

NEWS RELEASE

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TWO MT. GRAHAM FIREFIGHTERS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING **Both are Alive, Transported to Safford Hospital**

TUCSON, AZ (June 24, 2004)-- Two Forest Service firefighters working on the Noon Fire on Mt. Graham were struck by lightning today about 2:30 p.m.

Both injured firefighters are members of the Dalton Interagency Hotshot Crew, located on the Angeles National Forest in Glendora, California. The crew was on fire assignment to the Coronado National Forest at the time of the incident.

The injured firefighters were evacuated from Mt. Graham about 5:00 pm via helicopter by the 305th Rescue Squadron, an Air Force Reserve Unit located at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, assigned to the 920th Rescue Wing.

After being flown to the helibase at the base of the mountain, one firefighter was transported via ambulance to the Mt. Graham Community Hospital in nearby Safford, Arizona. The other firefighter was transported via helicopter to the Safford hospital where both will be further evaluated.

Families of the two injured firefighters were notified of the lightning strike incident by officials of the Angeles National Forest; however, the names of the firefighters have not been released at this time.

The Noon Fire was sparked by lightning on June 22. The blaze was reported to the Forest Service around 7:00 a.m. on June 23. Firefighting crews were dispatched to the fire that morning.

The 15-20 acre Noon Fire is expected to be fully contained tonight or tomorrow.