

Black Canyon Fire Update

Incident within an Incident

Great Basin Incident Management Team
Incident Commander: Marty Adell

Saturday, September 3, 41 personnel came down with an intestinal disorder. There were 36 affected personnel who were unable to return to work. Seven individuals were transported to the Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center in Idaho Falls and two were transported to the Arco Medical Center for treatment. Eight of those individuals were released the same day. One was held overnight for further evaluation. The cause of the illness is still undetermined. The Idaho Department of Health (IDH) is involved in investigating the cause.

Symptoms included pain, headache, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting which lead to dehydration. There were no fever or respiratory symptoms associated with the illness. If caught soon enough, quick rehydration and an anti-nausea agent appeared to hasten recovery. Most personnel recovered after a number of hours.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) across the street from incident Base Camp was used as a triage site. Medical assistance was provided by a physician's assistant, a registered nurse and a lab assistant from Arco, and several emergency medical technicians at the incident Base Camp. The State of Idaho Department of Health epidemiologist from District 6 (Idaho Falls) also responded. Idaho National Laboratory sent several ambulances to transport and assist patients. The local area ambulances all assisted with EMT support.

Measures were taken at the Base Camp to mitigate the spread of the illness. Servers are serving personnel at the salad bar instead of everyone helping themselves; salt and pepper shakers have been removed and replaced with individual packets. Tables are being sanitized after each use. A water tender carrying Clorox mixed with water sprayed the grounds around the Base Camp, the LDS church and the Community Center. Hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes, and gloves are readily available throughout the Incident Command Post and Base Camp. The shower unit has also taken additional precautions to sanitize their equipment between uses.

Firefighter health is continuing to be monitored by the management team with medical attention being provided as warranted. A mobile medical unit from Rexburg remains on site to offer immediate care to anyone else exhibiting signs and symptoms of this illness.