

Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST) Visit

Fire: Canyons Complex-Hang Dog & Hammond Fires (Eastern Great Basin)

Incident Commander: David Dash, Type 1

Location: Moab and Monticello Ranger Districts, **Manti-La Sal** National Forest

Date: July 19-20, 2002

Situation: The Canyons Complex consisted of the two fires above separated by approximately 30 air miles. The fires were burning in mixed mountain shrub, pinyon, juniper, and ponderosa pine between 6000' and 8500' elevation. The fires involved Private, State, National Forest and Bureau of Land Management administered lands.

FAST Members:

- John Shive (BLM-USO) Team Leader
- Jan Peterson(BLM-IDSO) Health and Safety
- Greg Vergari(R4) Fire Operations
- Jill McCurdy (R4) Aviation Safety
- Rachel Carver (BLM-PRD) Incident Business Management

Purpose:

Fire and Aviation Safety Teams (FAST) are activated during periods of high wildland fire activity or threat and are dispatched to provide assistance and conduct evaluations to promote safe operations. Team composition depends on the complexity of the incident(s). This FAST was activated by the Great Basin Coordinating Group (GBCG) on July 14, 2002. The team leader was given a delegation of authority signed by the Chairman of the GBCG at an entry briefing by Mike Dudley (R4 Director of Fire and Aviation) and Sheldon Wimmer (BLM Utah State Fire Management Officer) on July 15,2002.

Introduction:

The FAST met with Elaine Zieroth, Manti-LaSal Forest Supervisor and Scott Steinberg, Forest Fire Staff on July 18, 2002 at the Moab Ranger District. The FAST leader emphasized the importance of "Safety" during the visit with focus on assistance and adherence to policy and that the FAST was there to assist both the Forest and the IMT in identifying and mitigating possible Safety issues/concerns. The FAST met with the members of Dash's Type I IMT at ICP on the afternoon of July 19 and received an overview of the planning process and briefed the IMT members as to the purpose of the visit. An entry briefing was also completed with the Incident Commander on July 20, 2002 at the ICP. The FAST visited the ICP again on July 20, 2002 and attended the day shift briefing and the Helibase briefing. Greg Vergari and John Shive went to the line with the IC and conducted interviews with Line Overhead, Crews and equipment operators. The IBA conducted interviews and reviewed a sample of time records regarding work rest guidelines and the Health and Safety Manager reviewed and interviewed general camp, line, safety and Medical Unit procedures/practices. An out briefing was held with Incident Commander Dave Dash and to discuss the team's observations. The FAST utilized the sample questions attached to this report in conducting interviews during the visit.

Observations:

Management

Dash's Type I team was following standard ICS procedures and was fully staffed to manage the incident assigned. The Complex had been divided into two branches that are staffed with qualified branch directors. There was one spike camp near the Hammond incident and the ICP and base camp had been established near the Hangdog incident just east of old La Sal, Utah along with the Helibase. The IMT felt that they were receiving adequate direction and guidance from the Line Officer and staff. The delegation of authority included signatures from all participating agencies. A WFSA was in place, was being signed off daily by the appropriate line officer and revised as necessary. The transition with the type III organization was smooth and well done.

Aviation

On the evening of July 19, 2002, McCurdy met with Jerry Waters, AOBD (T), Glenn Claypool, ASGS and Mike Landau, HEB1 to discuss air operations on the Canyon Complex. They provided the FAST with the current IAP. We discussed in depth the aviation operations at the Hang Dog & Hammond fires. Assigned aircraft include 2 Type 1, 2 Type 2 and 1 Type 3 helicopters. The following items were discussed along with methods for mitigation:

- One Manager for two Type 1 helicopters. All of the IHOG requirements were met except for the notification of the Regional HOS. The Team had notified the Forest Aviation Officer and was under the impression that the FAO had made the appropriate contacts. The Regional HOS was notified after the first day of operations and a Safecom noting policy deviation has been filed. The helicopters are adequately managed by a qualified manager.
- The Flight Hazard map provided to the fire is a large scale map. The Forest needs to provide the Team with the appropriate GIS layers to include in the Fire Area maps.
- The Forest did not issue the Aircraft in-briefing package to the Team. Ken Gaynor, Acting Forest Aviation Officer was at the Helibase to assist in this matter.
- IA and following the directions from the 30 Mile Action plan are difficult to adhere to due to the Type 3 IC being the Helicopter Manager (collateral duties). Ken Gaynor is looking into ways to mitigate this.
- Coordination with the local Dispatch office on Initial Attack assignments-Ken Gaynor is currently looking into this.
- Long lines are being utilized for bucket work. This has been discussed with the Aviation Management and pilots. Rotor wash from the Type 2 aircraft and pilot comfort level are the concerns with direct belly hooks.
- Road guards/traffic control needs to be in place when helicopters are utilizing the dip site near the helibase. The pilots have been briefed about over flights of the road and vehicles. The traffic is light on the road and pilots with external loads will not over fly vehicles.
- Outstanding orders include: DECK, ABRO, HEB1, and HCWN.
- The Team is making good use of this assignment to have trainees in place. Currently the trainees include: AOBD (T), HEB1 (T), 3-ABRO (T), DECK (T), HCWN (T).

Two Helibase Operations trailers are in place and being utilized appropriately, one for radio/command operations, the other for pilot/crew rest area.

McCurdy looked into the required documentation for helibase operations. It appeared to be in place. The Helibase briefing board was complete to date. Load calculations were complete.

Helibase spacing of aircraft followed IHOG specifications. Fueling vehicles were on the deck area but were outside of the safety circle for the aircraft. Other associated contractor equipment was also located near the pad on the flight deck. This was due to the land being leased from a private party and the necessity to minimize movement of vehicles on the helibase.

Helitack crews and contractors appeared to be doing well as far as the work/rest guidelines and pilot flight/duty hours.

McCurdy met with Rich Webster, AOBD, on the morning of July 20, 2002 and discussed IA operations in detail relating to 30 Mile direction (collateral duties) as well as the IMT Aviation Organization and information flow between aviation personnel on a National basis. Other IMT functions have National meetings to coordinate their operations. Currently the Aviation Organization has no such meetings. It would be beneficial to have a National IMT Aviation post-season workshop to include: AOBDs, ASGSs, ATGSs, HEB1s, ATBMs, to discuss and propose solutions to problems common in aviation to many large fire incidents.

Fire Line Safety

Fatigue Management - Crews interviewed stated they were within the Work/Rest guidelines. They were following their 14 days assignment requirements and the Team was managing the Work/Rest situation however they need to document how they are doing this.

IMT staffing related to safety impacts - Dash's Type 1 Team has a fully qualified SOF1 and a SOF1 (T). The team had line SOF's in place on both fires. SOF felt that they were covered well in respect to safety officers. Vince Mazzier is developing a new format for the 215a and I saw no deficiencies with it. The Ice Cap system the team is using is a very efficient, clean, user-friendly system and compliments the safety program. This is a very active energetic Safety Officer and it is reflected in the Team operations.

Change of Command- The FAST did not witness the Type I team briefing. In our interview with Dash's Team they stated that the briefing was well done and they were complimentary of the Manti-LaSal for being prepared. The IC felt that the Forest Service could do a better job of letting Teams know what impact the 30 Mi. Action Plan would have on the IMT in that particular area, and should provide a copy of the plan to the IMT.

Contract/Cooperator Safety Issues- The Team had all contract engines inspected by their ground support unit. All contract engines contacted by the FAST team were complimentary of the Type I Team. They said that they were adhering to the Work/Rest Policy and were receiving complete briefings. One contractor had cotton treated fire pants; the overhead team caught this and corrected the situation.

Recognition of Fire Danger and Great Basin severity- The FAST listened to the Moab Interagency Fire Center, Fire Weather Forest and rundown of resources. The FAST felt the broadcast was very well done, indices were included as required by the 30 Mi. Action Plan form R4.

Thirty-mile Compliance - On arrival, Ground Fire Safety gave the SOF a copy of the 30 Mi. Incident Checklist and asked that they use it. This will ensure the Team records actions taken to address 30 Mi. Action Items.

Adherence to Work/Rest Guidelines as reflected in Crew Time Reports is detailed in the Work/Rest Compliance Section of this report. Crews, Modules and Overhead that were interviewed by Ground Fire Safety indicated guidelines were being enforced by the Team and adhered to by these units.

Pocket Cards were handed out to incoming resources. The Agency is in compliance with this Action Item.

Most crews, modules and overhead carry Incident Response Pocket Guides, everyone is waiting for the next production of IRPG's.

The team did an excellent job checking Red Cards on all individuals. They also insisted that everyone going to the line carry a hand tool.

The Forest has a list of Qualified Duty Officers signed by the Forest Supervisor. Type 3, 4 and 5 IC's on the Forest have been given the required orientation by Line. The Type III organization for this incident was well organized.

Work/Rest Compliance

Work/rest standards are being managed according to current policy and guidance. Some work shifts exceeded 16 hours. Documentation was on file to support the excessive hours. Extended shift work (e.g. 0500 – 2330) is being mitigated by 2-3 hour breaks during mid-day. In these situations, actual hours of work is not exceeding 16 hours, however, there is no documentation to indicate that this is being done as part of fatigue management. It is our recommendation that the IMT document this mitigation. Random spot check of hours worked by all resources assigned to the incident reflected that the IMT is paying close attention to work/rest compliance and is doing an excellent job.

Occupational Health and Safety

The IMT emphasized safety and occupational health during daily operations and for emergency medical preparedness. The ICP layout adhered to OSHA slips, trips, falls and emergency egress regulations. Appropriate flagging/alert signs were posted for any hazards and all facilities met the OSHA good housekeeping standards. Personal hygiene was promoted with hand washing stations and access to non-water microbial soap. The Safety

Section conducted training addressing personal protective equipment/clothing and fire shelter deployment for non-fire personnel. This outreach training is to be commended.

The medical unit reported to the Logistics Chief and provided excellent emergency/medical coverage. The Alaska Fire Service Medical Unit/Kit is capable of providing extensive medical care for emergency operations and daily maintenance/prevention treatments. The MEDL displayed excellent organizational and fire medical skills, which enhanced this fire's Occupational Health Program.

Overall the Canyon Complex Fire IMT displayed a high level of regard for personnel safety and occupational health.

Suppression Operations

Strategy seemed to be sound under the current fire conditions and appeared to be meeting the WFSA objectives.

/s/ John C. Shive
John C. Shive, Team Leader

July 20, 2002
Date