

# Rapid Lesson Sharing

**Event Type:** Roll Call

**Date:** September 7, 2017

**Location:** Uno Fire, Washington

## *When was the Last Time You Participated in a Roll Call?*

### **NARRATIVE**

On the morning of September 7, the briefing occurred along with Divisional breakouts where driving was emphasized on the Uno Fire.

Resources then left fire camp and started on the long, slow drive to the fire. The unimproved, dirt road to the fire is approximately 25-miles long and has very few pullouts. It is overgrown with brush, has treacherous cliffs, and provides marginal communications to the Incident Command Post (ICP) in certain locations.

The IMT established a spike camp for the north side of the fire, but could not find a spike camp location on the fire's south side due to reduced travel time.

The IMT's Safety Officer had identified the potential risks of traveling to and from the fire—including the possibility of a fatal rollover if a piece of equipment went off the edge.

Mitigations put into place by the IMT included the use of heavy equipment to clear brush for improved line of sight and improved pullouts. Mile post signs were placed and a Communication Plan was developed for personnel traveling the road. In addition, extremely dangerous cliffs were flagged off and personnel left the line early to avoid traveling in the dark.

The IMT also staged transports at the bottom of the hill and closed sections of road to large vehicles such as water tenders. Water tenders and other equipment abated dust and improved the road surface where it was needed.

The Equipment Division worked with the radio tech to "MacGyver" a portable repeater to provide better radio communication along the road. (To "MacGyver"—the art of creative thinking while not creating a worse situation.) In other words, the Radio Tech built a portable repeater.



**One of the several sketchy places on the 25-mile-long road that an engine could have rolled on the Uno Fire.**

### **Rumor Surfaces about a Possible Fatal Engine Rollover**

At approximately lunchtime on September 7, a contractor was in a local dentist office and heard a rumor that an engine had rolled on the Uno Fire and resulted in fatalities. The contractor called the Dispatch Center. The Dispatch Center called the Forest Duty Officer to share this information. The acting Agency Representative overheard the conversation with the Duty Officer and Dispatch. He then headed to ICP to verify this information.

The IMT's Safety Officer Trainee received a text from the Duty Officer: *"Can you talk?"* But the Safety Officer Trainee did not respond because he was in a Command and General Staff meeting and did not sense any urgency in this text.

The acting Agency Representative arrived at the Command and General Staff meeting and informed the IMT of this emerging situation. It is important to note that all participants were very concerned over this news and took it very seriously. However, they had no inclination that anything had occurred through IMT communications or other emergency channels.

### **Roll Call Initiated**

Upon receiving this critical information, the IMT immediately ceased the Command and General Staff meeting. The Communication Unit notified the Incident Commander and Agency Representative who were in the field at the time and initiated a Roll Call.

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***Does your tracking system  
ensure that every resource at  
every moment on your fire can  
be accounted for?***

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A Roll Call is a tactical pause in which everyone that is assigned to an incident is accounted for through positive communication. This Roll Call took approximately 29 minutes—from start to finish—in which all known fire line resources and incoming resources were successfully accounted for.

All in all, this Roll Call process went pretty smoothly. Communications was staffed with two Radio Operators. One Radio Operator made the calls and the other documented on a sheet of paper. The Communications trailer has an outside speaker and several members of the IMT were around this helping to verify communications. Planning Operations worked to verify that all incoming resources were also accounted for.

During the Roll Call process, there were approximately eight personnel that were more difficult to track. These were single resource type personnel who were not specifically assigned to a single Division on the fire or on the Incident Action Plan. They included personnel such as Resource Advisors, Communication Techs, Fire Behavior, Drivers, etc.

Shortly after the Roll Call was taken and everyone was accounted for, the IMT was able to verify that the reported engine rollover fatality had been a rumor.

## **LESSONS**

The IMT acknowledged that even though the Roll Call went as smoothly as could be expected, there is always room for improvement. After the After Action Review of this incident was held, the IMT developed a tracking sheet, improved the "T Card" tracking, and established better communication protocols.

The Incident Commander clearly communicated to the Agency Representative that all "local personnel" needed to check-in with ICP prior to going to the fire line. All fire line personnel also had to check-in with

Communications prior to leaving the pavement onto the dirt road and then again when they leave the dirt road to head back in.

- ❖ Using a systematic approach to a Roll Call by Divisions is a way to improve efficiencies. It also allows time for each Division to use the command frequency, if needed, to reach all of the incident's resources.
- ❖ All reported incidents regarding life safety need to be taken very seriously—no matter where the source of the information comes from.
- ❖ Clear Leader's Intent during the initial IMT in-brief and/or Letter of Delegation needs to be established concerning how local resources will be assigned and accounted for on the fire.
- ❖ At present, there is not a current ICS Roll Call form. The IMT on this incident did a commendable job of developing their tracking sheet on the fly to track all personnel assigned to the fire—even those personnel that are not typically on an IAP.
- ❖ During the time of limited resources it is OK to think outside of the box to find creative solutions to problems. Case in point on this incident was the “MacGyvering” of a portable repeater to provide better radio communication along the road. People on the line need to be creative thinkers and problem solvers when typical resources are not easily available—as long as they are not making a situation worse.
- ❖ Proper staffing of the Communication Unit is critical.

### Critical Thinking Questions

*These are not contributing factors. Rather, they are designed to get you to think critically or have dialogue around the topic.*

- ❖ Do we practice/train in such a way that we are set up for success—or do we just hope that we can make do if a situation arises? When was the last time that you participated in a Roll Call?
- ❖ Are we humble enough to admit that our current plans and processes, although adequate, may not address *all* situations? More importantly, are we willing to take the risk to adjust those plans and processes in order to learn—or do we just follow the status quo?
- ❖ How do you track “local, unassigned, and floating personnel” on your fire?
- ❖ How do Divisions on the fire track all assigned resources when they are challenged by geographical distances, topography, the sharing of resources, and limited communication?
- ❖ Is text messaging an effective form of communication?

**This RLS Submitted By  
the Region 6 RLS Team –  
with support from the Pacific Northwest  
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