

Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) Establishment, Tracking and Reimbursement Procedures

Establishment:

An ongoing fire meets FEMA criteria to request a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG). Currently, for FEMA Region VI, that criterion is...

First, 100 or more homes are presently threatened (the fire would reach the homes within one hour if left unchecked). Second, some of those homes need to be threatened to the point of requiring evacuations. Third, FEMA would also like to see the evacuation duration such that a shelter would need to be opened.

If a particular day has a high likelihood of fires meeting FMAG criteria, email FEMA MOC to determine who will be the FEMA Fire Action Officer (FAO) for the day. Also contact USFS in Lufkin (936.639.8501) to determine who the USFS Principal Advisor (USFS PA) will be for the day or if daily conference calls are being conducted, ask during the call.

As soon as a fire meets FMAG criteria...

Email initial notification (Exhibit 17) to TDEM SOC, FEMA MOC, the FAO and the USFS PA. This becomes the State's official notification of intent to submit a FMAG request. Since the fire has to be uncontained at the time of FEMA notification, and some fires that meet FMAG criteria have the potential to be partially contained rather quickly and since the OMB 1660-0058 (the official request form for FMAG's) process can take a couple of hours or more to complete, by sending this email, FEMA should base the request on the conditions of the fire at the time of this email and not the conditions that exist when they receive the OMB 1660-0058. It is also not unusual to have multiple fires meeting FMAG criteria simultaneously. It is very important that this email is sent for each one since it may be hours before the OMB 1660-0058 is completed on the last of the fires. Required information to be included in the email...

The (FIRE NAME) in (COUNTY NAME), Texas is currently (SIZE IN ACRES) and is a direct threat to (NAME OF TOWN, SUBDIVISION, ETC...), (POPULATION) with (NUMBER OF HOMES THREATENED). Evacuations are taking place and shelters are set up (LOCATION IF KNOWN)

After submitting the initial email notification, begin preparing the OMB 1660-0058 request. The OMB 1660-0058 for the Livermore Ranch Complex (Exhibit 18) is an example of what needs to be submitted to TDEM SOC, FEMA MOC, the FAO and the USFS PA.

The following information will be needed to complete the OMB 1660-0058...

Block 1 – Texas

Block 2 – Today's Date

Block 3 – Time that the initial email notification was sent to TDEM SOC, FEMA MOC, FAO and USFS PA.

Block 4 – Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) that will sign the completed OMB 1660-0058.

Block 5 – TDEM Address

Block 6 – GAR's signature and today's date.

Block 7a,b,c – Temperature, Relative Humidity, Wind Speed and Direction (this can be obtained from closest Remote Automated Weather Station).

Block 7d – Can be obtained from our predictive services folks or the USFS PA as they will have to provide the prevailing weather conditions for the next 24 hours to FEMA in their report.

Block 8a,b – Number of Wildfires Controlled, Number of Acres Burned, Number of Wildfires Uncontrolled and Number of Acres Burning (this can be obtained from our EOC).

Block 8c– Existence of other fires (names and acres if available) nearby that limit firefighting resources (this can be obtained from our EOC).

Block 8d – Existence of other fires nearby that may result in a conflagration. Use the "Fire Complex" definition to determine if the nearby fires may result in the conflagration, i.e., multiple fires managed by the same Incident Commander and sharing resources (this can be obtained from our EOC).

Block 9 – Check both boxes since we use NFDRS and KBDI and enter the KBDI value. Use the average for the county (this can be obtained from our EOC or the predictive services web site).

Block 10 – Check Yes or No as to whether a burn ban is in existence for the County or not. Get this information from the Burn Ban Map Link on the TICC Web Site.

Block 11 – Check both Watches and Warnings Boxes since almost always there are Red Flag warnings or high wind advisories, etc... for the county with the fire. If not sure, this can be obtained from our EOC.

Box 12 – Use the time from the first report of the fire, usually obtained from TDEM District Coordinator (TDEM DC) email or Dispatch Tracker. Obtain the current contact information for TDEM RC's from the TDEM SOC (Exhibit 19). Keep it current. There is a lot of turnover in that position.

Box 13 – Whatever name used on this form will be the official name of the fire once submitted to FEMA. TFS or TDEM DC will be best source to find out fire name.

Box 14 – Date fire started is usually today's date, but not always.

Box 15 – If the fire started quite a distance from the homes/community threatened, enter the original longitude/latitude as (point of origin) and the current longitude/latitude below as (current). That way, when the FAO and USFS PA go to Google Earth to verify threats, the threats will be close to the fire and not way back at the point of origin. TDEM DC should be able to give you this information or TFS Incident Commander if on the fire.

Box 16 – Acres Burning can be obtained from Dispatch Tracker or the TDEM DC.

Box 16a,b,c – The acres will generally always be 100% state, but if not, try to get the best breakdown you can. Fires solely on federal lands do not qualify for FMAG's. If the fire is split between federal and state/private land, use only the threats associated with non-federal land.

Box 17 State – Use the top portion of the box to list state/federal ground resources and the bottom portion to list air assets. If more room is needed to list resources, use Box 18 and explain that it is not a list of additional resources needed (as the box title implies) but additional resources on scene.

Box 17 Local – Get the information for local fire departments and local resources from the TDEM DC. Specify that any other state resources such as TxDOT, DPS, etc.. and also county resources such as sheriff officers, county maintainers/dozers, etc... are needed for the completion of the request. List the state resources in the "STATE" portion of Box 17. By multiplying the number of fire departments by 3 a rough estimate of the number of trucks on scene can be estimated and by multiplying the number of trucks by 3 an approximate number of firefighters can be estimated. If evacuations or road closures are in effect, emphasize this in this block listing highway numbers/names closed and that law enforcement is assisting with road closures and evacuations. If there is insufficient room in the block to list everything, use Block 18, and as before, explain that

it is not a list of additional resources needed (as the box title implies) but additional resources on scene.

Block 18 – For Box 17 additions or, if the state is tapped out locally and needs more resources but they are unavailable, list that in this block. This is usually a good thing when it comes to FMAG approval. Always enter in this block if aircraft is requested but unavailable or unable to fly due to wind speeds.

Box 19 – Threat to Life. Best source of information is the TDEM RC. If not available or unknown to the TDEM RC, a best guess will have to do. If the whole community is threatened, use the population for that community, if not, use the average number of persons per Texas household from web based census (2.7 persons) and multiply it by the number of homes threatened.

Box 19a – Check the appropriate box. If “yes” cannot be checked, the FMAG will probably not be approved, but do not lie about it. It is what it is. Turn the OMB 1660-0058 in anyway and if it is denied, TDEM can appeal if so desired. They cannot appeal what is not submitted.

Box 19b – Like Threat to Life, a best guess may have to do if the TDEM DC cannot tell you.

Box 20 – Use the nearest town threatened. Get the population from a web search. If there is/are subdivision(s) threatened, try to get the name(s), list them in the “Subdivision” portion of Block 20. As for the portion of the Block titled “Additional Information”, use that block to describe what the fire is doing to the threatened homes, where the evacuations are taking place (name of subdivision(s) if possible or portion of town, etc...). Do a web search for the median home value in the nearest town and multiply that times the number of homes threatened and show that at the end of this block. If more room than the Block allows is needed, use the “Additional Information” portion of Block 23. Even though the blocks on this form allow scrolling down through them, the “official” FMAG request is faxed, so only what prints out will be seen by FEMA MOC.

Block 21 – If there are any casualties, list the number by category (can be obtained from TDEM DC).

Block 22 (1) – Number of homes Threatened can be obtained from Dispatch Tracker, TFS EOC or the TDEM DC. The threats need to be downwind of the fire. I have had county officials demand FMAG’s for fires that may have started close to homes/communities, but the threats were upwind from the head of the fire, thus never actually threatened or if so, only for a brief period of time and not at the time of initial notification to FEMA.

Block 22 a, b – % of primary vs. secondary homes. FEMA will only consider primary homes as part of the threat. Camp houses, lake houses, summer homes, etc... do not count toward the 100 homes threatened criteria.

Block 23 – Threat to Facilities such as buildings, roads, bridges, infrastructure, utilities, businesses, etc... Best source of information is the TDEM DC.

Block 23 – Additional Information – Use this portion of the block to list other threats besides homes. Hospitals, schools, nursing homes are good things to list and are usually looked upon favorably by the FAO. Oil fields and related equipment are good to list also. Use this portion of the block to list the shelters and locations and if Red Cross or other groups are there to assist evacuees.

Block 24 – Threat to Resources such as watershed, irrigation, flood control, environmental, economic injury, etc... Use the same sources as Block 23 to determine if anything can be checked off. Politically sensitive items are always looked upon favorably by the FAO. Things like cultural resources and environmental resources especially. Use the Additional Information portion of the block to explain any resource checked or to supply any additional information that shows the fire to be “big, bad and ugly.”

Block 25 – Any comments concerning the fire or request from TDEM

Block 26 – Something similar to...

This fire is a dangerous wind driven fire. Current fire size is 20,326 acres. The rate of spread is over 100 feet per minute or just over 1.2 miles per hour. Flame lengths are reported by the Incident Commander to be in excess of 30 feet. Fuel temperature is 97°, adding to the explosive nature of the fire. The fire jumped all containment lines this afternoon and is 0% contained. Ground resources are committed to structure protection as well as trying to stop the forward spread of the fire. Due to high, erratic winds, all aircraft except the heli-tankers are currently grounded. Evacuation of the public is the current priority. Explosive fuel temperatures coupled with low relative humidity and gusty winds is causing difficulty in slowing the forward progress of the fire.

After the OMB 1660-0058 is completed, sign preparers name in Block 26 and fax to TDEM SOC. Ask them to sign Blocks 6 and 25, prepare a map and email the request and map to FEMA MOC (Exhibit 20). Have them scan the signed form and map and email back for our records (Exhibit 21). Also email FEMA MOC, the FAO and the USFS PA the completed OMB 1660-0058. This will be the form straight from the hard drive without signatures. This gives them a chance to start the process while waiting for the signed fax to arrive from TDEM SOC.

Contact Information used in FMAG process...

FEMA-MOC-DENTON (fema-moc-denton@dhs.gov)

Below are the FEMA FAO's.

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Below are the USFS PA's

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To summarize...

TFS makes initial notification via email to TDEM SOC, FEMA MOC, the FAO and the USFS PA. TFS then prepares the FMAG request using the OMB 1660-0058 and emails to TDEM SOC who adds their required information to the application and then forwards the package via fax to FEMA MOC for review and final determination. TFS also notifies USFS PA to prepare and email their FMAG form to FEMA MOC and gives FEMA MOC and FAO a heads up that a FMAG request is forthcoming.

FEMA approves/denies FMAG request.

Upon approval of the FMAG request, a TX Number is assigned to the fire.

From this point forward cost tracking and invoicing procedures are the same as outlined in previous sections of this document.