

# Memorandum

**To:** Region Chiefs  
Assistant Region Chiefs  
Unit Chiefs  
Contract County Chiefs

**Date:** January 13, 2009

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**From:**   
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**Subject:** OPERATIONS  
Private Resource Utilization

With the emergence of private resources providing services to clients of insurance companies in the wildland urban interface, many questions have been brought forward related to command and control, safety, and accountability within an emergency incident environment. These issues are being discussed and addressed in the fire service community throughout the country. While several entities are providing guidelines, including IAFC and FIRESCOPE, I felt it was necessary to provide direction to CAL FIRE employees and guidelines for contract counties providing SRA protection.

Private resources (contractors) may be allowed to operate on an emergency incident, within a restricted area, only if they are under contract (by order and request number) to the agency having jurisdiction. Private fire brigades may also be integrated within the incident if they have legal authority and jurisdiction to operate, are fully qualified and have a working relationship with neighboring fire agencies.

All other private resources should be restricted to non-emergency activities outside of the evacuated or restricted area to ensure safety, command and control, and minimize potential liability issues. Private resources may include utility companies, contractors or laborers providing defensible space/ fire protection, etc. These resources have a role before, during and after the emergency incident, but only within areas deemed safe and with the expressed authorization of the Incident Commander. If they are given evacuation orders, they must comply.

Private property owners have the legal right to protect their property if they are on-site during the emergency incident, but are not allowed re-entry during said incident when a mandatory evacuation order is in place.

### **Private Resource Guidelines**

- The Incident Commander and law enforcement have complete authority and legal right to control an emergency incident. Private resources are not first responders and are completely subject to the directions and limits set forth by public safety agency personnel. The private resource has no claim or stake in unified command and will not have any role in incident command.
- Private resource vendors shall provide a representative that reports to the Incident Commander or designee and can communicate with their resources. Private resources are responsible to communicate their location and movements through the private resource representative to the Incident Commander or designee.
- Incident Commanders and line resources need to maintain situational awareness regarding private resources and their compliance with evacuation orders.
- A message should be included in the incident action plan and briefed at operational briefings regarding known private resources activity on or near the incident.
- Private resources shall refrain from using incident radio frequencies.
- Private resources should focus their activities on pre-fire activities and pretreatment of values-at-risk prior to an evacuation order. Once an evacuation is ordered, they must comply and leave the area and cannot return until the area is reopened, or until they have received authorization to re-enter. The Incident Commander or local law enforcement officials having jurisdiction must authorize access to any community under evacuation/restriction.
- Private fire protection resource contractors who are employed on an incident (as a local, State or Federal resource) are not allowed to sub contract with the insurance industry or freelance to local home owners while mobilized on the incident.

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