



**WORKING MODALITY FOR
INTERAGENCY FOREST FIRE COORDINATION
GROUP (IFFCG)**

February 2021

ZHEMGANG DZONGKHAG

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Background

Forest plays an important role in providing numerous tangible and intangible services. It is also home to many rare and endangered wildlife species including flagship animals. Despite valuable contributions to the socio-economic development and habitat to wildlife, there are many drivers to deforestation and forest degradation. Among many drivers, forest fire is considered as one of the primary causes to the loss of forest cover and biodiversity. In February 2017, His Majesty commanded on to strengthen inter-agency coordination and ensure that the forest fire fighters are adequately and appropriately dressed and equipped while on fire management. Therefore, to ensure better coordination among different stakeholders in forest fire management, stakeholders of Zhemgang Dzongkhag conducted coordination meeting on February 01, 2021 to form Interagency Forest Fire Coordination Group (IFFCG).

Purpose:

The working modality of IFFCG is being framed to strengthen the coordination among the agencies during forest fire incidences within Dzongkhag. The IFFCG working modality is aligned with the Dzongkhag Disaster Management and Contingency Plan (DDMCP).

Objectives:

- ✓ To effectively manage forest fire and reduce risk of fire suppression
- ✓ To form central coordination group and formulate clear roles and responsibilities
- ✓ To ensure the safety of fire fighters during forest fire incidents
- ✓ To provide timely, efficient and effective firefighting action on forest fire incidents
- ✓ To achieve cost-efficient and optimal resource distribution for all forest fire

Working modality for IFFCG Operation

This working modality describes the method by which various forest fires fighting actions should be carried out in a coordinated approach during forest fire incidences.

1. Interagency Forest Fire Coordination Group

- 1.1. The IFFCG to be incorporated in the Dzongkhag Disaster Management and Contingency Plan (DDMCP) as one of the sections under the Operation Section.

- 1.2. Chief Forestry Officer (CFO) of the Divisional Forest Office, Zhemgang will lead the team of IFFCG as Incident Manager (IM) (Operation Section Chief, OSC) under the direct command of Incident Commander (IC) of Dzongkhag Disaster Management Committee.
- 1.3. IM OSC upon receiving fire incident information will assess the severity of the forest fire and accordingly inform IC and activate the IFFCG.
- 1.4. If the fire incidence falls under medium to large category, the IM OSC will activate Rapid Respond Team (RRT) from RBP, Desuung and Forestry personnel.
- 1.5. If the fire is not contained within eight (8) hours from the activation of RRT, IM OSC will activate backup team through focal from different agencies and if the fire is not contained after 24hrs, then Dzongkhag Incident Command System (DICS) will be activated under the command of IC.
- 1.6. IM OSC will prepare post-fire management report and submit to the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) with copy to IC and IC will submit information to any other agencies including media.
- 1.7. Dzongkhag Disaster Management Officer (DDMO) will coordinate all the logistic expenses of the fire incidents.

DZONGKHAG INCIDENT COMMAND AND INTERAGENCY FOREST FIRE COORDINATION GROUP

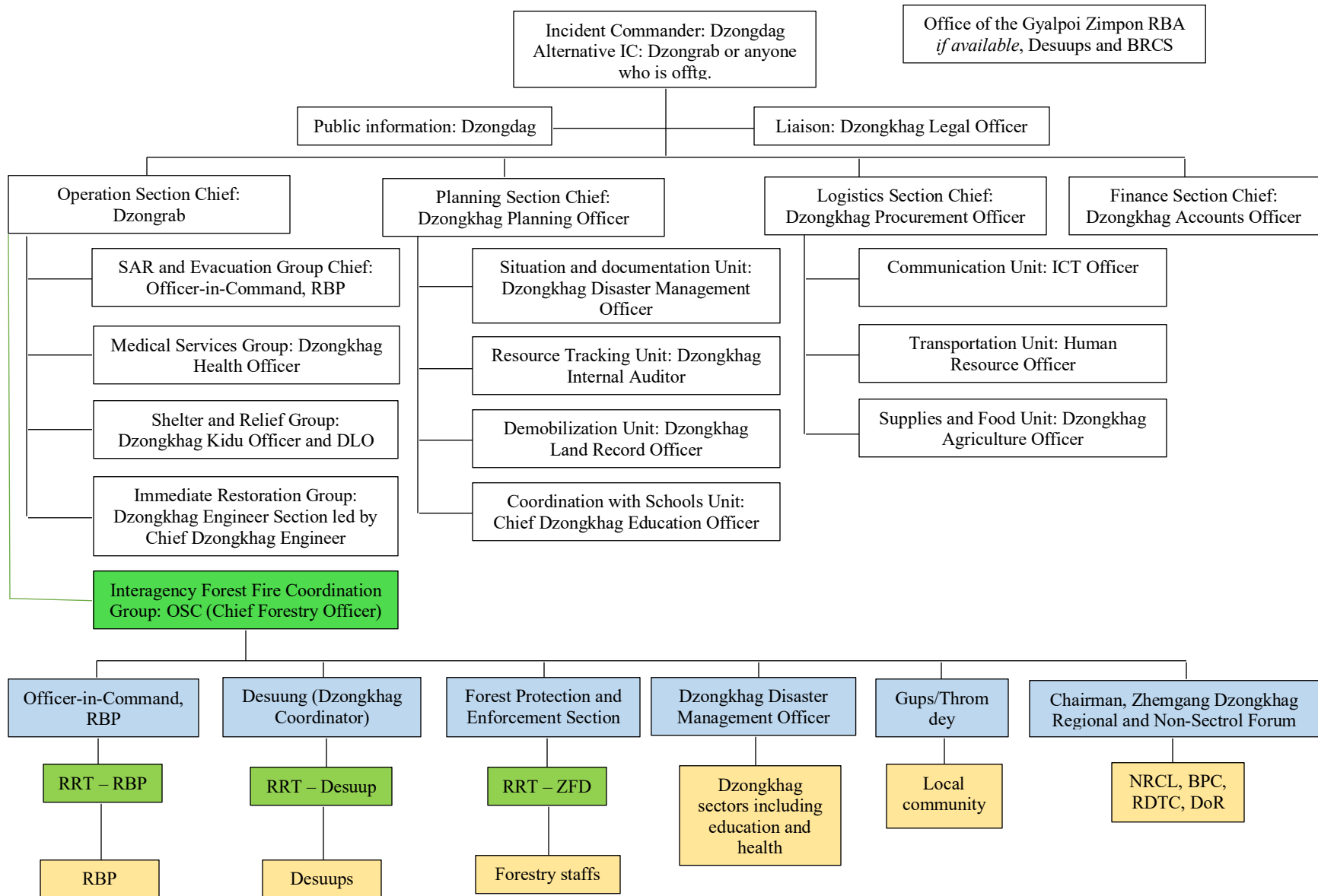


Figure 1: Dzongkhag incident command and IFFCG

2. Roles and Responsibilities of IFFCG (General)

2.1. Transportation

- 2.1.1. IM OSC will put up the requisition to Motor Transport Officer (Human Resource Officer), Zhemgang Dzongkhag for vehicle during forest fire incidences after approval from the IC. The MTO shall identify and arrange the transportation for IFFCG and firefighting equipment upon prior approval from the IC.
- 2.1.2. The expenditure incurred for the transportation including fuel will be arranged by the Dzongkhag Disaster Management Officer (DDMO) under the Situation and Documentation Unit with authentication from the MTO.
- 2.1.3. All the vehicles from different agencies will be requisitioned for emergency transportation during forest fire incidences. Additional vehicle will be hired from private parties after assessing the fire and geographical situation of the forest fire incident site.

2.2. Logistics

- 2.2.1. The Dzongkhag Procurement Section under Logistic Section will arrange logistics during fire incidents in coordination with IFFCG. DDMO shall facilitate reimbursement of expenses, food, refreshment and other logistics shall be made available to IFFCG members for respective agencies for optimal distribution to fire fighter.
- 2.2.2. The Logistic Team Leader (Dzongkhag Procurement Officer) will arrange all the food and others materials, as and when required during the operation.

2.3. Financing

- 2.3.1. The expenditure during operation will be arranged by DDMO and Dzongkhag Finance Officer as per the Operational Guidelines for Disaster financing 2017.

2.4. Firefighting Training

All fire fighters should be adequately trained in various firefighting technique, fire safety and coordination.

2.4.1. Zhemgang Forest Division will conduct basic firefighting training of stakeholders and communities as and when the budget is available.

2.6. Fire Fighter Safety

2.6.1. Briefing and proper engagement of firefighters

2.6.2. Ensuring availability and use of firefighting equipment and personal protective equipment

2.6.3. Engaging first aid team

2.7. First Aid Team

The IM OSC will alert first aid team through Dzongkhag Health Officer (DHO) and deploy with RRT.

2.8. Coordination and communication

In order to provide prompt and well-organized suppression response and to ensure safety of fire fighters during forest fire incidents, interagency coordination and communication flow are essential.

2.8.1. Coordination Protocol

The IM will coordinate with members of IFFCG in all respect of forest fire incidences.

2.8.2. Communication Protocol

An appropriate social media group will be opened for quick communication among IFFCG and all the head of agencies will be member of the social media group.

2.9. Water Tanker

2.9.1. RBP will deploy water tanker where necessary and feasible.

3. Rapid Response Team (RRT)

Rapid response team (RRT) will be deputed from Forestry, Royal Bhutan Police and *Desuung* to response quickly and effectively to all kinds of forest fire incidences within Zhemgang Dzongkhag.

3.1. The RRT will be alerted as and when forest fire incidences information are received by the IM through respective head of the agencies.

3.2. RRT from each agency should be led by the crew leader.

3.3. The appropriate number of RRT will gather in designated area and brief by the IM.

3.4. The RRT will be deployed to the forest fire incident site.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of RRT

4.1. The RRT will proceed to the forest fire incident site with firefighting equipment and PPE.

4.2. The RRT crew leader shall conduct assessment of forest fire severity and submit report to the IM immediately.

4.3. If the forest fire is manageable, RRT will start containing the fire.

4.4. If the fire is unmanageable, RRT crew leader will immediately seek support from the backup team through IM.

4.5. The RRT will organize and depute backup team according to the fire situation.

5. Backup Team

Based on the report from RRT, the backup team will be alerted from the agencies identified under IFFCG through their respective head.

5.1. The respective agency head will gather available backup team and report the number of heads to the IM.

5.2. All the backup team will gather at the designated area and brief by the IM.

5.3. The backup team will be deployed to the forest fire incident site led by group leader.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of backup Teams

6.1. The backup team will proceed to the forest fire incident site with available firefighting equipment and PPE.

6.2. The backup team will report to the RRT crew leader for instruction and directions.

6.3. As per the briefings and directions provided by the RRT crew leader, backup team will start containing forest fire.

7. Report

7.1. The report of incident will be compiled by the IM OSC as per the prescribed format.

7.2. The IM OSC will submit report to the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) with copy to IC. IC will submit report to Department of Disaster Management through system and to any agencies including media.

Annexure 1: Agencies of Interagency Forest Fire Coordination Group

Sl.#	Agency
1	Dzongkhag Administration
2	Zhemgang Forest Division
3	Royal Bhutan Police
4	Desuup
5	Rural Development Training Centre
6	Zhemgang Thromdey
7	Gewog Administration
8	Regional Office, Department of Road, Tingtibi
9	Bhutan Power Corporation Limited
10	Schools
11	Hospitals
12	Natural Resource Development Corporation Limited

Annexure 2: Transportation

Sl.#	Agency	Type
1	Dzongkhag Administration	Hilux and DCM
2	Bhutan Power Corporation Limited	DCM
3	Royal Bhutan Police	Tanker
4	Zhemgang Forest Division	Hilux
5	Gewogs	Bolero each
6	Schools	Bus
7	Rural Development Training Centre	Bus
8	Department of Road	Hilux
9	Hospitals	Ambulance

The following type of forest firefighting equipment will be necessary;

Annexure 3: Equipment

Sl.#	Tools/equipment	Quantity (available)	Unit	Required	Unit
1	Handsets	10	Nos.	-	
2	Fire rake	4	Nos.	26	Nos.
3	Spade	0	Nos.	30	Nos.
4	Water bag pump	4	Nos.	26	Nos.
5	Water bottle	0	Nos.	30	Nos.
6	Torch	0	Nos.	30	Nos.
7	Whistle	0	Nos.	5	Nos.
8	Smoke mask	30	Nos.	5	Nos.
9	Knife (<i>Paatang</i>)	0	Nos.	30	Nos.
10	Helmet	14	Nos.	16	Nos.
11	Folding shovel	4	Nos.	26	Nos.
12	Pic-axe hammer	13	Nos.	0	Nos.
13	Fire jacket	10	Nos.	0	

Annexure 4: Focal Officer for Interagency Forest Fire Coordination Group

Sl. #	Agency	Focal (Position)	Contact number
1	Dzongkhag Administration	Dzongkhag Disaster Management Officer (DDMO)	16901642
2	Forestry	Forest Protection and Enforcement Section	17933849
3	Royal Bhutan Police	Officer-in-Command, Zhemgang PS	17800394
4	Desuung	Dzongkhag Coordinator	17610599
5	Institutions	BPC DoR RDTC NRDCL	17111623 17606832 17653464 77733161
6	Geog Administration/ Thromdey	Gup (Nangkor) Gup (Bardo) Gup (Trong) Gup (Shingkhar) Gup (Nganla) Offtg. Gup (Goshing) Gup (Bjoka) Thromdey Ngotsab	77873885 17704755 17856759 17866591 17686938 17514415 17962066 17316302