

# Rapid Lesson Sharing

**Event Type:** ATV Rollover

**Date:** Aug. 18, 2013

**Location:** Eastern perimeter of Cog Fire – Northwest Colorado

## Narrative

During the afternoon of August 18, 2013, a fire started in a drainage bottom that was terrain-driven with multiple structures in the area. As the fire continued to spread up-drainage and over ridgelines to the east, local VFD ordered BLM resources to help. Multiple local engines, three BLM engines, and one BLM squad worked till approximately 2130 to contain 75 percent of the fire.



**Top Photo** – Shows the route that the ATV and dozer had previously used to access the top of fire that the Operations Section Chief avoided on this trip. **Bottom Photo** – Red arrow indicates the approximate beginning of rollover location—where the ATV's left front tire hit the sagebrush and initiated tipping.



- Individuals located downslope of ATV operations should always be aware of the hazardous rollover potential of ATVs. Likewise, ATV operators should always be mindful of workers below.

**Submitted By:** District Safety Specialist



After firing and dozer operations were completed, the Operations Section Chief was on an ATV collecting mapping data with a GPS. While GPS'ing the eastern-most flank along the dozerline, the fireline climbed a steep, rocky slope that was impassable for an ATV. To access the top of the fire, the operator therefore returned back to another location east of the fireline that had been previously traversed with the ATV and dozer.

This slope was dominated by sagebrush with a "knee-high" grass understory and was relatively rock free. At approximately 2000 hours—as the operator came to the upper 1/3rd of the 37 percent slope—he noticed a depression and chose to veer left around this obstacle for about 20 feet—planning to continue back right to align for the path to the road on the ridgeline.

During the right turn and side-slope travel, the operator proceeded slowly with his right knee on the seat and left foot on the left ATV peg for more control. The ATV contacted a sagebrush plant approximately two feet in height which caused the ATV to begin tipping downhill. The operator noticed that the ATV was about to rollover. He pushed the ATV away from himself and landed on the uphill side of the ATV.

The ATV rolled approximately 92 feet downhill and came to a stop on its own. The ATV sustained damage, but the operator, as well as bystanders, did not suffer any injuries.

## Lessons

- Proper riding stance and anticipation of potential roll over is critical to minimize injury.
- Be mindful of routes on slopes with obstacles and increased tipping potential.
- Consider UTVs which are typically more stable when traveling both across and up slopes.

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