

After Incident Report Lessons Learned Center

The purpose of the After Incident Report is to identify issues that occurred on an incident and how they were resolved. The lessons learned in the report will also be used to refresh or update training curriculums. Issues and trends that are identified may have Information Collection Teams assigned to them in the future for further analysis and resolution.

Type I – V Incident Commanders and Agency Administrators are requested to complete the following questionnaire for the incident(s) that they managed. Crews and single resources are also encouraged to complete the questionnaire for incidents they participated in:

Incident Name: Big Elk Fire **Dates of Assignment: July 18 – 21, 2002**
Joe Hartman IC

Unit or Jurisdiction(s): Arapaho-Roosevelt NF **Geographic Area: 9 miles SE of Estes Park, CO**

Report Submitted by: Bruce Short **Phone Number: (303) 275-5074**

1. What was the most notable success at the incident that others may learn from?

No residences were lost at the Big Elk subdivision. This was due to successful triage and pretreatment of the residential area followed by a burnout of fuels between the subdivision and the wildfire fire front.

2. What were some of the most difficult challenges faced and how were they overcome?

A fatal airtanker crash occurred just before the Team assumed authority for the incident. The Team coordinated the suppression of the fire caused by the crash, subsequent recovery of the remains of the air crew, removal of the debris, and coordination with the NTSB and Agency investigation teams. The Team brought in critical incident stress counselors for fire personnel, and demobed the crew involved in the initial attack at the crash site when they requested it.

The other major challenge for the incident was developing effective control strategies while faced with a major lack of resources. Orders made the first morning for Type 1 handcrews were finally filled 5 days into the incident. The Team had only 1 Type 2 handcrew for the first 2 days of the incident. This made it impossible to make significant containment progress for over 48 hours. The Team resorted to aerial suppression by helicopters as the primary suppression tool, supplemented by structural triage and pretreatment with burnouts where they could be accomplished safely.

3. What changes, additions or deletions are recommended to various training curriculums?

None.

4. What issues were not resolved to your satisfaction and need further review? Based on what was learned, what is your recommendation for resolution?

The length of time needed to obtain critical resources, resource orders cancelled or not acted on, and resources diverted away from a high-priority fire have not been resolved. We are unsure of how to resolve this issue, since it seems to be both a local and GACC issue.

Please submit this report to the Lessons Learned Center at the National Advanced Resource Technology Center (NARTC) attention Paula Nasiatka(pnasiatka@fs.fed.us or Fax 520-670-6413)

Thank you for completing the report. Others can learn from your experiences.