

Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: Equipment/Innovation

Date: May 17, 2023

Location: Mt. Taylor Ranger District,
Cibola National Forest, New Mexico

“We saw another crew using them and they seemed useful.”

Notice and Adapt

Crew 32 is a 10-person hand crew based out of the Mt. Taylor Ranger District in Grants, New Mexico. In 2021 the crew was assigned to a fire on another District of the Cibola National Forest. While assigned to the fire, they worked with an out of area interagency hotshot crew (IHC).

The Crew 32 Foreman noticed the hotshot crew was using a type of light that was easily mounted to their UTV with a magnet. The Crew Foreman was curious and asked the IHC Superintendent about the light. The two had a conversation about the light, how it was used, and where to purchase them.

The Crew Foreman went home, did some research, and told his supervisor (the District AFMO) about his discovery. The AFMO immediately recognized the usefulness of the item and supported the purchase.

Crew 32 now uses the lights for a variety of situations including:

- Mounted to UTV for visibility during night ops.
- Handheld for signaling aircraft.
- Signaling to identify different crewmember locations.
- Available for marking location during emergency medical scenarios.



The wearable safety light.

Context from a 2022 Event

Nighttime Dozer Ops Hit by Tree

The Dozer Operator was not aware that the Squad Leader had moved in front of the dozer as they were unable to see the Squad Leader's headlamp. The Squad Leader was struck by a 40-foot/8-10-inch DBH ponderosa tree, knocking him unconscious and resulting in trauma to the head, body, a lacerated tongue, and chipped teeth.

Lesson: Consider Using a Helmet Strobe for Night Ops

A light or strobe to serve as a constant identifier 360 degrees, or at least front and back, would be ideal during nighttime operations. *“Our crew will be trial-running some additional lights and it will become crew SOP that HEQB use them during nighttime dozer operations.”*



Light mounted on a UTV.

To see a short video of the light in use click here:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/jlt6JF1EORY>

Lessons

- **Be Aware** – Notice how other people operate and think in terms of what you could adopt or adapt to improve your own operations.
- **Be Nice** – Talk with other crews; ask about equipment; share best practices.
- **Take Action** – Do some research; find a safety light that works for your crew; get some and use them.

This RLS was submitted by:
The Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center staff,
in collaboration with
Ryan Carabajal, Crew 32 Foreman

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