

GREEN SHEET SUMMARY



**CA0TUU008732
Tulare Unit
Sierra-South Region**

**September 28, 2000
Blue Ridge VMP Burn**

Minor Burn to Inmate Firefighter on Mountain Home Crew

Lookout

Communications

Escape Routes

Safety Zones

SUMMARY

On September 28, 2000, while assigned to the Blue Ridge VMP Burn (0TUU008732) an inmate firefighter received minor burns to his neck and shoulder. The crew's work assignment for the day was to mop up a slop-over that had occurred the previous day. The injuries were considered minor and the inmate was given first aid and monitored at Mountain Home camp.

CONDITIONS

The Blue Ridge VMP burn was conducted in steep rocky terrain between 3000' and 5000' foot levels. The fuel types were live oak and chemise. Weather observations recorded at Fountain Springs reflected a high of 82 degrees, relative humidity 37 percent, winds 5 mph, and a 10-hour fuel stick of 6.5 percent. On September 27, the day of the actual burn fire behavior was moderate, with only two minor slop-overs that were easily picked up by fire crews.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The crew arrived at the Blue Ridge VMP site at 0830 hours and relieved another crew, which had been on night shift. The Captains on both crews held a short briefing with each other. The crew Captain conducted a briefing and a tailgate safety meeting prior to starting their work assignment. Items covered by the Captain included: wearing of all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), staying properly hydrated, being aware of your surroundings, and maintaining a safe working distance while using hand tools in steep terrain.

At about 1400 hours, half of the crew took a break. This part of the crew included the crew swamper and the first sawyer (injured inmate). The Captain had the remainder of the crew working a hot spot just above their location. While taking the break the first sawyer (injured inmate) decided to sharpen his saw. The first sawyer removed his web gear and helmet to do this. The crew Captain was 150' to 200' uphill of the first sawyer's position. Shortly thereafter, the Captain and the crew swamper saw a smoke appear near the fire line. The Captain yelled and asked the swamper to check on the smoke. The swamper went to the smoke and discovered a small slop-over that was starting to torch in the brush. The swamper yelled for the first sawyer to bring his saw immediately. The swamper advised the Captain via portable radio that there was a small spot outside the line. The Captain continued to supervise the group working above him and tried to maintain visual contact with the crew swamper and first sawyer. Due to the vegetation the Captain only had intermittent visual contact of the inmates working below him, but could hear them working and talking among themselves.

When the first sawyer arrived at the slop-over he started cutting brush with the saw along the fire edge. After a few minutes of work the sawyer handed the saw to the swamper asking him to hold the saw and saying that his neck was on fire. After brushing hot ash off the back of his neck the sawyer retrieved his saw from the swamper and

resumed cutting fire line. After being assisted by other crewmembers, the slop-over was contained to a spot about 15' by 30' in size. At this time the crew swamper notified the crew Captain via radio that the slop-over was contained. The Captain directed the swamper to have the crew continue to mop up the slop-over.

After containing the slop-over the sawyer asked the crew swamper to look at the back of his neck. The swamper discovered three small blisters on the sawyer's neck and back. The swamper rinsed the blisters with water and sprayed them with antiseptic spray. At 1550 hours the sawyer advised the Captain of his injuries.

INJURIES

One inmate received three small blisters each about the size of a pencil eraser. Basic first aid was the only medical treatment required. On October 10, the investigative team while interviewing the injured inmate asked to see his injuries. The team saw three small red spots on the neck and upper back of the inmate.

INVESTIGATIVE RESULTS

The Captain, crew swamper, and sawyer were all interviewed. Results of the investigative review are as follows: the injured inmate failed to put his nomex shroud down leaving his neck exposed. It's quite possible that when he quickly put his web gear on that the collar of his nomex shirt was pulled down thus exposing the lower neck and upper back. The injured inmate, as well as the entire crew has been repeatedly trained in the proper use of PPE. Additionally, the Captain provided documentation showing that proper use of PPE has repeatedly been a topic during tailgate safety sessions. Although the captain did not have continuous visual contact with the inmates working below him, he could hear them working and did have radio contact with them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue training all fire going personnel in the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment and insure it is included in tailgate safety briefings prior to going on the fireline.

Supervisors must continue to monitor personnel to insure that PPE is properly being used. This still does not relieve the individual from being responsible for their own safety.

All personnel need to be familiar with CDF's burn policy and the appropriate first aid treatment for burns.