



TO :

FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 06/07/2002

SUBJECT : SAFETY BULLETIN : 5/31 Pack Test Fatality

Pack test fatality notification attached.

On Friday, the 31st of May, the BIA National Office of Fire and Aviation received notification of a pack test fatality at a Southern California BIA Office. The fatality occurred Friday, the 31st of May, at 9:30 AM on the Sycuan Indian Reservation (twenty miles east of San Diego).

The fatality involved a 59 year-old male employee of the Sycuan Tribal fire department, who died of a heart attack while taking the work capacity test for arduous level duty.

An investigation team was dispatched, and found the following: The pack test, administered by the FMO of the BIA Southern California Agency, was properly conducted in accordance with agency standards and protocol. The employee was participating in the pack test to retain firefighting qualifications at the arduous level. The test was being performed on an acceptable course, and well within the recommended heat and humidity thresholds published in Fitness and Work Capacity (NFES 1596). There were emergency responders on site, and both the quality and timeliness of the care received was exceptional. A Health Screening Questionnaire was completed prior to the test, and indicated no impediments to participation.

The team found there were no contraindications for the employee in terms of taking the work capacity test. He was a full time employee of the Tribal Fire department, who participated in a scheduled, daily physical conditioning program.

An autopsy, performed by the San Diego County Medical Examiner, indicated the deceased suffered from coronary arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. Symptoms of this condition may be detected through a thorough physical examination.