

LESSONS LEARNED

- Are you physically ready for this assignment?
 - Extreme hiking
 - When on the line expect to hike in steep, rocky terrain
 - Extreme weather
 - Both hot and cold weather possible during the same incident
 - Lack of rest

LESSONS LEARNED

- Are you mentally prepared for this assignment?
 - Long hours of work
 - Lack of rest
 - Unpleasant work conditions
 - Away from family for extended time

LESSONS LEARNED

- Do you have the proper equipment?
 - Good hiking boots
 - Comfortable Pack
 - Cold weather gear
 - Good sleeping gear
 - Long handle tool
 - Brush helmet
 - Medicines and toiletries
 - GPS and Compass
 - All noted in Section 3

LESSONS LEARNED

- Is your family prepared?
 - Make sure your family knows and supports what you are doing
 - You will be away from home for an extended time
 - Ensure that you have proper child care in your absence
 - Ensure that household chores will be completed in your absence
 - Hire a gardener, pool guy, housekeeper for the summer

LESSONS LEARNED

- “Ooops! I forgot to pay my bills...”
 - The bill collector doesn’t care that you were out saving the world
 - Set up automatic bill pay
 - Ensure that your financial obligations are met in your absence

LESSONS LEARNED

- Make sure that you are taking care of yourself while on assignment
 - Use a good quality sunscreen everyday
 - SPF 45
 - Wear a hat to add protection to your head when not on the fire line

LESSONS LEARNED

- “I treated injuries that I had never treated before”
 - Review “Basic” EMT skills
 - Bandaging
 - Splinting
 - Foot care
 - Wound care
 - Gastrointestinal emergencies
 - Environmental emergencies
 - Study Wilderness Medicine or Military Field Medicine

LESSONS LEARNED

- “I had to pay for the rental car at the airport on an out of state assignment even though it was supposed to be arranged for by the incident.”
 - Be prepared to handle situations such as this
 - Carry a credit card
 - Carry at least \$100 cash
 - Resolve as soon as possible
 - Check with Finance and get the car out of your name
 - Be professional

LESSONS LEARNED

- “Don’ t whine and try to get your assignment changed.”
 - Take what you get every time
 - You may be sent home if you complain
 - Or worse, keep getting the less desirable assignments
 - Volunteer for the “less desirable” assignments
 - Take any job that is asked of you and do it well
 - Medical Unit Leaders appreciate your cooperation

LESSONS LEARNED

- “They told me I was going to be “Spiking Out...” It would have been nice to know what that meant prior to getting on the helicopter.”
 - Be prepared to “Spike Out”
 - Take food and water for at least 24 hours if possible
 - Take cold weather gear
 - Know what the MEDL expectations are while you are out
 - Medical Plan
 - Evacuation Plan

LESSONS LEARNED

- “Nobody wants to hear about the money you are making for carrying the first aid kit.”
 - NEVER discuss money on an incident
 - If asked about how much money you are making be vague but not rude

LESSONS LEARNED

- “I thought I was going to die after that hike.”
 - Pack light
 - Know who you are hiking with
 - Hot Shot Crew versus Blue Card Crew
 - Hydrate
 - Know your limitations

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “There will be a vehicle at the incident for me to use.”
 - Expect **NOT** to have a vehicle waiting for you
 - You may be required to ride with someone who has an agency vehicle
 - Do not use your personal vehicle unless it is approved by the Ground Support Unit Leader

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “I can pick up supplies at the incident when I get there.”
 - It may take days for the incident to get and issue supplies
 - Bring everything with you every time

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “I will always be out on the line.”
 - You will most likely be rotating between the line and the Medical Unit
 - The MEDL determines your assignment
 - Be honest about your capabilities.

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “I can drive the fire line, therefore I won’t be required to do much hiking.”
 - Even when you can drive around a fire line you will probably be expected to be out on the line monitoring the crews
 - In an emergency, you may be required to hike a considerable distance to assist in the rescue

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “I’ll take the night shift because it is easier”
 - It is easier to hike in cooler weather however this means that you will be “trying” to sleep during the heat of the day
 - Nighttime operations present new challenges that you must be prepared for prior to going out
 - Daytime operations can be very noisy and hard to get proper rest during – look for sleeper units or a quiet place to get rest

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “I’ll just grab a hotel and get some rest.”
 - Many times you are very isolated from anything
 - Other agencies may have contracts for hotels leaving no vacancies
 - Most likely your agency does not pay for hotels and you will be responsible for payment if you’re allowed to leave camp to find one

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “If another incident breaks out, I will be able to go to that one if I want.”
 - Once you are assigned to an incident, you belong to that incident regardless of what is happening around you
 - Do not leave the incident you are assigned to without approval
 - Completely DEMOB prior to leaving the incident
 - Must have approval to respond to a new incident

MISCONCEPTIONS

- “As soon as the fire is contained, I will be sent home.”
 - As long as there are crews out on the line working, expect to be held on the incident
 - You may be one of the last resources released

SUGGESTIONS

- Start getting in shape now!
 - USFS Arduous Pack Test Standard
 - 3 miles over flat terrain
 - 45 pound pack
 - 45 minutes or less
 - Walking only. No jogging or running
 - Can you make the grade?
 - Don't wait to find out

SUGGESTIONS

- Have your equipment ready prior to going available
 - Don't cause a delay in reporting to an incident because you weren't prepared
 - Create inventory sheets for your equipment
 - Web Gear
 - Red Bag
 - Medical Bag
 - Paperwork
 - Household Check-off

SUGGESTIONS

- Take care of your family
 - Make life easy for your spouse
 - Hire a gardener, pool guy or housekeeper to take care of your home while you are gone
 - Arrange for the bills to be paid in your absence
 - Arrange for child care before you go out
 - Ask your station to check on your family every couple of days
 - A simple phone call makes a big difference
 - Reward your family for supporting you
 - Something sparkly for the spouse always works
 - Something special for the kids
 - Somewhere nice is good for all

SUGGESTIONS

- Take a map and compass class
 - It is imperative that you know exactly where you are on an incident at all times
 - It is equally imperative that you know how to get to an injured firefighter using a map and compass
 - Do not take these skills lightly
 - The safety of many individuals is dependant on you

SUGGESTIONS

- Purchase and know how to use a GPS
 - As with the map and compass, a GPS will aid you in doing your job properly
 - Take a GPS course if needed
 - Just having one isn't good enough

SUGGESTIONS

- Show up to the incident ready to work
 - Always assume that there will be no equipment or supplies at the incident when you arrive
 - Bring everything, every time
 - Tools and Equipment
 - Medial Supplies
 - Personal Gear
 - Paperwork including valid EMT cards
 - You will not go on the line if you are not properly equipped

SUGGESTIONS

- Get familiar with radio operations
 - Know the organizational flow chart prior to accepting an assignment
 - Know who you are reporting to during an assignment
 - Know proper procedures for an emergency during an incident
 - Medical Plan
 - Ask Communications Unit if you have specific questions regarding the use of a radio

SUGGESTIONS

- Take care of yourself while on an incident
 - Eat properly
 - Use sunscreen
 - Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate
 - Rest when possible
 - Know your limitations

SUGGESTIONS

- Take care of your feet and your feet will take care of you
 - Invest in a good pair of hiking boots and break them in prior to going out on an assignment
 - Invest in good quality socks
 - Carry “mole skin” or other products to take care of blisters should they occur

SUGGESTIONS

- Pack a larger medical bag that can be kept in your vehicle
 - Make a bag up that holds medicines, bandages, personal hygiene items, blood pressure cuff and stethoscope, oxygen supplies, etc...
 - Keep extra supplies in your vehicle so you can restock if needed while on the line

SUGGESTIONS

- Be Nice and Work Hard
 - Remember that you will work with people from all walks of life
 - Be respectful of other agencies and their traditions
 - You are being invited to play in their game, do not ruin it for others
 - A good reputation will follow you everywhere...
A bad reputation will beat you there every time!

SUGGESTIONS

- Keep your home agency advised of your status while on the incident
 - Ensure that your timecard is being completed properly
 - Ensure that they have the incident information
 - Phone numbers
 - Incident location
 - Notify dispatch when you are released from the incident

SUGGESTIONS

- Be Respectful
- Show gratitude
- Work hard
- Have fun