



## Welcome to Virginia

Thank you for coming to Virginia to help. This brochure provides safety and logistical highlights about fighting wildfire here in Virginia. The best advice is to get to know your local fire management personnel. They will be your best guide to keep you safe and informed during your stay with us.

## General Guidelines

- ◆ Alcoholic beverages are forbidden on State property and during deployments.
- ◆ VDOF will not purchase any type of tobacco products or other personal items for use by crews.
- ◆ Reasonable laundry needs of crews are acceptable costs and are reimbursed on VDOF expense accounts. Crew boss needs prior approval from VDOF.
- ◆ Bottled water and sports drinks are acceptable to purchase for crews, but soda drinks should not be purchased. Snacks for crews should be kept reasonable and should consist of healthy foods, such as peanuts, granola bars, trail mixes, etc.
- ◆ Other specific needs will be addressed on a case by case basis with prior approval by VDOF.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Western Region Office, Salem:

Phone: (540) 387-5461

Alleghany, Bath, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe counties

### Central Region Office, Charlottesville:

Phone: (434) 977-5193

Albemarle, Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Arlington, Augusta, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Clarke, Culpeper, Cumberland, Fairfax, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Frederick, Goochland, Greene, Halifax, Loudoun, Louisa, Lunenburg, Madison, Mecklenburg, Nelson, Nottoway, Orange, Page, Pittsylvania, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince William, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Stafford and Warren counties

### Eastern Region Office, Providence Forge:

Phone: (804) 966-2209

Accomack, Brunswick, Caroline, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Essex, Gloucester, Greensville, Hanover, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Northampton, Northumberland, Prince George, Richmond, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, Westmoreland and York counties

## For More Information

For more information about fighting wildfires in Virginia, please contact your local Virginia Department of Forestry office or visit the agency website at [www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov).

For information about federal firefighting, contact:

George Washington & Jefferson National Forest,  
Roanoke, VA: 540-265-5220

Shenandoah National Park, Luray, VA:  
540-999-3500 #3442

US Fish & Wildlife Service, Suffolk, VA:  
757-986-3480



### Virginia Department of Forestry

900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
Phone: (434) 977-6555

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

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# FIGHTING WILDFIRE IN VIRGINIA

*Safety and Logistical Essentials*



Virginia Department of Forestry

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

## VDOF Provided Meals

Meals provided by the VDOF should not exceed the standard Virginia per diem rates. As of 12/30/2010, these limits are:

- ◆ Breakfast - \$7.00
- ◆ Lunch - \$11.00
- ◆ Dinner - \$18.00

NOTE: Per diem rates may vary in some locations, check with your local VDOF representative.

## Lodging

- ◆ Telephone charges will not be allowed from motel rooms. All motel room phones should be turned off to outgoing calls. Use personal calling cards or cell phones for calls home. Crew bosses should use credit cards for business calls only, and then have your agency bill VDOF for appropriate VDOF-related business calls.
- ◆ Personnel will be lodged two per room, except when a female would have to lodge with a male, or for specific health issues (ie. person with a possible contagious illness). The VDOF person in charge of rooms will only approve these exceptions.
- ◆ Crew bosses will keep a record of room assignments of the crew in case of deployments during rest hours and also for emergency notifications. Crew bosses should inform VDOF dispatchers of their specific room assignment.
- ◆ VDOF personnel handling motel invoices will designate on the invoice which crews/personnel are pertinent to the invoice prior to submitting to headquarters for payment (ie. Blackfeet Crew #74, Unitah Basin Crew, etc.).

## Personnel/Crew Time

- ◆ Crew time report (CTR) time will start when personnel/crews are ready to load for transport to work assignment. Ending CTR time is completed when crews return to motel or other lodging at the end of the operational period.
- ◆ The standard shift for ordered standby will be 12 hours maximum on CTRs. The 12-hour maximum will also apply to crew bosses and other overhead. While in staging, personnel and crews will be dressed in PPE and ready to deploy within five minutes of notification of a dispatch. Crews will not be staged in motels unless instructed to do otherwise.
- ◆ Only the appropriate VDOF personnel in charge of the specific crew/personnel will sign approval for CTR times. Under **NO circumstances will a blank or incomplete CTR be approved!**
- ◆ **Personnel and resources under VDOF command cannot be allowed to work more than a 16-hour operational period after the first 24-hour period of an incident.**
- ◆ Personnel should also be given at least 24 uninterrupted hours off following a 14-day work cycle or 48 hours off after 21 days worked.

## Medical Needs

- ◆ Any injury or sickness will be reported immediately to supervisors. Injuries reported at the END of operational periods when the injury occurred much earlier may not be covered by insurance.
- ◆ Federal workman's compensation will cover Federal personnel/crews. Crew bosses are responsible for completing appropriate Federal forms (CA1 and CA16).
- ◆ VDOF Workmen's Compensation Insurance will handle claims for personnel on a state compact order and all VDOF part-time personnel.

## Safety Concerns

In Virginia, there are three topographic regions – each with unique fuel types and challenges.

**Mountains:** Fuels are mostly hardwoods with scattered areas of pine (pitch, table mountain, white and Virginia). Hemlock and mountain laurel also contribute to fuel loading. Above-ground gas lines and “high walls,” which are remnants from past coal strip-mining operations, add to the hazardous conditions, especially at night. Most firefighting in this area is done with hand crews and aircraft.

**Piedmont:** The topography ranges from gently rolling hills to steep slopes. Gypsy moth and pine bark beetle outbreaks, along with past ice storms, have added to heavy fuel loading in some areas, along with a significant snag hazard. Tractor plow units along with hand crews are used on most fires. Fuel types range from upland hardwoods to extensive loblolly pine plantations. Heavier fuel loading and steep slopes create hazardous conditions.

**Coastal Plain:** The tractor-plow is the primary wildfire suppression tool. Hand crews have nearly an impossible task to dig lines through thick understory vegetation. Vast areas of unbroken loblolly pine plantations and extensive use of herbicides add to the fine, flashy fuels, especially once cured.

## Nature's Hazards

There are four poisonous snakes in Virginia: timber rattler in the mountains, canebrake rattler, cottonmouth in the Southeast and copperhead throughout the state. LEAVE ALL SNAKES ALONE. Many smaller “critters,” such as chiggers, ticks, bees, wasps and mosquitoes, also require attention. Another hazard is poisonous plants, such as poison ivy, poison oak and many other sticking, itching and irritating plant life.