

# NEWS RELEASE

## USDA Forest Service -- Northern Region



August 12, 2005

Contact: Mike Oliver (406) 329-3097

### I-90 Fire Shelter Deployment Investigation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On August 10, 2005, a fire shelter deployment occurred on the Tarkio Fire of the I-90 Complex in the Northern Region of USDA Forest Service. An investigation team is in place and the investigation is in progress. Investigation results will be released when the team's report is completed. The following are facts about the deployment that we know at the present time.

- At approximately 7:00 pm, August 10, 2005, two dozer bosses and one dozer operator deployed their fire shelters while in a safety zone during an active period of burning around the safety zone.
- All three firefighters were unharmed during the event.
- As fire activity in the afternoon increased, firefighter resources were directed to disengage and move to identified safety zones.
- Due to the slow rate of travel of the dozer and the active fire behavior, the dozer operator and two dozer bosses elected to move to the closest identified safety zone.
- This safety zone was a road junction and had been previously identified. The safety zone was further prepared by removing adjacent fuel with the dozer.
- Individuals were at the safety zone for approximately one hour prior to the fire front moving past them.
- The three individuals made the decision to deploy their fire shelters until the fire front passed over them.
- The dozer and a vehicle were also in the safety zone. There was no visible damage to the dozer or vehicle.
- The shelters deployed were all "new generation" fire shelters.
- The dozer was positioned in the middle of the safety zone and the deployment occurred in front of the dozer blade for protection to deflect heat.
- The three individuals were in their shelters for a period of several minutes while the fire front passed.
- The individuals prefer not to have their names released at this time.