

Southwest Fire Operations Risk Management Newsletter

Introducing the Southwest Area Safety Website

Never before has technology been so important as it is now to share timely, critical information relative to Risk Management, and the Health and Safety of our personnel.

The FS Fire and Aviation Management staff has designed the "Southwest Area Safety" website, currently operational.

The intent of this website is to provide personnel with an opportunity for "one-stop shopping" when it comes to important information related to Risk Management, Health and Safety.

The website will be updated with the most current information available as it pertains to the Southwest Area and nationally.

As you will see, the objective is to provide timely information to the field while keeping it simple and user-friendly. We want to provide you with an opportunity to find anything you need pertaining to firefighter health and safety in one spot.

The topics will remain simple, yet informative, including:

- * Accident Investigation Reports, After Action Reviews, and Facilitated Learning Analyses.
- * Alerts, Advisories, and Warnings.
- * "FireFit" program information.
- * Equipment tips and techniques.
- * Other information rela-

tive to firefighter health.

We are excited to share this new adventure with you and extend a personal invitation to view the website located at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/>



**We're on the
web!!**

**[http://fs.fed.us/
r3/swasafety/](http://fs.fed.us/r3/swasafety/)**

**SAFETY
STARTS
WITH
YOU!**

**Photo of the month?
What's wrong with this picture?
THINK SAFETY!!**



**USDA Forest Service—
R3—Fire and Aviation
Management**

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Special points of interest:

- *Introduction of "Southwest Area Safety" website.*
- *Wildland Fire Operations Risk Management Council*
- *Staying in Shape after fire season through the "FireFit" Interagency Wildland Firefighter Fitness Program.*

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Wildland Fire Operations Risk Management Council

Our Vision

Regardless of the mission, the challenge, or the environment, Forest Service employees engaged in fire management and all-risk incident response activities are safe, effective, and error-resilient.



Our Mission

To promote a comprehensive, proactive, and recognizable program that significantly advances the safety and effectiveness of Forest Service employees.

Our Goal

Improve employee performance through information transfer and education with an emphasis on **Strong Leadership**, a **Comprehensive Operational Approach**, and **Focused Action**.

Risk Management Council Members:

NIFC:

Larry Sutton — Boise, ID (Council Chair)

Region 1:

Jeff Scussel—Missoula, MT (Co-Chair)

Paul Chamberlin—Missoula, MT (Advisor)

Region 2:

Ted Moore—Lakewood, CO

Region 3:

Jerome Macdonald—Albuquerque, NM

Bequi Livingston—Albuquerque, NM

Region 4:

Steve Holdsambeck—Ogden, UT

Region 5:

Peter Tolosano—Sacramento, CA

Region 6:

Shelby Gales—Portland, OR

Region 8:

Larry Grimes—Atlanta, GA

Region 9:

Bill Reynolds—Eagle River, WI

Region 10:

Gary Lenhausen—Anchorage, AK

NEA:

Bob Hartlove—Newton Square, PA

John Grosman—Newton Square, PA (alt.)

Public Affairs Officer:

Mike Apicello—Boise, ID

Aviation Safety—NIFC:

Ron Hanks—Boise, ID

MTDC:

Leslie Anderson—Missoula, MT

For More Information:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/council/index.htm>

SAFENET—A Good Communication Tool!

The SAFENET system is intended solely as a tool for wildland firefighters and fire management. Its objective is to provide a forum for firefighters to voice their safety concerns, facilitate problem solving, and to aid in identifying trends as they relate to firefighter safety.

This tool was developed specifically for the wildland firefighter as a way to be heard and get unsafe situations resolved. It's a method for reporting and resolving safety concerns encountered in wildland fire, prescribed fire, or all-risk operations.

SAFENET is not the only way to mitigate a safety-related concern; it does not replace accident reporting or any other valid agency reporting method. It's simply an easy, quick way to report a safety concern.

Other facts about the SAFENET system:

- SAFENET forms are available to every firefighter and can be submitted through the Internet, in person, or by mail at any time.
- Anyone can fill out a SAFENET, anytime, to report a valid concern about unsafe situations or near misses.
- You can submit a SAFENET anonymously if you choose.

- There is no punishment or penalty for filing a SAFENET.

To visit the "Safety Zone" newsletter specific to SAFENET, please see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/council/newsletters/jun07/jun07.html>



Understanding the 'Facilitated Learning Analysis' (FLA)

For years, the Forest Service has taken a single approach to investigating accidents: the Serious Accident Investigation. Unfortunately the emphasis on "serious" accidents has led to many missed opportunities to learn from "less than serious" accidents or from events that were not accidents, such as near misses.

The conclusions reached through the Serious Accident Investigation process

have not always shed much light on *why* accidents occurred, especially accidents where the causes were ascribed to human error. The Forest Service may now be at a crossroads of where to place emphasis: on reactive investigations of tragedies after the fact, or on proactive investigations designed to prevent tragedies in the first place.

One such tool is the Facilitated Learning Analysis (FLA) that was designed

specifically as a process to "tell a story" and provide valuable "lessons learned" to others in hopes that they not make the same mistake or make a different decision if placed in the same predicament. Like the After Action Review, the FLA takes the process to the next level. (*Briefing Paper presented by Larry Sutton and Gary Helmer; briefing paper provided at AMC Meeting July 31—August 2, 2007.*)

ARE YOU FIREFIT? Staying In Shape Long After “Fire Season” Ends <http://www.nifc.gov/FireFit/index>

Fire season is slowly coming to an end and your body is certainly feeling the effects of the long haul. Are the legs a bit achy and the mood a bit “on edge”?

Although most fire personnel feel that they are at the peak of their fitness level, this is the time to take care of those aching muscles and any injuries that occurred as a result of the physical demands of the fire season.

Like elite athletes, wildland firefighters also need to take time after the season to rehab their bodies and provide time for recovery and relaxation. However, that doesn’t mean that it’s time to “slack off” and quit working out. It does mean that there are specific fitness regimes in place for the post-fire season to allow the rest while still maintaining a good fitness program.

The FireFit program was designed specifically to address the needs of wildland firefighters and has a special module designed for “Post-Fire Season Fitness.” This module is designed for the wildland firefighter and emphasizes time for rest and recovery while it provides a structured fitness regime geared for the off-season. One common

(to Column 3)

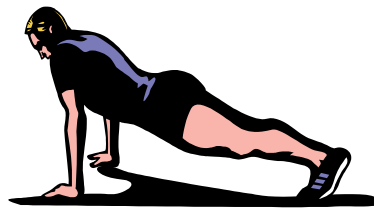
Performing the perfect push-up

The push-up is a great exercise for those firefighters that have limited exercise equipment or are on the road.

The push-up can be performed in a variety of ways, each one working the muscles a little differently and still utilizing several different muscles in one simple exercise.

Important Tips:

- Breathe throughout the exercise.
- Do not overextend the elbows.
- Perform the exercise slowly to get optimal benefits.
- Stop if you feel pain or other symptoms exist.



(from Column 1) . . .

theme is to establish a balanced year-round Simple “Post-Season” Module tips include the following:

- This module provides a transition from fire season to allow ample time for rest, recuperation, and injury rehabilitation.
- Designed to concentrate on flexibility and encourage cross -raining through a diversity of exercises.
- Primary phase to prepare the mind and body for the transition to the Pre-Season Module and fire season.
- Provides templates to incorporate cardiovascular training with muscular strength and endurance.

“Fitness can neither be bought nor bestowed, Like honor, it must be earned.”

- Anonymous

Mitigating Fatigue Both On and Off the Fireline!

With the fire season continuing in the Northern Rockies and hurricanes brewing in the Gulf of Mexico, fatigue management continues to be of great concern.

Although we each have a basic understanding of the “Fatigue” concept, do we really understand the effects of fatigue on ourselves and others?

Fatigue has been a primary factor affecting firefighters for years. In fact, fatigue continues to plague the airline industry and trucking industry requiring strict enforcement measures to be put in place for mitigation purposes.

Most people have a basic understanding of how much fatigue affects them.

Visualize yourself at your desk on a Monday morning after returning from your vacation and flying home on the “red-eye” flight. You got in at 6:00 a.m., rushed to get a quick “Red Bull,” and made it to the fire shop in time for the tailgate safety meeting at 8:00 a.m.

Then, about 10:00 a.m., you begin to fade. Your eyesight gets blurry, your mind seems to be in a fog, and you just can’t seem to make a decision even if your life depended on it. Now visualize yourself on the fireline in the same predicament. Would you be able to make a good decision given a life-threatening predicament?

Oftentimes, you will be the last person to recognize fatigue in yourself. You

will be in a state of denial when questioned by others regarding your fatigue.

It’s equally important to ensure that you and your employees understand the Work-Rest Guidelines and, more importantly, to admit when you or employees need “time off.”

More information is available pertaining to Fatigue Management from the following resources:

- **Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) - “Fatigue and the Firefighter” brochure**
- **Wildland Fire Safety Website (www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety)**

USDA Forest Service— R3—Fire and Aviation

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**We want to hear from you. What
do you and don't you like about
this newsletter?**

Dealing With 'Transformation' Stress

How do you define

S—T—R—E—S—S ?

How about through

T—R—A—N—S—F—O—R—M—A—T—I—O—N !

What does this new process called "Transformation" really mean to those folks in Fire and Aviation Management? How will we each be affected by this new process and when will it all begin—and end?

So many questions to ask and so much stress occurring as a result of the unknown.

A website has been developed nationally to address the "Transformation Process" and to answer those frequently asked questions. The website can be located at:

<http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/transformation/>

A great book to consider reading during this time of change is called:

"Transforming Stress—the HeartMath Solution for Relieving Worry, Fatigue, and Tension" by Doc Childre and Deborah Rozman, Ph.D.

Incident Preparedness—Health Risks Management

As our permanent and seasonal employees continue to support the national firefighting efforts and also prepare for natural disaster assignments, there are several precautions to consider in maintaining the health and safety of these employees during incident and firefighting duties, including the following:

- **Nutrition** : Nutritional needs should be met by a balanced diet consisting of carbohydrates (60% of calories), protein-rich foods (15-20%), fats (20-25%), two to four servings of fruit and veggies, and servings of whole grains daily with adequate hydration.

- **Rest / Sleep**: Firefighters and support personnel should be well rested, sleeping 7-9 hours each night.

- **Physical Conditioning** : Physical conditioning is important and should include aerobic and muscular routines through moderate exercise with good stretching on a daily basis.

- **Heat Tolerance**: Tolerance to extreme heat and humidity (heat stress index) generally requires 5-10 days of exposure to become acclimatized. To become acclimatized, gradually increase work time, taking care to replace fluids adequately and rest as needed, and maintain tolerance with periodic work or exercise in high-heat and humidity conditions.

- **Altitude Tolerance**: Elevations

below 5,000 feet have little noticeable effect on healthy individuals. As higher elevations are reached, barometric pressure declines and oxygen concentration in the air decreases. Acclimatization to elevations between 5,000-9,000 feet can take about three weeks, or one week per each 1,000 feet above 5,000 feet.

- **Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Glucose)**: The brain utilizes glucose in the blood for fuel. Symptoms include nervousness, faintness, confusion, inappropriate behavior, and visual problems. Individuals prone to hypoglycemia should eat on a regular basis, especially before vigorous exercise or work.

- **Hyponatremia (Excessive Water Intake)**: Excessive water intake can disturb the body's fluid-electrolyte balance and lead to an abnormally low level of plasma sodium. The risk is more pronounced during long duration exertion in high heat conditions. When excessive water intake is combined with loss of sodium in sweat, the risk of hyponatremia grows. To avoid this condition, drink carbohydrate (sports) beverages or put salt into drinking water to ensure sodium intake, drink half a quart of water or sports beverage 10—20 minutes before exertion, and replace fluids lost in sweat by drinking 6-12 ounces of water or sports beverage every 15-20 minutes during exertion.

- **Rhabdomyolysis (Exertion-Related Muscle Damage)**: This condition

causes fatigue and muscle aches and leads to myoglobin (looks like blood) in the urine. To limit the risk, increase training intensity gradually to give muscles time to adapt, maintain a year-round fitness program, avoid exercise in high heat stress index conditions unless you have trained in those conditions, limit exercise during times of illness, and consult with your physician if you are taking any medications or have medical concerns and/or conditions.

With so many environmental and other hazardous exposures related to all-risk incident response, it's important to make sure that employees have the required Safety and Health Training. It's also important to ensure that all immunizations are current before taking an all-risk incident assignment and that other recommended immunizations are taken into consideration.

