

Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: Two UTV Incidents

Date: Feb. 7 and Feb. 13, 2017

Location: South Carolina

NARRATIVE

February 7

***The UTV operator felt
an aching pain in the left wrist.***

At the end of the shift, returning to the staging area for an AAR, the UTV operator was patrolling a prescribed fire's perimeter on a designated OHV trail.

As the operator—who was holding the UTV's steering wheel at the appropriate "10 and 2" locations—suddenly attempted to avoid a downed limb located on the edge of the OHV trail, the steering wheel was rapidly rotated to the left. When this occurred, the UTV operator felt an aching pain in the left wrist.

That night, the UTV operator noticed swelling of this wrist and decided to seek medical attention in the morning. The operator was diagnosed with a sprained wrist that was placed in a soft cast.

February 13

***The back wheel went
slightly off the bladed berm . . .***

While prepping a unit for a prescribed fire a UTV operator and passenger were driving down a bladed dozer line to a wide spot utilized as a turn around.

The operator turned the UTV to the left, put the UTV in reverse, and went straight back. As the operator did so, the back wheel went slightly off the bladed berm—causing the UTV to shift weight to the downhill side. Next, the UTV tipped over with the passenger side on the bottom.

The UTV rested against two small trees just off the bladed dozer line, preventing the UTV from rolling over. The winch was used to tip the UTV back up-right.

The passenger suffered minor scrapes on their knuckles from holding the metal UTV handle when it came into contact with the ground. Both operator and passenger were wearing all necessary PPE—making the potential injury outcome of this event minor.

LESSONS

- ✓ Remain vigilant about your surroundings when operating the UTVs. Move obstacles from the proposed travel route if you can't clearly negotiate around them.
- ✓ Use a spotter when turning around in tight spaces—or simply back out the way you came in using a spotter.

Training Opportunities

These two UTV incidents have spotlighted future training opportunities that this unit will now take advantage of. These incidents have also provided open discussions on this unit regarding the inherent dangers we face on a day-to-day basis that we often consider “routine.”

This RLS was submitted by:
Incident Overhead

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