LCANS

In order to provide a reporting mechanism for changes in critical items related to firefighter safety a common reporting tool was developed. To improve standardization of how information is relayed by firefighters operating on an incident and to improve firefighter safety, a variation of the PCAN report commonly used by structure firefighters has been adapted for wildland firefighting. This tool is a short five letter acronym designed to facilitate the use of a common order model when reporting changes to the key elements it addresses. In order to differentiate between the two, the acronym **LCANS (Location, Conditions, Actions, Needs, Closest Safety Zone)** has been adopted. Order models such as this are used commonly to standardize communication and ensure benchmarks are met.

**Here is a breakdown of the information one would expect in an LCANS Report:**

- **Location** – where on the incident a crew is working and their direction of travel/line construction
- **Conditions** – Fire Conditions, unusual weather conditions.
- **Actions** – what tactical activity the crew or engine is engaged in.
- **Needs** – An objective assessment of their resource needs to accomplish the assigned objective.
- **Safety Zone** – the closest safety zone to the crew.

**Here is how an LCANS report would sound:**

To Division Alpha or Incident Supervisor from Engine 541:

“**E541 is west of DP 10 in Division Alpha working east towards DP 10. We are observing single tree torching and gusty SW winds at 10-20 with frequent dust devils. Our Engine is supporting Ironwood IHC direct line construction with a progressive hose lay. At our current rate we should be able to secure the fireline between DP10 and DP20 prior to the end of shift. An additional type 2 crew for gridding and holding would be beneficial. Our Safety zone is a green hayfield down Old Mill Road SW from DP20.**”

This is an example of a complete initial LCANS report that could be provided when resources are initially assigned to an incident or a different division. As the incident progresses the length of report and the information contained within the report would vary. It would be appropriate to expect resources to only provide subsequent reports on criteria that have changed. For example, later in the afternoon when the same resource in the example above was asked for their LCANS report they may answer “We are in the same location, engaged in the same tactics, and will utilize the same safety zone. With the arrival of the type 2 crew we have no additional resource needs. The only change is fire behavior has increased and we have seen some group tree torching.”
To assist a resource supervisor in making a LCANS report, a pocket sized reference card has been developed. The single 3.25” X 5” page containing this acronym can be inserted into the IRPG on the first white page (currently contains ordering and other non-essential info).

The Particulars

Who is involved in an LCANS report:

A LCANS report is made by any fire line resource supervisor to their immediate incident supervisor or other requesting entity. On a small fire, this may be from an engine boss to the Incident Commander. On a larger incident, this could be an ENGB to their STEN or TFLD, a CRWB to the DIVS, or a DIVS to the OPSC or Branch. It could also be given, if requested, by any of these resources to an Air Attack or HELC who was gathering information.

When is a LCANS report made:

A LCANS report is made when requested by a resource’s immediate line supervisor or higher in the chain of command or when a significant change has occurred on the fire line in any of the “LCANS” elements of the report. There is no set or required timeframe for the report to avoid the repetitive nature of “no change”. Significant changes are defined differently by each person. These changes may be left to the discretion of the resource or may be defined by the line supervisor as trigger points to look for during the day.

The following examples could be considered significant events that may trigger an LCANS report.

Location: Where on the incident a crew is working and their direction of travel/line construction
- Your engine is patrolling several miles further along than your last report
- You are on a different road or in a different drainage than previously reported
- You are now in the area of a different drop point than reported previously

Conditions: Fire Conditions, unusual weather conditions.
- The presence or onset of any of the Weather related Watch Out situations
- Lifting of the inversion resulting in increased fire behavior
- Torching has increased from single to group tree

Actions: What tactical activity the crew or engine is engaged in.
- Reduced line production rate due to need to improve escape route
- Change in activity from line production to spot suppression
- Beginning firing operations
**Needs:** An objective assessment of their resource needs to accomplish the assigned objective.
- Need for aircraft or other tactical resources to support line
- Arrival of previously requested resources
- Tactical supplies such as drip torch fuel, portable pumps, saw gas

**Safety Zone:** The closest safety zone to the crew.
- Safety zone for the crew has changed
- Need to improve safety zone or escape routes due to fire activity or resource numbers
- Need to construct safety zone due to extended travel to established zone

**Why does a resource make an LCANS report:**
A LCANS report is made to relay critical information up the chain of command as it relates to the safety and location of fire line resources. This information may be pertinent to an ‘incident within an incident’, or be the first indication of changing conditions either favorably or not.

**How is a LCANS report made:**
The LCANS report can be made either over the radio or by cell phone. Radio reports are more easily monitored by adjacent units that may also be affected by the changing conditions being reported.

**FAQs**

- **Q:** How often does it get used?
  - **A:** When situation on fireline changes enough to warrant updating the supervisor or when requested by the supervisor or Air Attack.

- **Q:** Who needs to be notified?
  - **A:** Immediate supervisor or other relevant positions requesting information (ATGS, HELC, etc.) or those that could be impacted by the change.

- **Q:** How often does a supervisor initiate LCANS with resources?
  - **A:** There will be no set timeline in an effort to ensure that when the information is provided it has relevance. In the past when reporting has been tied to rigid timelines it has lost relevance and become “white noise” I.E. – “Division Alpha is on the Division and LCES is in place”
• Q: How do we promote LCANS?
  o A: Share with IMT’s, Fire Departments within the state who respond to wildland fire, regional and national safety groups, Chief’s Committees, and federal partners. We can also include the information on the 204s and provide a short training document to include in IAPs for use in division breakouts.

• Q: Can we start using LCANS this summer?
  o A: Yes, we think we can. It does not supplant any other reporting criteria or currently held beliefs; it is simply a tool to help streamline information sharing in an effort to improve firefighter safety.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions for improvement please contact one of the following individuals:

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