

# Supporting Employees Impacted by Wildfires

A critical incident like a wildfire has the potential to impact the workplace.

Wildfires can be deadly, and often people are forced to evacuate from their homes when they occur. USPS facilities can also be directly impacted by wildfires, whether they are located in the wildfire path or have employees located in affected areas. Affected employees may find it difficult to balance job demands while trying to rebuild their devastated personal lives. Below are ways you can support your employees during these difficult times.

**Address the organization immediately.** Management and union leaders should meet with all levels of the organization to discuss ways to promote counseling services and community resources to help employees.

**Designate a contact for assistance.** Designate a person in human resources or leadership as a contact person to whom employees can turn for help and resources.

**Promote communication among employees.** Allowing employees to discuss their experiences and feelings with co-workers can help during difficult times.

**Help the community.** Organize a blood drive, clothing drive or fundraiser to help those impacted by the wildfires in your community. Many people not directly affected may feel helpless and unsure of how to help. When people are able to make a difference by contributing to their community, they will feel better about themselves.

## Communication tips for managers & union leaders:

### Do's

- Be aware that employees/members will have mixed emotions. These are normal reactions to a critical incident.
- Allow all employees to express any reactions they may have about the fires.
- Answer questions employees/members have to the best of your ability, or be willing to say nothing. Just being there is often the most supportive thing you can do to help.

### Don'ts

- Avoid statements like, "Everything will be all right." These statements may make some people feel that their concerns are not understood or validated.

The EAP is here to provide support & info. to you and your employees.