

SAFETY ALERT

*United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service
National Headquarters*

FILE CODE: 5100/6710/7130

SUBJECT: Ground Transportation of Fire Personnel

RE: Work/Rest Guidelines and Safety Belt Usage

TO: All Fire Personnel

DATE: June 27, 2002

Alert Information:

Ground transportation of fire personnel is made more dangerous by long hours in transit, stress, fatigue, and hard physical labor. It is important that personnel in transit to and from wildfire assignments and those entrusted with their safety adhere to national work/rest guidelines. Also, personnel transported in motor vehicles shall wear safety belts at all times when provided by motor vehicle manufacturers and comply with basic safety rules and regulations.

According to section 12 of Forest Service Handbook 6709.11, Motorized Vehicles, employees and contractors operating Government vehicles shall:

- Drive only if they have had at least 8 consecutive hours off duty before beginning a shift.
- Drive no more than 2 hours without a rest stop. Operators of vehicles carrying 16 or more passengers, including the driver, shall stop for 10 minutes every hour.
- Drive no more than 10 hours per shift. A shift must not exceed 16 hours from the beginning of shift to the end of shift including rest and meal stops.
- Always wear safety belts. Vehicle operators are responsible for ensuring that all passengers, including themselves, have safety belts properly fastened before the vehicle is put in motion.

Released by:

/s/Thomas J. Mills
THOMAS J. MILLS
Deputy Chief for Business Operations

/s/Joel D. Holtrop
JOEL D. HOLTROP
Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry