

The Story and Lessons from this Pump/Hoselay/Gated Wye Pressure Injury

On August 9, 2026, at 1530 hours on the Kaiser Canyon Fire, an engine crew member was injured while attempting to fill a portable tank (pumpkin). The portable tank was at the end of an approximately mile-long, downhill hoselay, that was being supplied water by another portable tank and a Mark-3 pump. Two gated wyes were opened on the hoselay to fill the pumpkin. The first gated wye was connected to a lateral with a nozzle and the trunk line that fed the portable tank. The second wye was submerged in the portable tank.

The first gated wye—which was on the ground—was difficult to open. The second gated wye that the crew member picked up out of the pumpkin jumped from the pressure after it was opened—hitting the crew member in the face, breaking his safety glasses, and causing a two-inch laceration below his right eye and broken facial bones.

After the crew member was struck in the face, the rest of the crew started medical care and putting the Medical Incident Report (MIR) together. The Rapid Extraction Module Support (REMS) team was immediately notified. And the MIR was reported over Tac to the Task Force Leader.

This medical incident was reported as a “Green/Priority 3 Minor Injury” due to the crew member's level of response—no loss of consciousness and no loss of vision, remained calm and kept talking to crew and medical team.

At 1540 hours, the REMS was on scene. They rebandaged the patient and administered 600 mg of ibuprofen before the patient was transported by a crew vehicle to Grand Coulee Medical Center for further evaluation—arriving there at 1730 hours. The patient received stitches and a CT scan. When the CT scan results came back, he was referred to a facial trauma specialist to determine if his fractures needed surgery.

Therefore, at 2045 hours, the patient was discharged and transferred to Providence Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane to see a facial trauma specialist—arriving there at 2226 hours. The specialist determined that the patient did not require surgery. He was prescribed medications and put on rest for 21 days, with follow-ups scheduled from more specialists to ensure the proper healing.

The patient was released from Providence Sacred Heart Hospital at 0230 hours.

Lessons

- ❖ In this medical incident, due to facial trauma and the mechanism of injury, the reported “Green/Priority 3” should have at least been a “Yellow/Priority 2.”
- ❖ Coban Self-Adherent Wrap (a lightweight, self-adhering wrap for non-adhesive securement) can bind up and be difficult to unwrap after sitting and getting compressed in a medical bag.
- ❖ Have all crew members become familiar with what is in the medical bag and where it is located.
- ❖ Establish and maintain daily communication with pump operators feeding the hoselay.
- ❖ *“See Something: Say Something:”* In this case, communicating the “red flag” of the first gated wye having difficulty opening. Also, to have awareness of pressure, consider having the same person open both gated wyes.

- ❖ Routine actions can become problematic/dangerous when you become used to a consistency of conditions—such as: hoselay/pump pressure, lateral use up the hoselay, and different pump equipment (the engine’s pump to a Mark-3).

Mitigation Options

- ❖ Consider opening the jumping end of the gated wye first before opening the gated wye on ground while stepping on it.
- ❖ Tie the gated wye down with paracord and a rock.
- ❖ Remove the gated wye in the pumpkin and tie the hose end down with paracord and rock.
- ❖ Bleed off pressure with the lateral.
- ❖ Test pressure in the hose by stepping on it and feeling how much “give” it has before opening the gated wye.
- ❖ Assign traffic control to manage blocked egress.
- ❖ Post the hours of medical facilities in the Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- ❖ Have Starlink access more available to all personnel.

This RLS was submitted by:

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