

Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: Propane Fire in Personal ICP Tent

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: Rice Ridge Fire ICP
Lolo National Forest; Montana

The patient was provided immediate care, was transported to the hospital via ground transportation, and was ultimately forwarded by air to a burn center in Seattle, Washington.

NARRATIVE

An individual “cried” for assistance from her tent early on the morning of August 23 at the Incident Command Post on the Rice Ridge Fire.

This verbal cry was quickly responded to by an adjacent firefighter who then saw an individual standing in the door of her tent, stamping out smoldering blankets and a sleeping bag. This responder assisted her in extinguishing the fire and pulled the burning bedding from the tent to insure that it was out.

The individual complained of foot pain which later turned out to be second and third degree burns to the bottoms of her feet from stamping out the fire with bare feet.

Upon further investigation, it was determined that this individual was trying to ignite a propane heater in her tent for warmth. However, evidently, the igniter was failing to strike a spark. All the while, the open propane canister was filling the tent with flammable gas.

When the igniter finally did work, a flash fire occurred in the tent and caught the bedding on fire. Additionally, much of the nylon screening and various parts of the tent also melted.

This flash fire, coupled with the attempt to extinguish the burning bedding with her feet, caused the injuries.

The IMT was prepared for an Incident-within-ICP. Quick response from a host of medics assigned to the fire and an ambulance stabilized the situation. The patient was provided immediate care, was transported to the hospital via ground transportation, and was ultimately forwarded by air to a burn center in Seattle, Washington.

LESSONS

- ❖ Individual propane heaters should never be utilized in confined spaces such as tents.
- ❖ This fire’s IMT has a plan for medical emergencies in ICP, practices 9-Line with the Communications Unit, and is ready to use it 24 hours-a-day.

This RLS was submitted by:
Incident Overhead

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