



TO :

FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 07/06/2004

SUBJECT : SAFETY BULLETIN : 72-Hour Report - Bitterroot Hotshot MVA - 30 June, 2004



72hour_briefing.doc



File Code: 6730

Date: July 3, 2004

Route To:

Subject: Expanded (72-hour) Briefing
Location of Accident: U.S. Highway 60 West of Magdalena, NM
Date of Accident: June 30, 2004

To: Regional Forester

The Following Information is Preliminary and Subject to Change

Names of Injured: Bitterroot Hotshot crew members Mike King, Lisa Kurtzhals, Jared Bohrmon, Nicole Lustig, Bill McMaster, Skylar Brown and Richard Griffin

Name of Deceased: Timothy J. Shultz, private citizen

Preliminary Findings: On Wednesday, June 30th, a Bitterroot Hotshot crew carrier collided head-on with a private recreational vehicle on U.S. Highway 60 approximately 20 miles west of Magdalena, New Mexico. The driver of the RV died at the scene. Seven members of the hotshot crew were injured. The most seriously injured crew member was immediately transported by helicopter from the accident site to the University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque. All other occupants of the crew carrier were transported by ambulance to Socorro General Hospital, approximately 45 miles east of the accident site. One crew member with more serious potential injuries was flown from Socorro General Hospital to the same Albuquerque hospital. One crew member with an arm laceration was kept overnight in Socorro for observation and released the following day. The four remaining crew members with minor injuries were treated and released soon after from Socorro General Hospital.

Narrative: The Bitterroot Hotshots were assigned to the Davenport Incident (fire) on the Magdalena Ranger District, Cibola NF, at the time of this accident. This crew was ordered June 15th and arrived in Albuquerque on June 17th. They had worked several other small fires on the Cibola prior to being assigned to the Davenport fire. They spent the previous night (June 29th) at a motel in Socorro, NM; traveled to the Magdalena RD office for a morning briefing; and were enroute west-bound to the Davenport fire when the collision occurred at approximately 8:50 a.m. The hotshot crew was traveling in three vehicles – the superintendent's pickup and two crew carriers – with the pickup in the lead. The RV crossed the centerline of the highway, narrowly missed the first crew carrier and collided with the second crew carrier (#8248).

Immediately following the collision, the first two hotshot crew vehicles turned around, returned to the accident site, called for assistance, and began administering first aid to the injured crew members.



Critical Incident Stress Debriefing was offered to the hotshot crew and occurred on July 2nd. Two crew members remain hospitalized; family members are working with Cibola NF and Region 3 staff to make arrangements for their return home. The rest of the crew returned today to their duty station in Darby, Montana.

The accident is being investigated by New Mexico State Police and Forest Service (Cibola NF and Regional Office) law enforcement officers.

/s/ Michael R. Williams
MICHAEL R. WILLIAMS
Team Leader

Cc: James Rawlinson, R3 Safety Manager