

## Staging Area

the lines were on the ground, but as he steps over the wires, he becomes shocked. Other responders on scene then had a major medical emergency on their hands.

If one of your crewmembers becomes electrocuted by live and/or downed wires, first, shut down the power and dislodge the person from the source. But remember, this is a dangerous process because of the potential for the rescuer to also become a victim, so it must be handled appropriately. Next, assess the victim's airway, breathing and circulation and begin CPR and defibrillation if needed. Don't forget: If EMS hasn't already been notified, instruct someone to do so and provide as much information as you can (number of victims, level of consciousness, pulse and breathing information, etc.). Lastly, provide emergency medical care until trained professionals arrive.

Should you ever find yourself inside a vehicle that has a downed power line draped over it, stay inside the vehicle. Do not exit until the power company arrives and advises you it's OK to do so. If trapped inside a vehicle

that's on fire and has a line draped across it, without hanging on to the vehicle, jump away from it.

## Conclusion

Firefighting near power lines is just one aspect of our job, but it's clearly one of the most dangerous. To ensure your safety and the safety of your crew, always remember these key points:

- Watch out for any power lines at or near an incident;
- If lines are affected by the incident, call the power company ahead of time, if possible;
- Communicate the precise location of all power lines and mark their locations on maps; and
- Avoid establishing escape routes, safety zones, command posts or staging areas under or near power lines.

*Gene Madden is an SOFI, an IOFI and an MEDL. E-mail him at [gms0f1@comcast.net](mailto:gms0f1@comcast.net).*

## NEWS

### Analysis Overhaul Redefining decision-support tools

*By Josh McDaniel*

The Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) is the primary decision-support tool for line officers in fire management. However, in an increasingly complex fire management environment, the WFSA process has not kept up with the times, and for many, has become little more than necessary paperwork.

### What's a WFDSS?

A new project organized by researchers from the Rocky Mountain Research Station is under way to quickly re-engineer—and eventually completely replace—the WFSA and Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP) processes. The goal of the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is to bring decision support up to speed with technological developments in fire behavior

## FireFit Footnotes

Fun activities improve physical & mental well-being

*By Marina Bates*

When you've been on the road for months and feel burned out by the fire season, there's a great way to re-energize yourself and your crew. It's an activity you performed naturally as a child. Any guesses? The answer: play.

Research has shown that a person's quality of work is directly linked to their sense of well-being, and one of the best ways to improve well-being is through play. Play helps us solve problems more creatively and allows us to adapt more easily to challenging situations. How does it accomplish these things? According to the National Institute for Play, it "generates optimism, seeks out novelty, makes perseverance fun, leads to mastery, gives the immune system a bounce, fosters empathy and promotes a sense of belonging and community."

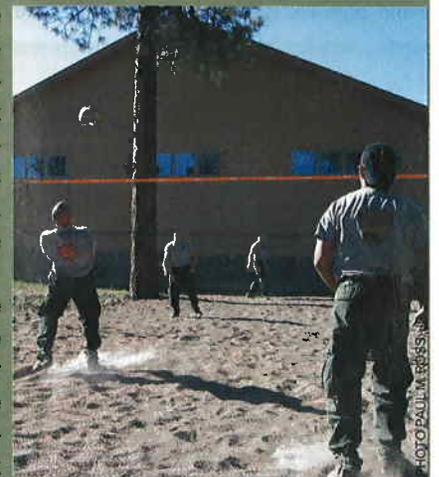
Crew workouts and teambuilding exercises are fun, playful ways to create crew cohesion and improve team dynamics. The FireFit Web site ([www.nifc.gov/FireFit/index.htm](http://www.nifc.gov/FireFit/index.htm)) promotes these concepts through fitness activities that can be easily integrated into a productive day at work, such as elbow tag or wood-cutting competitions. Your crew could also meet up after work for a game of volleyball, ultimate Frisbee or flag football.

Physical training combined with play can also enhance your ability to deal with the mental challenges of wildland firefighting. Mental fitness, another key

component in the FireFit training schedule, is crucial to firefighters because it facilitates consistency and improves determination, focus, confidence, resilience and self-control.

So the next time your crew has some down time, look for ways to integrate play into your schedule, because all work and no play makes for a dull fire season.

*Marina Bates is the assistant unit aviation manager for the Twin Falls District Fire and Aviation program in Twin Falls, Idaho. Bates, along with a team of other interagency fire experts, recently developed the national FireFit program endorsed by the Federal Fire and Aviation Safety Team.*



Crew workouts and teambuilding exercises, such as a game of volleyball after work, are fun, playful ways to create crew cohesion and improve team dynamics.