



TO :

FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 09/26/2006

SUBJECT : SAFETY BULLETIN : Expanded (72 Hour) Report, Kern Canyon Rollover



Expanded (72 Hour) Report, Kern Canyon Rollover.doc



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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In reply refer to
9214 (N) CA160

September 25, 2006

To: Ron Huntsinger, Bakersfield Field Manager

From: Kevin Chambers, Team Leader

Subject: Expanded (72 Hour) Report, Kern Canyon Rollover

Location: Highway 178, in the Kern River Canyon, ¼ mile west of Cow Flat Creek.

Date of Occurrence: Friday, September 22, 2006

Time of Occurrence: 10:49 Hours

Activity: A BLM Light Fire Engine (Type 6) with a crew of one was returning from Bakersfield Field Office to Chimney Peak Fire Station when the driver lost control of the vehicle, resulting in a roll-over accident.

Number of Injuries: Minor injuries to driver

Property Damage: Total loss of the Engine

Preliminary Factual Findings: The BLM driver was returning to the Chimney Peak Fire Station traveling eastbound on Hwy 178 when another vehicle approaching from the opposite direction crowded the eastbound lane, forcing the driver of the BLM engine to swerve towards the shoulder of the road. The right front tire left the pavement onto the shoulder, at which time, the tire rolled off the rim, causing the driver to lose control. The engine impacted a concrete culvert, forcing the vehicle into a slide. The vehicle then crossed the westbound lane, sliding off the highway and over the embankment. The Engine rolled several times before coming to rest, right side up at the edge of the Kern River. It was estimated at the accident scene that the vertical distance between the highway and the river is approximately 50ft.



During interviews, the driver indicated that engine was traveling at approximately 40-45 MPH in a 55 MPH zone. The USFS accident investigator on scene stated that “40-45 MPH is a safe speed for that portion of SR 178”. The California Highway Patrol accident investigation report is still pending.

Primary Factor: Loss of air in the right front tire caused the vehicle to pull hard to the right, towards the hillside. The driver then over corrected the vehicle, lost control, and slid off the highway.

Secondary Factor: Narrow canyon road with little or no shoulder and absent of guardrails in accident area.

Safety Considerations: Based on Law Enforcement reports, Safety Team interviews and the crew member’s statement, the driver was wearing his seatbelt at the time of the accident.

/s/ (Kevin Chambers, Team Leader)

cc:

BLM-California Safety Manager
Office of Fire and Aviation Safety Manager
California State Fire Management Officer

