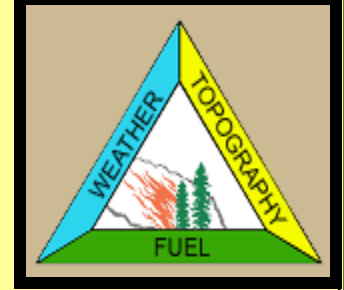




TOPIC 39

FUEL MOISTURE CONTENT - ASSESSING



ASSESSING FUEL MOISTURE CONTENT

The most obvious approach to the determination of fuel moisture content is by direct measurement. This approach involves weighing a sample of fuel, placing it in a drying oven, and then determining the dry weight. The percentage of moisture by weight in the sample can then be obtained. This method, in general, has proven very time consuming and labour intensive – especially as related to heavier fuels. Most forestry agencies use an indirect approach to the evaluation of fuel moisture content. The indirect method is based on a number of premises:

1. That the moisture content of dead fuels is dependent on the current weather and the weather history that has affected the fuels.
2. That by a daily (1200 standard time) monitoring of the weather we can assess fuel moisture content of fine, medium and heavy fuels.
3. The weather parameters to be monitored are: relative humidity, temperature, wind and precipitation and time of the year.

There are two (2) conditions influencing fuel moisture:

- Greenness or curing stage
 - Green (spring)
 - Curing (summer)
 - Cured (fall and early spring)
- Shade Protection
 - Fuels under dense stands (shaded) dry out slower
 - South slope fuels dry fast

