



LESSONS LEARNED - Driving Incident (Rollover)

Date/Time: August 22, 2009 @ 09:00 Hours **Location:** Highway 99, Los Molinos, CA
Employee Title: Klamath Interagency Hotshot Crew **Purpose:** Returning to Home Unit

Details:

Eight personnel from the Klamath Hotshots, Klamath National Forest, were involved in a vehicle accident on Highway 99 near Los Molinos, CA. The crew was returning to their home unit from a fire assignment on the Plumas National Forest and was in the northbound lane when a semi-truck traveling south crossed over into the northbound lane and struck the crew vehicle with a side mirror. This pushed the crew carrier into a sideways skid, crossing oncoming traffic and leaving the roadway, where it experienced a $\frac{3}{4}$ roll landing on the driver's side of the vehicle.

One crew member with significant injuries was transported to a hospital in Chico, CA and admitted for treatment. The rest of the crew sustained minor to moderate injuries and were transported to a hospital in Red Bluff, CA and treated then released. One of these was later taken to the hospital in Redding and also the hospital in Chico for further evaluation and treatment. All personnel have been released from the hospital and have returned home.

Lesson(s) Learned:

Seatbelts must be worn at all times. It is State Law and our Policy.

Alert driving prevented a potentially much more serious accident. The driver of the crew carrier saw the semi-truck drift and took evasive action to avoid a head-on collision. Likewise, the driver of the crew carrier following the carrier in the accident was alert and saw the semi-truck drift and the side-strike occur. The driver of the second vehicle immediately slowed down and took evasive action to avoid being struck by the semi-truck.

Be aware that exits/emergency exits may not function after vehicle damage. The crew carrier roll-over damaged the frame of the box (crew passenger area) to the point that the rear door and the emergency exit (side window) would not open. Crew members from the other vehicles tore the emergency exit window (frame and all) from the vehicle to extricate injured personnel. Other occupants crawled through the pass through window between the cab and the box and exited out the broken windshield area.

Drills/training for emergency response pays off. Uninjured crew members did an excellent job of treating injured personnel, dealing with hazardous materials (fuel) spills, and performing traffic control after the accident.