



TO :

FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 08/25/2006

SUBJECT : SAFETY BULLETIN : 24 Hour Report - Burned up Engine



24 Hour Report 082306.doc

24 Hour Report

2500 Fire – Burns Interagency Fire Zone

At 1250 hours, 23 August 2006, a type 6 engine owned by the Fields-Andrews Fire Protection Association (FA #4) experienced mechanical failure. This breakdown appeared to be a ruptured fuel line.

Engine FA #4 was the third engine in a routine flanking action, following BLM engine and a contract engine. Fuels were light, flame length and fire movement was moderate.

Engine FA #4 operator stated he was in unburned fuel, with black (no visible flame or ignition source) along the left hand side of the vehicle.

He stated that he smelled plastic or rubber burning, stopped his engine and looked under the vehicle, to see “a dripping fire” centered directly underneath the engine. He immediately took initial action on the fire underneath the vehicle, but had to retreat on foot to the black as the undercarriage became involved. The entire vehicle then caught on fire, and this fire then spread back to the black on the left and unburned fuel to the right and ahead.

Eyewitness was the Incident Commander, who was following FA#4, approximately 20 yards behind. She stated that she saw a “fireball” originate underneath FA #4. She immediately pulled into the black and began to assist. The rapid involvement of the vehicle precluded further suppression action, and both the operator and IC retreated to their safe zone in the black.

Summary:

Result: Total destruction of Engine (\$15,500 estimated)

Make/Model: 1988 Ford 350 Diesel w/ Standard BLM-Type pump

Safety: No injuries due to strict adherence to SOP, prior to, during and post- event, by operator and IC

Probable Cause: Mechanical failure (ruptured fuel line)

Vehicle Ignition Source: Unknown, either mechanical or hidden ember

Michael K. Williams

SOF -2

Burns Interagency Fire Zone