



# LAW ENFORCEMENT CHECKLIST

## for WILDFIRES

Law enforcement officers are often the first to arrive at a wildfire. This checklist from the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) will help responders assess the scene and take appropriate action, resulting in the preservation of life and property.

- ✓ Call the county 911 dispatch and MFC dispatch (833-MFC-FIRE). Local emergency resources will have water, and MFC will have heavy equipment and aircraft to assist.
- ✓ Provide dispatch with a good location of the fire. Look for a 911 address, nearest crossroad, or latitude and longitude.
- ✓ Wildfires can be hard to locate at night. Place someone at the access point from the main road with vehicle emergency lights on. Locate a good unloading zone for the unit.
- ✓ Report the estimated wildfire size in acreage (1 acre = a football field) and what fuel type the fire is burning in. Determine which way the wind is blowing and pull up an aerial map on your phone to check surroundings for hazards such as structures in danger, roads smoked out, right of ways involved, and gas lines.
- ✓ Protect life, including the public and yours. You may need to evacuate homes or businesses. Position yourself upwind of the fire to get out of the smoke, heat, and away from the head fire. Large parking lots or green fields are good safety zones. A safety zone should allow the fire to burn around you without putting you in danger. You should be able to stand in the middle of the safety zone and have a distance of the flame height times 4 of non-burnable fuel around you ( $4 \times \text{Flame Height} = \text{Safe Separation Distance}$ ).
- ✓ When structures are in danger, make sure it is safe and there is enough time for you to make an evacuation attempt. Evaluate the fire intensity and rate of spread. Wildfire moves extremely fast in light grassy fuels. Survey the structure for dangers such as a tree or a power pole burned out at the base that could fall and block your egress, a propane tank nearby that could explode, or if the structure is Firewise and not in danger at all.
- ✓ Make notes or take pictures of the scene that may help county fire investigators with an arson investigation. Take special interest in vehicle tags leaving the scene. Protect the ignition source location if it is safe to do so.
- ✓ MFC is on the MSWIN radio system and can talk with you and let us know the preferred special event channel.
- ✓ MFC will arrive on the scene with an Incident Commander to take over the suppression efforts and will request additional resources as needed.