

Montrose Interagency Fire Management



BLM – Uncompahgre & Gunnison Field Offices
USFS – Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forests
NPS – Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park &
Curecanti National Recreation Area

To: Ken Kerr, BLM Colorado State FMO
From: Barbara Sharrow, Uncompahgre Field Manager
Subject: “Jay” Fire 72 Hour (expanded) Personal Injury Report

Injured Employee(s): Two Hotchkiss Volunteer Fire Department Members

Summary:

On September 24, 2008, at approximately 1800 hours, two members of the Hotchkiss Volunteer Fire Department participating in wildland firefighting duties, were injured when the ATV they were riding rolled over on them. The driver of the ATV walked away from the roll-over and did not go for medical treatment that night. The passenger was in severe pain and the extent of his injuries was unclear at the time. The helicopter on the fire was dispatched immediately but did not have a backboard to stabilize the injured ATV passenger. Careflight, out of Grand Junction, CO, was then summoned and they flew the passenger to Delta, where he was diagnosed with a dislocated shoulder and sprained right knee.

Narrative:

When this incident occurred, members of the Hotchkiss Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) were in the mutual aid period with Montrose Interagency Fire, performing wildland firefighting duties on the “Jay” Fire. The fire was a Type 4 incident that transitioned to a BLM IC at 1800 on the 24th with the mutual aid period remaining in effect until 2400 that night. Two members of the VFD were on a 6-wheeled ATV and were following a dozer as it was being walked to the fire. The dozer had gone down a steep hill flattening oak brush along the way. The descent was very rocky and uneven and the flattened oak brush concealed a depression in the trail. The right front wheel of the ATV went into this depression and that coupled with the momentum of driving down the steep incline and the weight of the passengers caused the ATV to roll over to the right. The driver was able to extricate himself but the passenger remained pinned until the driver and three other firefighters were able to roll the ATV off of the individual. Initially, it was thought the individual’s arm was broken and it was unclear what the extent of his other injuries might be. The helicopter on the fire was summoned but did not have a backboard to stabilize the person so a medical helicopter (Careflight), out of Grand Junction, CO, was called. The injured ATV passenger was flown to the Delta hospital, and after evaluation, it was determined that he had suffered a dislocated shoulder and sprained knee. The ATV driver went to the doctor the following day and was diagnosed with muscle strain in his right leg. Medical costs for this incident were the responsibility of the department and county. The Fire Chief initiated OWCP paperwork the morning of 25 September to cover costs for both individuals.

Fuels:

Oak brush, minimal Piñon/Juniper and cheat grass.

Weather:

No critical fire weather events were occurring at this time. The temperature at time of incident was 81 degrees and winds were at 5-10 mph.

9/27/08