

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE TO PREVENT FOREST FIRE- 2022

1. Introduction

Forest fire, causes extensive damage to flora and fauna side by side generate heat and smoke causing pollution to local environment. In Odisha, forest fire occurs starting from the month of January to June. Hence, a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to prevent forest fire is required for field level officers to resolve the problem at source.

2. Objectives

The main objective of SOP is to deal with the problem of forest fire step by step at different levels in coordination with various line departments of government of Odisha and community participation. It will also ensure precise planning and implementation of forest fire control measures.

3. Strategies

The SOP indicates the responsibility of each level of field staff. This SOP shall be followed as per provision stipulated in the Odisha Forest (Fire) protection Rules, 1979. Applicability of this SOP covers the forest area under management of Forest Department.

4. Responsibilities

(a) At Division level

The Divisional Forest Officer / In-charge of the Forest Division will be responsible for the following works:

- i) Organising co-ordination/inception meeting under the chairmanship of Collector and District Magistrate with other departments for formulation of District Action Plan For Forest Fire Prevention and Management (DAP-FFPM) and its revision if necessary. (Refer Memo no. 19128/FE&CC dt. 30.10.2021 of ACS, govt. of Odisha)
- ii) Mobilising fund for forest fire management from District Administration, other line departments and other convergence activities.
- iii) Preparation of fire prevention & management Plan for division and supervise the implementation of the approved plan.

- iv) Special attention has to be given to fire prone areas and its reasons through preventive measures. As most of the forest fire alerts are of repeat nature, emphasis needs to be given on **ZERO (0)** repeat fire point in upcoming fire season. (Refer Memo no. 18725/1F(FU&FP)(FP)-235/2021 dt. 06.11.2021 of PCCF & HOFF, Odisha)
- v) Coordination with other department i.e. Revenue, Fire department, Police, Disaster management unit, KL seasonal staff, PRI members, VSSs/SHGs etc. is to be ensured for mitigation measures against forest fire.
- vi) Action for filling of vacant positions in fire risk forest Beats & Sections before onset of fire season.
- vii) Procurement of adequate fire fighting equipments, tools and first aid boxes etc.
- viii) Maintain updated contact details of all stakeholders for improved co-ordination.
- ix) To provide emergency fund to forest guard/ forester for transporting the fire fighting equipments to inaccessible areas.
- x) Notification of prohibited activities and display at conspicuous places for public information as per section 3(2) of Orissa Forest (Fire Protection) Rules, 1979.
- xi) Operationalise 24 X7 fire prevention control room at division headquarters in charge of an officer of Deputy Ranger/ Forester rank from 1st January to 30th June 2022.
- xii) Ensure Registration of official Mobile no with FSI website (<http://www.fsi.org.in>) for getting fire alerts. Contact number of control room should be displayed at Beat, Section Range offices and public places.
- xiii) Designate one Assistant Conservator of Forests specifically for forest fire during the fire season.
- xiv) Monitor & review fire control operation on weekly basis in the Division.
- xv) Ensure timely submission of fire occurrence report.

(b) At ACF level

- i) Prepare Dos & Don'ts of forest fire management for distribution by all files staff.
- ii) Inspect the Forest Fire Register maintained at divisional control room and supervise the steps taken regarding forest fire management on daily basis.

iii) He/She will look after forest fire management control room on day to day basis.

iv) Carry out specific Fire Fighting operation as per instruction of DFO.

(c)At Range level

(i)The Range Officer / In charge of the Range will be responsible for following works:

Preventive measures-

- maintenance of fire lines.
 - repair of forest roads.
 - maintenance of boundary & compartment lines.
 - select site to set up camps.
 - construction of Machans.
 - selection of fire fighting squad members.
- ii) Proper implementation of DAP-FFPM in range jurisdiction and special attention on repetitive fire point/ areas.
- ii) Organising monthly meetings of VSS and all other stake holders during fire season
- iii) Organise public awareness programmes such as oath taking, rallies, proper display of sign boards / banners at proper places etc.
- iv) Coordination with VSSs, PRI members, youth clubs and all different stakeholders and other departments in range jurisdiction for effective implementation of forest fire prevention and management plan.
- v) Deploy staff and squad members on strategic points with specific duty and chalk out their movement to cover fire sensitive forest areas.
- vi) Organising mock drill training for Forester, Forest Guard , Squad and VSS members with assistance of fire service personnel for effective fire control. Maintain Duty Register and log Book for fire squads and staff.
- vii) Conduct enquiry into each fire affected forest area, assess the loss, verify the action taken by the staff to control fire and submit report.
- viii) Recommend names of VSS, informants and squad members for incentives and awards.

(d)At Section level

The Section Forester/ Section in charge will be responsible for the following works:

- i) Prepare detailed list of villages/ points and map showing fire prone area, route chart to those sites and available water sources.
- ii) Execution and supervision of fire control measure works (maintenance and creation of Fire Line, compartment and boundary line) in fire prone areas well in advance.
- iii) Organising VSS meetings on regular basis and encourage members to take appropriate steps for control of fire as a Convenor.
- iv) Safe custody of fire fighting equipments and kits received from range office.
- v) Receiving fire alerts from range office, division control room & FSI and information from VSS on day to day basis, ensure entry into the register and pass on to concerned forest guard.
- vi) Arrange labour, hire of vehicle and provide logistic supports to fire fighting squads.
- vii) Close Coordination with VSSs, PRI members, fire service personnel and all different stakeholders and other departments in jurisdiction for effective mitigation of forest fire.
- viii) Action taken report with details of area fire affected with GPS survey and damage to flora and fauna (photographs) to be submitted immediately.
- ix) Expeditious steps to initiate legal action against culprits as per procedure.
- x) Fix one day in the month of December to check all equipments to ensure all equipments are in working condition, which are supplied to Forest Guards, VSS members, fire fighting squads.

(e)At Beat level

Beat Forest Guard / In charge of the Beat will be responsible for following works:

- i) He/She will prepare the record of village/ fire prone areas of previous fire season and conduct meetings with locals for awareness and sensitisation and make readily available volunteers.

- ii) He/She has to conduct control burning in advance with in his/her jurisdiction as per the DAP-FFPM.
- iii) He/She will distribute DOs and DON'Ts leaflets to locals and put posters at public places.
- iv) Make regular foot patrolling (preferably 10-15 km.) in forest areas.
- v) He/She will be in regular contact with local ward member/ Sarpanch/ Important local villagers, VSSs/SHGs for prompt information about forest fire.
- vi) In fire season, He/She has to be on lookout for forest fire from 4:00AM - 10:00AM (in the morning) and 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM (in the evening).
- vii) Receive messages from control room, range office, section forester, VSS and FSI on fire occurrence, record in log book / register.
- viii) He/She will extinguish fire with the help of men and material at his disposal.
- ix) Submit the beat report on forest fire on daily basis to Section Forester and Range Officer.

5. Preparation before the onset of the fire season

DFO should Submit completion report of following preventive measures to RCCF on or before 31 Dec., 2021.

- Preparation of DAP-FFPM.
- Completion of fire lines, forest road repair, maintenance of boundary & compartment lines, select site for camps, construction of machans etc.
- Meetings with various stake holders at different levels.
- Purchase and distribution of fire fighting equipments.
- Selection of fire fighting squad .
- Updation of contact nos. of all stake holders.
- Operationalisation of control room.
- Designate an ACF for forest fire management.
- Organising mock drills.
- Preparation of list of villages, fire prone points, maps etc.
- Control burning as per DAP-FFPM.

- Any other preventive measure as per local condition and requirement.

6. Operation after occurrence of the forest fire

- a. The ACF & RO after receiving the information on occurrence of forest fire from various sources (Modis satellite data, own staff local informer, news etc), will get recorded in the Log Register through control room of the division and will ensure its immediate transmission to the concerned Range officers, Section Foresters and beat Guards who will also record the same in their Log Registers and start actions without loss of time.
- b. The concerned Section Forester and Beat Guards, who are key persons in controlling and suppressing a forest fire, will rush to the spot fully equipped with team of manpower, fire fighting squads / VSS members/ villagers etc.
- c. Local fire stations will also be informed by Range Officer and ensure that they reach with water tanker in accessible forest areas. Their services will be properly utilised to extinguish fire.
- d. The Section Forester / Forest Guard will completely extinguish fire at site.

7. Evaluation and Reporting

- They will assess the damage on the spot with GPS reading, enquire the cause of fire and furnish detailed report in forest fire incident module of OFMS within 24 hours of fire occurrence time.
- Message on fire and action taken information would be passed on to Range office and control room at the end of the operation through VHF/mobile phone.