



**TO :**

**FROM :** National Wildfire Coordinating Group

**REPLY TO :** NWCG@nifc.gov

**DATE :** 09/12/2002

**SUBJECT :** SAFETY BULLETIN : Leona Incident Entrapment and Burnover

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Engines were attempting structure protection near the area of origin during Initial Attack.

A note from Charlie Gripp, Region 5 (FS) Fire Operations Safety Officer:

"Taking the time to discuss and verify safety procedures, as done here, before something happens means there is less opportunity for people to be caught unprepared. There were no injuries, only blistered varnish on a ladder and some melted plastic on the exterior control panel. I can't stress enough as we approach the wind event season in SoCAL that most fire behavior has been exceeding expected/usual characteristics for all aspects of the incident (location, slope, fuel, aspect, time, etc). We shouldn't be surprised or caught off-guard, we need to pay attention to all of our predictive sources. Most of our safety "incidents" of note in CA are still revolving around some aspect of structures within the wildlands. Remember houses can sprout up/grow back if burned, generally bigger and better. Be safe. Be aggressive. Be around for Xmas. Please distribute."

-ed-

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**24 Hour Report**  
**Leona Incident**  
**Shelter Use/Flame Impingement**  
**Angeles National Forest**

On September 3, 2002 at approximately 1415 hours, two Los Angeles County Fire Department Engine crews responded as part of the first alarm assignment to a wildland fire located at 37881 Bouquet Canyon Road in the Angeles National Forest.

Upon arrival they were directed by their on scene Battalion Chief to perform structure protection on Bouquet Canyon Road approximately ¼ mile above the point of origin. The first engine, a paid crew of 3 fire fighters arrived at the first structure and began to set up to protect the structure. The Engineer told the Captain that he was going to position the apparatus on the traffic lane, north bound Bouquet Canyon because he felt the vegetation was too close to the engine. The Captain agreed and the engine was positioned while the Captain evaluated the structure. He returned to the rig and they laid out their attack lines using 1 ¾ inch hose and high flow nozzles.

The second engine, a paid call station crew with 2 fire fighters arrived and was attached to the paid engine. They were instructed to pump their water to the first engine. At this point a Medical Assist Officer from County Fire arrived at the scene, he parked his vehicle because he did not want to drive through the fire front coming up the road and joined the engine crews. The Captain gave a complete safety briefing to both crews. This briefing included a plan of action; escape routes and alternates, safety zones, assembly point if they were separated, and a review of the 10 standard orders and 18 situations as well as LCES.

All fire fighters were wearing their personal protective equipment, including helmets, shrouds, pants, shirts, gloves, goggles and fire shelters. Both crews discussed and understood the plan of action.

The crews began work on the structure by removing a standing dead tree approximately 25 feet from the house. The Captain was watching the fire below them as they were working on the tree. The fire topped a small spur ridge approximately 150 feet from the structure and began spreading down hill towards the residence. The saw work stopped and the firefighters picked up the first charged line and began attacking the fire.

The Captain went to get the second line from the back of the house, as he reached the corner of the house, the fire was impinging on the structure. He looked around the corner to see his crew had evacuated to the assembly point. He met up with them and they decided to enter the engine because of radiant heat. They entered from the left road side because the curbside was too hot. The engineer entered the driver's seat and the remaining 5 entered the enclosed crew cab in the rear.

One of the occupants suggested that they use their shelters to deflect the radiant heat entering the engine cab. They used two shelters to wrap the rear windows of the engine. The crews remained in the cab of the engine for 3-5 minutes as the flame front passed. They attempted to exit the rig but retreated due to heat and remained in the rig for another 30-60 seconds before they exited and pulled their reel line to again attack the fire.

Both engines were out of water at this point, and the Captain checked all of the crews for health and injury and found everyone OK. They departed the site to get another load of water and returned to a new assignment. The damage to one engine consisted of blistered varnish on the ladder and some melted plastic on the control panel on the left side of the engine.

Critical Incident Debriefing has been made available to the crews by their agency.

Thomas K. Hutchison  
Incident Commander