



March 13, 2020

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Wildland Firefighter Safety Tips to Reduce Exposure to COVID-19

#1. Wash your hands every chance you get AND make sure all firefighters do the same. There's always water on or near the fire line, make sure you have access to bar or liquid soap.

Germs and viruses spread when someone touches something that is contaminated and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and carry viruses with them. A person can become infected by touching a surface where these droplets land before touching their eyes, mouth, or nose. Frequent hand washing prevents virus transmission from infected surfaces.

#2. Reduce your exposure to smoke. Excessive smoke will impede your lungs capability and may reduce your body's natural ability to ward off the virus.

If you do utilize your smoke mask or respirator make sure it is thoroughly washed and sanitized before storing away.

#3. Cover your mouth with a gloved hand, a bandana or the sleeve of your fire shirt.

Make sure you wash all clothes worn after each shift if at all possible. If washing is not an option use a disinfectant spray. **Here are some of the registered disinfectants on the EPA's list:**

- ◆ Clorox Multi Surface Cleaner + Bleach
- ◆ Clorox Disinfecting Wipes
- ◆ Clorox Commercial Solutions® Clorox® Disinfecting Spray
- ◆ Lysol brand Heavy-Duty Cleaner Disinfectant Concentrate
- ◆ Lysol Disinfectant Max Cover Mist
- ◆ Lysol brand Clean & Fresh Multi-Surface Cleaner
- ◆ Purell Professional Surface Disinfectant Wipes
- ◆ Sani-Prime Germicidal Spray

#4. Do not encourage folks to gather in close quarters especially at ICP, around wash stations, at meals and places of rest.

When possible have “stations” spread out, maintaining a 6-foot space between firefighters when not on the line is recommended if at all possible.

#5. Take your temperature before and after each shift.

Establishing a baseline of your health is important to see if there is any variance later on.

#6. Wash your hands every chance you get AND make sure all firefighters do the same.

We repeat this a second time because it is the single most effective and easiest thing you can do while on the fire line to help protect you and your fellow crewmembers.

#7. Clean and Disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your response vehicle in and around ICP. This also includes inside the cabs of the dozers (especially those that are climate controlled).

This includes handles, tables, radios, phones, light switches, keyboards and bathroom facilities.

#8. Get adequate sleep (1 hr. rest for each 2 hrs. worked), eat well balanced meals and stay hydrated.

Keeping yourself in top physical condition is critical, this allows your immune system to do what it’s supposed to. Keep you healthy.

#9. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

This face-off recommendation is important because respiratory viruses such as the new coronavirus and flu viruses as well as a number of other nasty microbes can make their way into you by first sticking to your hands and then being rubbed into your eyes, nose, or mouth.

#10. If you are not feeling well or have ANY of the COVID-19 or flu symptoms STAY HOME turn down the assignment.

No one will think any less of you for turning down an assignment, getting better and keeping others from getting sick is the most important concern.

**It is important that we continue
to work through issues based
on our public health officials’ wisdom
rather than speculation or conjecture.**