



- 
- SUBJECT:**           **LET BURN**
- PURPOSE:**        To establish consistent guidelines for Clark County Fire & Rescue incident commanders when considering a “let burn” decision.
- REFERENCE:**      Policy 522.40.05 LET BURN
- SCOPE:**           All response personnel.
- PROCEDURE:**     The decision to allow a structure or other type fire to continue to burn is rare. However, when Incident Command deems it reasonable, suppression operations may be discontinued and a Fire Watch established. When resources are available a department staffed Fire Watch should be maintained. This continual presence will allow unimpeded department access and monitoring of the incident.

In some cases a landowner Fire Watch may be established. Fire Watch must be managed by a qualified person who continuously and systematically surveys the fire building or incident. Fire Watch will be responsible in identifying early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm, and notifying 911. **(IFC 202)**

### **REASONS TO LET BURN**

#### **Unable to safely approach or reach the fire**

Some fire incidents are too difficult or dangerous to approach. This may include, but not be limited to, building collapse, radiant heat, explosives, or hazardous materials.

#### **Isolated Location**

Sometimes it is impractical to reach a fire because of difficult terrain. An example would be a mid-cliff wildfire.

#### **Insufficient resources to engage a fire**

Multiple incidents are taking place and inadequate resources are available.

Example: the department is engaged in suppressing two house fires during an ice storm. 911 reports a power line has fallen on an isolated shed. The shed is burning. The Battalion Chief sends a department unit to evaluate the shed fire and they find a low value building on fire. Suppression of the shed fire could be delayed or the fire would simply be monitored.



A lack of water supply or other extinguishing agent may also effect the decision to let burn.

Example: a petroleum tanker truck fire involving 5,000 gallons of gasoline. You lack the foam and equipment to reach the required "rate of foam application."

### **Fuel Type Resists Suppression**

Type of fuel, fuel arrangement, and the amount of fuel are all important factors in a "let burn" decision. Large tire piles, huge hay storage barns, and other bulk commodities may resist fire suppression.

## **OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

### **Environmental**

Will suppression cause greater environmental damage than letting the fire burn? Environmental factors related to air, water, and soil should be considered. Consultation with the responsible environmental agencies is encouraged.

### **Criminal**

Possible arson should be considered during the "let burn" decision process. Investigation support is also a factor. The responsible investigator should be consulted during the "let burn" decision making process.

### **Property Owner**

The property owner or agency manager must be a part of the process, but not the driving factor. Ownership and authority must be confirmed before a "let burn" decision is made. The landowner is responsible for notifying their insurance company. This notification should happen as early as possible in the incident.

### **Insurance**

Insurance liability is also a factor. Some lawsuits against fire departments are initiated by the insurance company, not the property owner. The landowner may want a building to burn. The insurance carrier may want the loss stopped. Getting an insurance agent to the scene early in the incident may be helpful. The agent is also the prime financial resource for the department when special resources are required.