

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354

January 11, 2002

In Reply Refer To:
9210 (FA-260)

EMS TRANSMISSION 1/11/02
Information Bulletin No. OF&A 2002-022

To: State Directors

From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Subject: Internet Impact Statements

DD: 1/16/02

As we discussed on the Fire Leadership Team (FLT) conference call yesterday, we are gathering impact statements that address how the lack of internet access is impacting the Bureau's fire and aviation program. In addition, we are working with NIFC's Governing Board to gather other agency impact statements.

In order to fully convey how this is affecting the Office of Fire and Aviation (OF&A), I am requesting that each State and OF&A Group Manager identify impacts for all IRM systems that they no longer have access to as a result of the disabling of internet connections.

I have attached a document that was sent forward to the Bureau's Washington Office on December 21. The intent of the document was to provide a sampling of impacts to the Bureau's fire and aviation program.

Please review the attached document and provide any additional impacts for your State/Program Area. Impact Statements should be coordinated with your State CIO. The format should be the same as in the attachment. In order to avoid duplication for "National" systems you only need to identify them by name. Impact statements will be compiled and consolidated by the OF&A.

Impact statements need to be completed and forwarded to Venetia Gempler, in the BLM External Affairs Office, no later than COB, Wednesday, January 16.

If you have any questions please contact John Gebhard (208/387-5164), or Venetia Gempler (208/387-5145).

Signed by:
Timothy M. Murphy
Acting, Director of Fire and Aviation

Authenticated by:
Terry L. Kelly
Staff Assistant

Attachment

Distribution:

W. Hord Tipton, 5640 MIB
State FMOs
State CIOs
Anne Jeffery, 5627 MIB
Group Manager, Planning & Resources
Group Manager, Support Services
Group Manager, Fire Operations
Group Manager, Aviation
Chief, Office of External Affairs
EEO Manager
International Fire & Aviation Program Manager

**BLM Office of Fire and Aviation Critical Functions
Impaired by Curtailed Internet Access
December 21, 2001**

BLM's Office of Fire and Aviation (OFA) consists of three separate networks – Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) OFA Stand-Alone Network; Vendor-Provided External Network; and Internal. The original request for relief from the court for OFA stipulated the WFMI website and a related system, called Automated Sorting, Conversion and Distribution System, be reconnected on a limited basis for the most critical applications. It is an external site that we are able to assure had no access to the BLM/DOI corporate network and no Individual Indian Trust Data. (See attached chart.)

OFA is affected in many ways by the lack of internet access. Some of the effects may seem insignificant, but they could pose a risk to public safety and property. Among the impacts are:

- C OFA operates a system of 1,150 “remote automated weather stations,” or RAWS units. Modem access is needed for technicians to repair, program and troubleshoot the weather stations. The impacts of not having modem access will multiply as fire season approaches. Also, the Department of the Defense, through its Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Plan, or CSEPP, depends on information provided by the weather stations when chemical weapons are destroyed, so the lack of access has consequences beyond the fire community.
- C OFA's internal network is still disconnected from the internet until the BLM network is certified. The internal network is critical for the National Interagency Coordination Center to dispatch resources and exchange information with regional centers across the country. One way this is accomplished is through the Dispatch Messaging System (DMS), administered by the Forest Service. This is a vital function at NIFC, and could have ramifications on public safety and property, especially when fire activity increases, or other natural or national disaster strikes.
- C December and January are the months when BLM does most of its recruiting and hiring of seasonal firefighters. Much of the hiring depends on automated systems. Currently, hiring is at a standstill, leaving BLM vulnerable to not having a sufficient number of adequately trained firefighters.
- C OFA's ability to contract aircraft for the fire season is also impaired. Without availability to a stand-alone system called ARINC, contractors cannot access critical information needed to prepare bids.

- c The NIFC public website receives up to eight million hits per month. It provides important information to the public and firefighters regarding safety and accidents, daily situation reports, maps, information on prevention and education, and serves as a link to hundreds of other sites of partners involved with fire and land management. We are working to ensure adequate security exists at this site before asking the court for relief. Certifications asking that the site be reconnected are being prepared.

Although this time of the year represents a low point for fire activity, it is the time when preparation and training for the upcoming season must occur. Continued lack of internet access is a tremendous liability. There is little question that public and firefighter safety and protection of natural resources and property may be compromised by the court order.