

MORTON INCIDENT SUMMARY SHEET

United States Forest Service-BDF

San Bernardino County Fire Department-BDC

Informational Summary of San Bernardino County Fire Department
Near Miss Incident and Vehicle Accident



Morton Fire Incident
99 Incident-Vehicle Rollover

August 9, 2010
Morton Fire

BDC Incident Number 10-100186
BDF Incident Number 2010-12094

This Summary report is intended as a safety and training tool, an aid to preventing future occurrences, and to inform interested parties. The information contained herein is subject to revision as further investigation is conducted and additional information is developed.

SUMMARY

The following information is a preliminary summary of a vehicle accident that occurred on the "Morton Fire" in which two San Bernardino County Paid Call Firefighters suffered minor injuries and a Water Tender sustained substantial damage.

CONDITIONS

Location:

The fire was located within the San Bernardino National Forest (BDF) approximately two and one-half miles off of Highway 38 on Forest Service Road 1 N 12. The accident occurred approximately one-half mile from the fire incident.

Topography:

1 N 12 is a Forest Service Dirt Road that ascends and winds up from Highway 38. The road varies in condition and steepness.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The 99 Incident was a secondary incident within the Morton Fire Incident. The Morton Fire was reported on August 9, 2010 at approximately 1250 hours. The location of the incident was reported near Thomas Hunting Area off Highway 38 and Vista Point on Forest Service Road 1 N 12.



At approximately 1255 hours FEDCOM dispatched a full response to the reported incident. Water Tender 99 was dispatched to assist with the Morton Incident and responded with one Paid Call Firefighter driver operator. Water Tender 99 added one additional Paid Call Firefighter trainee upon arrival on scene.

Water Tender 99 was assigned to shuttle water, supporting the incident fire attack/mop-up operation. The water shuttle operation required

units to travel on Forest Service Road 1 N 12 to a water source located on Highway 38, which was approximately two miles.

Water Tender 99 had completed one round trip water shuttle operation and was returning with its second load of water. At approximately 1612 hours the personnel from Water Tender 99 reported

via radio that their vehicle had rolled down an embankment and requested help. Water Tender 99 personnel freed themselves from the unit and ascended approximately 65' to Forest Service Road 1 N 12.

At approximately 1625 hours the personnel from BDF Engine 34 performed the initial BLS assessment on both firefighters. BDU Medic Engine 553A performed ALS assessments at approximately 1637 hour. The personnel from Water Tender 99 were placed in full C-spine and back precautions. BDF REC 31 transported Water Tender 99 personnel to the staging area and AMR 13 located at Highway 38 and Forest Service Road 1 N 12. At approximately 1730 hours AMR 13 transported Water Tender 99 personnel to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. Both firefighters received first responder emergency medical care within moments and Advanced Life Support care within 20 minutes of their request for assistance.

INJURIES and DAMAGES



Aerial photo of Forest Service Road 1 N 12
and Water Tender 99 approximately 65 feet below roadway.
Note the path of disturbed vegetation due to the lateral roll of WT99.

Both Paid Call Firefighters sustained minor injuries and were transported to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC) for evaluation. Both firefighter's were evaluated and released from ARMC. Water Tender 99 sustained substantial damage and has been removed from service.

FINDINGS

The physical condition of Forest Service Road 1 N 12 and visibility were both good. The driver operator was trained within agency standards and had a number of years of experience driving WT99. Both firefighters were following agency policy with the use of seatbelts and full PPE. However, vehicle positioning on the roadway was far to the right. Incorrect road positioning, failure to correctly judge vehicle clearance needs and a soft shoulder resulted in the rollover. Water Tender 99 was examined by a qualified agency mechanic and was found to meet DOT operational tolerances. Medical response was fast and appropriate for the injuries sustained.

SAFETY ISSUES FOR REVIEW & DISCUSSION

- Situational Awareness
- Driver Complacency
- Vehicle Limitations
- Agency Off Road Driving Procedures

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

- Need to stay focused on the roadway and conditions, and ensure that traffic controls are in effect to safely negotiate the roadway.
- Need to know vehicle limitations, as pertaining to size, weight, turning radius and visibility from the driver's perspective.
- Need to have a through understanding of agencies Off Highway Driving Procedures and Protocols
- We all need to speak up if we notice someone having difficulties operating equipment.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FACILITATORS

- All agencies need to ensure that all our drivers meet minimum standards, and qualifications for each piece of specialized equipment. Ensure our supervisors are documenting number of hours/miles of equipment operations and training records are current. This documentation should include, but not limited to highway, mountain, off highway operations and inclement weather. At least annually, have operators do a skills test to ensure knowledge of apparatus and handling proficiencies.
- This incident within an incident was handled by on scene personnel in a very prompt and professional manner. Medical attention was provided within minutes of the report of the rollover. Through good patient assessments and procedures, personnel were packaged and transported in the most efficient and safe manner for the injuries they sustained. The forest emergency medical evacuation plan was used and all on scene made good decisions.