



File Code: 6730
Route To:

Date: September 16, 2007

Subject: **Pine Fire Wildland Fire Entrapment - Expanded Briefing**
Off Corte Madera Road in Oak Valley, Descanso Ranger District, Cleveland NF

To: Bernard Weingardt
Regional Forester

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Name of injured:

Damaged Equipment: *CAL FIRE* D-6C 76A dozer # 3346 (moderate damage)

Preliminary factual findings: The dozer operator was operating *CAL FIRE* dozer 3346, cutting a line on the Pine Fire, in brush that was 10+ feet high (over-cab height). The dozer was over-taken by fire. The Operator attempted to back out of the fire but the dozer engine quit. The Operator attempted to deploy the reflective heat curtains inside the cab but had trouble with the snaps. Heat and fumes built up in the cab. The Operator's packs contained 3 fire shelters. The Operator was burned by the handle of his web gear assembly and dropped it in the dozer. The Operator abandoned the dozer and sought refuge in a "sandy area". The Operator was later found by the Incident Safety Officer and was transported by air ambulance to a burn center for treatment.

Narrative: On September 12, 2007, at approximately 1230 hours, the Pine fire of undetermined cause started near Corte Madera Road in Oak Valley, in southeastern San Diego County, on the Cleveland National Forest. *CAL FIRE* Dozer 3346 was dispatched to the Fire and assigned to Division "B". The Dozer Operator was briefed at 1405 and began work at a starting point off Corte Madera Road. The dozer was later moved up an unnamed road to the east to begin work at the other end of the line. The Operator began cutting a line back west to the original starting point at 1430 hours. After working for a short time the Operator noticed flames on the left side of the dozer. The Operator placed the dozer in reverse to back out of the area but the engine died. Heat began to build up in the cab and the Operator attempted to deploy the reflective heat curtains. The curtains in Dozer 3346 have a snap system and the operator could not get all of them to unsnap and unroll. Heat and fumes built up in the cab and made breathing difficult. The Operator had 3 fire shelters in his packs but a pack handle burned the Operator's hands when he grabbed the web gear assembly. The Operator then exited the dozer, through the right-side door, and sought refuge in a "sandy area" near by. At approximately 1615 hours, the dozer and Operator were located by the Incident Safety Officer approximately 450 feet within the burn. Lifeflight arrived at 1643 hours and the Operator was transported to a burn center. The Operator sustained 2nd and 3rd degree burns on his hands, and 1st and 2nd degree burns on the left side of his face. The dozer sustained moderate fire damage, mostly to the left side and in front of the cab.

A review of this accident by an interagency U.S. Forest Service and *CAL FIRE* accident investigation team is ongoing.

/s/ Arthur L. Gaffrey
ARTHUR L. GAFFREY
Team Leader

cc: Gene Smalley, Regional Safety Manager
Jim Pena, Deputy Regional Forester

