



# California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group

October 9, 2007



TO: P Michael Freeman, Chair  
FIRESCOPE Board of Directors

FROM: Ed Hollenshead, Chair  
California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group



The CWCG has finalized a concise set of principles to help guide fire suppression personnel operating in the wildland urban interface environment. These principles are not new, however they provide renewed emphasis on the fundamental imperative that the safety of fire fighters is the number one tactical consideration when operating in this environment. They amplify the importance of judgment in the making of decisions that involve risk, and call upon every fire fighter to engage only to the level their experience and training allow. These principles form the bedrock on which all operations should be based, and can serve as the core of safe and effective WUI fire suppression.



To that end, we are requesting the FIRESCOPE Board of Directors consider including these principles in the "Field Operations Guide", ICS 420-1, and any others of your publications that may be appropriate. Each of the CWCG member agencies has adopted these WUI operating principles, and will be forwarding them to personnel in the field to ensure they are trained and applied. Moreover, we will forward them to the National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group and ask that they adopt them, and include them, as appropriate, in all training and publications relating to wildland urban interface fire suppression.



Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you ahead of time for considering our request.



/s/ Ed

ED HOLLENSHEAD, CHAIR



## **Wildland Urban Interface Operating Principles**

- 1. The first priority for all risk-decisions is human survival, both of firefighters and the public.**
- 2. Incident containment strategies specifically address and integrate protection of defensible improved property and wildland values.**
- 3. Direct protection of improved property is undertaken when it is safe to do so, when there are sufficient time and appropriate resources available, and when the action directly contributes to achieving overall incident objectives.**
- 4. The firefighter's decision to accept direction to engage in structure protection actions is based on the determination that the property is defensible and the risk to firefighters can be safely mitigated under the current or potential fire conditions.**
- 5. A decision to delay or withdraw from structure protection operations is the appropriate course of action when made in consideration of firefighter safety, current or potential fire behavior, or defensibility of the structure or groups of structures.**
- 6. Firefighters at all levels are responsible to make risk-decisions appropriate to their individual knowledge, experience, training, and situational awareness.**
- 7. Every firefighter is responsible to be aware of the factors that affect their judgment and the decision-making process, including: a realistic perception of their own knowledge, skills, and abilities, the presence of life threat or structures, fire behavior, availability of resources, social / political pressures, mission focus, and personal distractions such as home, work, health, and fatigue.**
- 8. An individual's ability to assimilate all available factors affecting situational awareness is limited in a dynamic wildland urban interface fire environment. Every firefighter is responsible to understand and recognize these limitations, and to apply their experience, training and personal judgment to observe, orient, decide, and act in preparation for the "worst case".**
- 9. It is the responsibility of *every* firefighter to participate in the flow of information with supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Clear and concise communication is essential to overcome limitations in situational awareness.**