

Sample Incident Level COVID-19 Talking Points

Firefighting personnel are following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health and safety guidelines for COVID-19 to keep employees and the communities that they serve healthy and safe.

- This includes practicing social distancing, following personal hygiene standards, using personal protective equipment, limiting exposure, and monitoring regularly for symptoms of COVID-19.
- In our incident response strategies and tactics, we will commit responders to operations where we understand the fire environment risks and virus spread potential as much as possible - and where responders can be most successful with the least exposure necessary to meet reasonable objectives.
- We are working closely with our wildland fire and public health partners to continue to assess potential risks to firefighters and communities, incorporate the latest guidance, and adapt protocols based on lessons learned.

Please maintain social distancing when interacting with our fire personnel for our safety and yours.

- Our firefighters are encouraged to practice a “module as one” concept this year, staying in small groups for work and living situations. Keeping our firefighters healthy and safe helps ensure they can help protect your homes and communities.
- Please reach out to our public information officers with any questions you may have - you can find fire information on InciWeb, social media, or by calling or e-mailing us.
- Please call our public information officers to schedule a media interview.

Consistent and continual monitoring of personnel is the first step in preventing the movement of potentially infected individuals and the spread of COVID-19.

- All resources are encouraged to routinely review the COVID-19 screening checklist to monitor themselves for potential symptoms.
- All resources are encouraged to report any emerging symptoms to their supervisor who will coordinate with unit leadership, the medical unit, and/or local health agencies to ensure appropriate medical care for our personnel and minimize the spread of illness.
- Rest and proper hydration and nutrition are prioritized and emphasized every workday.

We are using appropriate risk management strategies to provide for the safety of incident responders and the public.

Customize to reflect incident specific mitigations.

- Resources are encouraged to maintain “module as one” separation as much as possible.
 - Firefighters generally do not wear masks while on the fireline, where they are working within their “module as one,” the group of individuals they live and work with.
- Personnel are encouraged to maintain social distancing as much as possible.
 - Masks are required when social distancing is not possible with individuals outside our “module as one.”
- COVID-19 personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves, and cleaning supplies are provided for firefighters and support personnel.

- Hand washing stations (with soap and water) are available in the incident command post.
- Hand sanitizer is available for all incident personnel.
- Fire camp looks different this year.
 - Access to the incident command post (ICP) is limited to essential personnel. Some of our personnel are working at other locations nearby.
 - Most firefighters are working in small groups and dispersed into isolated camps to provide our crews and the public better social distancing and safety from spread of COVID-19.
 - When there is an incident caterer in place, generally only one person from each module retrieves meals for the entire module, thereby eliminating difficulties with social distancing in the chow line. Meals are consumed at the module's physical camp or work location eliminating the chow hall environment.
 - In some cases, personnel may be self-sufficient, managing their own meals when it's a feasible option.
- We are using technology to safely accomplish tasks while maintaining social distancing as much as possible.
 - Several support functions are being conducted virtually, such as check in, submitting time sheets, and demobilization.
 - Many of our incident information officers are working virtually, helping answer phones, emails, update InciWeb, post updates on social media, etc.
 - We are utilizing online meetings to help facilitate internal and external communication with fire personnel and the community, while social distancing.
- Our team has a designated team member who is focused on coordinating COVID-19 mitigations and response on the incident. Their role includes reinforcing COVID-19 mitigation messaging among fire personnel, coordinating with partner agencies, and ensuring appropriate testing and support for our firefighters if they become sick.

We work with local authorities and impacted employees to follow proper public health procedures to keep the public and one another safe.

- Information about COVID-19 prevention and management during wildland fire operations is available on <https://www.nwcg.gov/coronavirus>.
- To ensure the medical privacy of our personnel, we do not share personally identifiable information. If potential exposures occur, potentially affected individuals are contacted directly, per local public health protocols.
- The incident command system (ICS) is designed to adapt to meet the needs of changing incident conditions.

People who are either susceptible to or affected by COVID-19 may have health conditions that also make them vulnerable to wildfire smoke exposure.

- Our InciWeb incident website <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/> links to our incident-specific smoke forecast outlook, which is also available on <https://wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlooks/>
- CDC Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke Information - <https://www.cdc.gov/air/>
- Smoke and COVID-19 FAQs – <https://wildlandfiresmoke.net/>