

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence M2022-03

April 13, 2022

To: Geographic Area Coordinating Group Chairs

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)

Subject: Management of National Caterers

The National Multi Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) provides an essential management mechanism for national-level strategic coordination to ensure that firefighting resources are efficiently and appropriately managed in a cost-effective manner. Mobile Food Service Units (MFSU), also known as national caterers, are a national resource as defined by NMAC and managed by the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC). MFSUs have national utilization and are in high demand with limited availability.

Management of MFSUs by Incident Management Teams:

Incident management teams (IMTs) are strongly encouraged to meet incident needs with a single MFSU, as ordering more than one MFSU reduces the capability to support other incidents. MFSUs may be reallocated by NICC under the direction of NMAC to meet higher priority obligations.

IMTs are encouraged to consider the ability to support line resources when locating MFSUs, rather than the default approach of locating the MFSU at the incident base/ICP. Consider remote meal delivery to the incident base/ICP instead of to line resources where feasible.

Food transportation:

The primary method to transport hot meals is via hot or cold food and beverage containers (i.e. hot cans), National Fire Equipment System (NFES) catalog numbers 0246 and 0244. The use of hot food and beverage containers maximize food temperature (food safety) and quality. Food can be dispensed from hot food containers to clamshells at the destination to facilitate physical distancing.

The primary purpose of clamshell containers is to facilitate physical distancing requirements, not food safety. Clamshell-packaged meals can be used in lieu of hot food and beverage containers for direct meal delivery. However, if food temperature and quality cannot be maintained without extensive measures taken, hot food and beverage containers should be used.

In all cases, food should be consumed within four (4) hours of the time packaged at the caterer.

Self-sufficient resources:

See NWCG Standards for Interagency Business Management, PMS 902 Chapter 20 regarding replacement of preseason purchased supplemental foods consumed on an incident.

Educational Materials:

Educational materials were developed by the Forest Service National Technology and Development Program (NTDP) in collaboration with interagency subject matter experts. The following documents are provided:



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Feeding Options Summary, Logistics and Food Unit Leader Educational Material, and Operations/Line Personnel Educational Material.

/s/ Ken Schmid, Chair

Attachment 1 – Feeding Options Summary

Attachment 2 – Logistics Educational Material

Attachment 3 – Operations Educational Material



Feeding Options Summary

General Guidance For All Options

- Follow masking, hygiene, and physical distancing requirements.
- Wash hands and don gloves when handling or serving food.
- Meals packaged by the caterer should be delivered and served within 4 hours to minimize the risk of foodborne illness.

Caterer (Modified) Option

Summary: Caterer supplied meals may be packaged “to-go” in individual clamshells or in hot food containers (hot cans) at the resource level or shared between multiple resources. There will be no seating provided and no self-serve areas available. Meals may be picked up at the catering window or as delivered to a spike camp.

Intended uses: Catering is intended to provide food items for resources assigned to the incident. The caterer can scale options to meet the size of the fire and varying resource needs. Caterers will package all meals to-go.

MRE with Complementary Items Option

****Recommend not exceeding 7 days of MREs as only meal option.**

Summary: MREs can be supplied and used in multiple scenarios and are intended for short-term usage or need to be complemented with other options. Modified caterer contract supports the use of complementary items with MRE use.

Intended usage: Best suited for initial attack, extended attack, and type 3 fires when other options are not viable because food temperatures cannot be maintained (ex, hard-to-reach geographical divisions of type 1 and 2 fires).

Produce: *Consider spoilage rates of fruits/vegetables (e.g., berries will not hold up during transport and storage like radishes).

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------------------|
| • Apples | • Carrots | • Snap peas |
| • Pears | • Celery | • Peppers |
| • Plums | • Broccoli | • Avocados |
| • Grapes | • Cauliflower | • Cherry tomatoes |
| • Oranges | • Radishes | |

Shift provisions: Contractors shall select one item from each of the following categories: food bar, snack bar, candy/cookie/dessert, chips/pretzels/crackers, alternative protein, nuts/seeds/trail mix, and a trial item.

Shelf Stable Food Boxes, pending availability from servicing cache (NFES #007478)

Summary: The shelf-stable food box provides items for two individuals for three shifts. The contents include freeze-dried meals, canned items, and other packaged goods. Water will be required to reconstitute some menu items.

Intended uses: The intended use of the food box option is for line spiked or remote resources where providing caterer prepared meals is logistically challenging, increases risk, or temperatures cannot be maintained. This box does not require refrigeration. Providing additional fresh produce should be considered.

****Water is required for reconstitution for some menu items, additional water should be provided.**

Logistics and Food Unit Leader Educational Material

Communication with the Caterer:

- Understand and communicate contract requirements and modifications for 2022 and be involved in meal distribution planning.
- Increase coordination/communication between the FDUL/LSC/IMTs and the caterer, particularly regarding meal numbers and caterer location set-up (determine space requirement for most efficient set up).
- Be proactive, work with Operations and the caterer on meals requirements 48-72 hours out, when possible.
- Provide caterers with consistent messaging across IMTs. Consistent standard operating procedures would be beneficial for IMTs, caterers, and assigned resources.

Dining areas/Seating:

- Caterers will not set up dining areas.
- Incident Management Teams (IMT) are strongly discouraged from setting up alternate dining areas where incident personnel may gather.

Catering Set Up Location:

Locate mobile food service units (MFSU) and distribution sites closer to resources. Consider risks associated with driving semi-trailers into mountainous/remote locations and if delivery trucks can reach the MFSU vendors. Each IMT will need to evaluate risk/benefits of moving caterer closer to line personnel (e.g. ground support delivery vs resource pick-up).

Primary Meal Delivery Option:

- Meals will be packaged in clamshells and available for pick up at the serving window for resources located near the caterer.
- Ensure adequate spacing for resources in line at catering window.

Hot Food and Beverage Containers (hot cans):

- Will be the primary method for food delivery to resources in remote locations. Clamshells will be supplied by caterers for meals to be served from hot food containers. Meals may be served into clamshells for resources to facilitate dispersion at remote locations/camps. Hot food containers may be packaged at the resource level or shared between multiple resources. Send with gloves to ensure hygiene precautions can be met.
 - NFES# 0244 CONTAINER - HOT/COLD BEVERAGE
 - NFES# 0246 CONTAINER - HOT/COLD FOOD

Labeling of Hot Food and Beverage Containers:

The following labeling information should be provided:

THIS PACKAGE CONTAINS:

PORTION SIZE:

PACKAGED ON: (Date) (Time) (By)

MUST BE SERVED WITHIN 4 HRS OF TIME PACKAGED

DESTINATION:

NMAC M2022-03 Attachment 2 – Logistics Educational

- If meals cannot be consumed within 4 hours, other feeding options shall be considered (see feeding options summary document).

Meals Ready to Eat (MRE)s with complementary food items:

Utilize when resources are remote and cannot maintain food temperatures because of delivery time. Resources have been encouraged to order complementary food items (fresh produce, complementary items – items from shift provisions excluding the main entree). These are available from National MFSU's only.

Shelf-stable food boxes (pending availability from servicing cache):

Each box provides shelf-stable food items for two people for three days (see feeding options summary document). Items include freeze-dried meals, canned goods, snack items, and utensils. NFES #007478

- **WATER IS REQUIRED FOR RECONSTITUTING SOME MENU ITEMS**

The boxes are built to meet all delivery capabilities – air or ground

Food Safety: 4-hour food temperature limitations

- Food Code Section 3-501.19, Time as a Public Health Control
(B) If time without temperature control is used as the public health control up to a maximum of 4 hours:
 - (1) The FOOD shall have an initial temperature of 5°C (41°F) or less when removed from cold holding temperature control, or 57°C (135°F) or greater when removed from hot holding temperature control;
 - (2) The FOOD shall be marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time that is 4 hours past the point in time when the FOOD is removed from temperature control;
 - (3) The FOOD shall be cooked and served, served at any temperature if READY-TO-EAT, or discarded, within 4 hours from the point in time when the FOOD is removed from temperature control; and
 - (4) The FOOD in unmarked containers or PACKAGES, or marked to exceed a 4-hour limit shall be discarded.

Type 3 Caterer Use:

- For incidents that meet the National requirement and there are no National MFSU's available, NICC may dispatch CWN caterer from National Blanket Purchase Agreement.
- Any time mobile food services are needed for federal wildland fire incidents in the western United States, the Federal Wildland Fire Agencies, hereinafter referred to as The Government, are obligated to order services from the National MFSU Contractors any time (a) the number of people to be fed is at or above 150 persons per meal and; (b) the headcount is estimated to remain at those numbers, or greater, for at least 72 hours from when the headcount first reaches 150 per meal, provided that the Contractor can reasonably meet the incident's needs and required time frames.
- MFSU Contractors will be given the opportunity to provide three meals per day up to their maximum stated capacity unless other arrangements are mutually agreed to with the FDUL or the needs of the incident require different meal options such as Meals Ready to Eat (MRE). When the Government's needs at an incident exceed the Contractor's stated maximum capacity, the Government may alternatively source meals as required.

Lessons Learned from 2021:

- Establish a field logistics (LOGS) position. They can assist with meal counts and enforcement of COVID-19 mitigations, contract modifications, and serving of meals.

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- Order multiple Food Unit Leaders (FDULs), identify an on-site point of contact for the caterer.
- Utilize box vehicles for transport to maintain heat/reduce exposure of packaged meals.
- Establish FDUL phone line in areas with adequate cell coverage for call in or text of resources meal pick up times (resources called/texted ETA for pick up so distribution sites were prepared)
- Package hot meals separate from cold items to preserve food temperatures.

Operations/Line Personnel Educational Material

What you can do to keep you and your team healthy and available for assignments:

- Follow masking, hygiene, and physical distancing requirements.
- Wash hands before handling food and don gloves before serving food.

How meals may be delivered:

- Meals will be served in clamshells and available for pick up at the catering window, for resources located near the catering unit.
- If meals cannot be consumed within 4 hours, other feeding options should be considered (see feeding options summary document).
- The caterer is only required to provide regular and vegetarian meals. All other dietary concerns will need to be managed by the resource.
- Hot food and beverage containers (hot cans) – will be the primary meal delivery option utilized for resources in remote locations. Clamshells will be provided with the hot food containers. Meals may be served into clamshells for resources to facilitate dispersion at remote locations/camps. Hot food containers may be packaged at the resource level or shared between multiple resources. Gloves and hygiene products should be included.
- Meals Ready to Eat (MRE)s with complementary food items – if you are in remote locations that are difficult to deliver hot meals, anticipate MREs or hot food containers. It is appropriate to request supplemental items when receiving MREs (fresh produce, complementary items – items from shift provisions excluding the main entree).
- Shelf-stable food boxes (pending availability) – Each box provides shelf-stable food items for two people for three days (see feeding options summary document). Items include freeze-dried meals, canned goods, snack items and utensils.
 - WATER IS REQUIRED FOR RECONSTITUTING SOME MENU ITEMS.
 - The boxes are built to meet all delivery capabilities – air or ground

How you can help:

Backhaul was an issue last season because of bulk. Within your module, please stack, compact, and reduce the size of your waste as appropriate (scrape food items and stack individual clamshells).