



**Douglas A. Ducey**  
Governor

## Office of the State Forester

### Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management



**David Tenney**  
State Forester

Effective Date: February 1, 2021

To: All Department of Forestry and Fire Management employees and Wildland Fire Employees of Fire Departments and Fire Districts who have a Cooperative Fire Rate Agreement with the Department of Forestry and Fire Management.

Subject: Requirements and COVID-19 Mitigations for Work Capacity Tests and Critical Training for the 2021 Fire Season.

#### Background:

Adjusted or deferred typical pre-season fire preparedness requirements in order to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for the 2020 fire season. While the risk of COVID-19 exposure remains, there are also risks associated with further deferral of work capacity tests and training. There is no evidence the requirements for new employees outlined in DFFM "Memo Adjustments to Wildland Fire Preparedness Activities for the 2020 Fire Year in response to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic" caused undue exposure to the virus or led to infection, and the fire community has successfully achieved its mission without experiencing widespread COVID-19 outbreaks or spread from Work Capacity Tests and training. Therefore, the goal for 2021 is to resume pre-season preparedness while safely mitigating the risk of COVID-19 exposure to the greatest extent possible. DFFM Cooperator Agencies may elect more stringent directions if deemed prudent.

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### 2021 Requirements:

The following actions and mitigations are required for all wildland firefighters prior to receiving a 2021 red card.

### Work Capacity Tests:

Work capacity tests at the light, moderate and arduous levels are required for 2021. COVID-19 mitigations may include:

- Pre-screen participants using the Wildland Fire COVID-19 Screening Tool: <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/docs/eb-fmb-wildland-fire-covid-19-screening-tool.pdf>
- Socially distance participants for the duration of the test. This may require testing of smaller groups at the same time, staggered start times, and/or modified routes.
- Use individually issued backpacks, vests or bladder bags; there should be no sharing or reusing of equipment for same day use.
- If sharing and reusing must occur, follow appropriate cleaning protocols and allow several days between using to ensure the virus is not present.

### Training:

Critical training, including training that was deferred in 2020, should be resumed whenever possible. The NWCG Training Delivery Committee is currently prioritizing critical courses and developing alternative course delivery methods. Virtual or online learning is the preferred delivery method, however, in person training, with appropriate COVID mitigations, will be required in some cases.

<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/vilt>

Mitigations for in-person training may include:

- Screening participants using the Wildland Fire COVID-19 Screening Tool.
- Limiting the number of students and trainers.

- Requiring social distancing and mask use.
- Holding training sessions outdoors and/or in areas with good airflow.
- Wearing gloves and sanitizing all shared touch items.

First Aid, CPR, Blood Borne Pathogen and other medical training:

- Follow the requirements of the certifying entity (American Red Cross, American Heart Association, etc.).

RT-130 and fire shelter deployment training:

- Use virtual delivery methods for RT-130 classroom sessions.
- Complete practice deployment individually, not in teams.
- Consider using out of service fire shelters for deployment training.
- Purchase additional practice shelters if necessary, as multiple uses on the same day is not recommended.
- If practice shelters must be reused, follow NWCG sanitization procedures <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/committee/docs/fsppes-disinfecting-practice-shelters.pdf>

\*\*Please contact DFFM District Representative, DFFM Training Specialist [sburger@dffm.az.gov](mailto:sburger@dffm.az.gov), or DFFM Safety Officer [jquadiana@dffm.az.gov](mailto:jquadiana@dffm.az.gov) if more guidance is needed.

Thank you,

John Truett

Deputy Director of Fire Operations