

Illinois Emergency Operations Plan

ESF 4 – Firefighting

Illinois Emergency Management Agency and
Office of Homeland Security

September 23, 2026



Illinois Emergency Management Agency
and Office of Homeland Security



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 State of Illinois Managed Plan Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4 Firefighting		
Title	ESF-4 Firefighting	
Managing Division/Branch	Division of Operations	Strategic Planning – Inter-Agency Strategic Planning Cell (ISPC)
Drafted/Evaluated	The ISPC, in coordination with the ESF planning group	September 2025
Evaluated Against	1. Prior version, if applicable. 2. Federal statutes and regulations. 3. State statutes and administrative codes. 4. Federal, state, and IEMA-OHS policies and directives. 5. National Preparedness Goal 6. National Response Framework 7. NRF Emergency Support Function Annexes 8. FEMA Community Lifelines 9. National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) 10. IEMA-OHS policies, plans, and common definitions list. 11. Corrective actions from After-Action Reports (AARs) and real-world events where this ESF was engaged	
Plan Type	☐ New ☒ Revised	
Branch Manager Review and Approval	Scott Gauvin, Manager of Strategic Operations and Preparedness	July 7, 2026
Senior Official Review and Approval	Theodore ‘Ted’ Berger, Director Clayton Kuetemeyer, Deputy Director Christopher Dodd, Chief of Operations Louise Conway, Chief Legal Counsel	September 23, 2026
Supersedes	August 2021, IEOP, Annex 11 Fire Services	



State of Illinois Emergency Operations Plan (IEOP)
Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4 Firefighting
Version: September 23, 2026

State ESF-4 Coordinator	Support Agencies & Organizations
Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)	Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS) Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Illinois National Guard (ILNG) National Weather Service (NWS)
Primary State Agencies & Organizations	
Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)	
Federal ESF-4 Coordinator	
Department of Agriculture Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) U.S. Fire Administration	



Table of Contents

Record of Changes.....	6
1. Introduction.....	7
1.1. Purpose.....	7
1.2. Scope	7
1.3. Policy.....	8
1.4. Situation	9
1.5. Assumptions	9
2. Concept of Operations	10
2.1. General	10
2.2. Notification, Alert, and Warning (NAW).....	10
2.3. Activation.....	10
2.4. Communications.....	11
2.5. Resource Management	11
2.6. Reporting Requirements	11
2.7. Organization	11
3. Roles and Responsibilities	13
3.1. State ESF Coordinator.....	13
3.2. Primary State Agency/Organization	13
3.3. Support State Agencies/Organizations.....	14
4. Authorities.....	18
5. References.....	18
6. Acronyms & Definitions.....	19



1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. Provide strategic and operational guidance for coordinated mobilization and deployment of sustained fire service capabilities.

1.2. Scope

- 1.2.1. Support for fire service is limited to state-approved requests.
- 1.2.2. State-supported operations are scalable and modular based on the scope and magnitude of the event and the ability of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).
- 1.2.3. State utilization of fire service resources is designed to augment the efforts of local and state government and voluntary and private sector organizations.
- 1.2.4. This function does not address:
 - 1.2.4.1. Force security and protection; see ESF-13 Public Safety and Security.
 - 1.2.4.2. Environmental protection and technical support for oil and hazardous materials incidents by the fire service; see ESF-10, Oil and Hazardous Materials Response.
 - 1.2.4.3. Damage assessment and disaster intelligence; see ESF-5, Information & Planning
 - 1.2.4.4. Search and rescue; see ESF-9, Search and Rescue.
 - 1.2.4.5. Support for population evacuation; see ESF-13, Public Safety and Security.
 - 1.2.4.6. Licensed emergency medical transport units under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH); see ESF-8, Public Health & Medical.
- 1.2.5. For this function, fire service operations include:
 - 1.2.5.1. Firefighting, prevention, and control of fire
 - 1.2.5.2. Control and mitigation of environmental damage



- 1.2.5.3. Mitigation and containment of hazardous materials releases
- 1.2.5.4. Decontamination
- 1.2.5.5. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- 1.2.5.6. Specialized rescue services, and
- 1.2.5.7. Other MABAS services and resources.

1.3. Policy

- 1.3.1. Implementation of this function will not supersede any AHJ's administrative protocols or policies concerning fire service operations.
- 1.3.2. Local AHJs retain the authority and responsibility for an incident, including coordination with follow-up resources.
- 1.3.3. Requests from non-MABAS member AHJs for fire service support will be directed to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
- 1.3.4. Resources deployed by the state or MABAS will not assume command and control, or authority and responsibility, for an incident.
- 1.3.5. Fire service resources requested and approved by the SEOC Manager will be assigned a mission number and a record of approval.
- 1.3.6. Procedures for utilization and control of fire service resources will incorporate operational priorities that include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.3.6.1. Protection of life
 - 1.3.6.2. Public health and safety
 - 1.3.6.3. Property protection
 - 1.3.6.4. Environmental protection
 - 1.3.6.5. Restoration of essential utilities
 - 1.3.6.6. Restoration of essential program functions
 - 1.3.6.7. Coordination as appropriate.



- 1.3.7. Fire service personnel will be trained in assigned missions and will be made aware of the potential risks involved.
- 1.3.8. Disaster intelligence and impact information collected through the situation and rapid needs assessment will be provided to the SEOC in accordance with ESF 5, Information and Planning.
- 1.3.9. The SEOC or designated state organizational element will provide technical and logistical assistance to activated or deployed fire service operations.
- 1.3.10. Agencies conducting fire service operations are responsible for training personnel in requirements and processes.
- 1.3.11. At the direction of the governor or designee, state agencies may be tasked with providing agency personnel in support of fire service operations.

1.4. Situation

- 1.4.1. An event has occurred resulting in damage to infrastructure, public or private property, or creating a threat to life or the environment.
- 1.4.2. Key stakeholders, partners, and executive officials are making requests for fire service resources to MABAS or state agencies.
- 1.4.3. Local government and private sector organizations are engaged in response and short-, intermediate-, or long-term recovery, preventing timely, coordinated fire service operations.

1.5. Assumptions

- 1.5.1. An event has occurred resulting in damage to infrastructure, public or private property, or creating a threat to life or the environment.
- 1.5.2. Key stakeholders, partners, and executive officials are making requests for fire service resources to MABAS or state agencies.
- 1.5.3. Local government and private sector organizations are engaged in response and short-, intermediate-, or long-term recovery, preventing timely, coordinated fire service operations.



2. Concept of Operations

2.1. General

- 2.1.1. The state does not have enabling authority or resources to provide direct fire service response to an area affected by a disaster.
- 2.1.2. The state will utilize capabilities provided through established intergovernmental agreements for fire service support.
- 2.1.3. The SEOC will support local governments and private sector organizations through MABAS resources approved by the SEOC Manager.
- 2.1.4. Primary and support agency SEOC Agency Representatives will identify situations affecting fire operations.
- 2.1.5. Needs identified through fire service operations will be incorporated into the SEOC Common Operating Picture (COP) and situational reports.

2.2. Notification, Alert, and Warning (NAW)

- 2.2.1. SEOC NAW of SEOC Agency Representatives will be handled in accordance with ESF-2 Communications, Appendix X-1 Notification, Alert, and Warning
- 2.2.2. The SEOC MABAS Agency Representative will notify MABAS leadership of the implementation of this function.
- 2.2.3. State agencies are responsible for internal and support partner NAW.

2.3. Activation

- 2.3.1. The SEOC will provide support for fire service coordination and management efforts through the activation of state agency personnel and mobile support teams (MSTs).
- 2.3.2. Upon activation of the State Unified Area Command (SUAC), the SEOC Manager, in coordination with the SEOC MABAS Agency Representative, may assign coordination and management of fire service resources to the SUAC commander.
- 2.3.3. The SEOC Management and Coordination SOP will be used to determine staffing levels necessary for state response and recovery coordination.



2.4. Communications

- 2.4.1. Communications throughout response and recovery will be conducted in accordance with SOPs and managed using established procedures, processes, and policies outlined in ESF 2, Communications.
- 2.4.2. Communications will be conducted in a National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant manner utilizing clear text and frequencies coordinated with the SEOC.

2.5. Resource Management

- 2.5.1. Resource management and logistics will be carried out in accordance with ESF-7, Logistics.
- 2.5.2. Resource management includes mutual aid and assistance agreements, the use of federal and state teams, and resource mobilization protocols.
- 2.5.3. Local governments and private sector organizations must be capable of providing timely, accurate, and actionable information and intelligence to support resource requests for fire service capabilities.

2.6. Reporting Requirements

- 2.6.1. SEOC information, intelligence, and situation reporting will be conducted in accordance with the SEOC Coordination and Management SOP.
- 2.6.2. The OSFM will serve as the coordinating point for fire service resources and will maintain situational updates, develop required intelligence briefings, and provide critical information obtained to stakeholders, key decision-makers, executive officers, and the SEOC.
- 2.6.3. As appropriate for the type, scope, and magnitude of fire service resource management requirements, the SEOC MABAS Agency Representative will provide reports to the SEOC on disruptions, resource activations, and deployments.

2.7. Organization

2.7.1. Direction and Control

- 2.7.1.1. State agencies and external organizations retain operational control of their fire service resources.



- 2.7.1.2. The SEOC is the single point of coordination for state support of fire service operations.
- 2.7.1.3. The SEOC Public Information Officer (PIO) or designee will coordinate the activities of public information representatives assigned to fire service operations. They will ensure that all communications with the public will be clear and accessible, regardless of any physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.

2.7.2. Coordinating Elements

- 2.7.2.1. The SEOC may assign an MABAS Agency Representative to a local or county jurisdiction, State Unified Area Command (SUAC), or State Area Command (SAC).
- 2.7.2.2. SUAC or SAC elements may be deployed by the SEOC to coordinate information and resource requirements for operations.
- 2.7.2.3. State-deployed Incident Management Teams (IMT) may be assigned as representatives to incident command sites in support of SEOC, SUAC, and SAC operations.
- 2.7.2.4. The SEOC MABAS Agency Representative will coordinate directly with state agency representatives to ensure coordination of fire service information, situational awareness, and intelligence.
- 2.7.2.5. Coordination between private sector organizations and fire service operations will be maintained through the SEOC and Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC).

2.7.3. Federal Coordination

- 2.7.3.1. IDNR will coordinate with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on wildland fire incidents involving federal property or teams.
- 2.7.3.2. IEPA will coordinate with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) on hazardous material incidents.
- 2.7.3.3. The OSFM will coordinate with IDNR and the Department of Justice (DOJ), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) on pyrotechnics and fireworks.



- 2.7.3.4. SEOC Agency Representatives, state agencies, boards, and commissions will coordinate with their federal counterparts in accordance with the enabling authority.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. State ESF Coordinator

3.1.1. Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)

- 3.1.1.1. Coordinates the utilization of required ESF-4 support to execute missions presented by the SEOC Manager.
- 3.1.1.2. Coordinates, integrates, and manages overall State efforts for ESF 4 Firefighting.
- 3.1.1.3. Manages and updates resource availability for ESF 4– Firefighting.
- 3.1.1.4. Assists in planning during activations and updates to the overall ESF plan.

3.2. Primary State Agency/Organization

3.2.1. Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)

- 3.2.1.1. Provide centralized coordination of fire service resources when requested by the SEOC.
- 3.2.1.2. Provide resources to supplement local fire service operations throughout the response and short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery.
- 3.2.1.3. Provide logistical support to state-recognized MSTs.
- 3.2.1.4. Provide long-term planning support for fire service operations.
- 3.2.1.5. Provide coordination of requested fire service resources through the MABAS Mobility Control Center.
- 3.2.1.6. Provide fire service resource dispatch services through the Regional Emergency Dispatch (RED) Center when activated.
- 3.2.1.7. Provide representatives to support or coordinate local, county, SUAC/SAC, and/or SEOC fire service operations.



- 3.2.1.8. Provide support personnel at the local, state, and incident levels.
- 3.2.1.9. Arrange for and provide direct representation with local, county, and state EOCs and fire chiefs in the designated area, as appropriate, to coordinate requests for firefighting assistance in structural or industrial fire detection, protection, and suppression operations.

3.3. Support State Agencies/Organizations

3.3.1. Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)

- 3.3.1.1. Collect, analyze, de-conflict, and disseminate fire incident information.
- 3.3.1.2. Coordinate with county emergency management agency officials, affected local governments, and private sector organizations for the collection, receipt, analysis, and dissemination of situational awareness and disaster intelligence information.
- 3.3.1.3. Assist agencies in prioritizing fire operations.
- 3.3.1.4. Assist in determining impact areas.
- 3.3.1.5. Develop and maintain maps, visual aids, and displays.
- 3.3.1.6. Coordinate with federal agencies and representatives.
- 3.3.1.7. Request federal assistance program authorizations.
- 3.3.1.8. Identify and determine state assistance program authorities.
- 3.3.1.9. Coordinate and provide public information, crisis communications, and rumor control for the state. Ensure that all communication with the public is clear and accessible, regardless of physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.1.10. Request assistance from supporting agencies as necessary to accomplish ESF 4 responsibilities.
- 3.3.1.11. Coordinates state firefighting resources by mobilizing firefighting resources in support of local and state wildland, rural, and urban firefighting agencies statewide.



3.3.1.12. Provides logistics support for mobilizing resources for firefighting.

3.3.1.13. Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC)

3.3.1.13.1.1. Coordinates the acquisition of private sector resources necessary to support fire services operations.

3.3.2. National Weather Service (NWS)

3.3.2.1. Provides fire/weather conditions and forecasting as needed, from the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, and/or from a nearby National Weather Service Forecast Office under the terms of existing interagency agreements.

3.3.2.2. Provides urban and industrial hazard analysis support through the Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

3.3.2.3. Provides fire/weather support under the terms of the National Agreement for Meteorological Services in Support of Agencies with Land Management and Fire Protection Responsibilities.

3.3.2.4. Provides forecasts of the dispersion of smoke in support of planning and response activities.

3.3.3. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

3.3.3.1. Coordinate with OSFM and MABAS on incidents and fire suppression operations required in unprotected or inadequately protected rural areas, considering the unique needs of the area, including physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments of the residents.

3.3.3.2. Compile and disseminate incident reports and summaries.

3.3.3.3. IDNR fire does not typically deal with hazardous waste and substances in wildland fires.

3.3.3.4. Provide Just-In-Time Training (JITT) to fire agency personnel in the areas of fire education, prevention, suppression, and damage appraisal.



- 3.3.3.5. Provide guidance and assistance in selecting and utilizing personnel protective equipment, tools, and other necessary equipment to fight wildland fires.
- 3.3.3.6. Provide available resources to assist in suppression efforts for fires on or adjacent to state-owned lands and properties.
- 3.3.3.7. Provide available resources to assist in suppression efforts for fires on private lands.
- 3.3.3.8. Provide fire prevention materials (e.g., Smokey the Bear costume, literature, etc.) to the fire agency. Ensure that all communication with the public is clear and accessible, regardless of physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.3.3.9. Coordinate and provide public information support, crisis communications, and rumor control. Ensure that all communication with the public is clear and accessible, regardless of physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.

3.3.4. Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)

- 3.3.4.1. Coordinate with OSFM for emergencies that threaten or involve the release of stored products from Underground Storage Tanks (USTs).
- 3.3.4.2. Provide technical assistance in assessing and evaluating threats to public health, public welfare, and the environment resulting from releases or threatened releases of oil and hazardous materials (HazMat), with consideration for the portions of the population that may be impacted by lower levels of contamination, which may not impact the remaining population.
- 3.3.4.3. Manage technical efforts to detect, identify, contain, clean up, dispose of, or minimize releases of oil/HazMat.
- 3.3.4.4. Provide technical assistance in assessing public health and environmental threats posed by oil/HazMat incidents, with consideration for the portions of the population that may be impacted by lower levels of contamination, which may not impact the remaining population.



- 3.3.4.5. Coordinate laboratory testing to determine conventional pollutants, drinking water contaminants, and hazardous substances.
- 3.3.4.6. Provide technical assistance on operating as well as assessing damage to public water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure, with consideration for the portions of the population that may be impacted by lower levels of contamination, which may not impact the remaining population.
- 3.3.4.7. Coordinate state access to federal oil/HazMat response programs and/or the Hazardous Waste Fund.
- 3.3.4.8. Provide situational awareness on the condition of affected public water supply systems, publicly owned sewage systems, landfills, uncontained hazardous waste sites, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act hazardous waste facilities, and other threatened situations that become evident during incident or disaster investigation.
- 3.3.4.9. Provide technical assistance in the disposal of certain types of potentially infectious medical waste identified in Illinois Administrative Code, Title 35, Parts 1420- 1422, with consideration for the portions of the population that may be impacted by lower levels of contamination, which may not impact the remaining population
- 3.3.4.10. Provides technical assistance and advice in the event of fires involving hazardous materials.
- 3.3.4.11. Assists in identifying an uncontaminated, operational water source for firefighting.
- 3.3.4.12. Assists in identifying critical water systems requiring priority restoration for firefighting, with consideration of potential medical, functional, or other additional needs or requirements of the public.
- 3.3.4.13. Provides technical assistance on issues concerning the impacts of firefighting chemicals on wastewater treatment facilities, with consideration for the portions of the population that may be impacted by lower levels of contamination, which may not impact the remaining population.

3.3.5. Illinois National Guard (ILNG)



- 3.3.5.1. Deploy UH-60 (Blackhawk) and/or CH-47 (Chinook) aviation assets to conduct aerial fire suppression, damage and fire spread reconnaissance, personnel and equipment transport into remote or threatened areas, emergency medical evacuation from fire zones, and airlift of large firefighting supplies or equipment as directed by the SEOC.
- 3.3.5.2. Deploy UH-60 (Blackhawk) and/or CH-47 (Chinook) aviation assets to conduct aerial fire suppression, damage and fire spread reconnaissance, personnel and equipment transport into remote or threatened areas, emergency medical evacuation from fire zones, and airlift of large firefighting supplies or equipment as directed by the SEOC.
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4. Authorities

- 1. Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act (20 ILCS 3305), as amended.
- 2. State of Illinois and MABAS Memorandum of Understanding, as amended.
- 3. Illinois Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, as amended.
- 4. Fire Investigation Act (425 ILCS 25), as amended.
- 5. Pyrotechnic Distributor and Operator Licensing Act (225 ILCS 227), as amended.
- 6. Fireworks Use Act (425 ILCS 35), as amended.
- 7. Gasoline Storage Act (430 ILCS 15), as amended.
- 8. Boiler and Pressure Vessel Storage Act (430 ILCS 75), as amended.
- 9. Elevator Safety Act (225 ILCS 312), as amended.
- 10. Robert T. Stafford Act, as amended.

5. References

- 1. Illinois Emergency Operations Plan, as amended.



2. MABAS Staff Reference, Field Operations Guide, as amended.

6. Acronyms & Definitions

1. For all definitions and acronyms addressed in this plan, please refer to the IEOP Base Plan, Appendix X-7 Glossary of Terms.