



## COVID-19 Protocols in a multi-agency response to a wildfire incident

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During the Covid-19 Pandemic additional measures should be taken when attending a wildfire incident as part of a multi-agency response. It is likely that agencies/partners will have their own Covid safety measures in place and that these may differ due to their respective roles, responsibilities and working practices. It is important that everyone is respectful of each other's protocols.

**\*\*\* Any individual exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 or who is self-isolating must not attend a wildfire incident under any circumstances \*\*\***

Please refer to the NHS website for the latest list of symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you are displaying any of these symptoms: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

Basic Covid precautions must be adhered to by all partners, including maintaining social distancing whenever possible. The number of people travelling in vehicles should be kept to a minimum. Some partners have set a maximum number of people who are able to travel together in a vehicle. Anyone that needs to travel in a partner's vehicle or who is required to attend a Command & Control vehicle for a briefing must wear an appropriate IIR face mask\* and not just a face covering.

*\* Fluid repellent surgical (FRS) mask labelled as an IIR mask. A standard mask for protection against smoke inhalation does not provide the same level of protection against Covid-19.*

The blue light agencies, including Northumbria Police, North East Ambulance Service, Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service and the volunteer Mountain Rescue Teams will be using prescribed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). All four agencies carry spare IIR face masks for distribution to partners when required.

PPE does not negate the need to social distance whenever possible. Social distancing of 2 metres or more should be maintained at wildfire incidents wherever possible. If it is not possible to maintain 2 metres distance (i.e. due to specific tasks such as distributing equipment or riding in a vehicle), an IIR mask must be worn by all involved until social distancing can be achieved again.



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**\*\*\* Please remember that social distancing of 2 metres and hand hygiene are the most effective mitigation against spreading and contracting COVID-19. Please wash or sanitise hands thoroughly before and after handling any equipment \*\*\***

Some partners will appoint a Safety Officer and/or Covid Safety Officer whose task will be to ensure that all their personnel are adhering to Covid safe practices at all times. All partners are advised to respect the protocols and safe working practices of others. These protocols have been developed under guidance from Public Health England and other national and international advisory and governing bodies.

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### Document reviews and contact for further information

This document will be regularly reviewed by members of the Northumberland Fire Group and amendments will be made if/when any significant changes are made to guidance issued by HM Government and/or any of the responding organisations make significant changes to their operating protocols.

This document was last reviewed on 13/05/2021.

Please contact the following individuals if you have any queries concerning the content of this document:

- Andrew Miller, Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team - [andrew.miller@nnpmrt.org](mailto:andrew.miller@nnpmrt.org)
- Rob Stacey, Secretary of the Northumberland Fire Group - [robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk)