



LESSONS LEARNED

Employee Injured by Gray Water Truck

Date/Time: 21 Sept, 2009, ~2230 Hours

Location: Silver Fire ICP, Plumas County Fairgrounds, Quincy, CA, Plumas NF

Employee Title: (1) Firefighter/Hot Shot (Temporary Employee)

Purpose: Fire Suppression

Details: After working two long shifts on the fire (over two days), the Firefighter had just settled into a sleeping bag rolled up in a space blanket and went to sleep between 2100-2130 hours. The Firefighter had situated the sleeping bag in a sleeping area that had not been initially designated, but had evolved into an authorized overflow sleeping area at the Incident Command Post (ICP) due to a large influx of resources and crowded conditions. This sleeping area was located in the grassy center of the fairground's racetrack (East side), adjacent to where the showers were also located. The racetrack overflow sleeping area was not posted or flagged or otherwise identified as a sleeping area, although barriers were in place prohibiting vehicular traffic (except service vehicles).

A gray water truck, (an authorized service vehicle) entered the racetrack area from the west side, to empty the full gray water bladders from the showers between 2130-2200 hours. After emptying the bladders, the driver maneuvered the truck to position it so it could return the way it had entered. At the apex of the first forward turn the driver thought he heard a sound. Thinking it was a fallen hose he got out to check in the rear of the truck. No hoses had fallen, so he got back in the truck and proceeded to move it backwards. At that time he saw a sleeping bag in the headlights and realized a person in the sleeping bag was seriously injured after being struck by the tire of the water truck, he left to get medical aid. Nearby crew EMT's, also sleeping in the racetrack area, rendered aid, as did the ICP medics. The firefighter was taken by ambulance to the local hospital and later transferred to a trauma center, remaining there for a month. The firefighter sustained multiple injuries from this accident, but is recovering and hopes to return to fire fighting in 2011.

Lesson(s) Learned:

- Adequate sleeping area(s) should be designed to accommodate the number of personnel dispatched to an incident.
- Develop adequate Day and Night use sleeping areas that will ensure quality rest.
- To combat fatigue, all sleeping areas must be quiet and protected per FSH 6709.11 Chapter 25.13(b) with signage and roped off for safety.
- Don't mix sleeping areas with the shower unit. Keep these two functions separate.
- Know where your crew members are sleeping, keep your crew together in case of an emergency or a response.
- Sleeping areas need to be large enough to accommodate all personnel assigned to the incident.
- Anticipate camp population growth when establishing sleeping areas.
- Use barriers, such as cones and flagging to define the sleeping area to prevent vehicles from entering the sleeping area.
- Do not allow vehicles to enter the sleeping area.
- Do not sleep around parked vehicles.
- If you find yourself in a sleeping area with no barricades carefully choose your sleeping location that will prevent vehicles from infringing on that area.