Last year on a single wildland fire incident, 200 firefighters were exposed to a viral agent, which resulted in the hospitalization of many for severe dehydration.

The state Health Department report concluded "that due to the lack of available and consistent handwashing, it is probable that large tubs containing an ice slurry to hold bottled water, sports drinks, juice and canned sodas became contaminated by the unwashed hands of ill people."

This outbreak of illness occurred prior to the takeover by an incident management team. Thus it is a reminder for firefighters to wash their hands before eating or drinking at all stages of an incident. Firefighters are also encouraged to carry instant hand sanitizers since soap and water are not always available.