



SAFETY GRAM

Accident/incident Summary: Fatalities and Entrapments 2001

The following data indicate the 2001 fatalities, entrapments* and entrapment-related injuries associated with wildland and prescribed fire operations. There were 18 fatalities and 34 firefighters entrapped. The information was collected by the NWCG Safety & Health Working Team, with confirmation from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Date	Location	Type of Accident	Organization	Entrapped	Shelter Available	# Shelters Deployed	Fatalities	Injuries
Jan 12	Hillsbora, KY	Engine, rollover	Volunteer	n/a			1	
Feb 6	Homochitto RD, MS	Heart Attack, WCT	Federal	n/a			1	
Mar 17	Larkspur, CO	Heart Attack, WCT	Volunteer	n/a			1	
May 21	Daggett, CA	Burn over, engine	Military, Marines	3	no	0		2 nd & 3 rd degree burns
June 18	Moses Lake, WA	Medical, aneurysm	Volunteer	n/a			1	
July 7	Gorda Fire, CA	Heart Attack, traffic	Volunteer	n/a			1	
July 10	Lewis County, ID	Aircraft, SEAT	Contractor	n/a			1	
July 10	Winthrop, WA	Burn over, crew	14 Federal and 2 civilians	16	yes	14	4	minor burns, cuts, smoke inhalation
Aug 8	Indian Spring Fire, WA	Engine Fire	Contractor	n/a				2 nd & 3 rd degree burns
Aug 13	Virginia Lake Fire, WA	Burnover, dozer	Contr., Federal	2	yes	2		smoke inhalation
Aug 27	Bus Fire, CA	Aircraft, retardant	State	n/a			2	
Aug 31	Fridley, Fire, MT	Aircraft, helicopter	Contractor	n/a			3	
Sept 3	Labor Fire, MT	Falling snag	Federal	n/a			1	
Oct 25	'70 Fire, CA	Burn over, crew	Federal	9	yes	9		minor, shoulder
Nov 10	Daddy's Ridge Fire, TN	Burn over, crew	State	4	no	0	1	
Nov 19	Cameron, WV	Engine, rollover	Volunteer	n/a			1	
Totals				34		25	18	

These accidents reinforce the need for being continually alert to the “Situations That Shout Watch Out” and ensuring that all of the “10 Standard Fire Fighting Orders” are followed before initiating tactical operations. A simple concept to remember and share with crew members is “L.C.E.S.” The acronym stands for Lookouts, Communication, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones. If a fire crew has these four areas fully established and understood, they can anticipate a safer assignment.

Timely reporting of entrapments or fatalities is necessary. Completion of the Wildland Fire Entrapment/Fatality Initial Report (NFES 0869) accomplishes this need. This initial report is self explanatory and does not replace agency reporting or investigative responsibilities, policies or procedures.

During 2001 we experienced two fatalities and several emergency responses to employees while they were performing the Work Capacity Test (WCT). Studies of firefighting and other field tasks confirm the link between fitness and work performance. Fit workers accomplish more with less fatigue, and they perform better in hot environment. NFES 1596 “Fitness and Work Capacity”, second edition, clearly states fitness is the most important factor in work capacity. The NWCG-SHWT recommends employees should read and follow this publication and begin training at least 4 to 6 weeks before taking the WCT.

The NWCG Safety & Health Working Team requests any Investigation Reports from agencies that experienced the above or other entrapments/major accidents in 2001. Please mail reports to the following address:

NWCG/SHWT – Stan Palmer
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 S. Development Avenue
Boise, ID 83705

or email them to: stan_palmer@nifc.blm.gov.