

PINE INCIDENT
CA-ANF-2407
LAC-04142168



On July 14, 2004 at approximately 1430, there was a “close call” involving Cleveland National Forest (CNF) Engine 27 (Eng 27) with Strike Team 6632 C. The strike team was assigned to the structure protection group on the Pine Incident. The general location was south of Pine Canyon Road near Three Points. The actual road name was Whispering Pines.

As the team’s Safety Officer, I was notified by the Operations Section Chief, that a Cleveland N.F. Engine 27 engine was damaged while assigned to structure protection from direct exposure to flames. Operations also conveyed that there were no reported injuries.

It took me approximately one hour to get to the area of the reported incident and locate the CNF engine. Structure Branch was unable to contact crew or the structure group or supply any additional information about damage or circumstances. We felt it was necessary to debrief with the crew in a fact finding mode as soon as possible due to the lack of information available.

Once we located the Strike Team, we spoke with the Strike Team Leader. He did not have a lot of specific information directly relating to the close call. As the designated lookout for the strike team, he radioed Eng 27, warning them of a building spot fire in their general location.. We then spoke with the Captain of CNF Eng 27. He relayed to us that while engaged in attacking a spot fire, flames laid over the top of the engine for a very brief period, approximately 15 seconds. It was determined that no damage occurred to the engine. The Captain said he announced what he thought was imminent damage over the radio, but soon realized upon a second glance that the engine was unscathed. The Captain conveyed that he was premature with his assessment of potential damage to engine over the radio. The radio transmission led to those who heard it that there was actual damage, thus starting a preliminary fact finding mission.

Upon reviewing the situation, it was determined that it fell into the category of a “close call” and *not* an entrapment situation. Upon our arrival the crew was in normal operations mopping-up around structure. We requested a detailed ICS-214’s from the Strike Team Leader and affected Engine Captain.

The following day July 15, we conducted an “After Action Review” (AAR) with the Strike Team Leader, Engine Captain, and the apparatus engineer. Those, present from the CIMT 4 were; two SOFRs, Deputy IC, and Forest representative. The format for the AAR in the Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG pg 17) was used to conduct the session.

- Operational objective known?
Yes, the crew was briefed on their structure protection assignment, with clear instructions and engagement protocols known.
- What actually happened?
While taking action on a spot(s) fire intensity increased rapidly encroaching on the engine's location.
 1. The strike team had a lookout posted
 2. An escape route and safety zone was identified
 3. All communication links were in place
- Why did it happen?
While engaged with several rapidly building spot fire(s), Engine 27 was apprised by their lookout of the increase in fire activity. The crew's identified escape route (the road, see sketch map below) was compromised, the crew left engine and fell back to their alternate escape route/safety zone, which was the residence. One contributing factor in not moving the engine itself was the fact that it was connected (via fill hose) to a hydrant/standpipe.
- What can we do next time?
Maintain "situational awareness"
Look-up, Look-down

In conclusion, the crew had safety measures in place, but failed to disengage quickly enough. While they were disengaging the hose connection to the hydrant precipitated an untimely delay in moving the engine. In essence, the radio transmission "projecting" damage was the trigger for the investigative action which occurred. The captain lamented that he wished he could retract his radio transmission about the engine.

It was conveyed to the captain that the AAR was not punitive in nature and no assessment of guilt was determined. Additionally, it was conveyed to the captain he should feel free to report close calls, without any reservations.

JACK B. ROGERS
Safety Officer
CIIMT #4



Hydrant where CNF Eng 27 was filling. Planned egress was road in forefront of picture.

HYDRANT

General Direction Fire Came From

Location where CNF Eng 27 was located. Engine was facing fire, the rear facing the residence approximately 150 feet uphill.



CNF Eng 27, showing no damage



