

Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: Engine Rollover

Date: October 2, 2022

Location: Anderson Butte Fire
Oregon

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The Story and Lessons from this Rollover Incident

First reports of the Anderson Butte Fire came in around 1500 on October 2. The initial resources assigned to the fire were three Type 6 engines.

The engines were traveling along a well-maintained gravel road. The area had not had significant recent rainfall. The roadbed was very dry.

The initial reported location of the fire was incorrect, causing the engines to take a longer travel route and delaying the fire response by approximately one hour. Because of this, the engines were traveling with a greater sense of urgency than normal.

The route into the fire was to northwest, into the sun, and the engines were producing much dust. As the convoy neared the fire's edge, they entered a stretch of road protected from normal winds.

The driver of Engine 241, the last vehicle of the convoy, stated that *"the dust kicked up, just hung in the air."* He said the visibility had become greatly reduced to the point where seeing the road was difficult. He was relying on the emergency lightbar of the engines ahead of him to find his way.





As he rounded a shaded corner, the sun hit the engine windshield and severely impacted his vision. He did not notice the curve in the road.

Soon after, the Engine 241 driver—who was the vehicle’s sole occupant—noticed that the passenger side front tire was no longer contacting the ground. He attempted to steer back toward the road, but momentum caused the engine to tip. The engine then rolled more than two times before being stopped by a small grove of oak trees, finally coming to rest on the driver’s side, approximately 100 feet below the road.

The driver was able to climb out through the passenger window, walk up to the road, and radio for help.

Initial Fire IC Takes Command of Vehicle Rollover Incident

The initial Anderson Butte Fire Incident Commander transitioned command of the fire to the incoming supervisor and took command of the vehicle rollover. Fire suppression operations had to be prioritized, as the fire was growing toward the location of the rollover.

The Engine 241 driver indicated that he basically just had a laceration on his leg. He initially requested to continue to the fire, but was held back for further evaluation. A local ambulance crew arrived around 30 minutes later. The driver was evaluated for head trauma and his lacerated leg was treated.

The ambulance was released, the driver was instructed to return to his home unit, and was driven there by his supervisor.

The engine, which was totaled beyond repair, was retrieved by a wrecker the following day.

*The fact that the driver only received minor injuries
was attributed to his proper seatbelt use
and the engineered steel headache rack
that prevented the cab from fully collapsing.*

Lessons

DRIVING IN DUST

- ❖ Continuously evaluate conditions, as dust and sun angle make for less visibility, travel at slower speeds, and allow for more space in between yourself and the vehicle in front of you.
- ❖ If you can't clearly see the road: STOP.

Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation?

URGENCY and NORMALCY

- ❖ The sense of urgency and excitement may have led to the engines following too closely.
- ❖ The engines were traveling along the dusty, graveled road for approximately 30 minutes. This may have lulled the drivers into a false sense of normalcy and prevented them adjusting speeds when visibility changed.

How do you overcome the traps that come with urgency and complacency?

INCIDENT-WITHIN-AN-INCIDENT

- ❖ Previously practiced Incident-Within-an-Incident (IWI) procedures allowed for calm and efficient management of both the fire and this rollover accident.

How does your unit plan and practice for the unexpected?

VEHICLE SAFETY

- ❖ The fact that the driver only received minor injuries was attributed to his proper seatbelt use and the engineered steel headache rack that prevented the cab from fully collapsing.

LEADERSHIP

The driver wished to return to the line, but the supervisor instructed the engine driver to stand down. The supervisor demonstrated the appropriate leadership. The care of the driver, while not an obvious emergency, was prioritized.

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