

From: FS-VIPR
Sent: Saturday, June 6, 2020 2:35 PM
Subject: (4000-4215) VIPR Message: COVID-19 and Mission Operational Readiness



Acquisition Management
USDA Forest Service



Dear VIPR Vendor,

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Federal Government, through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has issued precautions and/or guidelines to slow the spread of the disease. State and local government directives, decisions, and recommendations will also impact Interagency Wildland Fire Operations during the 2020 fire season and beyond. At the USDA Forest Service, the health and safety of our Wildland Fire Community is the top priority and critical to the success of our mission. Based on the evolving COVID-19 situation and the impact to the world, the USDA Forest Service wants its contractors to be aware that the Agency is working very diligently to preserve Mission Operational Readiness.

As part of the readiness effort, the COVID-19 situation has called for safety measures to protect those responding to wildland fire program needs. In addition to the established regional area wildland fire plans posted on the [National Interagency Fire Center \(NIFC\) Website \[gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#), the USDA Forest Service and our Interagency Partners will be adhering to the [CDC \[gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#) guidelines and the published Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([OSHA \[gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#)) standards and requirements, which apply to preventing occupational exposure to COVID-19. Until rescinded, all those operating within fire base camps and supporting wildland fire suppression activities will be expected to follow the same published Federal and State/local guidelines and restrictions in place for the duration of any and all fire assignments. Additionally, the CDC also recently published [FAQs for Wildland Firefighters \[gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#).

A list of recommended supplies and basic behaviors have been identified to foster success during the pandemic.

- Cloth face coverings - Cloth face coverings are recommended for use off the fire line when six feet of distance cannot be maintained, not including driving. Specific CDC guidelines for cloth face covering can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> [gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]
- Cleaning and disinfecting supplies - Cleaning and disinfecting shall occur as outlined by CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html> [gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]. Using cleaning products from the approved list of disinfectants located here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2> [gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]
- Hand sanitizer or soap and water - hand washing should occur frequently as outlined by CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html> [gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]
- Disposable Gloves - For use cleaning and disinfecting as outlined by CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/gloves.html> [gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]
- Thermometers - For use evaluating an individual's readiness; each day or prior to accepting an assignment.

In response to COVID-19, the OSHA general industry (29 CFR 1910) and other directives for employers can be found [here \[gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](#), as well as the OSHA enforcement response plan. The USDA Forest Service recommends all those considering wildland fire support during the 2020 fire season become familiar with OSHA Workers' Rights and Employers' Responsibilities in order to properly comply with workplace standards.

Through research and survey of the market, it is determined that the OSHA PPE and safety measures taken for wildland fire are of nominal cost. Based on the independent Government estimate, the Government estimates for daily PPE and safety costs equate to ~\$10 per person per day. These business expenses are covered under VIPR agreement Section B.2 -- PRICING AND ESTIMATED QUANTITY where, "Proposed rates shall include, but are not limited to, labor (as required), equipment, operating supplies, materials, State and Federal taxes (including workers compensation costs), insurance coverage, transportation costs, overhead, and profit, and any costs/fees necessary to ensure equipment/operators/crews meet(s) the specified standards. As required by the agreement, any costs associated with a contractor provided support truck for fuel, maintenance, and operator transportation; delivery/setup/takedown, mobilization/demobilization, power generation, and a Contractors representative attendance at the operational period briefings should also be included."

Our continued relationship and exemplary support from our industry partners is highly valued and critical to the wildland fire mission. If your company experiences a significant financial burden, due to the additional expenses of providing your employees required PPE and safety measures necessary for operating within the wildland fire work environment, please contact your Contracting Officer. Finally, it's always an independent business decision to accept an assignment. In the event you receive an assignment where COVID-19 is present and you feel accepting the assignment will create undo harm on your company we recommend you decline the assignment. Thank you.

Thank you!

Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) Team

Check out VIPR on the Web:

External - <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/vipr.php> [gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]