



Safety and Health Working Team

National Wildland-Fire Coordinating Group



SAFETY GRAM

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT SUMMARY: FATALITIES AND ENTRAPMENTS 99-01

The following data summarizes the 1998 fatalities, entrapments* and entrapment-related injuries associated with wildland and prescribed fire operations. There were 14 fatalities and 20 firefighters entrapped. The information was collected by the NWCG Safety & Health Working Team, with confirmation from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Date	Location	Type of Accident	Organization	Entrapped	Shelter Deployed	Shelter Not Deployed	Fatalities	Injuries
02/07/98	Coos Bay, OR	Heart Attack	Federal	n/a			1	
04/01/98	West Texas	Burnover	State	2	no			none
04/22/98	Grandy, MO	Heart Attack	Volunteer	n/a			1	
04/30/98	N. Pueblo Agency, NM	Burnover	Volunteer	2	no			none
05/05/98	Colorado City, TX	Vehicle, Engine	Volunteer	n/a			1	
06/16/98	Gainesville Area, FL	Burnover	State	1	no			
06/18/98	Race Track Fire, FL	Burnover	State	1	no			none
06/22/98	Bunnell Complex, FL	Burnover	State	1	no			minor burn
06/24/98	Gainesville Complex, FL	Burnover	State	2	no			minor burn
06/27/98	Gila Natl. Forest, NM	Aircraft	Federal/Contract	n/a			2	
07/06/98	Bibb County, AL	Heart Attack	State	n/a			1	
07/13/98	Gun Range Fire, ID	Burn	Federal	n/a				1 (burn)
07/20/98	Hyatt Fire, CA	Burnover	State	1	no			minor burn

Date	Location	Type of Accident	Organization	Entrapped	Shelter Deployed	Shelter Not Deployed	Fatalities	Injuries
07/22/98	Scipio, UT	Burnover	Volunteer	3	no			none
07/29/98	DNR Fire, WA	Burnover	State	2	yes			none
08/01/98	Richland Creek Fire, TX	Vehicle, Engine	Volunteer	n/a			1	
08/21/98	Cascade, ID	Vehicle, Truck	Contract/Federal	n/a			2	
08/31/98	Lancaster, CA	Vehicle, Truck	County inmate	n/a			1	
09/04/98	Williams, CA	Vehicle, Engine	Federal	n/a			1	
09/09/98	East Crossett, AR	Burnover, Dozer	State	1	no		1	2/3° burns
09/19/98	West Mountain #2, UT	Burnover	County	1	yes			none
10/05/98	Edna Fire, CA	Airtanker	State	n/a			1	
10/06/98	Taylor Fire, CA	Heart Attack	County	n/a			1	
10/14/98	Silver Brook Fire, TX	Burnover	Volunteer	2				2 (burns)
11/18/98	Joint Fire, VA	Burnover, Dozer	State	1				1 (burn)
TOTALS				20			14	

Sketchy information received indicates several other countries reported firefighter fatalities: On 5/6/98 a forest fire southeast of Mexico City, Mexico, killed 15 people and injured 11 more; On 7/21/98 one man died of a heart attack and two firefighters died when their helicopter hit a high tension wire and crashed; On 7/22/98 three Greek firemen and a forest volunteer were burned to death as they fought to stop a forest fire. On 9/21/98 at least two people were killed and two others were reported missing as forest fires raged across Russia's Pacific Coast Island of Sakhalin. These fatalities indicate there's a need for all wildfire service personnel to share information and learn from these tragedies.

These accidents reinforce the need for being continually alert to the "Situations That Shout Watch Out" and ensuring that all of the "10 Standard Fire Fighting Orders" are followed before initiating tactical operations. A simple concept to remember and share with crew members is "L.C.E.S." The acronym stands for Lookouts, Communication, Escape Routes, and Safety Zones. If a fire crew has these four areas fully established and understood, they can anticipate a safer assignment.

Timely reporting of entrapments or fatalities is necessary for the rapid dissemination of accurate information to the fire community. It also allows fire safety and equipment specialists to quickly respond to these events as appropriate. Completion of the Wildland Fire Entrapment/Fatality Initial Report (NFES 0869) accomplishes this need. This initial report is self explanatory and does not replace agency reporting or investigative responsibilities, policies or procedures.

The NWCC Safety & Health Working Team would appreciate Investigation Reports from agencies that experienced the above or other entrapments/accidents in 1998. Please forward to:

National Interagency Fire Center
NWCG/SHWT - Stan Palmer
3833 So. Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705
spalmer@nifc.blm.gov

*Entrapment: A situation where personnel are unexpectedly caught in a fire behavior-related, life-threatening position where planned escape routes or safety zones are absent, inadequate, or have been compromised. An entrapment may or may not include deployment of a fire shelter for its intended purpose. These situations may or may not result in injury. They include "near misses."