

Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: Dozer Fire and Precautionary Actions

Date: May 4, 2026

Location: Mapes Fire, Huron-Manistee National Forest,
Michigan

Dozer Fire: Cause and How to Prevent in Future

By Shane Forshee, Dozer Operator

On May 4, 2026, my Dozer 252 was dispatched to the Mapes Fire on the Huron-Manistee National Forest. Operations discussed at the initial briefing included the typical anchor and flank tactics.

Approximately one hour into constructing direct fire line, I noticed flames coming up from the lower section of the dozer's center windshield. I grabbed the extinguisher from behind the seat, extinguished the fire, and continued with operations.

The backing fire on this incident had approximately four-foot flame lengths in the red pine and would periodically torch—causing short-distance spotting.

Lessons

This Caterpillar D3K2 has a cavity between the lower windshield and hood cowl. A factory rubber seal is located approximately 3-inches below the base of the windshield. This area has always been problematic for collecting needle cast and woody material. It is extremely difficult to remove completely.

On this incident, the rubber seal had burned, as well as some needle cast that had collected in this location.

Moving forward, placing a filler piece on the outside of the hood cowl sealing against the windshield will help keep woody material from collecting in this cavity and mitigate the potential for the dozer catching fire when constructing fireline.

I believe it is important to find ways to reduce these type of areas that can easily collect woody debris that is difficult to remove, especially on firefighting equipment that is exposed to embers and even flame contact.



Fire damage on Dozer 252's windshield. Arrow points to the small gap between hood cowl and windshield that can collect debris.

This RLS was submitted by:
Shane Forshee, Dozer Operator

Do you have a Rapid Lesson to share?
(<https://lessons.wildfire.gov/submit-a-lesson>)

[Share Your
Lessons](https://lessons.wildfire.gov/submit-a-lesson)