



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Southern Research Station

200 WT Weaver Blvd.
Asheville NC 28804-3454
828-257-4832 Voice
828-257-4840 Fax
828-259-0503 TDD

File Code: 6730

Date: July 31, 2008

Route To:

Subject: Expanded (72-hour - after the team arrives) Briefing - Panther Fire, Happy Camp RD, Klamath NF

To: Director, OSOH, Washington Office

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Location: Panther Fire, Happy Camp RD, Klamath NF, California

Date of occurrence: July 26, 2008

Time of occurrence: Approximately 1515 Hours

Team leader: Jim Reaves

Mission: Fire Suppression

Activity: Scouting fire to merge Panther into the Siskiyou Complex, the following day

Number injured: None

Number of fatalities: One

Narrative: The Panther fire was initially identified on July 23, 2008. The Type 4 incident command organization transitioned to a Type 3 due to the increased complexity of the fire.

On July 26, the Type 3 Incident Commander requested that the fire Incident command organization be elevated due to the continued increase in complexity. Two firefighters who assigned by the Siskiyou Complex, arrived to conduct a **routine** scouting mission prior to this transition.

The two firefighters involved in this accident were Division Group Supervisors (DIVS). They were briefed by the Type 3 Incident Commander on scene and upon arrival at the fire. Following this briefing the DIVS conducted a survey of the fire-line that had been constructed in prior operational periods.



While conducting this survey their escape route was compromised by fire. One of the DIVS escaped the advancing fire by running down a steep north slope covered with extremely heavy brush. The second DIV remained in place and successfully deployed his shelter, but was later found deceased within the fire shelter. The deceased firefighter was recovered on 27 July 2008.

/s/ Jimmy L. Reaves
JIMMY L. REAVES
Station Director and Team Leader, Panther
Fire Incident

cc: Ralph Dorn
Hank Kashdan