

For the purposes of this compact the term "employee" shall include any volunteer or auxiliary legally included within the forest fire fighting forces of the aiding state under the laws thereof.

The compact administrators shall formulate procedures for claims and reimbursement under the provisions of this article, in accordance with the laws of the member states.

#### Article VI

Nothing in this compact shall be construed to authorize or permit any member state to curtail or diminish its forest fire fighting forces, equipment, services or facilities, and it shall be the duty and responsibility of each member state to maintain adequate forest fire fighting forces and equipment to meet demands for forest fire protection within its borders in the same manner and to the same extent as if this compact were not operative.

Nothing in this compact shall be construed to limit or restrict the powers of any state ratifying the same to provide for the prevention, control and extinguishment of forest fires, or to prohibit the enactment or enforcement of state laws, rules or regulations intended to aid in such prevention, control and extinguishment in such state.

Nothing in this compact shall be construed to affect any existing or future cooperative relationship or arrangement between the United States Forest Service and a member state or states.

#### Article VII

The compact administrators may request the United States Forest Service to act as the primary research and coordinating agency of the Middle Atlantic Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact in cooperation with the appropriate agencies in each state, and the United States Forest Service may accept the initial responsibility in preparing and presenting to the compact administrators its recommendations with respect to the regional fire plan. Representatives of the United States Forest Service may attend meetings of the compact administrators.

#### Article VIII

The provisions of Article IV and V of this compact which relate to mutual aid in combating, controlling or preventing forest fires shall be operative as between any state party to this compact and any other state which is party to a regional forest fire protection compact in another region; provided, that the legislature of such other state shall have given its assent to such mutual aid provisions of this compact.