

# Rapid Lesson Sharing

**Event Type:** Medical Extraction with Creative Dispatching

**Date:** September 3, 2017

**Location:** Pyramid Peak Fire, Idaho

*How efficient is your team?*

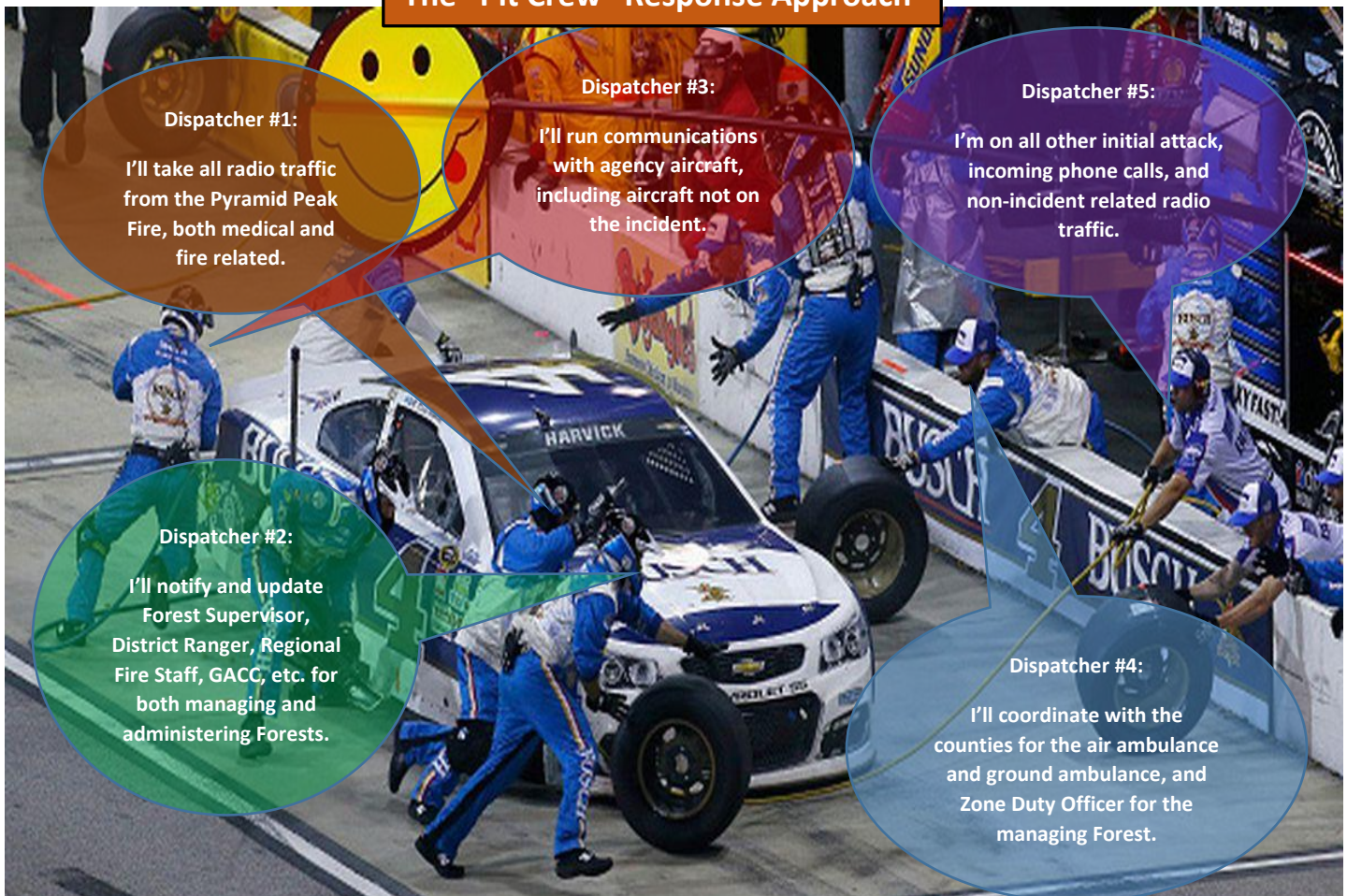
*How will you adapt when an emergency arises?*

*Do you have the support behind the scenes to expedite your response?*

On September 3 a firefighter was struck by a limb and seriously injured on the Pyramid Peak Fire, located in a remote area of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Upon notification of this serious medical incident, the Dispatch Center utilized what in Emergency Medicine is being called the “Pit Crew” or “Systems” based approach. On this incident, ground resources reported using a similar “Pit Crew” approach during their response.

During the Initial Attack when the Payette National Forest resources responded, they were unable to hit the Wallowa-Whitman NF repeaters, but they easily hit the Payette NF repeaters. It was therefore determined that the fire would be run through the Payette Dispatch Center instead of the La Grande Interagency Dispatch Center. This is important because there was a different Forest managing the incident (the Payette NF) than the one who had administrative responsibilities (Wallowa-Whitman NF).

## The “Pit Crew” Response Approach



### **Explaining the “Pit Crew” Response Approach**

This style of response has become popular in Emergency Medicine fairly recently. It is commonly used as a method for getting CPR started quickly, and continuing CPR efficiently and effectively. However, many departments are starting to use this method for all of their calls.

In this approach, each member of the team has a clearly defined role, similar to the pit crew in NASCAR. In this way, this approach has been proven to increase efficiency and decrease duplicated efforts.

By assigning each member of the team a specific job, you begin to bring order to chaos. When everyone knows their specific job, they have the freedom to make decisions and the confidence to organize new incoming information. You can see in a NASCAR pit crew, the jobs are very specific, leaving no room to question who does what.

While this is not really a foreign concept to those of us in wildland fire operations, it is interesting to hear that this Dispatch Center used a similar approach on the Pyramid Peak Fire.

In this incident, establishing the responsibilities of each Dispatcher took less than a minute. At that point, those involved had the ability to focus on their specific mission and knew exactly where to route incoming information.

The usefulness of such an approach could be far reaching and go far beyond simply ground operations.

#### **In an Actual NASCAR Pit:**

Pit Crewmember 1 - Tire Changer  
Pit Crewmember 2 - Tire Carrier  
Pit Crewmember 3 - Jackman  
Pit Crewmember 4 - Gas Man  
Pit Crewmember 5 - Catch Can Man  
Pit Crewmember 6 - Window Tear Off  
Pit Crewmember 7 - Tire Catcher

***“I felt supported in my decisions. We had space to respond to the incident without pressure from Dispatch.”***

**Incident Commander on the Pyramid Peak Fire**

### **Lessons and Successes**

On this emergency medical incident on the Pyramid Peak Fire, an organized and calm support system behind the scenes assisted resources on scene in having the patient off the incident and to Advanced Life Support in 65 minutes, with the option to transfer the patient to an Air Ambulance in 72 minutes. Those are impressive numbers, especially considering the remoteness of their location on this incident.

#### **Some of the successes noted by ground resources in the AAR included:**

- ✓ Personnel from five different groups worked seamlessly together. These resources contributed this to training and communication, the willingness to work together and take initiative, and having high-quality medical gear on scene.
- ✓ Qualified and skilled EMTs were on scene.
- ✓ A lull in fire activity allowed resources on scene to focus on the extraction, putting the fire on the back burner.
- ✓ A non-incident agency aircraft in the area was able to approve the medivac site as a helispot for the designated medivac ship, expediting the extrication.
- ✓ Discussion with resources before reengaging the fire gave folks the chance to calm down and process the incident.

***“It is my humble opinion that the wildland fire organization has come a long way in helping support and preparing its workforce to handle medical emergencies in the wildland arena. With that, it has to also be said that we have a long way to go.”***

**The Primary EMT on this Incident**

#### ***Think You Know What It Takes to be a Dispatcher?***

**Check out this incident’s timeline on the next page to see and appreciate all that they do to help ensure successful outcomes.**

## Operational—on scene actions

Dispatcher 1  
Dispatcher 3  
Dispatcher 5

Dispatcher 2  
Dispatcher 4

## Dispatch—behind the scene actions

1040 IC notified—firefighter struck by a limb, still under the limb  
1041 Quick verbal assessment with patient  
1042 Resources remove insulting branch from patient while he self immobilizes  
1042 On-scene bucket ship landed in meadow to conserve fuel and remove bucket  
1043 Resources retrieve staged trauma kit and litter  
1044 Lead EMT on scene performing complete patient assessment  
1044 Resources begin improving the medivac site and evacuation route  
1045 Patient requested to have his spine cleared so he could self extract. EMT's on scene decide to continue with spinal immobilization  
1052 Another agency helicopter that was in the area but not assigned to the incident approved the proposed medivac site, with removal of 1 additional tree  
1053 Complete 9 line relayed to dispatch by Incident Within an Incident IC  
1054 Medical gear began arriving  
1055 Patient packaging began  
1105 Began carrying patient to helispot  
1105 Final helispot improvements made, helispot manager established  
1109 Fire activity picking up, trees torching  
  
1116 Patient arrives at helispot  
1118 Helicopter is loaded with the person gear for the two people leaving at meadow site  
  
1120 Helicopter lifts meadow to evacuation helispot  
1124 Helicopter off helispot en-route to local helibase for fuel and rendezvous with air ambulance  
1125 Resources given the option to take more time before re-engaging.  
  
1130 Request Type 1 helicopter for bucket work, re-engage resources on the fire.  
1132 Request replacement trauma bag and litter  
  
\*AAR conducted at end of shift, where resources were given the option to demob and informed about post incident support op-

1040

1040 Received notice that a fire fighter was struck by a tree, asked to stand by for 9 line  
1040 New wildcat incident created, roles established for dispatchers involved with the incident.  
1040 Forest Duty Officer and Forest Supervisor of managing forest notified  
1040 Local short haul ship out on proficiencies ordered back to base  
1042 Short Haul base notified  
1042 On scene helicopter standing by in meadow, have enough fuel to make it to local helibase, not the airport  
1042 Administering forest notified of incident  
1044 Managing Zone Duty Officer notified and en-route to dispatch  
1049 District Ranger, Forest Safety Officer, and administering Duty Officer notified

1050

1053 9 line received, Priority yellow transport utilizing air transport from new helispot  
1055 Notified IC short haul ship is available, IC says it is not needed  
1057 IC says they plan to use the on scene helicopter to transport from fire to local helibase. Requests air ambulance to local helibase

1100

1101 Air ambulance requested, estimated 42 minutes enroute  
1101 Managing Forest Supervisor updated  
1101 IC notified Air Ambulance ETE 42 mins out  
1103 Great Basin Coordinator and Administering Forest Duty Officer notified  
1104 Local helibase notified air ambulance 40 mins out, given freq  
1106 Short Haul base notified they are not needed, asked to standby  
1107 Neighboring forest near critical care hospital requested to provide a hospital liaison, if needed  
1108 Managing Forest Supervisor notified Administering Forest Supervisor

1110

1112 Dispatch notified by county that Air Ambulance is 40 out, dispatch gave county contact names for agency ship and helibase  
1112 Managing DO requests ground ambulance to helibase in case of issue with air ambulance  
1114 Administering dispatch center updated  
1118 Left message with Regional Duty Officer

1120

1121 On scene helicopter off meadow to helispot  
1123 Ground ambulance requested to local Helibase, county only has BLS ambulance available, so request canceled  
1125 Helicopter off helispot with pilot, patient and EMT headed to local helibase, ETE 6 mins  
1127 Advised EMT and pilot, could have ALS at airport if they want to come since there is time before air ambulance will arrive.  
1127 Transporting pilot and EMT decide to hot fuel at local helibase and continue to airport  
1127 Ground ambulance ordered to rendezvous point at airport  
1129 Air ambulance notified to come to airport not helibase, and specific desired location at airport

1130

1129 Local helicopter landed at helibase, hot fueling  
1133 Supervisor of patient notified they are coming to the airport  
1133 Updated ETA for Air Ambulance, 20 mins

1140

1137 Short haul ship released from stand by  
1137 Helicopter with patient and EMT off helibase enroute airport, ETE 10 mins

1150

1145 Local helicopter landed at airport, ALS from ground ambulance with patient  
1152 Air Ambulance landed at airport

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***This RLS was submitted by:***  
**Fire Operations Specialist**

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