



TO :

FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 09/05/2001

SUBJECT : SAFETY BULLETIN : 9/3 Fire Fatality

Following Monday's fatality, the US Forest Service released the attached news bulletin.



Bitterroot National Forest

1801 N. 1st Street, Hamilton, MT 59840 (406) 363-7100

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Dixie Dies
Public Affairs Officer
(406) 363-7100**

“Firefighter Fatality”

Hamilton, Montana, September 3, 2001 (3:30pm)— At 10:00 this morning a firefighter was struck by a falling snag and fatally injured on the Labor Fire. The name of the firefighter will be released after notification of relatives. “This is a terrible tragedy,” said Spike Thompson, Deputy Forest Supervisor. “The safety of our firefighters is always our first priority.”

The cause of the Labor fire has not been determined. It is located in the area of the ski slopes of Lost Trail Ski Resort near the Montana/Idaho border. The fire is estimated between 3-5 acres. This fire was reported after midnight last night and initial attack crews responded early this morning. A helicopter is currently assisting a 20-person crew with their firefighting efforts with water bucket drops.

All firefighters on duty at the time of the accident have been replaced with another firefighting crew. The Ravalli County Sheriff Coroner and the Forest Service are coordinating the investigation of the accident.

All calls should be directed to (406) 375-2609.

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“Firefighter Fatality Update”

Hamilton, Montana, September 3, 2001, 10:00pm---After notification of family members the Ravalli County Sheriff Coroners Office and the Bitterroot National Forest have confirmed that David Ray Rendek, age 24 of Hamilton, Montana was killed by a falling snag while fighting the Labor Fire near Lost Trail Montana. David was pronounced dead on arrival at St. Patrick’s Hospital in Missoula, Mt.

“We are deeply saddened by this tragic accident,” said Rodd Richardson Forest Supervisor, “When something like this happens, the whole firefighting community grieves, our thoughts and prayers are with Dave’s friends and family.”

The Forest Service and Ravalli County Sheriff Coroner are coordinating the investigation of the accident.