

File Code: 6730

Date: August 18, 2006

Route To:

Subject: Preliminary (24-hour—after the accident) Briefing

To: Chief of the Forest Service
Director of the Bureau of Land Management

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO
CHANGE**

Location: Fishlake National Forest

Date of occurrence: August 17, 2006

Time of occurrence: Approximately 1445

Team leader: Joel Holtrop, Forest Service / Gus Panos, Bureau of Land Management

Mission: Fire Suppression

Activity: Extended Attack

Number injured: 0

Number of fatalities: 1

Property damage: None

Narrative:

The lightning caused Devil's Den fire was discovered on August 16, 2006. On August 17, 2006, at approximately 1445, during initial attack on the fire, one fire fighter died when fire activity increased. The USFS fire was being fought by an interagency crew. The deceased fire fighter is a Bureau of Land Management employee.

On August 18, 2006, a national interagency investigation team is assembling on the Fishlake National Forest/Fillmore District.

cc:

BLM National Safety Manager

USDA FS National Safety Manager

File Code: 6730

Date: August 21, 2006

Route To:

Subject: Expanded (72-hour—after the team arrives) Briefing
Fishlake National Forest UT-FIF-000435

To: Chief of the Forest Service
Director of the Bureau of Land Management

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE:

Name of Deceased: Spencer Stanley Koyle, Bureau of Land Management Fire Operations Specialist.

Preliminary Factual Findings:

The lightning-caused Devil's Den fire was reported to Richfield Fire Center dispatch on August 15, 2006 at 2356 hours. The location was given as east of Delta, Utah, on the Fishlake National Forest, Fillmore Ranger District. On August 16, local resources and fire severity crews took initial attack actions on the fire. On August 17, firefighters and aircraft were on-scene for suppression action. At approximately 1350, sudden blowup conditions caused the entrapment and subsequent burnover of Spencer Koyle.

Narrative:

Fire weather conditions on August 16 and 17 included high temperatures, low relative humidities, strong winds and a Haines Index of 5. The fire was started by dry lightning from a shallow trough that passed through the area early in the week with dry lightning activity. The fuel type was pinyon-juniper and grass along a 55-75% rocky slope. Elevation at the incident site is 7,558 feet. On August 17, forty firefighters and multiple aircraft were mobilized. During the morning firefighters and equipment were airlifted to Helispot 1. Crews were staged at the helispot and a safety zone. While the ICT4 and ICT4 trainee made assignments to crews and individual resources, Koyle left the helispot to scout the fire below. About 1350 hours wind and fire conditions changed quickly. Koyle tried to return to the safety zone but was overtaken by rapidly advancing flames. Preliminary investigation indicates that Koyle deployed his shelter. At 1419 hours a mishap was declared and search and rescue operations were initiated. At 1735 hours the body was located and fatality confirmed.

On August 18, 2006, a National Interagency Investigation Team was formed with Co-Team Leaders Gust C. Panos, Bureau of Land Management, and Joel D. Holtrop, USDA Forest Service.

/s/ JOEL D. HOLTROP

/s/ GUST C. PANOS

cc:

Michelle Ryerson, Bureau of Land Management
Dick King, USDA Forest Service