

Today's discussion is from the
Miscellaneous Category.



Scenarios are situations that can arise on a Wildland Fire or Aviation incident and are meant to add a realistic setting for the application of Today's Safety Discussion.

Potentially Violent Personal Encounters

Firefighters need to be aware of the potential for personal violence directed against them while they are engaged in fire operations and be alert to the warning signs during personal encounters with individuals. They also need to be aware of potential criminal activity (e.g., illegal dumping on public lands, clandestine drug labs, marijuana cultivation, etc.) in remote areas of public lands, and be prepared to leave the area immediately as persons engaged in such criminal activity can be hostile and violent if discovered.

- If a firefighter meets a member of the public who is hostile, the employee should:
 - be polite and non-threatening,
 - do not try to reason with potentially violent individuals,
 - leave the area as soon as possible,
 - report the incident to their supervisor, dispatch and law enforcement authorities.

- The vast majority of public land users are courteous and friendly, and want to use public lands properly and legally. Most encounters will be friendly and educational to both parties. Firefighters should be aware of the fact that there are exceptions to this rule, and should cultivate a situational awareness when they are in the field.

- If a firefighter feels at all uneasy or uncertain about a situation, they should not be embarrassed to leave the area. Firefighter safety and health are always primary considerations on the job.

- **Note:** It is unlawful for anyone to physically or verbally abuse a Federal employee who is acting within the scope of their duties—notify law enforcement at once if either occurs.

References:

[Safety and Health for Field Operations Manual, BLM--1112-2](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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