

Panther Fire Medevac-Hoist

(Taken from **Meeting Notes Region 5 Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Board of Directors Meeting. October 14, 15, 16, 2009**)

In 2008 on the Panther Incident, (Klamath N.F.) a fire fighter was injured on the line in a remote area. The I.C. requested a Medivac based on the seriousness of the injury. Through a somewhat flawed process, A National Guard hoist equip black hawk helicopter was called in for the mission. The helicopter hovered and configured for hoist over the active fire and injured fire fighter for nearly 10 minutes. A live video illustrates the complexity of the situation and the cumulative affects on the fire behavior, safety of the ground crews, due to the length of time the helicopter spent hovering over the site. Although the injured party was ultimately extracted from the injury site successfully, the operation seriously compromised the safety of all parties involved. The final consequences from this one Medivac expanded the size of the fire, caused destruction of firefighter equipment and compromised the safety of fire fighters on the ground. (Refer to Panther Fire CD: Helicopter Medivac)

In contrast, utilizing an established Short Haul Medivac procedure with trained personnel would have taken a fraction of the time and would have likely been conducted in an appropriate location.

Recommendation: A. Adapt the currently approved USDA Helicopter Shorthaul Program from LE&I to Fire and Aviation Managements need for emergency helicopter extrication through the following process:

1. Develop a FAM shorthaul plan and tier it to or adopt the existing DOI Helicopter Shorthaul Handbook.
2. Apply a strategic approach to select exclusive-use helicopter bases to become trained and equip with shorthaul capability.

See video here: <https://youtu.be/fBqZXjbeHUE>