

Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: ATV Incident

Date: Aug. 26, 2016

Location: Soberanes Fire, Los Padres
National Forest, California



The ATV after it rolled.

could and proceeded up the hill. The ATV operator was surprised by how sandy the route was. Even so, he was able to make it up the hill and across the short bench to the base of the next hill.



Looking up the second hill.

"Deep sand is no joke!"

NARRATIVE

On the afternoon of August 26 the overhead of an Interagency Hotshot Crew met with Division Supervisor and Branch Director. The mission was to scout the existing dozer line along the ridge to pinpoint fire edge and scout for a potential firing operation.

One of the IHC Squad leaders was given the task of using the ATV to scout farther up the line. The ATV operator started up the dozer line. In several areas, he opted not to proceed up the actual dozer line because he didn't feel comfortable with the conditions and used a nearby road system instead.

The ATV operator came to a large pushed-out area followed by two steep hills. He stopped at the bottom of the first hill to access if he could make it. He decided he



Looking back down the dozer line from the first hill.

Once again the operator stopped and studied the conditions. He noticed that this hill was a bit steeper but had more rock. He figured this was a good thing—less sandy and more traction. But as he proceeded up the hill, he once again encountered the deep sand which slowed him down.

As the operator rode straight up the line the ATV continued to slow down due to the deep sand and rocks. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the hill he was barely moving when all of a sudden the rear wheels of the ATV shifted to the left just as it came to a complete stop. This left the ATV on a side-slope angle. The operator was holding the brake, but felt the ATV was about to roll sideways. The operator stepped off and moved quickly away. Almost immediately, the ATV began to roll on its side.



The area where the ATV stopped near the top of the hill.



Where the rear tires slipped.

The ATV rolled several times on its way down the hill where it eventually stopped just off the dozer line. The ATV sustained moderate damage. The operator was not injured.

LESSONS

- ✓ Don't underestimate the power of deep sand to slow your progress.
- ✓ Just because you have done something similar many times doesn't mean this time will have the same outcome. Don't let your past experience cloud your current judgement.
- ✓ Don't hesitate to step away and let equipment sustain damage—better it than you.

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