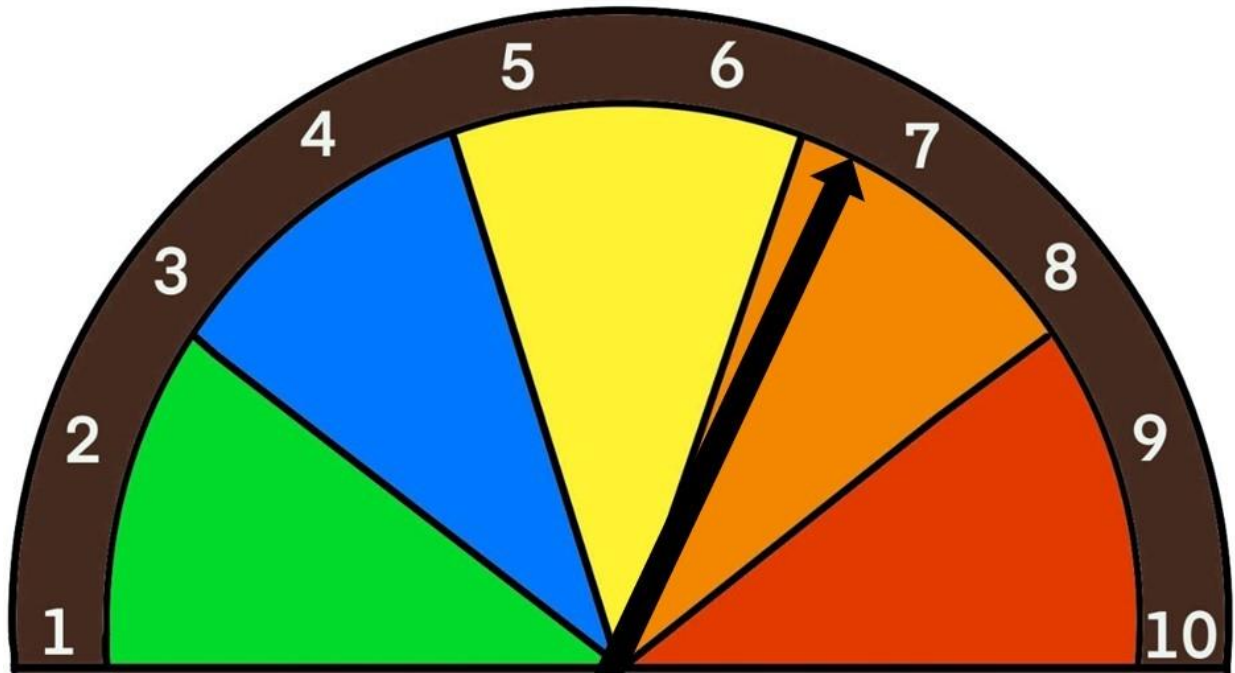


PULSE CHECK



Stress

(Arrow represents average self-rating)

MAY 28, 2020

An Assessment of
PNW Fire & Aviation Management
Preparedness
In the 2020 Global Pandemic

Currently at
Preparedness
Level 2

Introduction



“Unknowns are causing stress.”

These are unprecedented times with many unknowns related to the pandemic and our ability to engage in successful fire suppression. Projections indicating an above-average fire season amplify concerns. Taking care of employees and focusing on their needs is vitally important as they go into this fire season.

The Pacific Northwest Regional Leadership Team and the State Office/Regional Office (SORO) Fire and Aviation Management leaders assembled our team to perform a rapid assessment of fire preparedness programs in light of the pandemic. We were tasked to help identify the following:

1. Current stress level and health/well-being of employees.
2. What is different this year.
3. Blind spots in our current thinking and actions.
4. Scenarios to enhance learning.

To help meet these objectives, we reached out to more than 40 individuals in one-on-one and panel discussions and/or with an opportunity to provide written input. We developed a set of five questions to ensure consistent and facilitated conversations, and to provide a framework for similar check-ins over the course of the season (see Appendix C).

Participants included a wide cross-section of disciplines, geographical locations, and agencies (see Appendix B). SORO leaders, Agency Administrators, Incident Commanders, and Aviation and Operations leaders provided input for themselves personally, as well as representing the “boots” on the ground or in the air.

The conversations were telling and heartfelt. The safety of our wildland firefighters, aviators, and the public is first and foremost in everyone’s mind; we all care deeply about the health and well-being of our workforce, their families, and the public they serve.

Employee Stress Levels



“When firefighters leave the fire, they leave the hazards behind—the long hours, the potential for burn-over, driving, snags—but now they have a new hazard of bringing a contagious virus home with them.”

We asked people to rate their current stress level. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “very comfortable” and 10 is “very uncomfortable,” stress levels ranged from 2 to 10, with an average stress level of **6.75**. They were then asked to elaborate on the reasons behind their stress level rating.

The most common issues of concern were:

- Information overload.
- Conflicting guidance.
- No clear plan if employee(s) get infected.
- Lack of cohesion.
- Cumulative mental fatigue.
- Distraction and lack of focus.
- Balancing risk and risk transfer.
- Increased time required to do the work.
- Contact tracing.
- Lack of confidence in self-reporting of symptoms.
- Reduced availability of fire suppression resources.
- Lack of timely and complete testing.
- The fact that so much is yet unknown.

Employee Health and Well-Being



“We’ll make it through this summer, we’ll get through it; what I’m worried about is the mental health of personnel come the dark days of this fall and winter.”

We heard that the most overwhelming concern during this pandemic, entering into fire season and beyond, is the health of our employees and their loved ones. This is very understandable. We wish to provide context to considerations which would yield great reward and allow employees to shift their focus back to known hazards. Many of these could be fashioned into a “Bill of Rights” for our emergency responders. Employee stress, performance, and sense of well-being would be improved if there were end states that looked like this:

Timely testing made available to employees for free. Develop a robust testing system at the National or Regional level that will enable us to quickly determine when an employee is infected. Not only would this help alleviate employee stress, it would help us quickly identify employees who are fit for duty to serve.

Prepared with direction on how to isolate/quarantine sick employees. Many are worried about what will be needed to support the medical aspects of fire suppression. Some units are working with County Health Departments and have pre-identified isolation/quarantine facilities close to medical services. Other units have not addressed this important need. The current condition and/or design of some facilities may not meet the needs of our workforce should pandemic health and safety mitigations persist. We need an “easy button” to be able to quickly hire local County Health officials to help with

potential outbreaks. Discussion and action to help local units and counties should be taken at the State and Regional Office levels.

Prepared with direction on contact tracing for people who have been exposed. Some County Health Departments might have the capacity to perform this function; this is not the case in rural counties where capacity is already challenged. More direction on how and who conducts contact tracing would be helpful.

Medical professionals incorporated into our organization. Medical issues should be addressed by people with medical expertise. Having personnel as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the medical field would be beneficial to Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and local units. Analysis should be conducted to establish the function and number of these positions. Ensure the availability of medical advice through consultation.

Those infected feeling nurtured and financially secure. Advocate for and support infected employees through the claims process. If it is determined they became ill in the line of duty, then take the position to financially support them and their families. If someone should die as a result, consider it a line of duty death. Not only would this help alleviate employee stress, it would establish the organization as an employer who honors sacrifices made in serving the American people.

A better avenue for employees to seek mental health help. Mental health has long been a concern for the firefighting community. Often, emergency responders can continue at high levels while the emergency exists, but then as the emergency winds down, the emotional toll presents itself. With the additional risks associated with a pandemic and the possibility of illness, we should provide a robust system of mental health support.

Before calling the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), employees need a safe place for a simple check-in on how they are doing mentally. We need to be proactive to recognize the early signs of depression and provide support to those who may need it. Procure additional mental health professional assistance, and provide additional contact information for mental health issues. Seek out State and local mental health professionals to provide this service. Our Human Resource specialists and Critical Incident Stress Managers could also be a resource to provide additional mental health capacity.

Flexible work-rest ratios to meet the needs of both employer and employee. It makes sense to allow adequate recovery for employees who perform their duties and often go above and beyond when the incident demands it. With the added pressures associated with a global pandemic, this may mean liberal, paid rest and recovery periods. For many, recovery also means re-connecting with people who are concerned for them while assigned.

Employees are already feeling fatigued from cumulative stressors. Emphasis on pacing physical and mental fatigue will be paramount if we are to exit the 2020 season with a high-performing workforce that can re-engage in the future. Add capacity for back-ups of key positions and personnel. Build contingencies for when employees may get sick or need time to recover. The right to refuse assignments should be supported.

Have experience in and value a reporting culture. If an employee feels ill, their need to report their condition must outweigh their personal desire to stay active in service. Currently, there are financial

and emotional incentives to stay active; peer pressure can inhibit reporting. Contractors, ADs, and all emergency responders must not be incentivized to keeping working when sick.

An employer of choice with a reputation of taking care of our employees and contractors. With the global pandemic, there is an opportunity to be known as an employer who cares. This would boost employee morale and bode well for new employee recruitment in the future.

Alignment



“Ongoing issues and challenges are related to ‘doctrine’; we want actual direction.”

We sense that the pandemic has caused stressors and changes that were previously unimaginable. Mitigating these stressors requires gaining alignment wherever we can. Feedback indicates that local unit leaders have been building their own plans and Best Management Practices based on general direction with a localized focus. The pandemic (like a wildland fire) knows no boundary, and thus affects every person and every activity. So, how could we be more efficient and move ahead with confidence into the future?

Provide clear direction and information. All of the people we talked with felt overloaded with information, some to the point of not being able to absorb new information. They want clear, basic, and implementable direction that is fundamentally common for all in the PNW. We should strive to find the right balance between doctrine and clear, basic direction. We should empower creative thinking and decision space within common sideboards. Clarity provided here will be a huge stress reliever.

Common messaging. The timing is perfect to leverage messaging and we should capitalize on it. Provide messaging on both complex and fundamental issues. Right now people are listening--messaging on the potential for more fire on the landscape, the role of fire, and fire prevention campaigns will have powerful pay-offs with a captive audience.

Create muscle memory and invest in alignment. A foundation where agencies' emergency management organizations are in alignment would build muscle memory for new ways of doing things. This would foster trust from our employees and the public we serve. It would strengthen partnerships when we come to the table with a common goal. Knowing we are vested to gain alignment is powerful and will help set expectations at all organizational levels. This would reduce the potential for “friendly fire” between employees, crews, resources, and agencies.

Look to the future with existing and new partners. Strengthen existing partner relations and coordination within our geographic area. Maintain relationships with neighbors to our geographic area. Leveraging new partners could move us into ways of doing business that would reduce stress, gain understanding and capacity, and help us pursue solutions to protect the health of our most critical resource, our employees. New partners could include state-level health agencies, county health agencies, and the National Guard.

Innovation in mobilization. We heard a need to take another strategic look at mobilization practices. With a shared vision and strategic operating practice, shared facilities and resources would prove more efficient and robust. Our normal resource and firefighter capacity will be reduced this season. There are opportunities within mobilization to leverage capacity, support creative problem solving, and engineer a system that will place our best foot forward towards the highest priority.

Local unit discretion pertaining to National and Shared Resources inhibits mobility and interoperability, two of the most beneficial features of National Resources. Providing clear and common direction will help relieve the stress currently felt by the employees who manage these modules. Actively pursue innovation in mobilization and resource use. Proceed with innovations with the intention of risk reduction, for example, maximizing the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).

Learning



“We haven’t yet walked this mile.”

The fire community and leadership desire to be a learning culture. We believe in adapting and improving Best Management Practices. We know that this summer we will be making difficult risk-based decisions, trying to find a balance with appropriate fire suppression objectives and available resources. We also know the responsibility includes the unknown risks associated with a global pandemic.

We have “paper” solutions in place, but haven’t been able to test them. Challenges may not be known until we experience them. Learning will result if/when the things we’ve planned for actually happen. There have been barriers to learning, including social distancing, not being able to use aviation simulators, technological barriers, etc. As the season progresses, we will have stories and experiences from which we can learn. Meanwhile, other geographic areas are already having experiences and are already learning. Learning enables us to grow and reduces stress. A learning culture would include the following end states:

Continued use of existing learning tools. After-Action-Reviews (AARs) distributed by hotshot crews and others are “gold” and have been very extremely useful and informative.

PNWCG’s “Northwest Incident Management Teams, Recommended Best Management Practices, COVID-19 Pandemic” dated May 14, 2020 has identified considerations in responding to wildfire to help reduce exposure. Although this document focuses on how IMTs should operate, it could also help inform initial attack at individual units. It has been left up to the individual units whether to follow these BMPs where applicable. As circumstances change, continue to develop useful practices that can be applied.

Consider discussing “unknowns” during the “Six Minutes of Safety.” Foster openness and encourage ground-level discussions. Nationally, there is the Lessons Learned organization and the Human Performance staff which could both be a conduit for learning.

Practice of challenging scenarios. Scenarios could be practiced to facilitate learning and to help employees prepare for worst-case events. (See Appendix D for some examples of possible scenarios.)

A dedicated group of people to foster learning. How can we “lean into” this issue and perform with excellence? A dedicated group of people to summarize what we know and develop an information system that is effective and efficient without “overloading” employees could be a small investment with a big payoff. This team could be the “keepers” of information, as well as have a teaching role in Best Management Practices. We have experiences like that of the Line Officer desk--perhaps there is opportunity to expand on this. Let us create the ability to foster line-to-line, staff-to-staff, IC-to-IC, aviator-to-aviator so that by the end of the season, our performance was enhanced by learning and sharing. Likely everyone would appreciate the support; we just need to empower a small group and stay with it all season. It would also be an excellent opportunity to include law enforcement, recreation, and the BLM.

A Highly Reliable Organization (HRO) model. Learning is one of the pillars in the HRO model; these organizations desire to learn. Employees are encouraged to come forward with information without a focus on outcomes. Don’t miss an opportunity to learn. Dedicate personnel with a learning focus. Focus on a deep learning experience after the 2020 fire season to prepare for the next season. We must learn, adapt, modify, and evolve.

Our Final Thoughts



“What has been affirmed through this assessment is that at all levels of the organization, there is a strong intent to perform at a very high level. Our employees, their families, and public safety are our Number One priority. We have an opportunity to define our future. The passion and care that exist in our organization will inspire our best and brightest to help create solutions, deliver a future with fewer unknowns, and create a path forward for positive change.”

Appendix A: Team Members

Team Member	Role	Bio	Contact Information
Tracy Beck	Team Leader	Retired Forest Supervisor, Willamette National Forest	tracybbeck@gmail.com
David Summer	Facilitator	Retired Fire, Fuels and Aviation Director for PNW and Alaska	dsummeror@aol.com
Bob Crumrine	Fire Specialist	Deputy Interagency Fire Staff, Fremont-Winema National Forest and Lakeview District BLM	bcrumrin@blm.gov
Pat Kelly	Aviation Specialist	Retired Assistant Director- Aviation, National Headquarters	pjk_4@comcast.net
Peggy Rollens	Writer/Editor	Contract Technical Writer	peggyrollens@gmail.com

Appendix B: Participants

Name	Title / Unit
Allen, Robert	Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
Baldwin, Jason	Acting Branch Chief Aviation Operations, F&AM, National Headquarters; Fixed-Wing Program Manager, SORO
Belozer, Janine	Regional Aviation Safety Manager, SORO
Burditt, Lynn	Area Manager, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
Carlton, Alice	Forest Supervisor, Umpqua National Forest
Crippen, Renee	Dispatch Center Manager, North East Oregon Dispatch, La Grande, OR
Darling, Dennis	Fire Operations Specialist, SORO
DePue, Opal	Engine Captain, Willamette National Forest representing chair for captain's group
Dimke, Jeff	Fire Management Officer, Spokane District, BLM
Duncan, Riva	Interagency Fire and Aviation Officer, West Central Oregon
Ellison, Sarah	No title listed, Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station
Glose, David	Regional Helicopter Program Manager, SORO, Regional Aviation Group
Grafe, Doug	Fire Protection Division Chief, Oregon Department of Forestry
Hedgepeth, Kelly	La Grande Airbase Manager, Wallowa Whitman National Forest; Detailed to Project Manager, F&AM National Headquarters
Hiatt, Ed	Interagency Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, NW Oregon District BLM, Siuslaw National Forest and Willamette National Forest
Hulse, Hannah	Program Specialist, SORO
Jeffries, Shane	Forest Supervisor, Ochoco National Forest
Jewkes, Holly	Forest Supervisor, Deschutes National Forest
Johnson, Douglas	Deputy Fire Management Officer, Central Oregon Fire Management Services
Kidwell, Erin	President of PNW Regional Employee Union.
Livingston, Noel	Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Lucas, Amanda	Acting BLM State Aviation Manager, SORO; Southwest Oregon Unit Aviation Manager, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, Medford, Roseburg, and Coos Bay BLM Districts
McDaniel, Darcy	Assistant Director, Fire Integration, SORO

Name	Title / Unit
Meisinger, Brent	Fire Operations Specialist, SORO
Morrill, Glenn “Kipp”	State Aviation Manager & Fire Program Safety, DOI Regions 8 & 10, BLM CA State Office, Branch of Fire & Aviation; Incoming BLM State Aviation Manager, SORO
Narus, Bob	Fire Management Officer, Vale District BLM
O’Brien, Dan	Center Manager, NW Coordination Center, SORO
Parks, Devin	Zig Zag Hotshot Crew Superintendent, Mt. Hood National Forest, representing PNW Hotshot Group
Parrish, Richard	Fire Operations Specialist, SORO
Rawlings, Steve	Assistant Director, Operations, SORO
Reed, Jim	Aviation Maintenance Division Manager, SORO Regional Aviation Group
Reed, Kim	Aviation Operations Division Manager, SORO, Regional Aviation Group
Robertson, Alex	Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, Central Oregon Fire Management Services
Roth, Robert	Assistant Director, Aviation, SORO
Sampson, Tim	Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, Colville National Forest
Schullanberger, Barry	Interagency Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, Fremont-Winema National Forest and Lakeview District BLM
Schupe, Dirk	Fire and Aviation Staff Officer, Mt. Hood National Forest
Shilling, Eric	Supervisory Pilot, SORO, Regional Aviation Group
Siemens, Brad	Assistant Director, Business, SORO
Smith, Ben	Aerial Survey Program Manager, Forest Health Protection, R6
Smolde, Rodney	Forest Supervisor, Colville National Forest
Stutler, Joe	Senior Advisor, Deschutes County, Oregon
Turley, Chuck	Wildfire Division Manager, Washington Department of Natural Resources

Appendix C: Questions

1. What is your current level of concern/stress about the upcoming fire season as related to the pandemic? (On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is “very comfortable” and 10 is “very uncomfortable.”)
2. Why do you rate your concern/stress at this level?
3. Are there any challenges or concerns that are not being addressed?
4. Are there any possible solutions or remedies for the challenges you are facing?
5. Is there anything else you would like to add or talk about?

Appendix D: Scenarios

The following scenarios are offered as “what if” exercises to facilitate learning, discovery, and preparation. Going through these exercises can help improve line officer and staff understanding through practice, which in turn can help reduce stress levels. As you work your way through the scenarios, think about what your unit can do to be more prepared to operate in the interface between pandemic and fire preparedness.

Scenario 1: “Test Our Firefighter”

At a pre-season meeting tailored for ICs and first responders, Agency Administrators from the Forest, BLM, and State were to provide leader’s intent to an audience of mixed-agency personnel. After the opening remarks and leader’s intent from the Forest Supervisor, an individual stands up and says, “Will I be able to get tested prior to taking an assignment and who will pay?”

Another IC stands up and says, “Yeah, and what happens if I test positive? Will I get paid to stay home?” Another individual shouts out, “Yes, and what if I die? Is it a line of duty death? Does my wife get some financial relief?”

? **Question:** What is the appropriate response and is it different from what you want to say?

? **Question:** Peel the onion a little bit more and answer from the BLM and State IC’s perspective: “What is different from Forest Service procedures and why? Why did we not get alignment prior to the season or make process and procedures clear for all?”

Scenario 2: “Medical Response”

On July 7, 2020, an “incident within an incident” occurs on the Cougar Fire. Upon review, test results for Crew Number 9 determine that 6 of the 20 firefighters have tested positive with the virus.

Team 6 is in command of the Cougar Fire. The team’s Medical Unit do the best they can, but no additional resources are identified by the local unit and no additional resources are in the system.

The team isolates the crew into a dedicated area. Rumors are flying in camp. On Day 4, the crew boss takes her crew home because it was determined that better care could be provided at home. There were no approved SOPs and this seems like a reasonable option.

Crew Number 9 had worked on Division A with three other hand crews and two strike teams of engines.

? **Question:** What do you do with these 80 firefighters?

The team was frustrated because they had identified early in the process that they needed medical assistance; it did not happen, so they did the best they could with what they had.

Meanwhile, fire activity has really picked up. The fire has doubled each day and currently sits at 4,200 acres and is only one mile from town. The community is very frustrated that the fire does not seem to be slowing down. The community is concerned about a virus outbreak; they had no known cases up to this point.

? **Question:** What do you say at a public virtual meeting? How do you convey your heartfelt message in an e-mail or flier?

? **Question:** The community wants to know what was done pre-season to ensure adequate medical resources are available when we come into a rural community. What do we say to the community?

Scenario 3: “Mental Health Resources”

Over the Labor Day weekend, it is reported that a Crew Boss has committed suicide. After looking into the situation, it was discovered that the Crew Boss’ mother-in-law was living with his family. She had pre-existing health conditions and that is why she was living with her son-in-law. The mother-in-law died on August 29, 2020 and the medical community indicates that she died from COVID-19.

The Crew Boss had been on assignments throughout August and was assigned to fires with known outbreaks of corona virus. The Crew Boss’ wife was always concerned when her husband came home as to whether he should be isolated or continue to live in the home like normal.

Following the funeral, the wife is making some inquiries:

- She wants to know why there was no testing.
- She wants to know why there is no reliable tracking system.
- She wants to know if she is eligible for any financial resources to relieve the financial burden.
- She wants to know if this could be treated as a line of duty death, knowing it was a suicide.
- She wants to know who has the answers and does not want to be shuffled around.
- Her only anchor point is another wife and her husband’s best friend.

① **Question:** How do we respond to each of her inquiries?

② **Question:** What have you done to prepare to address these types of questions?

Scenario 4: “Living with Fire”

The Apple Fire started August 2, 2020 and has grown to 76,000 acres. It is August 30, 2020, and the stress of the summer is very evident. State legislators, the timber industry, and local communities are taking the position that our agency did not take an aggressive enough approach to initial attack. They believe we have not “answered the bell” as in the past, and we now have a campaign fire and budget impact about which the public is disappointed, and, in some cases, outraged.

Right now, before the “storm,” there is an opportunity for Agency Administrators and Fire Leadership to produce fire prevention messages and op-ed pieces about “living with fire.” We could share common expectations for this season. We could sign a joint letter to all firefighters saying that “together, we are better.” We could acknowledge the shared challenge this year in a global pandemic. We know that we have less capacity this season, which could result in more fire on the landscape and smoke in the air; we could be proactive in managing expectations.

So, explore the following:

- ① **Question:** What have we put into place?
- ② **Question:** Can we have an interagency agenda?
- ③ **Question:** Can we have interagency messages?
- ④ **Question:** Can we establish executive calls throughout the season to keep alignment at the highest level?


Scenario 5: “Aircraft Maintenance Staff Develop COVID-19-Like Symptoms”

Intended for: Aviation Managers, Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group Multi-Agency Coordination Group (PNWCG MAC) Representatives, PNWCG MAC Aviation Specialist, Center Manager, Northwest Coordination Center.

Situation: It is August 4, 2020 and the PNW has been at Preparedness Level 5 (PL5, the highest level) for two weeks. Most of the fires have been burning since the last big lightning bust 12 days ago. One hundred and forty-five aircraft are operating in the PNW. Aircraft Resource Orders have been Unable to Fill (UTF) for about a week. A Lightning Activity Level 6 (the highest level) is forecasted to begin tomorrow night, targeted at the Central Oregon Cascades.

Four members of the contract maintenance staff at the Redmond Air Center have COVID-19-like symptoms. They have been working on both of RAC’s Smokejumper Aircraft. The rest of the maintenance staff, both contractors, and Forest Service employees have been working side-by-side with these four. In fact, most of the Regional Aviation Group (RAG) has either interacted with them or flown aircraft that they have been working on.

In checking the sign-in log to the hangar, it turns out that over 30 employees and contractors have used the single hangar bathroom in the past two days.

 **Question:** What issues do you see and what actions do you take?

Points to address include:


1. Separating the symptomatic from non-symptomatic.
2. Working with their employer to get the contract workers tested.
3. Pursuing testing for RAG employees who have exposure.
4. Notifying the County Health Department.
5. Arranging back-up for RAC staff, including maintenance folks who test positive.
6. Notifying Northwest Coordination Center staff that RAC’s two Smokejumper aircraft need to be decontaminated and are out of service for at least three days.
7. Arranging for decontamination of the hangar and aircraft.
8. Arranging for alternate maintenance base for scheduled aircraft.
9. Determining how to make the RAC Smokejumpers available firefighters for the next three days.

Scenario 6: “Border Fire”

It is August 15, 2020, and the Pasayten Complex has been burning for a week with four large fires near Two Point Mountain. The fires are beginning to grow together, which would result in over 12,000 acres on fire with the smoke heading directly into Canada. The same lightning bust that produced the Pasayten Complex ignited numerous fires in British Columbia. The BCFS was able to pick up all of their fires. The Canadian government has requested that the U.S. put a high priority on the Pasayten Complex to reduce smoke in the border communities. There is pressure from the top to make this happen!

Crews on the fires near Two Point Mountain have been spiked out for one week.

A Type 3 Helicopter module from a long way away has been based out of North Cascades Smokejumper Base (NCSB) in Winthrop, and the helicopter has been used mostly for operations reconnaissance and mapping. Three days ago, they had the task of delivering batteries and other supplies to six crews at three different helispots. They also backhauled two firefighters who had sore feet. One of the module members has developed COVID-19-like symptoms.

 **Question:** What issues do you see and what actions do you take?

Points to address include:

1. Separating the symptomatic from the non-symptomatic.
2. Ensuring that no one without appropriate PPE comes into contact with the helicopter.
3. Pursuing testing for the helicopter module and pilot.
4. Locating and pursuing testing for the two passengers backhauled.
5. Notifying the County Health Department.
6. Determining who the module has been in contact with and pursuing testing as appropriate.
7. Ensuring that the contractor decontaminates the helicopter.
8. Notifying crews visited by the module in the field to do temperature checks.

Scenario 7: “Fire Knows No Boundary”

It is July 22, 2020, and we have a human-caused fire that lies on the landscape involving FS, BLM, BIA, State, and unprotected lands. The fire developed quickly and is now 28,000 acres; models suggest it could easily reach 75,000 acres within the next two burning periods.

As the Incident Management Team (IMT) is transitioning from a Type 3 team, it has become very apparent that the IMT must now deal with the inconsistencies and differences in agency policies related to corona virus PPE, sanitation, and social distancing expectations for the firefighter. Ground and aviation resources are asking questions and expressing concerns about the appropriate path forward.

The State has approval to mobilize engines coming from eight different Fire Departments. They have their own protocols from leadership and the union.

? **Question:** How do you balance risks of the fire and the stress of firefighters because of the corona virus?

It is recognized that the IMT will have to make decisions on the fly and ask for acceptance and understanding of those folks assigned the incident.

During a crew boss meeting, resources from outside the local area are saying that on their last fire, the situation was handled differently.

? **Question:** What do you do?

? **Question:** How can medical mitigation measures be different from community to community?

? **Question:** How can we get acceptance from our firefighters that we are learning as we go?

? **Question:** What can be agreed to now before July 22, 2020 is a reality?

? **Question:** What can be done at PNWCG to mitigate alignment challenges?

? **Question:** How can leaders and agencies speak more consistently? Have these discussions occurred while preparing for the 2020 fire season?

"We are firefighters,
not medical
professionals."

"COVID is a time
suck."

"You play like you
practice; no practice
equals poor play."

"Too much
information is like
drinking from a fire
hose."

"We need to focus
on falling the snag,
not on who held
the saw last."

"We're all a little
tired and it's a
different kind of
tired."

"We're not prepared
for what to do with
exposure, testing,
contact tracing,
isolation, and
quarantine."

"Is the juice worth
the squeeze?"

"I usually like having
decision space and
living in the gray,
but I don't feel like
this is the time for it.
We want actual
direction."