

Keeping It Safe

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An Overview of the Safety and Health Working Team

Wildland Firefighting

- Inherent risk involved
- Potential for injury

Safety and Health Working Team (SHWT)

- Strives to create safe work environment
- Formed as a working team under the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)
- Consists of the following:
 - Five Federal agency representatives
 - Three State representatives
 - Two Advisors (MTDC and NIFC)
 - NWCG Preparedness Branch Coordinator
 - An Executive Secretary

Working Partnerships

- Missoula Technology & Development Center (MTDC)
- Federal Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FFAST)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- The Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center (LLC)
- International Association of Wildland Fire
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)

NWCG Governance

- NWCG is undergoing dynamic organization change
 - Working Teams are being grouped into three branches
 - SHWT may be moved to the Risk Management Committee under the Preparedness Branch
 - FFAST and Medical Standards Group may be moved as subunits under SHWT
 - Budget uncertainty

Projects in Progress

- SAFENET
- Safety Alerts
- Safety Gram

- Historical Wildland Firefighter Fatality Reports
- Interagency Investigation Reports and Data
- Monitoring and Mitigating Exposure to Carbon Monoxide and Particulates at Incident Base Camps
- Sub-groups/Sub-committees
- FireFit

FireFit (FFAST Initiative)

- Trends attributed in-part to improper fitness training or lack of year-round fitness regime:
 - Injuries due to physical fitness training
 - Overuse injuries that occur early in the fire season
- Ultimate FireFit Goal:
 - FireFit was created to provide the interagency wildland fire community with a comprehensive, easy-to-follow, fitness program intended to improve firefighter safety and health and reduce injuries.
- FireFit (FFAST Initiative)
- FireFit provides a basic format for a well-balanced fitness program that can be augmented as local units see fit.
- Program success will rely on management support at every level as well as individual's motivation and participation.

SAFENET

- SAFENET is an anonymous reporting system where firefighters can voice safety and health concerns.
- Documents corrective actions taken at the field level or provides suggested corrective actions for higher level of action.

SAFENET is not:

- A forum for personal attacks/defamation.
- A mechanism to elevate “pet peeves.”
- Only used for incidents that need higher level corrective action.
- Interagency criteria for posting SAFENETs:
 - Clearly stated safety or health issue encountered in wildland fire or all hazard operations.

SAFENET Management

- Three (3) Ways to Submit:
 1. Electronic: <http://safenet.nifc.gov/>
 2. Hard copy form: PMS 405-2, NFES 2633

- 3. Dedicated telephone line: 1-888-670-3938
- Agency Review:
 - Every SAFENET is reviewed by respective jurisdictional agency FFAST representative or by the National Association of State Foresters representative.

Near Miss Reporting

- National SAFENET submissions have declined since 2005:
 - 180 submissions (2005)
 - 155 submissions (2006)
 - 118 submissions (2007)
 - 143 submissions (2008)
 - Every report matters. Do your part and REPORT!!!

Management Level Comparison

- Comparison of the number of SAFENETs submitted in relation to the type of incident management organization.

2008 SAFENET Contributing Factors

- Communications 34%
- Human Factors 27%
- Equipment 13%
- Environmental 11 %
- Other 10%
- Fire Behavior 5%

Safety Alerts

- Twenty two (22) Safety Alerts were disseminated in 2008

Safety Gram

- The Safety Gram summarizes data involving wildland and prescribed fires that resulted in entrapments, major accidents (including those with and without injuries), and fatalities for all wildland fire management organizations throughout the United States (including contractors).

2008 Safety Gram (25 Fatalities)

Driving (2)

- Two fatalities occurred while firefighters were responding to a wildland fire.

Entrapments/Burnovers (1)

- One fatality occurred while firefighter was doing fire reconnaissance.

Medical Emergencies (3)

- Three fatalities have occurred; one responding to a fire.
- Two heart attacks occurred while fighting fire.

Hazard Tree/Snag (1)

- One fatality occurred; firefighter was struck by falling tree top.

Aviation (14)

- One fatality occurred when an S.E.A.T. crashed.
- One fatality occurred in medical helicopter mid-air collision.
- Nine fatalities occurred when an S-61N crashed and burned.
- Three fatalities occurred when a P2V retardant plane crashed and burned on take-off.

Other (4)

- Two individuals (VFD and Deputy Sheriff) hit by semi while directing traffic near fire.
- One fatality occurred when firefighter fell from cliff while scouting fire.
- One fatality occurred when a grader operator jumped from equipment and sustained head injuries.

Historic Wildland Firefighter Fatality Reports

- Database that tracks fatalities, entrapments and serious accidents.
- Used in trend analysis and accident prevention.
- Data collected from 1910 to 2008.
 - Since 1987 this information has been obtained from Safety Grams.

Interagency Reviews and Investigations Database

- 1998 TriData Phase III Study
- Managed by the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center (LLC)
- Provides firefighters with historical information regarding wildland firefighting accidents and reviews.
- Information can be utilized in creating:
 - Sand table exercises
 - Staff rides
 - Other lessons learned opportunities

Missoula Technology & Development Center (MTDC)

- Partners with SHWT providing NWCG with pertinent research and studies with regard to:
 - Firefighter energy

- Nutrition
- Health and safety
- Produces technology and development publications
 - 17 Year (1990-2006) Fatality and Entrapment Analysis
- Wildland Firefighter Fatalities in the United States 1990 – 2006 (Produced by MTDC)
 - 310 Wildland firefighters died from 1990 – 2006
 - 26% increase from initial period (1990-1998)
 - Leading causes of fatalities are: aircraft accidents; vehicle accidents and heart attacks.

Incident Emergency Medical Task Group (IEMTG)

- Emergency Medical Services Task Group (EMSG) was sunsetted January 2008
- IEMTG was created to address the coordination and delivery of emergency medical services and occupational health care on incidents.
 - New charter was approved identifying new members and new responsibilities..
 - The IEMTG website was created and resides under the NWCG's SHWT's website.

Hazard Tree and Tree Felling Task Group (HTTG)

- HTTG has met and established a Program of Work and Action Items with proposed timelines.
- Presented Business Plan to the SHWT on February 21, 2008, detailing planned work for the next two years.
- Provides oversight concerning strategic analysis and direction of various hazard tree and tree felling program subjects.

Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher (WFSTAR)

- Resources for refresher training instructors
 - Guidance
 - Agency policies
 - Emerging issues
 - Training materials

Accident and Injury Data Collection Addition to ISUITE

- Initiated 2007 Fire Season
- Higher than expected use
- Uses ISUITE database to collect information from MEDLs and SOFRs
- Modifications have been made for '08 based on user feedback
- Information received will allow better accident and injury trend analysis by SHWT
- Need to increase use of program -excellent tool for IMTs and provides national trend data.

