

BLUE SHEET

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

Preliminary Summary Report of Serious CAL FIRE Injuries, Illnesses, Accidents and Near-Miss Incidents



**Near Miss Review – Summit Fire Burn Injury
May 1, 2013**

**CAL FIRE - Riverside Unit
13-CA-RRU-044298**

**Near Miss Review Incident
13-CA-RRU-044464**

California Southern Region

This Preliminary Summary Report is intended as an aid in accident prevention, and to provide factual information from the first 24 hours of the accident review. To that end it is published and distributed within a short time frame. Information contained within may be subject to revision as further investigation is conducted, and other reports and documents are received.

SYNOPSIS

The following is a Preliminary Summary Report of a near miss incident where a firefighter received first and second degree burns to his face during suppression operations of a wildland fire.

NARRATIVE

On May 1, 2013, at 1:42 PM, BDU E3569 was dispatched to the Summit Fire in the Banning area of the Riverside Unit.

At approximately 4:15 PM, E3569 was performing mobile pumping fire suppression operations on Division A. They anchored their operation from a dozer line as they attempted to perform a flanking operation on a spot fire that had crossed the line. The captain was operating the engine while both firefighters were on a 25 foot 1½" hose line with a combination nozzle in front of the engine. Firefighter 1 was on the nozzle and firefighter 2 was 10 feet behind him on the hose line in a support position.

During the operation, firefighter 2 observed that fire had crossed the dozer line approximately 300 feet behind the engine. He notified firefighter 1 and the captain of the situation. Both firefighters then quickly placed the hose line back into the storage compartment in the front bumper. The captain began to move the engine out of the unburned fuels into the burned area. Firefighter 2 remained in the unburned fuels as he waited for the engine to move. Fire conditions quickly changed and the fire reached firefighter 2's location while he was still standing in the unburned fuels. Firefighter 2 turned and crouched to shield himself away from the heat and flames. Simultaneously, he quickly moved into the burned area which was only a few feet away.

After he retreated into the burned area, he met up with firefighter 1 and the engine. The captain told them they had less than a quarter tank of water left and that they needed to leave to get water. While they were getting water at a nearby hydrant off the fire line, firefighter 1 noticed the injuries to firefighter 2's face and notified the captain. The captain made the notification to his fire line supervisor who in turn requested a medical response.

Firefighter 2 was transported by an ambulance to a local hospital. After assessing and treating his burn injuries, he was released. He was then transported to the nearest burn center for further evaluation. The burn center personnel evaluated his injuries and released him placing him off duty for one week. Firefighter 2 primarily received first degree burns and a small area of second degree burns to his lower face. He sustained no other burns or injuries.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- ✓ Ensure **Situational Awareness** at all times.
- ✓ Ensure all personnel review wildland fire safety policies and procedures such as the 10 Standard Fire Orders, the 18 Watch Out Situations, LCES, the Common Denominators for Wildland Firefighter Fatalities, etc.
- ✓ Ensure all personnel are properly wearing their Personal Protective Equipment while performing fire suppression operations.
- ✓ Ensure all personnel are familiar with CAL FIRE's burn injury treatment policies.