



NFFE Forest Service Council
Safety Committee Update - Hantavirus
 May 29, 2015



Please share the following with your Bargaining Unit Employees (BUEs).

Local Union Officials:

This notice is intended to ensure we remind employees of the Hantavirus risk throughout our national forests and in our facilities (<http://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/surveillance/state-of-exposure.html>).

Hantavirus (HPS) is a severe, frequently fatal respiratory disease in humans. Any person can become infected through contact with hantavirus-infected rodents, especially deer mice, or their urine and droppings. Forest Service facilities presenting the highest risk are those that are seasonally closed or that provide access and harborage for rodents (barracks, warehouses, lookouts, fire stations, equipment storage lockers, etc.). Prevention is the best option and we need to make certain that prevention measures are known by having conversations with our employees and by ensuring that each Unit's Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) includes Hantavirus information.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/resources/materials.html>
- http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/20/3/13-1581_article

Forest Service Hanta Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8J_dci5-ufU

Deep background from the National Center for Biotechnology Information:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2863364/>

Hantavirus Talking Points:

- The risk of contracting Hantavirus is very low.
- On average, the virus is present in <20% of deer mice.
- As much as possible, keep rodents out of facilities.
- Take precautions when entering a cabin or enclosed place where there are mice present. Open structures to fresh air and sunlight as much as possible for 2 or more hours prior to entry, especially structures that have been closed for longer periods.
- Wear protective gloves (nitrile or other disposable gloves) if handling live or dead mice or potentially contaminated materials.
- Use 10% bleach or Lysol solution to soak any rodent feces, nest materials and or rodents prior to cleaning them up. It is important to not stir up contaminated dust; dust can introduce the virus into your lungs.
- Food should be properly stored to prevent access by mice. **DO NOT EAT** food contaminated by mice. The virus is spread through droppings, urine and saliva.
- Mice are found at all elevations. No elevation is more or less prone to mice. Seek medical assistance if you become ill after having been in contact with mice or droppings.
- Inform the doctor that you have been in contact with mice in an area where Hantavirus is endemic.

The earlier the detection--the higher the likelihood of successful treatment!

Please Stay Safe,

/s/ Randy Meyer

RANDY MEYER, Chair
NFFE FSC Safety Committee

~ The End ~

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