



Klickitat County Emergency Operations Center
199 Industrial Way, Goldendale, WA 98620
Public Information Officer 509-250-0528
klickitateocpio2@gmail.com

Media Release

July 23, 2020, at 5:00 PM

Fire Response during COVID-19

KLICKITAT COUNTY – We are extremely pleased to tell you about the success that our county had while dealing with the first large fire during COVID-19. Knowing that fire season was approaching everyone had been preparing for the additional difficulties that the fire teams would encounter due to the current pandemic. This early preparation was key to the success.

The Klickitat County Public Health Department (PHD) and the Klickitat County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) representatives attended the initial fire briefing and provided information about local resources such as personal protective equipment, the isolation & quarantine shelter, hospital availability and more. This allowed the crews to understand what was available if needed. The PHD reviewed the Fire's Best Practices for COVID which was said to be a good solid plan that would lower the risks of a COVID outbreak. Both PHD and DEM attended daily Cooperator's Meetings for updates as well as daily Planning Meetings. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) kept local officials and stakeholders updated.

The Local Fire Districts, Local DNR and Local Cooperators did a fantastic job stopping the fire growth on the first evening. From there forward they increased containment and extinguished hotspots as they appeared. Some of the changes that were made to address the health concerns were using physical distancing measures such as individual meals, separated work areas and they worked in groups and did not intermingle with other groups, as well as wearing masks when physical distancing was not possible. These measures that were taken helped to keep everyone healthy and safe while allowing them to focus on the fire.

We are in our driest times now through August and can only expect to see more fires. Keep in mind that fires even far away can drastically increase the smoke in our county and make it harder to breathe for those who have underlying conditions. If you are unable to wear your mask due to breathing conditions and are in need of going to the store, you can always try calling the store to see if they offer a curbside pickup option. COVID cases are still on the rise. Keep taking all the health precautions seriously and reduce your risk and those around you.

Be a Part of the Solution

###