



U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has received notice of the following firefighter fatality:

Helitack Crewmember Nathan Matthews

U.S. Wildland Fire Service - Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management
Unit, Rifle Interagency Helitack

Rifle, Colorado

Firefighters from the Rifle Interagency and Pittman Valley Helitack Crews were involved in a burnover event while responding to initial attack fires in the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit (UCR). Nathan Matthews (USWFS - UCR) was medivacked to a burn unit. Despite these efforts, Helitack Crewmember Matthews succumbed to his injuries on July 24, 2026. Sydney Watson (USWFS - UCR), Emily Barker (USFS - UCR), and Nick Hutcherson (USFS – Kaibab NF) died at the scene.

Age: 43

Classification: Wildland Full-Time

Years of service: 11

Date of incident: June 27, 2026

Date of death: July 24, 2026