



Today's discussion is from the LCES (Lookouts, Communication, Escape Routes, Safety Zones) Category.

Subjective vs. Objective Hazards

A popular mountaineering test divides the alpinists' hazards into two distinct types: subjective, which one has direct control over (e.g., condition of the equipment, the decision to turn back) and objective hazards which are inherent to the alpine environment (e.g., avalanches, rock fall).

Objective hazards are a natural part of the environment. They cannot be eliminated and either one must not go into the environment where they exist or adhere to a procedure where safety from the hazard is assured.

Similarly, the wildland firefighter's hazards are either subjective or objective. Examples of subjective hazards would be working below a dozer constructing fireline or the use of improper techniques while felling a tree. The fireline supervisor has direct control over these types of hazards.

The wildland fire environment has four basic objective hazards; lightning, fire-weakened timber (standing and lying), rolling rocks and entrapment by running fires. When these hazards exist the options are to not enter the environment or to adhere to a safe procedure. I feel the key to this safe procedure is LCES.

Although, the following discussion applies to all objective hazards, we will directly address fire entrapments.

● Identify subjective or objective hazards of working in the vicinity of:

- Dozer(s) or Tractor Plows
- Snags
- Helicopters
- Fixed Wing Aircraft
- Other Engines and Vehicles
- ATVs
- Oil and Gas Wells and Pipelines
- Power lines

References:

["LCES and Other Thoughts" by Paul Gleason](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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