



File Code: 6730

Date: September 11, 2005

Route To:

Subject: Expanded (72-Hour) Briefing
Missouri Ridge Tree Felling Incident
Krassel Ranger District, Payette National Forest
September 6, 2005, approximately 1158

To: Mary Wagner, Acting Regional Forester

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The accident occurred on the 6,500+ acre Missouri Ridge Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Fire which is part of the 40,000+ acre Frank Church WFU complex that has been burning since August 1, 2005. The Missouri Ridge Fire is located on the Krassel Ranger District, Payette National Forest 50 miles northeast of McCall, ID.

While conducting saw line hazard tree felling operations, the top of a snag broke off, and struck the hardhat of a Class C sawyer. This caused significant injuries which included a linear skull fracture, vertebral fracture and multiple rib fractures. The nearby swamper immediately provided emergency first-aid, and activated the planned medical evacuation procedure. The injured sawyer received advanced medical care by adjacent Fire Use Module EMTs within minutes of the accident.

An effective evacuation involving the entire Division/Group including Helitack, Hotshots, and Overhead which resulted in a prompt and successful patient transfer to a Life Flight Helicopter standing by in a nearby emergency medi-vac landing zone. The injured sawyer was flown and treated at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho. While the sawyer's injuries were serious, he was released from the hospital, and the outlook for a full recovery and return to the job is positive.

Additional Details of Accident:

The snag was 120 feet tall, 30 inches at the base, and naturally leaning into a larger green tree. There was no fire in the snag or on the nearby ground. The sawyer was step-cutting the lower sections from the snag base, in an effort to lower and move it towards the base of the green tree so the snag would fall to the ground. As the second section was cut and released, an approximately 20 foot / 41 pound top section broke loose and fell, while the sawyer was next to the base of the snag. The hardhat sustained a small indentation and crack, and the liner remained secure and intact. The hardhat will be sent to the Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) for future fact finding analysis.



Qualifications:

The sawyer is a designated Forest Chain Saw Program Manager in the Intermountain Region. In addition, he is a qualified and experienced C-Certifier Sawyer and Falling Boss.

PAUL CHAMBERLIN

Team Leader

cc:

Regional Forester

Jim Morrison, (acting) Regional Safety
Manager