



TO :

FROM : National Wildfire Coordinating Group

REPLY TO : NWCG@nifc.gov

DATE : 08/28/2006

SUBJECT : SAFETY BULLETIN : 72 Hour Mudd Fire - Fireshelter Deployment



72 hr Mudd Fire Shelter Deployment v2.doc



STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
NEVADA DIVISION OF FORESTRY

2525 South Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-5502
Phone (775) 684-2500 Fax (775) 687-1159

August 26, 2006

To: Bureau of Land Management - Director, National Office of Fire and Aviation
Bureau of Land Management - Chief, Division of Operations
Nevada Division of Forestry – State Forester Firewarden

Subject: Expanded (72 Hour) Report for the Mudd Fire - Fireshelter Deployment
Elko, Nevada

Narrative:

The Mudd Fire began on August 23 at approximately 1500 as a result of a hot diesel exhaust emission. The fire is located in Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) jurisdiction and managed by the Elko County Fire Protection District.

Initial attack resources were dispatched and responded to the fire in the Snow-Bowl area North of Elko, Nevada. These resources included a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Task Force consisting of four engines without a designated Taskforce leader. The engines included a local Carlin BLM Type 4 heavy engine E1947, a Carson City BLM Type 4 heavy engine E3943, a Bakersfield BLM Type 6 light engine E3144, and a Kingman BLM Type 6 light engine E263 with chase vehicle.

Making contact with the Division Supervisor the engine were staged at a safe location while a scouting party looked the west flank for a possible burn out operation. The scouting party consisted of the engine bosses for engines 263, 1947, 3144, and one crewmember.

The engines were ordered up the road and departed the staging area with engine 3144 taking the lead. A short time later the contact was made with the scouting party and it was reported that fire was threatening 5th Street road and the engines were turning around. Engine 1947, 263, and 3943 turned around and proceed to a second safe staging area. Engine 3144 however, had out distanced the others and did not receive the order to turn around. Repeated attempts to contact them failed with only one response from 3144 which was “stand by” no other contact was made by the engines. Communications were established between the Engine Boss of 3144 and the engine itself on their local tactical frequency.

Engine Operator (ENOP) for 3144, and a crewmember saw fire blocking the road in front and behind them. Searching for an alternate route they selected the only available path to the top of the ridge and a possible route to a mountain top communications site for a safety area. The two-track was steep, rough and primitive and caused a flat on the left rear outside dual tire also damaging the rim.

Upon reaching the top of the ridge, they momentarily lost view of the path and upon seeing it had to reverse the engine in an attempt to get back on track. During this maneuver the engine lost traction and eventually slipping off a rock ledge becoming high centered.

The two firefighters exited the engine and began burning around it for protection while deploying the hard line for water. Deciding their position was untenable the ENOP of 3144 notified his engine boss that they were abandoning the engine. Directing the crewmember to gear up and grab a tool, they began running for the communication towers approximately 1 mile distant. Both firefighters attempted to burnout the road as they ran. Progressing along the ridge for 1/3 of a mile they saw the fire coming and the ENOP instructed the crewmember to drop his gear, grab his shelter and prepare to deploy. An attempt to light an escape fire using a fusee had limited success. The ENOP deployed his shelter in a sparsely fueled saddle and instructed his crewmember to do likewise however not liking the site and the crewmember continued to run approximately 800 feet around a small knob. Seeing a black area, he ran through a flaming front and then deployed.

Communication was lost for a short time and then “emergency transmission, deployment” was heard.

Air Attack was enlisted to help search for the two burned over fire fighters and to coordinated aerial support. The burn over location was not readily known and took several minutes to find. Medical resources were mobilized and were ready to receive any injured personnel. Helicopters spotted both firefighters and transported them to a waiting ambulance. They were treated for 1st and 2nd degree burns at the Elko Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital. Both are expected to recover 100%. They have been transported home. Both will receive further treatment at a burn center to be determined.

Actions Taken to Date:

An Interagency Deployment Investigation Team was ordered and is in place in Elko, Nevada.

Coordination with Incident Management Teams, Crew representatives, and local agency personnel is occurring.

A visit to the accident site by the investigation team, interviews of involved personnel, and fact gathering is ongoing.

A Critical Incident Stress debriefing occurred August 26, 2006.

/s/ Robert Ashworth

/s/ Vince Mazzier

cc Michelle Ryerson, Bureau of Land Management
Mike Dondero, Nevada Division of Forestry