



WASHINGTON STATE
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

Washington Invasive
Species Council

MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION (MAC) SYSTEM GUIDE

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Multi-agency coordination is a process that allows all levels of government and all disciplines to work together more efficiently and effectively.

Purpose

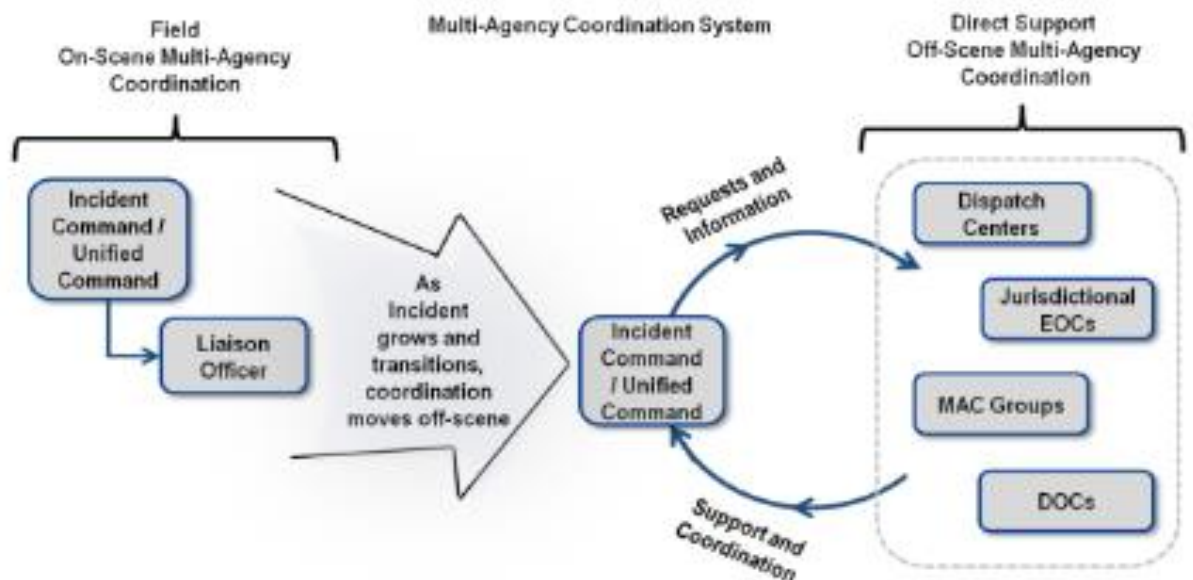
The Multi-agency Coordination System Guide has been developed to support a greater understanding of a multi-agency coordination (MAC) group, provide guidance on development and implementation of a MAC and offer tools and job aids to enhance functions within a MAC.

Multi-agency coordination occurs whenever personnel from different agencies that have legal responsibilities to abate the emergency, jurisdictional authority, and/or critical resources to support the response. While informal arrangements among agencies can be made to work, it is more effective to establish MAC System procedures in advance in a planned and organized fashion.

In the context of this guide, a Multi-Agency Coordination System provides the architecture to support coordination for incident prioritization, scarce resource allocation, communications systems integration, and information coordination. The MAC System assists agencies and organizations to respond to an incident. The elements of the MAC System include facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications. A Multi-Agency Coordination Group may be convened by an EOC Director or other authority to establish priorities among multiple competing incidents, provide coordinated decision making for resource allocation among cooperating agencies, harmonize agency policies, and offer strategic guidance and direction to support incident management activities. MAC Groups convened to prioritize incidents for the allocation of scarce resources should consist of administrators or executives, or their designee, who are authorized to commit agency resources and funds.

MAC System Overview

Multi-agency coordination results from the participation of agencies and disciplines involved at any level of an organization working together in a coordinated effort to facilitate decisions for overall emergency response activities, including the sharing of critical resources and the prioritization of incidents. Multi-agency coordination occurs at an EOC when multiple agencies are working together to support incident needs. First responders successfully utilize multi-agency coordination whenever multiple agencies respond to an incident, through a unity of effort, which can be further strengthened by use of Unified Command. Unified Command provides multiagency support and coordination when an incident grows in complexity or multiple incidents occur in the same period.



MAC System Elements

The primary elements of the MAC System include facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications integrated into a common system with responsibility for coordination of resources and support to emergency operations.

- **Facilities:** When convening a MAC Group, consideration is given to how much space is needed within a given building as well as the need for infrastructure support. The facility should be able to provide adequate conference rooms, individual workspace with telephones, computer and internet capabilities for agency representatives. Consideration can also be given to establishing a MAC group or components of it in a virtual environment.
- **Equipment:** Furniture, computers, internet access, telephones, video and teleconferencing capability, electronic and static display equipment, televisions, and vehicles to deliver equipment should be available. Service, support, and maintenance considerations must also be addressed to ensure availability of the needed equipment items. Routine maintenance schedules, replacement of communications equipment, and equipment budgeting should be included in planning. Inspections, testing, and operations of equipment not used for extended periods of time should occur to ensure reliability is maintained.
- **Personnel:** The MAC Group must employ personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities and authorities to accomplish the objectives at hand. Personnel convened as part of a MAC Group that is tasked to prioritize incidents and allocate scarce resources may consist of agency administrators or executives, or their designees, who are authorized to commit agency resources and funds to support emergency operations.
- **Procedures:** Procedures help to define how organizations will work together in the MAC System. Procedures include processes, protocols, agreements and business practices that describe the activities, relationships, and support the ability of the MAC System to function. MAC Group operating procedures might include concept of operations, functional checklists, instructions for using forms, how to prioritize incidents, or other protocols that are beneficial for managing and participating in multi-agency coordination. Coordination processes, procedures, protocols, and agreements should be stressed during training and demonstrated through regular exercise and testing programs.
- **Communications:** Communication strategies should be established to enhance information flow to involved agencies and jurisdictions. This includes both protocols and interoperable communications capabilities. Common terminology, standards and procedures should be established and detailed in plans and agreements.

MAC Functions

The use of the MAC System promotes the scalability and flexibility necessary for a coordinated response during large and escalating incidents. The system supports the management and coordination of resources and information above the field level. This helps ensure that those involved in the support and coordination of policy level decision making have a common operating picture. The primary function of the Multiagency Coordination System (MACS) is to coordinate activities above the field level (or incident level).

1. Situation Assessment: The Situation Assessment function includes the collecting, processing, and display of all information needed to make resource allocation decisions in support of emergency operations. This information helps to identify and determine operational needs for the development of a common operating picture. Situation assessment may take the form of:
 - a. Consolidating situation reports or traffic conditions
 - b. Receipt of intelligence-related information
 - c. Damage assessments
 - d. Incident maps and status boards
 - e. Weather report or forecasts
 - f. Resources assigned, available and out of service
 - g. Geospatial Information System data

2. Incident Prioritization: The second MAC System function is to review the intelligence gathered from the situation assessment in order to establish incident priorities. When scarce resources are requested for assignment to multiple incidents, an approved methodology should be applied that includes the following variables:
 - a. Situation Status: Current and projected situation, needs and prognosis.
 - b. Resource Status: Available and committed resources.
 - c. Considerations: Incident review factors.
 - d. Scoring System: Incident rating scale. ([Appendix A](#))
 - e. Priority List: A concept for listing incidents in priority order.

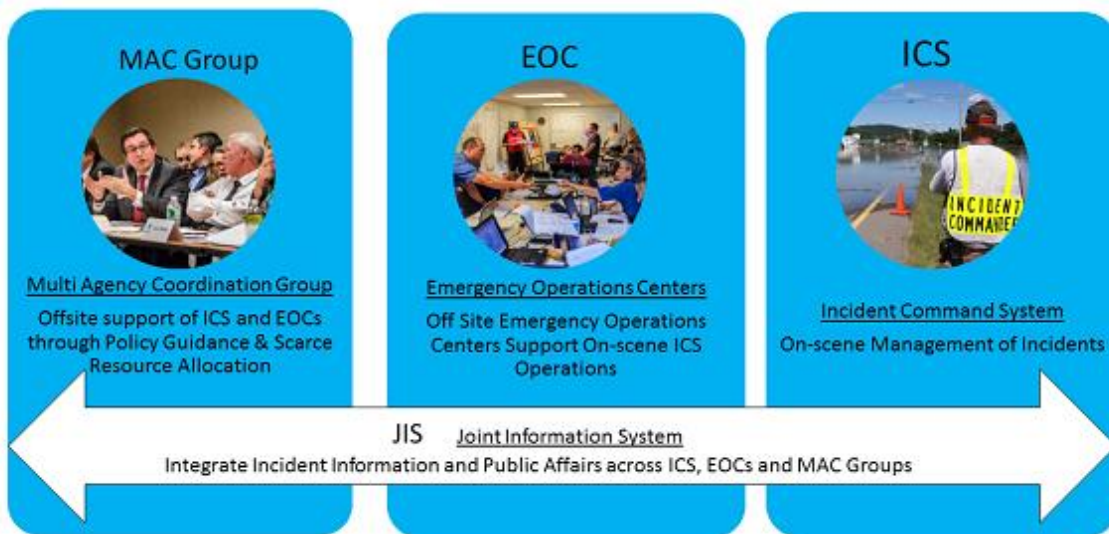
3. Critical Resource Acquisition & Allocation: The third MAC System function involves implementing the incident priority list in order to allocate available resources. A three-step process can be used to address this activity:
 - a. Step 1: Identify and List the Requested Resources
 - i. Consult with staff coordinating requests for assistance.
 - ii. Gather and describe the requested resources that are considered scarce.
 - iii. List the number of units or single resources being requested.
 - b. Step 2: Identify the Incidents / Jurisdictions Requesting Assistance
 - i. Identify the incidents / jurisdictions that are requesting assistance.
 - ii. Include contact information for follow up coordination.
 - c. Step 3: Identify the Jurisdiction / Agencies with Available Resources
 - i. List the jurisdictions / agencies with resources that meet the requested need.
 - ii. Each assisting jurisdiction / agency should list the number of committed and available resources within their authority.
 - iii. Assign available resources based on the established priority list.
 - iv. Document if unable to fill (UTF) the request

4. Support for Policy Level Decision Making: A fourth MAC System function involves assisting the EOC Director and/or Incident Commander and other officials with policy-level decision making and interagency coordination. Incidents sometimes require short-term modification of, or relief from, specific policies, procedures, and protocols. The MAC System serves as a tool for building consensus on decisions that address the concerns of all group members as closely as possible.

5. **Information Sharing:** By virtue of the situation assessment, personnel in the MAC Group share information on incidents within their area of responsibility, as well as provide agency / jurisdictional contacts for media and other interested organizations. Incident information is coordinated and disseminated for both internal and external use. Internal dissemination may include participating MAC Group agencies, EOCs, Incident/Unified Command, private industry and critical infrastructure partners, other federal, state, tribal, local, and volunteer agencies, elected and appointed officials and Public Information Officers (PIO). External dissemination includes sharing information with the news media through a Joint Information System (JIS) / Joint Information Center (JIC).

6. **Coordination with Elected and Appointed Officials:** Keeping elected and appointed officials at all levels of government informed is another function of the system. Maintaining the awareness and support of these officials and decision-makers, particularly those from jurisdictions within the affected area, is extremely important, as scarce resources may need to be moved to a higher priority incident. Elected and appointed officials may participate in MAC System activities and should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for successful emergency management and incident response. These officials can include administrative and political personnel, as well as department or agency administrators/executives who have leadership roles in a jurisdiction, and legislators and chief executives, whether elected (e.g., governors, mayors, sheriffs, tribal leaders, and county executives) or appointed (e.g., county administrators and city managers). Elected and appointed officials may also be called upon to help shape and revise laws, policies, and budgets to aid in preparedness efforts and to improve emergency management and incident response activities.

7. **Coordination between MAC System Components:** A critical part of the MAC System is outlining how each component (EOCs and MAC Groups) communicates and coordinates with each other. Gaps or disconnects can negatively impact scarce resource support to emergency operations in the field. Personnel involved in multi-agency coordination supporting an incident may be responsible for incorporating lessons learned into their procedures, protocols, business practices, and communications strategies. These improvements may need to be coordinated with other appropriate emergency management and/or public safety organizations.



Roles and Responsibilities

MAC Group responsibilities include:

- a. Prioritizing incidents or jurisdictions based on the following factors:
 - a. Life and Safety Threats
 - b. Property/Infrastructure Damage Threats
 - c. Potential for Loss and Resource Issues
 - d. Incident Complexity and Duration
- b. Acquiring resources and providing resource allocation decisions or recommendations to the EOC/IC. MAC Group Representatives must have full authority to represent their agency to:
 - a. Prioritize incidents.
 - b. Establish resource allocation priorities.
 - c. Commit to expenditures of their organization's funds and utilization of resources.
- c. Provide information regarding resources including:
 - a. Ensure that their agency resource situation status is current.
 - b. Determine specific agency resource capabilities and needs.
 - c. Determine agency resource availability (including availability for out of jurisdiction assignment).
- d. Anticipate future resource needs and develop strategies and contingency plans.
- e. Conduct information coordination (communicate "decisions" back to agencies).

Incident Action Planning

The incident action planning (IAP) process and IAPs are central to managing incidents. The incident action planning process helps synchronize operations and ensure that they support incident objectives. Incident action planning is more than producing an IAP and completing forms—it provides a consistent rhythm and structure to incident management. As IAPs are tactics-oriented, they are created at the incident command level. Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) may also develop a document similar to an IAP to coordinate and account for their own operations.

Personnel managing the incident develop an IAP for each operational period. A concise IAP template is essential to guide the initial incident management decision process and the continuing collective planning activities. The IAP is the vehicle by which leaders on an incident communicate their expectations and provide clear guidance to those managing the incident. The IAP:

- Informs incident personnel of the incident objectives for the operational period, the specific resources that will be applied, actions taken during the operational period to achieve the objectives, and other operational information (e.g., weather, constraints, limitations, etc.);
- Informs partners, EOC staff, and the IC/UC positions of the MAC group objectives and operational activities planned for the coming operational period;
- Identifies work assignments and provides a roadmap of operations during the operational period to help individuals understand how their efforts affect the success of the operation;
- Shows how specific supervisory personnel and various operational elements fit into the organization; and
- Often provides a schedule of the key meetings and briefings during the operational period.

Figure 1 The Planning P

The IAP provides clear direction and includes a comprehensive listing of the resources and support needed to accomplish the objectives. The various steps in the process, executed in sequence, help ensure a comprehensive IAP. These steps support the accomplishment of objectives within a specified time. The development of IAPs is a cyclical process, and personnel repeat the planning steps every operational period. The Operational Period Planning Cycle (Planning P) is a graphic depiction of this cycle. Personnel develop the IAP using the best information available at the time of the Planning Meeting. Personnel should not delay planning meetings in anticipation of future information. In the Planning P, the leg of the “P” describes the initial stages of an incident, when personnel work to gain awareness of the situation and establish the organization for incident management.

The role of the MAC Group in the Planning Process is to identify incident priorities and provide policy support. The objectives developed by Command (and the EOC, if applicable) should work within those priorities and policies.

See [Appendix B](#) for a sample Planning “P” used by the Asian Carp Regional Coordination Committee (ACRCC).

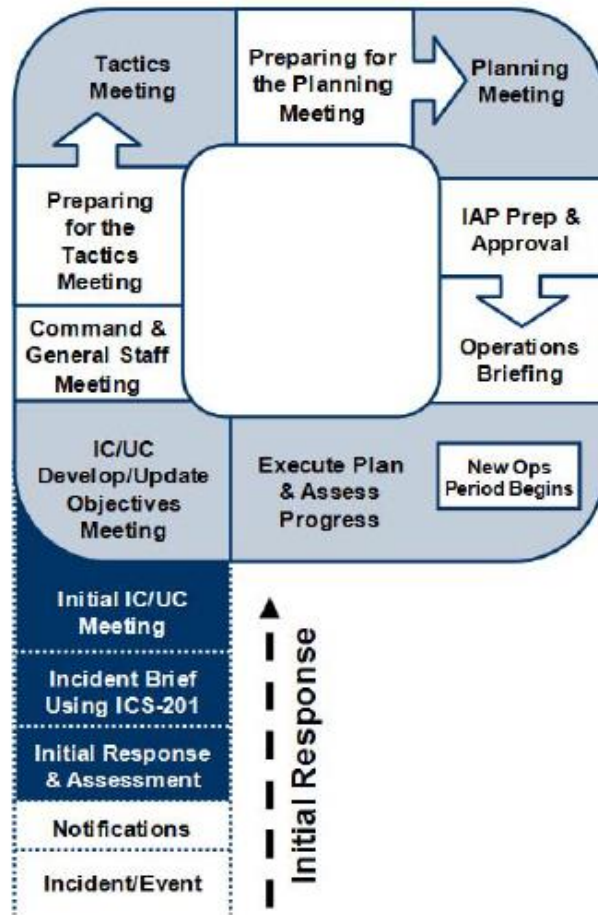
MAC Group Membership

The MAC Group membership should be based upon the statutory responsibility of a jurisdiction or agency to abate the emergency. As such each emergency situation will dictate who should be mobilized to serve on a MAC Group. MAC Group members should consist of agency administrators or executives, or their designees, who have the authority to commit resources and funds to mitigate the emergency impacts. MAC Group members can include:

- a. Local government
- b. State government
- c. Federal government
- d. Tribal government
- e. Others with statutory or regulatory responsibility to abate the emergency

Intelligence or information regarding incidents can be requested by the MAC Group from organizations without statutory or regulatory authority, such as:

- a. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g. American Red Cross, Salvation Army)



- b. Private sector organizations (water / wastewater, electric utilities)
- c. Infrastructure owners and operators
- d. Other jurisdictions which are or may be impacted or affected by the incident

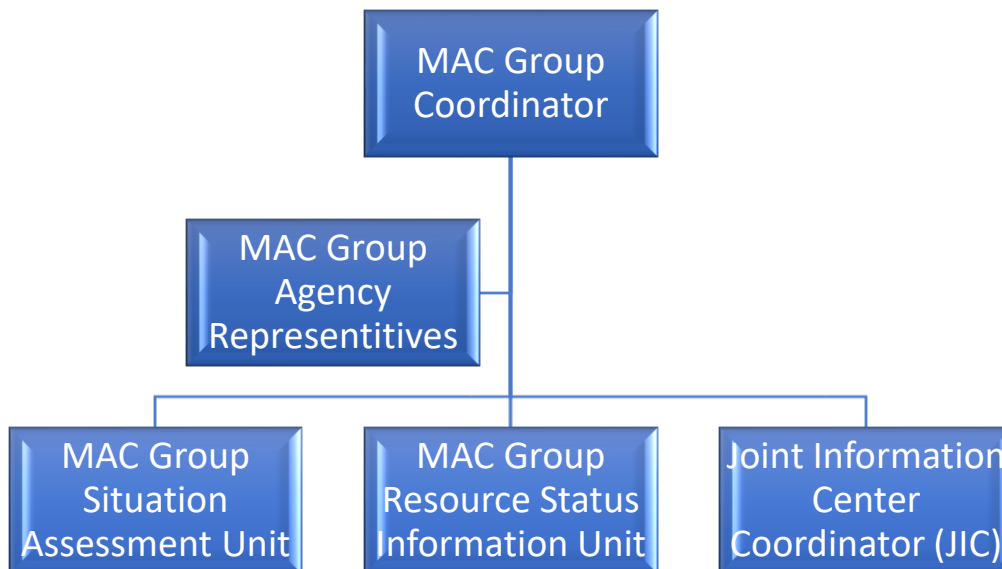
MAC Group Staff Positions

The MAC Group is convened to support the EOC Director or Incident Commander. The MAC Group may establish functions necessary to successfully prioritize incidents and allocate scarce resources. Suggested MAC Group staffing positions are listed below:

- a. **MAC Group Coordinator:** Once the decision is made to utilize a MAC Group, a Coordinator will need to be assigned. The coordinator serves as the MAC Group business facilitator and helps to direct the MAC Group toward accomplishing its mission. The coordinator:
 - a. Fills and supervises assigned personnel.
 - b. Manages the facility and ensures necessary equipment is available.
 - c. Facilitates the MAC Group decision making process including display of information and providing a situation assessment for incident priority setting and resource allocation.
 - d. Facilitates the MAC Group daily schedule and agenda.
 - e. Documents proceedings including conference calls or in-person meetings and distributes information to MAC Group agency representatives and others as needed.
 - f. Assigns a Technical Specialist to assist the MAC Group in preparing the forms.
 - g. Prepares the final documentation package of MAC Group proceedings.
- b. **Joint Information Center (JIC) Coordinator:** A JIC can be established to serve as the single source for coordinating public information related to the MAC Group activities. Through the JIC Coordinator, the MAC will coordinate and approve all public information releases. The JIC Coordinator:
 - a. Manages the Joint Information Center
 - b. Coordinates multi-agency representatives to the JIC
 - c. Obtains briefings from MAC Group Coordinator.
 - d. Prepares information for MAC Group members.
 - e. Coordinates the gathering and distribution of information with the JIC.
 - f. Maintains Unit Log for documentation package.
- c. **MAC Group Advisor:** The MAC Group Advisor is a Subject Matter Expert (SME) with extensive MAC System operational experience who understands its functions. The role of the Advisor is to share past experiences and expertise in a best practices and lessons learned approach. This position helps MAC Group Coordinators demonstrate the skills necessary to perform the MAC Group Coordinator position in the form of training, exercises and incident prioritization and statewide scarce resource allocations when activated. The MAC Group Advisor:
 - a. Supports and mentors MAC Group Members.
 - b. Enhances MAC Group effectiveness and readiness.
 - c. Assists in strategic planning, incident prioritization, multi-agency collaboration, and providing insights based on past experiences to improve functionality.
 - d. Maintains Unit Log for documentation package.

- d. MAC Group Situation Assessment Unit: The MAC Group Situation Assessment Unit oversees the collection, organization, and analysis of information to support MAC decision making. Through coordination with Command and/or EOC, the MAC Group Situation Assessment Unit:
 - a. Gathers situation assessment information from the ICP and/or EOC Planning Section.
 - b. Summarizes resource needs and requests from the Incident Status Summaries (ICS 209s), Situation Reports, Mission Tasking Assignments and other information gathering efforts from the EOC.
 - c. Posts information on status boards for MAC Group members and staff.
 - d. Ensures that situation status reports are developed for dissemination to MAC Group members.
 - e. Ensures that all maps, status boards and other displays contain current and accurate information in coordination with the ICP and/or EOC.
 - f. Maintains Unit Log for documentation package.

- e. MAC Resource Status Information Unit: The MAC Resource Status Information Unit maintains information on scarce resource needs. The MAC Resource Status Information Unit, through coordination with the ICP and/or EOC:
 - a. Maintains scarce resource availability including the tracking of resource needs in coordination with the ICP and/or EOC.
 - b. Assists in preparing information materials, when requested by the MAC Group Coordinator.
 - c. Provides scarce resource information to the MAC Group Situation Assessment Unit Leader as requested.
 - d. Maintains Unit Log for documentation package.



Note: As with the Incident command system (ICS), MAC Group staffing can expand or contract depending upon the scope and complexity of the event and needs of the MAC Group. This means that it is possible that not all positions may be staffed.

Convening a MAC Group

A MAC Group is activated when an emergency situation threatens, significantly impacts or involves multiple agencies and or political subdivisions. Once established, the MAC Group may meet regularly during the response or on an as needed basis.

MAC Group Notification

Notification protocols should be pre-established as part of the MAC Group procedures:

- a. Who will make the initial activation notifications?
- b. How the notifications are conducted
- c. Selection of the requested agencies for participation, based upon the incident or jurisdictions involved
- d. Selection of the style of meeting (conference call, face to face), providing specifics for location, date, times and any additional information required.

MAC Group Meetings

Whenever feasible the MAC Group should convene in face-to-face meetings. When it is not convenient for the MAC Group to meet in-person, they may elect to coordinate their responsibilities through the use of regularly scheduled conference calls and or virtual meetings. See sample MAC Group Meeting Agenda below:

Sample MAC Group Meeting Agenda

1. Role Call
2. Situation Status Report
 - a. Weather situation report
 - b. Incident Briefings
 - c. Identification of significant incidents/updates
 - d. Current response activities
 - e. Resource status report
 - f. Identification of scarce or needed resources
3. Identify current resource availability
4. Develop/update incident priorities
5. Questions/issues
6. Schedule next meeting
7. Adjournment

Adjourning the MAC Group

The MAC Group will be adjourned when incident prioritization and scarce resource allocation is no longer needed. Adjournment of the MAC Group should occur when:

- a. Resources are being demobilized and resource coordination among agencies or jurisdictions is no longer necessary.
- b. The situation at the incident site has stabilized.
- c. Need for resource coordination has diminished.

Appendix A: Incident Priority Matrix

Incident Priority Matrix Purpose: Decision tool assisting the MAC Group in ranking incidents based on agreed upon criteria; results in a numerical ranking which assists the MAC Group establishing incident priorities and ultimately high priority incidents will receive at least some of the critical resources they've requested.

Preparation: MAC Group as a whole completes this document daily, usually facilitated by a MAC Group Coordinator and Recorder. Once incident priorities are established, the information is shared with Incident Commanders prior to their operational planning meetings.

Distribution: MAC Group members and Incident Commanders only. It is not recommended this information be shared with the media as routine matter. Release to the media should always be approved through the MAC Group.

Incident Priority Matrix (MACS 429)

1. Operational Period: Date From:		Date To:		Time From:		Time To:							
2. Incident Overall Ranking:		1		2		3		4		5		6	
3. Incident Name:													
4. Agency:													
5. Ratings (Current-Projected):		Current	Projected	Current	Projected	Current	Projected	Current	Projected	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
Life and Safety Threats-Pubic and Emergency Response													
Evacuations													
Road, Highway or Freeway Closures													
Extreme Fire Behavior/Weather Event/Natural Disaster													
Property Threatened and/or High Damage													
Structures (res, comm, vac., other)													
Communities at Risk:													
Infrastructure, National, State, Local													
Resource Issues and Potential for Loss													
Historical and/or Cultural Resources													
Natural Resources													
Commercial Resources													
Potential for Economic Impact													
Incident Complexity/Duration													
Complex vs. Single Incident													
Potential for Timely Containment													
Overall Ratings of Incident (current and projected time periods)													
6. Critical Resource Needs (First column is for ICS 209 critical needs and second column is for projected need or Resource Allocation use):													
Aircraft, Fixed-Wing													
Aircraft, Rotor-Wing													
Handcrews													
Bulldozers													
Wildland Engines													
Structure Engines													
Other Resources Kinds and Types													
Overhead													
7. Approved by: Name: _____													
Macs 429 7/1/09		Signature: _____								Date/Time _____			

Appendix B: Sample Planning “P”

Developed and used by the Asian Carp Regional Coordination Committee (ACRCC)

