

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

To: Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO)

Subject: Expanded (72 Hour) Report for the New York Peak Fire

Number of Injured Employees: Six

Narrative: Eldorado Hot Shots responded to the New York Peak fire around 2 p.m. on Tuesday, July 25 and were conducting burn out activities near Leonard Ranch near Denio Junction in NV. At approximately 5 p.m. a vortex (e.g., dust devil, fire whirl) developed suddenly and three firefighters received serious burn injuries. They were evacuated by air ambulance and hospitalized. One firefighter was treated and released from Humboldt General Hospital in Winnemucca. Two other firefighters were flown to Lion's Burn Care Center at the University Medical Center in Las Vegas. Three additional firefighters were later treated for minor burns locally and released. An Entrapment/Burnover Investigation Team was activated on Tuesday night and arrived on Wednesday, July 26 to begin investigating the incident. The team consists of both BLM and Forest Service employees:

- Team Lead: Ed Singleton, BLM Albuquerque District Office Manger
- Chief Investigator: Kathy Greer, BLM Utah State Safety Manager
- Safety Advisor: Stan Adams, Richfield Field Office/Ashley National Forest Interagency Safety Officer
- Technical Experts:
 - Gary Jarvis, R4 Fuels Program Manager
 - Jerry McGowan, Fire Operations, Stanislaus National Forest
 - Hector Madrid, BLM New Mexico Fire Management Officer
- Union Representative: Dan Duefrene, Shasta-Trinity National Forest

The team participated in a site visit with the Eldorado Hot Shots to review site operations during the incident and to conduct crew interviews. Data is being gathered to support the investigation. Preliminary findings indicate that fire behavior and a sudden weather change were significant factors in this incident and that a burn over did occur. Another significant finding was related to material factors. Had a bulldozer not remained with the crew for a short period of time, more serious injuries would have occurred. Two firefighters remain hospitalized for their injuries. The investigation will continue as more witness interviews are conducted and data is analyzed. Personal protective equipment is being sent to Missoula Technical Development Center for further analysis. A final report will be issued within 45 days of the incident.

/s/Ed Singleton, Entrapment/Burnover Investigation Team Lead

cc:

BLM Safety Manager, WO-740

Office of Fire and Aviation, Division of Fire Operations Chief