



Field fire occurrence has been more frequent and more severe than it is in normal years. Fires that are typically 1 acre are growing to 5 acres. Fires that are typically 5 acres are quickly consuming 20 acres. Some have been much larger in both size and complexity. Field fires present inherent dangers and difficulties during firefighting efforts. This “tailgate” edition addresses some of those issues.

#### Incident Objective #1:

Provide for firefighter and public safety.



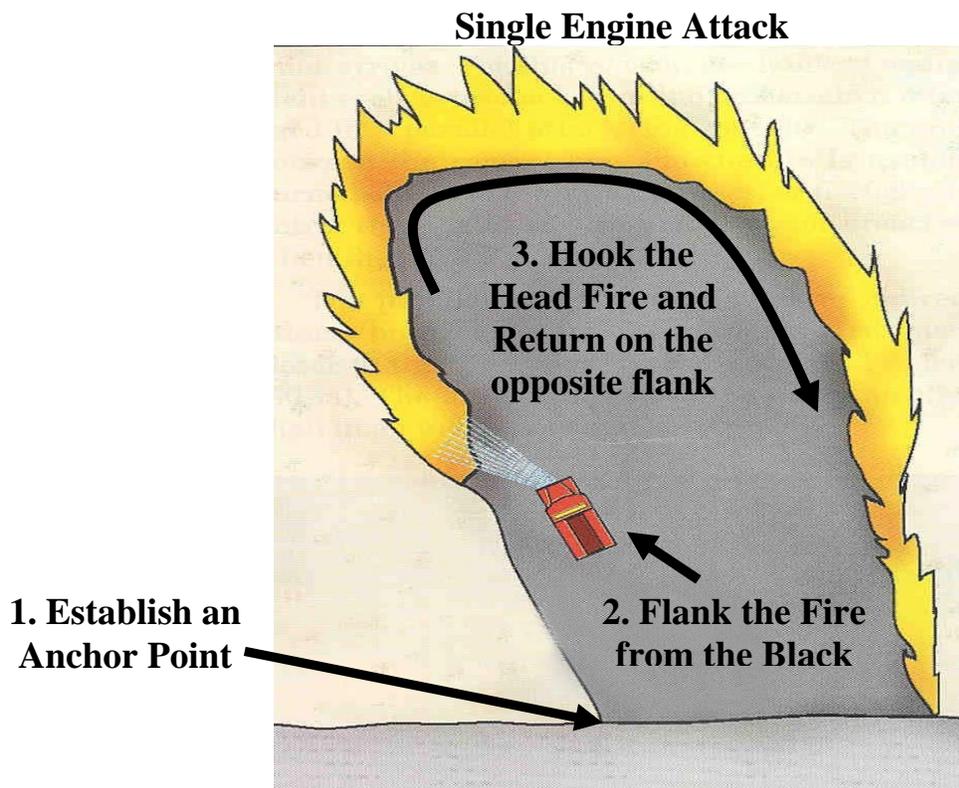
# Fire Behavior

The fine fuels that are common in field fires in Indiana such as cured grasses, standing and harvested agricultural fields and mixed grass/brush fields react quickly to atmospheric conditions. On warm dry days the grasses will lose moisture quickly and readily support active combustion. Some of the available fuels will support flame lengths in excess of 12 feet and a rate of spread that can push 300 feet per minute.

Field fires have the potential to produce very high fireline intensity or, simply, the amount of heat energy released during the combustion of fuels. A standard rule of thumb is that if flame lengths exceed 4 feet, typical engine and manpower tactics may prove less effective.

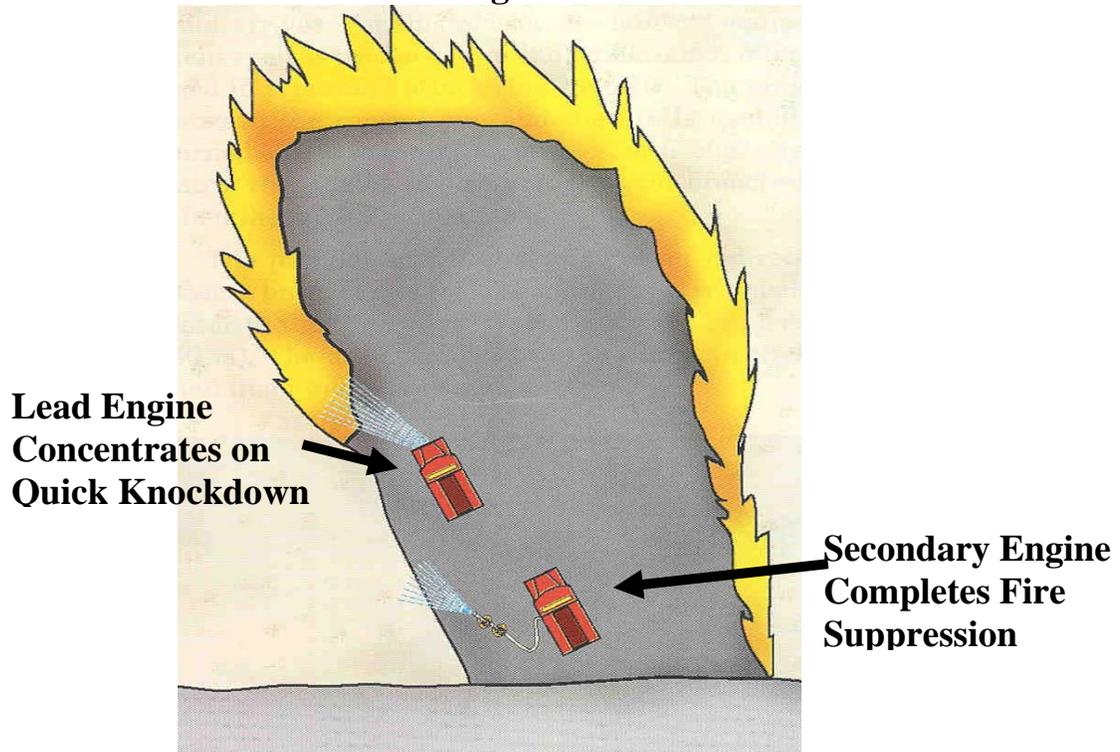
## Tactics

Before taking action on wildland fires establish Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes and Safety Zones for personnel and equipment – LCES. Below are two tactical examples of how to properly attack field fires.



**Anchor Point: Initiate fireline operations from an advantageous position such as a barrier to fire spread (road, creek, etc.) in an effort to decrease the fire's ability to out flank suppression operations.**

## Tandem Engine Attack



- ✓ Establish an Anchor Point from which to begin suppression operations.
- ✓ Nozzle operator should work to the side and slightly ahead of the engine to maintain good visual contact with the driver.
- ✓ Engine driver monitors fire activity and advises nozzle operator of tactical changes, hazards and fire behavior.
- ✓ Nozzle operator acts as a Lookout for the driver by pointing out hazards to the driver including holes, fences and powerlines. Nozzle Operator also cools hotspots in the black ahead of the engine.

These field fire tactics provide for LCES...

- **Lookouts** – The driver and nozzle operator have the ability to spot hazards for each other.
- **Communications** – All personnel are in visual contact and are in close enough proximity that they do not have to rely on radio communications.
- **Escape Routes**- By attacking from the black, the escape route is defined by the fireline made while progressing up the flank.
- **Safety Zones** – Established by creating an anchor point and working the flank.

# Wildland Urban Interface Watchouts

Fires increasingly occur in areas where structures and other personal property improvements are present. The complexity of such fires rise quickly and can result in fire personnel taking undue risks with both personnel and equipment. Below are some watchouts to be aware of in such instances.

1. **Poor access and narrow one-way roads.** These obviously present ingress difficulties, but also compromise escape routes.
  - a. Scout the road before committing equipment.
  - b. Back all apparatus in to provide for timely disengagement.
  - c. Communicate the hazard.
2. **Bridge Load Limits.** Bridge load limits in rural areas are often very light. Private bridges are typically not designed to withstand the weight of fire fighting equipment.
  - a. Search for alternative access.
  - b. Request brush trucks or light pumpers.
3. **Lookout for power lines, propane tanks, septic systems and other HazMat.**
  - a. Develop your situation awareness and observe for hazards especially in areas with which you have limited familiarity.
4. **Inadequate water supply.** Make an effort to maintain at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your water supply for engine and personnel protection in case the situation deteriorates.



**Do not let the “fog”  
of the incident cloud  
your judgment!**