

# Facilitated Learning Analysis



## Burn Boss Responsibilities

**Incident: Rx Operations**

**Location: Region 5 - USFS**

**Date of Incident: 04/08/2012**

**Date of FLA: 06/16/2012**

**Narrative:**

On Sunday April 8, 2012, a local engine module consisting of an Engine Captain and two Firefighters, reported to the District Office as usual to start their day. The engine captain received a briefing from the Duty Officer (Fuels BC) regarding the day's tasks to complete. The crew was to open up one of the local guard stations for the season (this station is an interagency station shared with the state). Before leaving the District Office, the Engine Captain inquired if it was a burn day. The Duty Officer stated that, "it was a burn day".

Upon arrival at the guard station, one Firefighter worked outside cleaning up the grounds and the second Firefighter worked inside cleaning the office area. Eventually both Firefighters ended up outside raking debris into piles on the compound. Both Firefighters assumed it was a burn day. The Burn Boss assumed all proper notifications were made by the local Duty Officer. A test fire was lit to see how it would burn. The test fire was successful. Additional piles around the station were lit and allowed to creep. The local burn plan allows for up to 25 feet of spread, "creep", from each individual burn pile. Burn piles allowed to creep were in close proximity to an above ground fuel tank, a fence and the county road. At one point, part of the fence was damaged by fire and fire was allowed to creep within less than 20 feet of the above ground fuel tank. The crew extinguished the fence. This was not a concern to them since the fence was going to be taken down and rebuilt. Near the end of the day, the Firefighters ensured all fire was out before leaving the guard station for the day.

Early on Monday, April 9, 2012, the local ECC received a call from a local citizen who reported that part of the fence at the station had been burned but was not currently smoking. A local state Battalion Chief headed out to the station to investigate. Upon arrival, the state BC noticed the fence and part of the compound's grounds had been burned. He was unaware of any recent burning. Shortly after arriving, he was contacted by the USFS BC (suppression). The USFS BC stated that an engine crew was out at the station the previous day doing some burning. Once the engine crew arrived at the guard station on Monday, the engine captain spoke with the state BC. The engine crew stated that "everything appeared the same as they left it." The state BC explained his concerns regarding the proximity of fire to the fuel tank, lack of notification procedures and the burn itself. While the USFS Captain and state fire agency BC spoke about the events, the USFS crew continued pile burning until the end of shift.

**Lesson(s) Learned:**

- Notification procedures: The Burn Boss will follow all notification procedures in the burn plan. Never assume someone else will complete this action.
- Ensure all daily burn documentation is completed at the burn site and thoroughly filled out.
- Clearly define site specific targets, objectives, and prescription. Not all sites are the same. The Burn Plan should be able to define direction for multiple sites within one Burn Plan for that local area.
- Have multiple options when clearing debris from the administrative sites. Options could include pile burning, raking of debris, or other methods.
- Be aware of hazards and limit resource damage.

- Define leader's intent in regards to "creep" during pile burning.
- Strengthen our working relationship with other agencies
- The medical evacuation plan should be attached to the daily documentation packet. Since this packet is on site with the burn boss.
- The Health and Safety Code Handbook states in 61.51e – Dispensing, 3. Gasoline Dispensing Units and Associated Buildings. Prohibit all flammable material within 50 feet of the dispensing station and buildings.
- Use appropriate signage as needed at the site to make the public aware.
- If the Burn Boss is unsure if a box on the "go/no go" checklist cannot be marked yes, then the burn will not proceed until the Burn Boss is certain the box can be appropriately checked.

