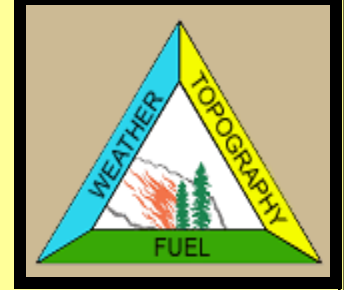




## TOPIC 26 TOPOGRAPHY INDICATORS



**Topography**, or the lay of the land, is a major influence on fire behaviour. There are three main considerations regarding topography: aspect, slope and elevation.

The shape of the land, has a major affect on fire behaviour. Box canyons, narrow canyons, and gulches act like a chimney of a stove. Radiation, convection, and spot fires speed up as when a damper was opened in a chimney. This effect can result in extreme fire behaviour and can be very dangerous to firefighters.

Fire burning on one side of a steep, narrow canyon can easily spread to fuels on the opposite side by radiation and spotting.

Fire burning along lateral ridges may change direction at the point when the ridge drops off onto a canyon. This direction change is cause whirling (eddy) motion by the fire may result from a strong air flow around the point of a ridge.

A mountain pass or saddle will cause the windspeed to increase as it passes through the constricted area and spread out on the lee (downward) side with probable eddy action.

