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# North County Fire Authority Health & Wellness Newsletter

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## Topics:

- **MRSA Overview**
- **Signs & Symptoms**
- **Protection**
- **Summer Recipe**

## Safety Tip



Completely cover all scrapes and wounds

## Workout Tip

Use the Buddy System to increase workout morale, build relationships, increase communication & promote safety techniques during your workout.

## Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

MRSA was first published in the December 2006 issue of *Fire Engineering*, and today firefighters are at risk for MRSA and multiple other communicable diseases. North County Fire Authority will continue to provide its employees with the latest disease information and protection techniques and supplies to limit the risk of exposure. Our Health and Safety Newsletter will highlight a communicable disease in each newsletter.



## What is MRSA?

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a type of staphylococcus infection that is resistant to antibiotics. MRSA is transmitted most frequently by direct skin-to-skin contact; however, it can live on warm moist surfaces for an unknown period of time.

According to a study by the IAFF in 2000, one out of every 50 firefighters was exposed to a communicable disease.

Reasons to explain exposures include:

- Treating patients & not knowing their communicable disease history

- Exposure to blood & bodily fluids.
- Working in environments that can cause injuries, such as abrasions and lacerations.
- Increased stress at home or at work weaken our immune system.

**Emergency responders must always be vigilant to a culture of safety.**

**Complacency and shortcuts increase the cause analysis of injuries and illness.**

Firefighters have been dealing with infectious disease since the beginnings of the fire service. Many policies and guidelines are in place to protect our emergency responders such as National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, 2007 ed.; 1581, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910.1030, *Bloodborne pathogens*, and 29 CFR 1910.134, *Respiratory protection* (including the NIOSH standard on particulate masks).

By building a culture of safe practice, we are committing ourselves to the awareness of exposures by all personnel.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Wound drainage and fever. MRSA can cause skin infections that may look like pimples or boils and are red, swollen, or painful or have pus/other drainage. MRSA is known to cause acute pneumonia and sepsis.

## PROTECTION

Our companies live a shared lifestyle in our fire stations. Best means of protection are the use of gloves, masks, eye protection; but most importantly hand washing. Using individual items such as soap, bedding and towels must be practiced. Cleaning and disinfecting equipment shared by others are not limited to; steering wheels, hearing protection, radio microphones, exercise equipment and remote controls. Our focus is on station cleanliness and personal hygiene.

## Summer Recipe

# Antipasto Pasta Salad

Yields 12 servings

### Ingredients

- 1 lb. seashell pasta
- 1/4 lb. Genoa salami, chopped
- 1/4 lb. pepperoni sausage, chopped
- 1/2 lb. Asiago cheese, diced
- 1 (6 oz.) can chopped olives, drained
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 (.7 oz.) package dry Italian-style salad dressing mix
- 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbs. dried oregano
- 1 tbs. dried parsley
- 1 tbs. grated Parmesan cheese

### Directions

1. Cook the pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water until al dente. Drain, and cool under cold water.
2. In a large bowl, combine the pasta, salami, pepperoni, Asiago cheese, black olives, red bell pepper, green bell pepper and tomatoes. Stir in the envelope of dressing mix. Cover, and refrigerate for at least one hour.
3. To prepare the dressing, whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, oregano, parsley and Parmesan cheese. Add salt and pepper to taste. Just before serving, pour dressing over the salad, and mix well.

Recipe provided by [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com)



### Nutritional Information

#### Amount Per Serving

- 451 Calories
- 29.1 grams Fat
- 37 milligrams Cholesterol
- 15 grams Protein
- 33.2 grams Total Carbs

# Roadside Incident Response

Information provided by 6 Minutes for Safety

<http://www.wildfirelessons.net/uploads/6mfs/home.html>

Nationally, the number of injuries and fatalities among emergency responders who are responding to roadside incidents is increasing at an increasing rate. Although most wildland fires occur in remote areas, there are situations where wildland personnel are responding to fires along rural country roads, jeep roads or major highways; the risk still exists for our firefighters. Below is a checklist of considerations that should be utilized when responding to fires and other incidents along roadsides.

## Considerations

- Firefighter and public safety will always be the number one priority.
- Utilize L.C.E.S. in all incident activities.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be used on all incidents.

## Upon Arrival at the Scene - Size Up Incident

- What has happened?
- What is happening?
- What will or could happen?
- Is this a HazMat situation?

## \* Tactical Considerations

- Anytime traffic flow is affected, contact jurisdictional law enforcement agency for assistance.
- Conduct all operations as far from traffic lanes as possible.
- Park units on same side of the roadway to avoid traffic congestion.
- Exit apparatus away from the roadway and in full PPE.
- Post a lookout to watch for and control oncoming traffic.
- Utilize road flares or other traffic warning signs whenever possible.
- Engine operators will operate pumps from the non-traffic side or from the cab when possible. Keep all equipment, fire tools and hose out of traffic lanes.
- During night operations, utilize reflective clothing, vests and other safety equipment as necessary.
- All emergency responses on roadways will be concluded as quickly as possible to reduce personnel exposure.
- Cancel or demob unnecessary apparatus as soon as possible

\* Each agency emergency vehicle operator will follow their particular state laws and agency policies.