

Wildfire

TER-REC0011 / Commission for Terrestrial Rescue

1. Introduction

Vegetation fires are becoming more frequent due to changing climatic conditions.

Forest fires in alpine areas are becoming an existential problem for the inhabitants of the valleys, as they may affect the protective forests that protect the settlements from avalanches.

For this reason, it is extremely important to fight such fires in the mountains quickly and efficiently.

The fire brigades are very well trained and equipped to fight these fires, but they quickly reach the limits of their capabilities in alpine and impassable terrain.

It is important to define our tasks and responsibilities:

First of all - In case of Wildfires Mountain Rescue Organizations should be prepared for

- Evacuation missions (Firefighters, forest workers, hikers)
- Rescue missions (Firefighters)
- Support missions (logistics support, air support, rope technics ...)
- Ongoing exchange with the firebrigades on site on the topic but also exercises in general to deepen the solidarity even more.

But we should not do

- Fighting fire or becoming a firefighting organization

As a second point, there are some key points in equipment we use for working in a firefighting environment:

- PPE
- Special equipment (Ropes, slings ...)
- Additional equipment for air transport

As a third point, define keypoints in training needs

- The use of special PPE
- Self protecting strategies
- Use of new rescue equipment
- Backup-Helicopters for fast evacuation / rescue

As a fourth point – cooperation and collaboration

- Talk to each other and have a plan
- Establish common SOPs (firefighters and mountain rescue)
- Find common borderlines and clear responsibilities
- Use and register existing local or national rules and regulations
- Plan and perform common field exercises
- Integrate into the greater ICS structure

2. Recommendation

The ICAR Terrestrial Rescue Commission recommends

Structural:

- The fire brigades always take the lead in the ICS in such operations
- The role of mountain rescue teams is supporting fire brigades:
 - Preparatory planning and implementation of safety-related measures for firefighting personnel
 - Securing firefighters during extinguishing work
 - Securing firefighters when fire brigade is going or leaving the scene of the fire
 - Securing firefighting equipment
 - Follow-up transport of extinguishing material
 - First Aid supply (Dehydration due to the heat, injuries ...)
 - Logistic support with specialized vehicles or other equipment
 - Support through local knowledge and terrain expertise

Restriction:

Mountain rescuers should not be involved in fighting fires under any circumstances. This is the sole responsibility of the fire brigades.

Training

- Ongoing exchange and trainings/exercises with the fire brigades for a good working together
- Ongoing exchange and trainings with special equipment

3. Equipment and Processes

Some of our members have already developed appropriate documentation for equipment and the organization of collaboration. They are happy to make these available and can be accessed via the links notified in the article on the ICAR-Webpage for this recommendation.

4. Glossary

Vegetation fires - Glossar – Webiste only in German
<https://waldbrandinstitut.de/Begriffe/index.php/>

History of Revisions	
----------------------	--

issued	2025 – Jackson (USA)
--------	----------------------