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FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 08/09/2006

SUBJECT : SAFETY BULLETIN : Final Raft River Fire 72 Hour Briefing



Raft River 72 hour report.doc



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Twin Falls District Office
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In Reply Refer To: 9210 ID-204

Subject: 72-Hour Briefing

Fire # C2QN Raft River Fire, Personal Injury Incident

Twin Falls District, Burley Field Office BLM

Date/Time of Incident: August 4, 2006, Approximately 21:00 Hours

Number of Injuries: 1 (Family Has Been Notified)

Preliminary Factual Findings:

On August 4, 2006 at approximately 21:00 hours, an engine crew member was participating in wildfire suppression activities on the Raft River fire, approximately 30 miles east of Burley Idaho. He and three other firefighters assigned to Engine 2692 were performing mop-up operations on the northeast portion of the fire when he was struck by the engine as it was backing up. The firefighter fell to the ground, facing up, and his legs became caught under the engine. As the engine continued to back up, his legs were pushed toward his chest, injuring his back. His condition was stabilized on the scene, and he was transported via Life Flight helicopter to Magic Valley Regional Medical Center in Twin Falls, Idaho. At this time, he is in good condition and spirits, and continues to receive medical care.

Narrative:

BLM Engine 2692 arrived on scene at the Raft River fire at approximately 17:40 hours. After receiving a briefing, the engine went to work suppressing the fire. As fire activity diminished, the engine continued to work along a dozer/retardant line performing holding and mop-up actions. At approximately 20:30 hours, the engine reached a point on the northeast edge of the fire. After mopping up a hotspot at the location, the Engine Operator and one crewmember (firefighter #1) were seated in the engine, and two other crewmembers (firefighter #2 and firefighter #3, the injured firefighter) were outside the engine rolling up hose. At approximately 20:56 hours, the Engine Operator had a radio conversation with an Engine Module Leader who was just arriving at the northeast portion of the fire with a group of engines. The Engine Module Leader agreed that Engine 2692 should leave the location and fill the water tank. Firefighter #2 overheard this conversation on the handheld radio, and firefighter #2 and firefighter #3 proceeded to walk from the driver's side rear of the engine around the back of the engine, heading to the passenger door of the engine. As the two firefighters reached a point a few feet from and directly behind the engine, Firefighter #2 noticed a lizard on the ground, and both firefighters stopped and bent down to look at it. Statements indicate that the lizard ran up the leg of firefighter #2, causing her to react and momentarily distracting both firefighters. At this point, Firefighter #2 noticed that the engine was backing up toward them, and both firefighters

attempted to move out of the path of the engine. Firefighter #2 was struck by the engine and pushed into Firefighter #3, knocking him to the ground, facing up, with his feet toward the engine. As the engine proceeded to back up, Firefighter #3's legs became entangled in the undercarriage of the engine, causing his knees to be drawn up toward his chest, injuring his back. As Firefighter #3 was being run over, Firefighter #2 ran from the rear of the engine toward the driver's side door, and shouted for the Engine Operator to stop the engine. The Engine Operator reacted immediately and stopped the engine, and then moved the engine forward a few feet, freeing firefighter #3. The Engine Operator immediately notified the Engine Module Leader of a medical emergency. The Engine Module Leader notified the incoming Type 3 Incident Commander of the medical emergency, and the ICT3 contacted South Central Idaho Interagency Dispatch Center and requested a Life Flight helicopter respond to the scene for medical evacuation. Personnel on the scene stabilized Mr. Burk and prepared a landing spot for the incoming helicopter. The Life Flight helicopter arrived on scene at 21:50 hours, and transported Mr. Burk to Magic Valley Regional Medical Center.

/s/ Jeff Arnberger, Investigation Team Leader