

# **GREEN SHEET**

## **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)**

### **Informational Summary Report of Serious CAL FIRE Injuries, Illnesses, Accidents and Near-Miss Incidents**



#### **Non-Injury Vehicle Accident**

**July 28, 2012**

**Turkey**

**12-CA-FKU-9545**

**12-CA-FKU-9552**

#### **California Southern Region**

A Board of Review has not approved this Summary Report. It is intended as a safety and training tool, an aid to preventing future occurrences, and to inform interested parties. Because it is published on a short time frame, the information contained herein is subject to revision as further investigation is conducted and additional information is developed.

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## **SUMMARY**

On Saturday July 28, 2012 a CAL FIRE Prevention Officer was responding to the Turkey Incident on Whitesbridge Avenue, a two lane road near the community of Mendota. While attempting to gain access to the Incident, the Officer slowed and activated his rear facing amber lights. As the Officer was turning left onto the dirt access road his vehicle was struck by a civilian driver attempting to pass in the oncoming lane. There were no reported injuries to either the CAL FIRE employee or the civilian driver. Both vehicles sustained major damage.

## **CONDITIONS**

Weather information for Saturday, July 28, 2012, was obtained from a remote automated weather station (RAWS) located in Kettleman Hills, CA. The RAWS is located approximately twenty miles southwest of the accident location. The Kettleman Hills RAWS recorded weather hourly at 8:50 PM. The weather was clear and dry with a temperature of 81 degrees Fahrenheit. Relative Humidity was 28 percent with wind direction out of the North Northwest at 6 MPH, with gusts to 10 MPH. The approximate time of the accident was 8:58 PM. The CAL FIRE vehicle involved was a 2007 Chevy Silverado 1500 4X4 pick up. The civilian vehicle was a 2002 Chevy Impala sedan. Both vehicles sustained major damage.

## **SEQUENCE OF EVENTS**

On Saturday, July 28, 2012 a CAL FIRE Prevention Officer had been contacted by the Emergency Command Center (ECC) to respond to the Turkey Incident (11CAFKU009545), a wildland fire, as the primary investigator.

The wildland fire was on Whitesbridge Avenue approximately 1.01 miles East of San Mateo Avenue, near the community of Mendota California. Whitesbridge Avenue is a major roadway through Western Fresno County and is an East to West artery. Whitesbridge Avenue is heavily traveled daily by vehicles traveling from Mendota to Fresno California. The roadway is a two lane paved Avenue with posted Speed Limit markers throughout the route of 55 MPH.

The CAL FIRE Prevention Officer was traveling Westbound on Whitesbridge Avenue and observed the fire on the South side of the road approximately a half mile from the roadway. The Officer contacted the Incident Commander by radio to get directions on how to access the fire from his current location as he was unfamiliar with the area. The Incident Commander described a dirt access road heading south off of Whitesbridge Avenue. The Officer slowed and activated his rear amber lights as to alert traffic behind him while he attempted to locate the dirt access road. The Officer slowed to approximately 40 MPH to make a left hand turn from the westbound lane on to the dirt access road. As the CAL FIRE vehicle made the left turn a civilian vehicle following the Officer attempted to pass in the eastbound lane striking the CALFIRE vehicle on the driver's side.

## **INJURIES/DAMAGES**

No injuries were reported by either driver. Both were released at scene after evaluation by EMS.

The CAL FIRE vehicle sustained major damage to the driver's side of the vehicle.

The civilian vehicle sustained major damage to the front of the vehicle.

## **SAFETY ISSUES FOR REVIEW**

- Seatbelts save lives and must be worn at all times – in this incident the parties involved were spared more serious injury because seat belts were worn.
- Secure all loose items within the vehicle. Articles unsecured become projectiles in an accident. Inspect vehicles and secure all loose items.
- Remember the Basic Speed Law (CVC 22350) – No person shall drive a vehicle upon a Highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property.
- Tailgate safety sessions should include discussions of safe driving practices focusing on situations where the unexpected happens.



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