



TO :

FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 05/24/2001

SUBJECT : SAFETY ADVISORY : Firefighter Personal Hygiene

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.
