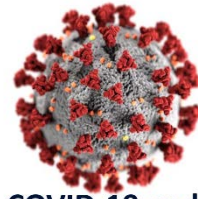


# Rapid Lesson Sharing

**Event Type:** COVID Mitigations  
on the Silver King Fire

**Date:** April 10, 2020

**Location:** Big Cypress National  
Preserve – Florida



**COVID-19 and  
Fire Season 2020 Lessons**  
For the latest on COVID-19 visit

[CDC.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)



Physical distancing during morning briefing  
on the Silver King Fire.

## Operating in the COVID-19 Environment: A Local Unit Level Perspective

*Leading a Type 3 Fire Organization on Your Local Unit  
Regarding COVID-19*

**By Michael O'Leary, Deputy Fire Management Officer  
Big Cypress National Preserve**

The 2020 south Florida fire season has come with the additional challenges of being prepared and managing resources while using Best Management Practices (BMP) when dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

As managers we have all read the BMP plans that have been disseminated throughout the organizations. Big Cypress National Preserve (BICY) Fire and Aviation Management began preparing in late February for a potentially active fire season.

Above average temperatures and record low rainfall has put south Florida in an early drought condition.

### **A Series of Strategic Planning Meetings**

The Silver King Fire started on April 10 in the Preserve's northeast corner. The community of Sanctuary was threatened. Additional resources were ordered to respond. BICY had severity approval beginning April 1 but did not have the resources available to maintain initial attack capabilities and manage the Silver King Fire.

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*Our way of doing business has changed and everyone needs to understand that response, strategies and tactics may change from previous fire seasons.*

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Normally, it is as simple as ordering what you need. But with concerns of COVID-19, each order was highly scrutinized at various levels.

With the support of Preserve management, BICY Fire and Aviation conducted a series of strategic planning meetings. Using Region 2 and the Southern Area Blue Team's BMP plans, BICY implemented several mitigations for managing wildfire resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local level planning is essential, it needs to include Agency Administrators, cooperators and militia staff members who are willing to assist. Our way of doing business has changed and everyone needs to understand that response, strategies and tactics may change from previous fire seasons.

The limiting factor is availability of resources and the challenge of having the capacity to support larger groups of people while adhering to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) COVID recommendations.

BICY found MS Outlook Teams to be very useful, but it needs to be put together with some thought.

It is also beneficial to identify C&G Staff personnel who can assist remotely and ensure that they are familiar with digital forms and processing. Status Check In, CTRs, General Messages, Demob Sheets, CA-1s and CA-16s should all be in digital format.

In addition, having an organized folder for each incident helps in collecting and the processing of the various documents we use during wildland fire operations.

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*Develop contingencies for COVID-19 cases. Quarantine individual, testing suspected vector (recommended), and isolation of family unit for 72 hours—then self-assess.*

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### **Other Important COVID Considerations**

1. Develop strategies based on available resources and values at risk.
2. Establish trigger points around your COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment, sanitation supplies and holding capacity. Do not order more resources than you can sustain safely.
3. Identify multiple ICP locations and multiple staging areas to separate modules/family units.
4. Identify comfort level Top Down and Bottom Up. Know that these may change as things evolve. Frequent Pulse Checks in an open learning environment is essential.
5. Restrict Fire Operations Centers to critical personnel to help maintain local information SMEs.
6. Communicate Task, Purpose and End State (to include buy-in from Agency Administrator).
7. Build capacity in C&G sections at the local level.
  - Order a Duty Officer to support wildfire operations needs while FMO/AFMO can field calls from cooperators and home unit inquiries of incoming resources and function as AREP.
  - Plans – Virtual meetings with C&G and other section members using MS Outlook Teams was very effective. IAPs development and production was done remotely. GISS capacities may be impacted.

Recommend ARC Collector and identifying who has access and with what privileges (editing, collecting). These individuals need an account to NIFC MAPS ARC GIS.

- Consider having 2 Liaison Officers (LOFRs) – One focused on fire support the other focused on COVID-19 sanitation supplies and mitigation needs (beneficial to have purchase authority). Ordering is more complicated: water/Gatorade, meals, batteries, coolers, Porta-Potties, sanitation stations, cleaning supplies, availability of bulk local purchases (limit one per customer policies), and businesses capacity to fill orders with reduced staff and drivers all impact timely deliveries.
- Finance working remotely and develop QR code for CTRs, Status Check In and Demob.
  - ✓ Ensure e-iSuite enterprise platform is operating properly at remote location and access passwords are up-to-date—and people have the latest updates. EFFs/ADs not recognized in IROC system causes an issue with processing time.
  - ✓ Utilize digital signatures for all documents.
- PIO – Essential to communicate proper messaging to the public and media resources regarding COVID-19 mitigations and fire updates.
- Safety – SOF1/2 and camp Safety.

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*Identify COVID-19 trigger points that will elevate the need for Type 2 or Type 1 Incident Management Teams. This is something we have never considered in the past.*

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8. Consider Smart Source (Viper contract) for bolstering computers with the latest updated government systems. Respond within 24 hours.
9. Submit SOPs regarding local COVID-19 mitigations, check in, submitting time and briefing protocols with the Resource Orders.
10. Develop contingencies for COVID-19 cases. Quarantine individual, testing suspected vector (recommended), and isolation of family unit for 72 hours—then self-assess.
11. Consider establishing contracts with disinfecting companies (such as Clean King, ServPro) to disinfect common working areas (helibase, engine bays, ICP, staging areas, vehicles, etc.). Anticipate down time during professional cleaning services of buildings, vehicles etc.
12. Units not having adequate internet to host MS Outlook Team meetings and processing virtual documents upload/download and higher volume of computer traffic need to identify other facilities with High Speed internet capabilities.
13. Identify COVID-19 trigger points that will elevate the need for Type 2 or Type 1 Incident Management Teams. This is something we have never considered in the past.

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**This RLS was submitted by:**  
**Michael O'Leary, Deputy Fire Management Officer**  
**Big Cypress National Preserve**

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# SAFETY MESSAGE

*Incident:*

Silver King Fire

*Date:* April 16, 2020

*Time:* 0700 - 2000 Hours

*Major Hazard and Risks:*

➤ **Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19)**

➤ **Driving & Parking**

➤ **Hydration**

*Narrative:*

- We're in a new era of wildland firefighting. While hand washing isn't new; social distancing is, as well as avoiding shaking someone's hand. **This virus is serious & doesn't play.** If you experience any upper respiratory issues, have an elevate temperature or just "feel" sick let your immediate supervisor know. Follow CDC Guidance:
  - The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
  - Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes
  - Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.
  
- You drive to/from the fire every day. Don't be an inattentive driver. Use your lights/signals/seat belts. Slow down. Be a thoughtful/considerate driver. Allow others to get by you when you park and be mindful where and how you park too. Make sure your ride is secured and in a lighted parking area when you park it at night.
  
- While working drink at least 1 quart of fluid per hour.