

Interim (72-Hour) Summary Report



Alaska Division of Forestry

Wildland Firefighter Injury

Date of Accident / Injury:
July 9th, 2009

Logging Slash Fire

This report is intended to provide a factual description based upon information obtained during the initial stages the accident investigation conducted within the first 72 hours post accident. It is published and distributed within a short time frame and may be subject to revision as further investigation is conducted and other reports and documents are received.

Synopsis

At approximately 1857 hours (ADST) on July 9th, 2009 while supporting a water pumping operation, a member of the Idaho City IHC was burned while working on the Logging Slash Fire in interior Alaska. A designated Medivac helicopter from an adjacent fire was dispatched while medical personnel on scene began treatment of the injured crew member and prepared him for transport. The injured crew member was rapidly transported to a Fairbanks hospital and after an evaluation by physicians, was transferred to a Seattle burn center. The crew member has been moved from the Intensive Care Unit to the regular burn ward where his condition continues to improve.

Narrative

A member of the Idaho City IHC was assigned to support a water pumping operation utilizing a folda-tank and Mark 3 pump. When the crew member opened the Jerry Can (fuel tank); flammable liquid and vapors spewed from the container and were ignited. The resulting flash fire burned the crew member. Initial investigation reveals no mechanical problems existed with the pump or fuel system, however it is evident the Jerry Can, during set-up of the pump, was placed in close proximity to the Mark 3 exhaust (muffler). During the interval that the pump was running the exhaust did impinge upon the Jerry Can preheating the gasoline. Portable fire extinguishers were used to extinguish the fuel can, pump and other burning objects that had been ignited by the flash fire.

An Interagency Accident Investigation Team comprised of the members listed below continues to further analyze the events of this incident.

Rocky D. Ansell, Statewide Health & Safety Officer
State of Alaska, Division of Forestry

Tom Kubichek, Alaska Smokejumpers Air Operations Supervisor
Bureau of Land Management / Alaska Fire Service

Mike Spencer, Safety Officer / Training Specialist
Pacific N/W Regional Office, US Forrest Service