An indirect attack is backing a fire to stop the spread at a barrier.
- Factors include:
 - Fire intensity not allowing a direct attack.
 - Terrain limits access to fireline.
 - Wet or muddy soil limiting access
 - Inadequate resources for a direct attack.

Indirect Attack - Backfiring

- Backfiring characteristics include:
 - Usually done in a 1-2-3 pattern
 - Need direct attack support along heel & flanks
 - Anchor points (a start place and a stop place)



Photo:
NWCG

Indirect Attack - Backfiring

- Backfiring characteristics include (cont.):
 - Must complete firing operations prior to flaming front reaching you



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Indirect Attack - Backfiring

- Backfiring characteristics include (cont.):
 - Escape routes and safety zones **MUST** be identified and communicated before initiating a firing operation.



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NIFC

Indirect Attack - Backfiring

- Aircraft can be used to support firing operations.
 - “Pre-treating” by dropping water on the unburned side of the road



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Indirect Attack - Backfiring

- Aircraft can be used to support firing operations.
 - “Checking” by dropping water on the fires’ edge to slow the spread



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Point Protection

- Used when extreme fire conditions do not allow for either direct or indirect attacks.
 - Protection provided at structures



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Point Protection

- Aircraft can be used to assist point protection operations by utilizing them as “eyes in the sky.”



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Tactical Water Supply

- Water supply considerations:
 - Nearest water sources for refilling tenders
 - Need one 3,000 gallon tender per 4 to 5 brush trucks



Photo: Kari Greer

Tactical Water Supply

- Water supply considerations (cont.):
 - Location of refill sites
 - Multiple fixed sites may be adequate in some cases.



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Tactical Water Supply

- Water supply considerations (cont.):
 - Location of refill sites
 - Multiple mobile sites allow for the movement of the water sources with the firefighting resources.



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Tactical Water Supply

- Cut down refill site turnaround times by having each tender coordinated with apparatus in the field.



Photo: NWCG

Mop Up Operations

- Grass:
 - Secure the fire perimeter by 10 feet in low wind conditions
 - Increase distance if high winds are predicted.



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Mop Up Operations

- Grass (cont.):
 - Look for potential sources of embers



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Mop Up Operations

- Timber/brush:
 - May require feeling under trees or brush to find embers
 - Longer mop up duration than grass



Photo: Kari Greer

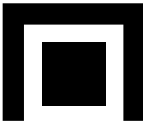
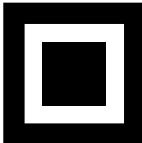
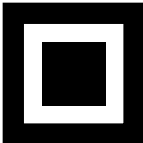
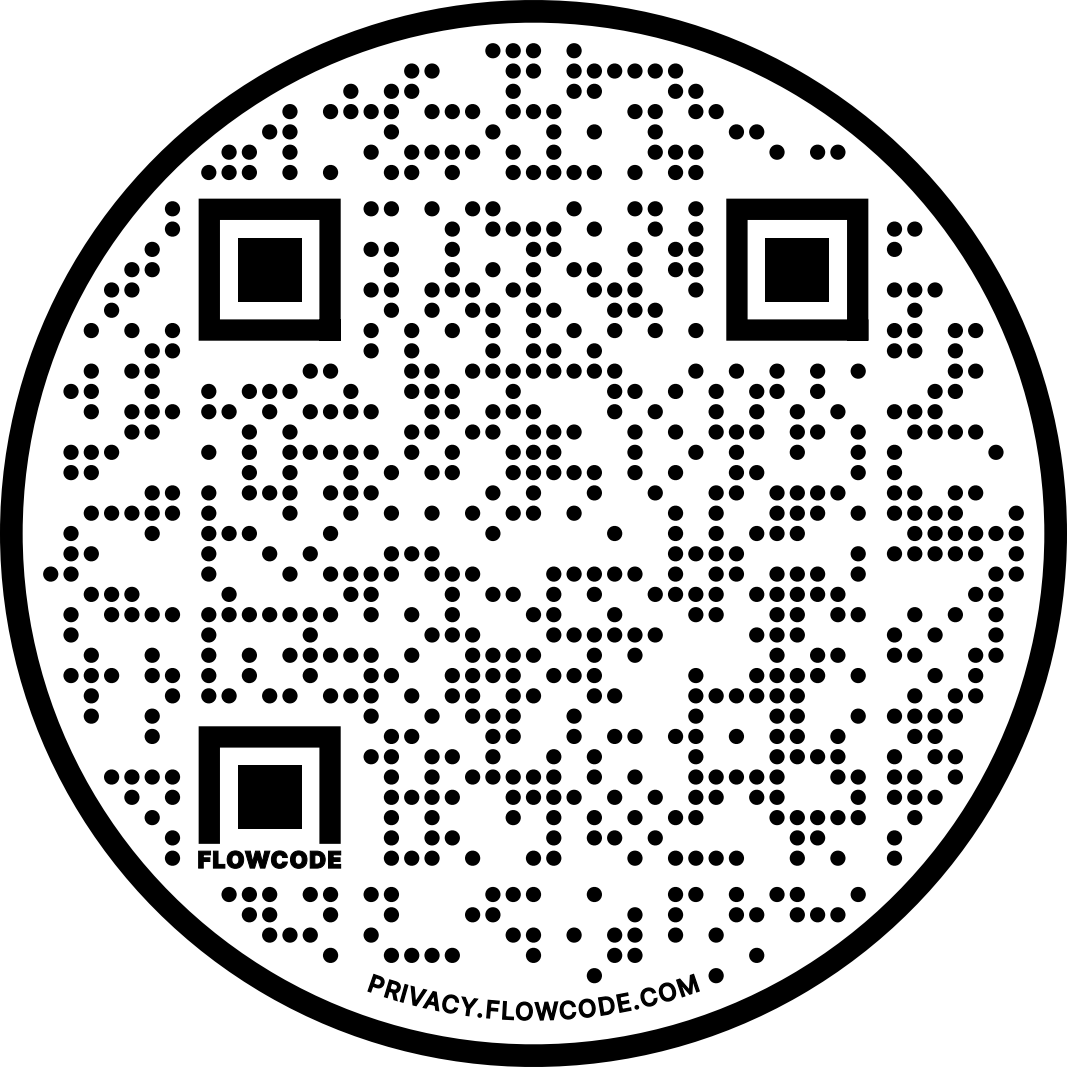
Mop Up Operations

- Timber/brush:
 - Mop up is $2 \frac{1}{2}$ times the fuel height
 - Example: 10 ft. tall brush will need a mop up 25 ft. off the perimeter



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Questions?



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