

BLUE SHEET  
PRELIMINARY SUMMARY  
REPORT

<CDF Shield>

WILDLAND FIRE ENTRAPMENT  
FIRE SHELTER DEPLOYMENT INVESTIGATION

August 29, 2003

Santa Clara Complex  
DEVIL FIRE

CA-SCU-003581

CNR-44

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

On August 29, 2003, at approximately 0115 hours, 3 CDF Inmate Conservation Camp Crews, 2 dozers (one local government and one private), and 2 CDF overhead personnel became entrapped while conducting a holding operation. 2 CDF employees and one inmate received 2nd degree burns. The burns were no larger than ½ inch in diameter. All personnel were treated and released back to the incident by the Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) later that afternoon.

Narrative

The involved personnel were assigned as holding forces during a firing operation along a ridge in steep terrain. The firing operation started at approximately 2235 hours. The firing operation could not get the fire to carry, and was terminated at approximately 0050 hours. About 10 minutes

later, the main fire activity increased dramatically, causing fire on the opposite side of the ridgeline. The fire spread quickly upslope toward the personnel. The dozers and crew, realizing that they could not make it to a designated safety zone, began to clear an area. When it became apparent that the fire would reach them before they could complete a safety zone, the decision was made to deploy their fire shelters. 53 firefighters deployed their fire shelters, and remained inside for approximately 10 to 15 minutes. The 2 dozer operators took refuge on their dozer (enclosed cabs). After the passage of the fire front, the personnel remained at the deployment site for approximately 1 hour. After the area was safe to travel, they walked down to a safety zone, before being transported to the incident base.