

GREEN SHEET

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Informational Summary Report of Serious CDF Injuries, Illnesses, Accidents and Near-Miss Incidents



2008 Shasta-Trinity Lightning Complex

Water Tender Rollover with Minor Injuries

Glenn Kelley (Private) Water Tender

August 2, 2008

CA-SHU-004727

California Northern Region

A Board of Review has not approved this Summary Report. It is intended as a safety and training tool, an aid to preventing future occurrences, and to inform interested parties. Because it is published on a short time frame, the information contained herein is subject to revision as further investigation is conducted and additional information is developed.

Lookouts

Communications

Escape Routes

Safety Zones

SUMMARY

On August 2, 2008, Glenn Kelley (Private) Water Tender, E-293, was involved in a single vehicle accident during fire suppression repair activities on the 2008 SHU Lightning Complex, northeast of Platina, California. The accident resulted in minor injuries to the driver and one passenger. The water tender received major damage in the accident.

CONDITIONS

Vehicle: The vehicle involved in the accident is a two passenger water tender.

- The Glenn Kelley Water Tender is a private hire, 1984 Ford, conventional cab truck with a PTO driven water pump and a 4000-gallon water tank. The Glenn Kelley Water Tender was staffed with two operators at the time of the accident.

Location: The wildland fire incident occurred in the unincorporated area of Shasta County, northeast of the community of Platina, California. This is in the State Responsibility Area protected by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Shasta Trinity Unit. The accident site was on a dirt road approximately 5 miles north of Platina Rd on Graves Ranch Rd. (Latitude: 40 26'.784" N Longitude: 122 50'.938" W). The elevation of the accident site is approximately 700 feet above sea level (ASL).

Topography: Road surface was approximately 12 feet wide at a 15 percent slope with steep banks on the each side of the road. The Graves Ranch Road follows the confluence of Duncan Creek.

Fuel Type: The incident occurred in mixed fuels and timber with associated ground litter. Chaparral, Oak, fir and pine trees flanked both sides of the dirt road. Dense, heavier brush and live oaks were located above and below the accident site.

Weather Observations: August 2, 2008, 1615 hours

Temperature: 92 Degrees Fahrenheit

RH: 22%

Winds: Calm

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

On Saturday morning, August 2, 2008, the Glenn Kelley Water Tender was assigned to fire suppression repair on the Deerlick Fire. The Glenn Kelley Water Tender's assignment was to perform dust abatement of the Graves Ranch Road when departing the incident in the evening. The Graves Ranch Road has a narrow road surface with limited visibility and few opportunities to turn around. Widths of the road surface vary due to rock outcroppings, sharp switchbacks, and erosion caused by winter runoff from nearby Duncan Creek and its tributaries. Vegetation in the vicinity of the incident consists primarily of a mix of Chamish and Manzanita, with few oaks, fir and pine trees. The vegetation along the roadside at the accident site was not dense enough to hold a vehicle in place if it were to leave the road surface.

At approximately 1600 hours, the Glenn Kelley Water Tender was exiting their assignment on the Deerlick fire returning to their service vehicle at the Graves Ranch. The Water Tender operators decided to water the road on their way out to the Graves Ranch.

Approximately 5 miles from Platina Road on Graves Ranch Road, on a grade of approximately 15 percent, the water tender was traveling on a dirt road surface that varied from 10 feet to 15 feet in width. As the water tender approached the steeper part of the grade, the operator attempted to brake to slow the vehicle. The operator realized that he had no brakes as the vehicle was picking up speed. The operator did not attempt to set the spring brake, however attempted to slow the vehicle by driving into the cut bank on the passenger side of the vehicle.

The vehicle traveled approximately 150' down the road with the passenger wheels into the cut bank before hitting some vegetation. As the front passenger wheel made contact with the vegetation, the vehicle rolled over onto the road. The rear bumper dug into the ground and the vehicle came to rest approximately 10' from point of roll over pointing downhill.

The occupants managed to escape from the vehicle's cab and then walked to their service vehicle at Graves Ranch. A fire suppression repair technical specialist notified the Branch Director of the accident at 18:45 hours. Cal Fire Engine 2460 and one Medic Unit were dispatched to the incident. Both operators were checked out and declined medical treatment. The Medic Unit was canceled.

The operator stated the water tender had approximately a half tank of water when the accident occurred, and he had not checked the brake system that day.

The water tender was removed from the accident site on August 3, 2008 by the owner of the vehicle.

INJURIES/DAMAGES

Injuries:

Minor abrasions and bruises. Driver was evaluated at a local hospital and released.

Damages:

The Glenn Kelly Water Tender sustained major damage.

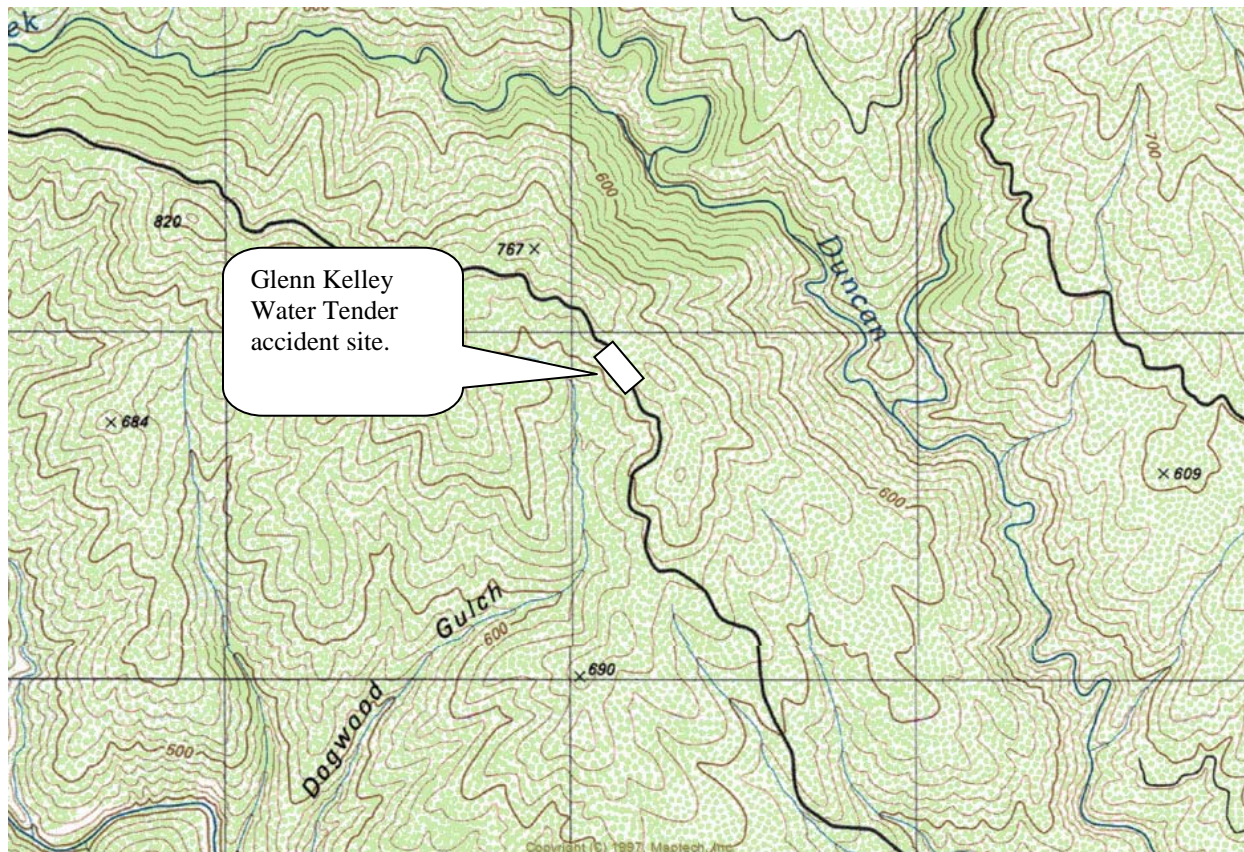
SAFETY ISSUES FOR REVIEW

1. Vehicle operators must maintain situational awareness when considering or observing changing road conditions, steep slopes and variances in road compaction.
2. Operators must consider gear selection and brake limitations when traveling down steep grades. Operators should never descend down a grade in a gear higher than it would take to climb up the grade.
3. When operating a vehicle with a heavy load on steep grades, it is advisable to stop periodically and check brake temperatures.
4. If there is another occupant in your vehicle, it is advisable to have the passenger get out and scout steep grades prior to taking the vehicle down them.
5. Remember to always use the vehicle's safety restraint systems and secure all loose items in the cab prior to driving.

Water Tender Rollover with Minor Injuries

Glenn Kelley (Private) Water Tender E-293

August 2, 2008



**Topography view of accident site. Road surface is Graves Ranch Road at accident site.
Water tender came to rest facing downhill in the center of the roadway.**