

## Incident Management Team Uses the ‘AeroClave’ to Decontaminate for COVID Mitigations

By Rocky Mountain Team 1 Safety: Keith Long, Todd Legler, and Mark Munns

The 2020 fire season has been full of a number of challenges associated with COVID-19. Fire personnel are problem-solvers at all levels. They have risen to meet the unique challenges of fire suppression in the COVID environment. (To see the “2020 Coronavirus Lessons Summary” reports: <https://www.wildfirelessons.net/viewdocument/coronavirus-lessons-summary-2020>.)

The Rocky Mountain Type 1 Team is no exception when it comes to applying creative thinking to keep the risk of COVID transmission to fire personnel and communities at the lowest possible level.

This Team has employed a number of COVID mitigations on their fire assignments. These include: daily screening; electronic check-in, demob and finance; virtual work; social distancing; face coverings, etc. In addition, the Rocky Mountain Type 1 Team has added an “AeroClave” to its arsenal of tools to help combat the fight against COVID.

The [AeroClave](#) is an automated no-touch decontamination unit that reduces human error in decontaminating all surfaces. It has shown a 34 percent reduction in lost leave associated with sick leave. When used with Vital Oxide disinfectant, the AeroClave is effective in killing a number of viruses and pathogens including: Influenza, Hepatitis, HIV, and COVID. The AeroClave is capable of treating a 5,000 cubic foot room.

### How the AeroClave Works

Between team transitions, one individual from the Rocky Mountain Type 1 Team works a night shift using the AeroClave with Vital Oxide to decontaminate each yurt, tent, and building that is being utilized. The AeroClave is placed in the room. Then, with a push of a couple of buttons, the disinfecting process starts. There is enough delay time to allow the operator to step out of the room.

Depending on the size of the room, the run time is usually about 10 minutes with a subsequent 10-20 minute rest time. At this point the building is safe to be reentered. The AeroClave can also be used to decontaminate an engine, helicopter or ambulance that has transported a sick or injured firefighter, greatly reducing downtime compared to traditional decontaminating processes.



An AeroClave unit decontaminating a meeting room/work space. These units can also be used to decontaminate engines, helicopters or ambulances.

While the AeroClave varies in upfront cost, operational costs are minimal. It was estimated that to professionally decontaminate the facilities used by the Rocky Mountain Type 1 Team on the Bridger Foothills and Lionshead fires would be approximately \$20,000. The Team was able to decontaminate these facilities for approximately \$200 after the initial cost of the AeroClave.

### Lessons

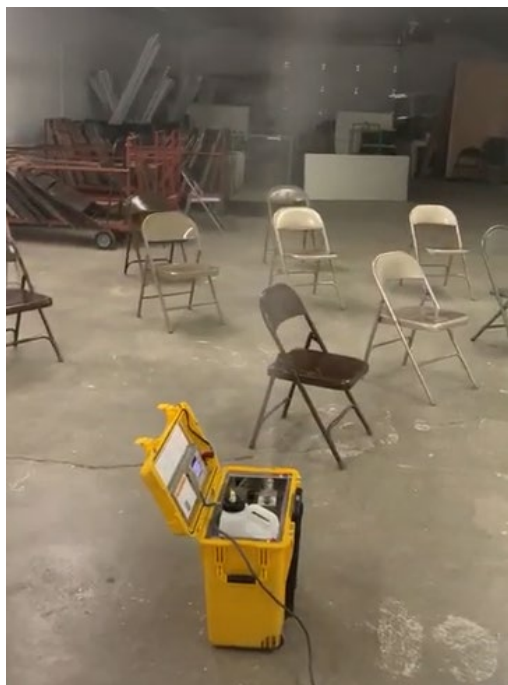
- ❖ Innovative thinking has allowed the Rocky Mountain Type 1 Team to quickly decontaminate facilities during transitions, providing a healthier work environment while remaining fiscally responsible, and minimizing down time.
- ❖ The AeroClave along with Vital Oxide has side benefits, which include rapid treatment of medial transport vehicles that may be contaminated with bloodborne pathogens.
- ❖ Treating common areas like yurts and buildings frequently can also reduce the rapid spread of camp crud that usually takes a significant toll on firefighting personnel in the fall.

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*To see the AeroClave in action,  
check out this quick video clip:*

[https://youtu.be/B\\_rw3XIZqlc](https://youtu.be/B_rw3XIZqlc)

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