

## FAQ Structure Protection

Q: When structure protection (from a structure protection agency) is either preplanned and/or a tactical decision made in the field, has the responsible wildland agency crossed into extended attack?

A: The need for structure protection is a complex decision. (See the definitions below, which provide the foundation for the answer.)

1 - Clearly **structure suppression** (suppressing fire in burning buildings) is outside of the responsibility of the wildland fire program and FPA-PM specifically. [Clarifying note - structure suppression in some National Parks *is* a federal responsibility due to vagaries of the laws surrounding exclusive jurisdiction for some Parks. However, even in these few cases structure suppression is considered completely separate from wildland fire programs and budgets.]

2 - The question of whether the dispatch of engines or other resources to do structure protection during a wildland fire is **initial or extended** attack could vary depending on whether those resources in that dispatch location were pre-planned and positioned for that purpose. If they are locally considered part of a pre-planned initial attack force for (an interface area with mutual aid for example) - they may be considered part of the initial attack effort. Initial attack would be the exception, and extended attack the more common occurrence.

3 - Is the use of structure protection a **strategic or tactical decision**? It could be either. If a fire manager had flashy fuels in an area of homes and frequent fire occurrence, you would anticipate that he or she would pre-plan a response to those situations. In that sense it would be a strategic planning activity. If there were no clear-cut pre-plan to provide structure protection and structure protection was called up on an incident by incident basis, it would clearly be a tactical decision. The need for structure protection is most likely a tactical decision, and therefore outside the scope of the preparedness module.

4 - The core question may be whether structure protection should be part of the modeling for FPA-PM. The FPA core team contends that structure protection not be modeled for the following reason. FPA-PM modeling for initial attack suppression is based on building enough line to contain the perimeter of the growing fire. It does not consider peripheral resources needed to deal with other aspects of a fire event, such as structure protection. Therefore, it would be outside of the present effort.

FPA may find that there will be a need to model other 'non-producer' resources as we proceed, but those may need to be deferred to future releases and would certainly need some other type of analysis or surrogate other than line production.

## Definitions:

**Tactics:** Deploying and directing resources on an incident to accomplish the objective designated by strategy. (NWCG) [Tactical decision making or tactical operations are outside the strategic modeling application of FPA-PM.]

**Initial Attack:** The actions taken by the first resources to arrive at a wildfire to protect lives and property, and prevent further extension of the fire. (NWCG)

**Extended Attack:** A wildland fire that has not been contained or controlled by initial attack forces, and for which more firefighting resources are arriving, en route, or being ordered by the initial attack incident commander. Extended attack implies that the complexity level of the incident will increase beyond the capabilities of initial attack incident command. (NWCG)

**Structural Fire Protection:** The protection of homes or other structures from wildland fire. (NWCG) Also called exterior structural protection and requires a formal Fire Protection Agreement that specifies mutual responsibilities and funding. (Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2002)

**Structural Fire Suppression** is the responsibility of tribal, State, or local governments. (Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2002)