

**Event Type:** Water Tender Rollover

**Date:** August 4, 2022

**Location:** Moose Fire  
Salmon-Challis National Forest, Idaho



## Sun in Water Tender Driver's Eyes Triggers Rollover Accident

On August 4 at 7:23 a.m., a water tender rollover was reported on the Moose Fire. The reporting party provided the rollover site's coordinates and requested medical response. An ambulance was dispatched to the scene.

The water tender driver said he was driving uphill on the two-way dirt road at 20 miles-per-hour when he was "blinded" by the sun—and drove off the road's right side.

The water tender truck rolled approximately 25 feet down the embankment, resting on its right side. Witnesses assisted the driver out of the vehicle. He was conscious, breathing—but complained of hip pain and was transported by ambulance to Steele Memorial Medical Center in Salmon, Idaho.

He was treated and released with minor injuries.

### Lessons

- ❖ When driving in the mountains in switchbacks, be prepared for the sun to affect your ability to see the road. Use visors and maintain a slow speed. Be prepared to stop when visibility becomes impaired.
- ❖ If visibility becomes impaired due to the sun or other environmental factors, immediately stop the vehicle until you regain sufficient situational awareness to proceed safely. Be sure to turn on hazard lights.



- ❖ Keep your windshield clean. The blinding effect of sun on the windshield can be exasperated with dust or debris on the windshield.
- ❖ Wear your seatbelt. The water tender driver in this incident was not wearing his seatbelt. He was unrestrained and was fortunate that the trees prevented a complete rollover of the vehicle.

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**For more information and lessons  
on water tender rollover incidents see:**

**[“2010-2020 Water Tender Rollover Analysis”](#)**

*This report is an independent effort of the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center. We have taken the initiative to conduct this analysis and compile this report based on the alarming frequency of water tender rollovers . . . we have collected evidence of 27 events over 11 years—including seven fatalities. Projecting forward based on the recent past, we can expect three fatalities every two years.*

