



LESSONS LEARNED

Northern Region Safety & Occupational Health
July 2013

TFL ATV ROLLOVER

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT: While on a fire assignment, a Task Force Leader scouting between trails and roads was operating an ATV. As he traveled off the road he began traversing across a rocky, wooded sloped area. The Task Force Leader stated, **“I was operating the ATV slowly and intermittently applying the hand brakes.”** Suddenly the left front tire went up on a rock as the right front tire went down into a depression. The ATV started a very slow rollover to the front right and the operator simply stepped off the ATV, which caused him to fall backwards hitting his head, which was covered by a helmet, on a tree. No vehicle damage or injury occurred. The Task Force Leader stated, **“I am sure that I would have incurred some type of head injury if I had not been wearing my D.O.T. endorsed helmet.”**

WHAT WAS DONE WELL:

- The operator of the ATV was properly wearing a helmet.
- The operator contacted the Line Safety Officer (SOFR) and reported what occurred.
- The Task Force Leader briefed other personnel, on his assigned Division, at the incident of what had happened.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

- The ATV operator did not have an endorsement on his government issued driver's license to operate an ATV.
- The operator previously attended an ATV short course, approximately ten years ago, although it was not an ASI endorsed course.
- Traveling in terrain that was rocky, wooded, and with a 47% slope are not recommended conditions to operate an ATV.
- Operator was not fully focused on the path in front of him, and was operating the ATV at a higher skill level than what he was trained at.

LESSONS LEARNED/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- This could have been a serious incident, if the operator had been operating the ATV without a helmet.
- The Task Force Leader needs to attend an agency ASI training before operating an ATV again.
- It is recommended that this type of ATV not be operated in steep rocky areas, where the slope is greater than 35%. The Task Force Leader should have scouted the intended path of travel prior to operating the ATV in a challenging or unknown area.
- Task Force Leader was trying to operate the ATV simultaneously while scouting the path ahead. Operating the ATV requires full attention, do not over task yourself.