

Chernobyl fires causing spike in radiation levels

By Zach Dickerson
Editor in Chief

A forest fire covering 50 acres erupted on the afternoon of Saturday, April 4, near the village of Vladimiovka, located in the exclusion zone, with another smaller fire around 12 acres also burning. Because of these fires, radiation levels near the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster site have spiked.

Since the start of the fire, the area of the blaze has increased to nearly 250 acres. According to the Associated Press, the fire is believed to have started near the village of Volodymyrivka.

Egor Firsov, head of Ukraine's ecological inspection service, made a Facebook post of a picture of a Geiger counter and a statement saying, "There is bad news — in the center of the fire, radiation is above normal. As you can see in the video, the readings of the device are 2.3, when the norm is 0.14. But this is only within the area of the fire outbreak."

These measurements are referring to the microsievert per hour ($\mu\text{Sv/h}$) reading. The

maximum allowable amount of natural background radiation is 0.5 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$, but Firsov's reported amount was nearly five times that.

Some reports have shown that radiation has now spiked up to 16 times higher than the typical levels of the area. Local media also reported on Thursday, April 9, that authorities were evacuating a small community within the exclusion zone.

The spiked radiation levels don't appear to extend to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, or to the city of Chernobyl itself. Authorities state those radiation levels remain normal.

Another image, on Sunday, April 5, showed a Geiger counter near the fire with readings just below the maximum natural amount, 3.4 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$. Other reported footage, also taken near the fire, show higher readings.

Hundreds of firefighters, two An-32P planes and an Mi-8 helicopter are working to battle the larger fire. About 42 water drops have been carried out on the area. A smaller number of firefighters were sent to work on the smaller fire.

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Photo by Yaroslav Yemelianenko

A view of a forest fire burning near the village of Volodymyrivka in the exclusion zone around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, Ukraine, Sunday, April 5, 2020.

BC to reimburse room and board for students who moved home

By Aia Andonovska
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By now, most students will have checked their email and seen that Brevard College has come up with a reimbursement plan for students who are completing their spring 2020 semester online in the comfort and safety of their own homes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and colleges shutting their doors all over the world, most have enacted reimbursement policies in order to aid their students during this dire time of need.

On the BC website, a breakdown of numbers is posted. Total room and board fees for one semester equals \$5,200. The total number of days students attended school this semester was 109. The daily rate of room and board equates to \$47.71.

First, Brevard College calculated each student's refund by gathering data through the use of a Google form, communication with students, walk-throughs of residence halls and reviews of meal swipe activity. This reimbursement period began on March 22 at the very earliest. For students who did not inform the college of their departure, the college used March 29 as their reference move out date.

Students who continue to live on campus do not qualify for reimbursement of any kind. Students who moved out but are still storing belongings on campus are eligible for 75 percent of a refund. Some students initially expressed mixed feelings about this, because of various circumstances surrounding travel such as flights being cancelled.

However, there is a very simple appeal process that the college has created, according to Mitch Radford, Associate Vice President for Finance/Controller. "We realized that some would have had to travel very far to get their belongings, which is why we implemented

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