



# Salmon-Challis National Forest Black Canyon Fire Update Tuesday, September 13, 2011



Contact Fire Information: 208.756.5177

On Saturday, September 3, forty-one (41) personnel assigned to the Black Canyon Fire came down with an intestinal disorder. Nine individuals were treated at area health facilities, and a total of thirty-six (36) of those affected were unable to return to work. Along with other emergency medical assistants, the State of Idaho Department of Health epidemiologist, Kathy Reynolds, from District 6 (Idaho Falls) also responded.

The Idaho Department of Health sent out samples for testing. The results came in on Monday, September 12, and, according to Reynolds, two samples tested positive for norovirus. Norovirus is an infection that causes acute gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines). The most common symptoms are diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain.

The affected firefighters experienced these symptoms, as well as headache and nausea, which then lead to dehydration. No one experienced fever or respiratory symptoms. For those who sought medical attention soon enough, quick rehydration and an anti-nausea agent hastened recovery, and most personnel were recovered after a number of hours.

Norovirus is highly contagious and therefore easily spread. Individuals can contract the virus by eating foods or drinking liquids that are contaminated, touching contaminated surfaces and then placing one's hand in one's mouth, or by having direct contact with an infected person.

Reynolds also said that the samples taken by Idaho Department of Health tested negative for salmonella, shigella, campylobacter, and shiga toxin enriched stool.

All resources assigned to the fire at the time of the breakout have been released. One local fire engine continues to patrol the Black Canyon Fire, north of Howe, Idaho.