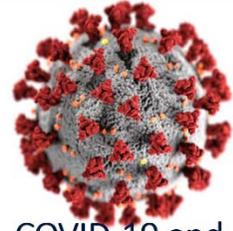




Event Type: COVID-19 Lessons
on the 189 Fire

Date: April 18, 2020

Location: New Mexico



COVID-19 and
Fire Season 2020 Lessons

For the latest on COVID-19 visit
[CDC.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19) 

Engine Module's Experience and Lessons from its First Fire Assignment this Season

Many resources did not appear to be practicing social distancing.

Other responders have COVID-19 procedures, but they vary widely between agencies.

Narrative

On Saturday April 18, our Carson National Forest (CAF) Engine 661 responded to the 189 Fire near Abiquiu, New Mexico to support the fire on state jurisdiction lands.

Information we received upon initial response was that the state was requesting U.S. Forest Service resources because the fire could threaten our agency's lands.

We assembled our Engine Module for the first time this season. Just before departing for the incident, we received additional information that the fire may be on the Santa Fe National Forest (SNF) lands and that SNF Engine 461 was responding.

We continued to respond with the thought that we would likely be cancelled once closer-resources arrived on scene.

Effort Made to Keep Engine Module Isolated

Upon arrival on the incident we noticed a large organization working the fire that included: several law enforcement vehicles, several fire department command vehicles, several volunteer engines from the surrounding communities, an ambulance, and SNF Engine 461.

An effort was made to keep our module isolated from the rest of this group, having only one person obtain a briefing and assignment from the Incident Commander. We did interact with SNF Engine 461 to see what intel they had prior to our arrival.

Our assignment was to relieve SNF Engine 461 on the hose lay and continue to secure the fire while they took care of a spot fire above the main fire. We tied-in with the SNF Engine 461 folks and secured the fire's edge until released from the incident.

The New Mexico State Forestry's Returning Heroes Hand Crew arrived on scene and relieved all engine personnel to enable them to be available for initial response. Before departing to our station, we conducted an AAR.

AAR

Insights and Observations

- ❖ The organization seemed excessive for the size of the fire (1 to 2 acres).
- ❖ Approximately 50 to 60 personnel were assigned to the incident, including a 20-person crew.
- ❖ Limited communications between cooperator's Dispatch Centers made it hard know how many resources were committed to the incident.
- ❖ Many resources did not appear to be practicing social distancing.
- ❖ Other responders have COVID-19 procedures, but they vary widely between agencies.
- ❖ Very few people used masks when on the fire line or when in vehicles.
- ❖ The hose lay was used by two engine crews, and was likely in use by others prior to our arrival.
- ❖ Meals were provided to responders. (Forest Service personnel declined the offer.)
- ❖ Our Engine Module was kept isolated from the rest of the group and maintained social distancing within the module as much as possible.
- ❖ Equipment was wiped down and stowed prior to our departure home.
- ❖ We requested an emailed resource summary from the IC to track resource interactions.

AAR

Suggestions

- ❖ Consider disengaging if resources or efforts are not necessary.
- ❖ Stage Engine Module away from the incident until the initial briefing is obtained.
- ❖ Ask for a radio briefing upon arrival to set the expectation for future interactions.
- ❖ Only one person should interact when receiving initial briefing if necessary.
- ❖ Scout the initial assignment before committing any resources.
- ❖ Voice concerns when personal space is challenged.
- ❖ Continue to be mindful of COVID-19 procedures and interactions with others.
- ❖ Increase communication with cooperators at every level of our organizations.

**This RLS was submitted by:
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