



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center
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MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#013-2010

To: NWCG Executive Board, Geographic Area Coordination Group Chairs (GACG),
and Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs)

From: NWCG Chair *William Raage*

Date: March 16, 2010

Subject: NWCG Infectious Disease Guidelines

Attached are the Infectious Disease Guidelines prepared by the Incident Emergency Medical Task Group (IEMTG). This document has been reviewed by the IEMTG Medical Advisor and an epidemiologist with the National Park Service's Office of Public Health. These Guidelines are provided with the intent of assisting incident management personnel with effectively preventing the spread of infectious diseases during incident operations and response to outbreaks if they do occur.

Outbreaks of infectious disease have occurred in the past during incident operations managed by NWCG member agencies. It is likely that this will continue into the future, as both existing and currently unknown pathogens circulate through the general population. "Camp crud" and food borne illnesses have been commonplace in incident settings during our history. The attached Guidelines should assist in the planning for potential occurring infectious diseases, identifying diseases, establishing effective prevention measures, and reporting and containing outbreaks when they do occur.

During the IEMTG's work on this issue, one message became clear from the medical community: **good personal hygiene is the single most effective means of preventing outbreaks**. NWCG urges all its member agencies to emphasize this fact and support efforts to integrate this knowledge into the wildland fire safety culture as expressed in the behavior of wildland firefighters and other incident personnel.

The Infectious Disease Guidelines will be maintained on the IEMTG web site at <http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/pre/rmc/iemtg/policy-guides.html>. Hard copies of this document are not expected to be produced or distributed by NWCG. It is likely that these Guidelines will be updated in the future as new outbreaks occur or as new medical knowledge or prevention techniques become available. It is strongly recommended that users of a "hard copy" of this document verify they are referencing the latest version by checking this website periodically.

Questions and feedback should be directed to a member of the IEMTG representing your agency or geographic area <http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/pre/rmc/iemtg/roster.html>.

Attachment A: NWCG Infectious Disease Guidelines