



# "SAFETY ZONE"

"A High Performing Firefighter is by Definition a Safe Firefighter"

Issue 10 - June 2007

## "SAFENET: The Tool That Speaks for Firefighters"

Darcy, a career firefighter, saw a "Buffelgrass" notice posted on her unit's fire information bulletin board. Intrigued by the interesting botanical name - "Buffelgrass" - Darcy read the information in the notice. What was serendipitous and timely that day was not only Darcy's personal interest about the Buffelgrass fuel information, (where she learned about its high flammability and extreme potential for erratic fire behavior in severely dry locations), but also her ability to put this information to later use when her need to call on "situational awareness" and applied knowledge was critical.

Two weeks after reading about Buffelgrass, Darcy and her crew responded to a wildland interface fire that flared up in a thickly populated area of cured Buffelgrass. Remembering the information she gained from the original notice enabled Darcy and her crew adequate time to mitigate their tactics and back out of a potential blow-up situation. Although none of Darcy's crew was injured in the sudden fire behavior Darcy did experience some minor burns. As Darcy lay in the emergency room awaiting treatment, she reflected back to the moment when she read the Buffelgrass notice and thought about what could have been if she hadn't taken the time to read it.

Upon returning to her local unit, Darcy and her crew completed an "After Action Review"(AAR) of the incident and submitted a [SAFENET](#) to the National Interagency Fire Center regarding the Buffelgrass hazards. The intent for submitting the SAFENET, was to share information, inform other firefighters about this volatile fuel and ultimately to avert potential injuries to others. In turn, by submitting this SAFENET a timely "Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory" was disseminated nationally.

**SAFENETS ARE POWERFUL TOOLS!** The SAFENET system was created and established during the 2000 fire season in response to a recommendation from Phase III of the Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Study. A SAFENET, provides front line wildland firefighters with a direct avenue to report information and hazards, pursue unresolved issues, identify mishaps or near misses and capture key opportunities for organizational learning. Utilizing SAFENET is an opportunity.

*Remember when you file a SAFENET, please be sure to provide enough information on the event – where it happened down to the local management unit, resources involved, date and time, and so on – to allow the agency to properly follow up on corrective actions. Once a SAFENET is submitted to NIFC, it is forwarded to the agency responsible for the incident or event in question.*

**Do your part – use this critical tool.**

For details on how to complete/submit a SAFENET visit the SAFENET website at

<http://safenet.nifc.gov/>

or by mailing in a SAFENET using the form below

Safenet Form: [pdf file](#)

[-- Print version --](#)

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**"Newsletter of the Forest Service Wildland Fire Operations Risk Management Council "**

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/council/>

