



**TO :**  
**FROM :** National Wildfire Coordinating Group  
**REPLY TO :** NWCG@nifc.gov  
**DATE :** 02/03/2009  
**SUBJECT :** SAFETY ADVISORY : 2008 SAFETY GRAM



2008 Safety Gram Cover Memo.pdf



2008 Final Safety Gram\_12-31-08.pdf

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Chair, National Wildfire Coordinating Group

From: Chair, Safety and Health Working Team

Date: February 2, 2009

Subject: 2008 SAFETY GRAM

The 2008 SAFETY GRAM is attached. It summarizes reported wildland fire fatalities, burnovers/entrapments and other serious accidents for all wildland fire management organizations throughout the United States in 2008.

Twenty-five fatalities occurred in 2008 when employees were performing wildland fire management activities. This is a substantial increase from the nine fatalities that were reported in 2007. The 2008 fatalities are listed by category below:

**Driving – 2:** Two fatalities occurred while firefighters were responding to a wildland fire.

**Entrapment/Burnover – 1:** One fatality occurred while firefighter was doing fire reconnaissance.

**Medical Emergencies – 3:** Three fatalities have occurred; one responding to fire, two heart attacks while fighting fire.

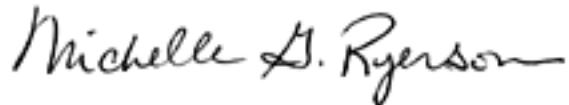
**Hazard Tree/Snag – 1:** One fatality occurred; firefighter was struck by falling tree top.

**Aviation – 14:** One fatality occurred when a S.E.A.T. crashed. One fatality occurred in a 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.

Accident prevention is enhanced when firefighters and fire managers are made aware of serious accidents that have occurred over the year and can identify where our future safety emphasis areas should be. Please provide wide distribution of the 2008 SAFETY GRAM to your respective agencies and organizations. The SHWT will also distribute the Safety Gram via NWCG Safety Alert System and post to the SHWT website.

Please feel free to contact me at (208) 387-5175 or [michelle\\_ryerson@nifc.blm.gov](mailto:michelle_ryerson@nifc.blm.gov) if you have any questions or need additional information.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle A. Ryerson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Attachment

cc: Preparedness Branch Coordinator  
Master SHWT File



# SAFETY GRAM

DRAFT – ALL DATA IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## Fatalities, Entrapments and Serious Accident Summary for 2008

The following data indicate the fatalities, entrapments, burnovers and other life-threatening accidents associated with wildfire, wildland fire use and prescribed fire operations in calendar year 2008. The information was collected by the NWCG Safety & Health Working Team, with confirmation of the fatalities from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Date	Fire Jurisdiction Location	Activity	Agency/Entity of Personnel Involved	Type of Accident	Number of People	# Shelters Deployed	Fatalities	Injuries
1/08	Turkey Roost Fire State of Florida Lakeland, FL	Firefighting Tractor plow operations	State/FL	2 Entrapments Burning out around stuck tractor; 2 <sup>nd</sup> tractor burned over	2	0		Radiant heat burns to hand, elbow and eyelid
2/25	Archer Fire Archer City, TX	Driving Firefighting	State/TX	Vehicle accident Two brush trucks collided at incident	4			4 firefighters transported for treatment
3/5	Citrus County US 98 Florida	Driving Returning from training	DOF/FL	Vehicle hit by garbage truck	3			3 firefighters transported to local hospitals, 2 serious
3/19	River Fire NM State Forestry Radium Springs, NM	Driving Firefighting	VFD/Dona Ana County/NM	Vehicle accident Brush truck tipped on its side	2			No injuries
3/25	Quinlan Fire Oklahoma State Forestry Dewey County, OK	Firefighting Frontal attack with brush truck	VFD/OK	Entrapment Firefighters injured when running from damaged truck	4	0		2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree burns to hands/legs of one FF; 3 FF treated for heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation
4/15	Ordway Fire Colorado State Forestry Ordway, CO	Driving Responding to a wildland fire	VFD/Olney Springs Fire Dept/CO	Engine crashed when attempting to cross a collapsed bridge	2		2	

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4/15	TA 25 Fire Fort Carson Military Reservation Fort Carson, CO	Aviation, S.E.A.T. aircraft	Contractor/ Department of Defense	S.E.A.T. crashed	1		1	
4/17	N/A (not on a fire) Nevada Division of Forestry Winnemucca, NV	Work Capacity Test Pack Test	State/NV	Medical Heart attack	1			Crew Captain suffered heart attack during pack test
4/19	Gold Hill Fire Virginia Department of Forestry Buckingham County, VA	Firefighting Dozer operation	State/VA	Entrapment Winds shifted and fire engulfed dozer	1	0		FF had 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree burns to hands, 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree burns to neck, thighs, and chest
4/29	Hinckley Fire Pine City Fire Department Pine City, MN	Driving FF collapsed in fire apparatus, going to fire	Pine City/MN	Medical Unknown, died at hospital	1		1	
5/18	Dinosaur Fire Cal Fire, Northern Region Hollister, CA	Firefighting Placing hose lay on fire	State/CA	Medical Compartment syndrome	1			Transported to hospital, many surgeries, expected full recovery
5/29	Logan 32A Prescribed Fire Flathead NF Kalispell, MT	Firefighting Retreating from the area	Fed/FS	Lightning Struck near by	2			Transported to 2 hospitals, checked over and released
6/4	Jungle Fire BIA Land/BLM Operational Command Yuma, AZ	Firefighting Felling a tree	Fed/BLM	Burns Standing in hot ash when felling tree	1			Received 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree burns to both feet, treated at burn unit
6/10	Jackson Fire Sacramento, CA	Firefighting Structure protection with engine	Sacramento Metro	Entrapment Flames shifted direction	3	0		2 FF escaped injuries; Captain received 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree burns to hands, 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree burns to arms
6/11	Nicholaus Fire Lincoln, CA	Firefighting Direct attack	State/CAL FIRE and VFD/Placer County	Entrapment Winds shifted and flames over-come them	3	0		2 FF received severe burns to face and arms; 1 FF minor facial burns

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6/11	Indians Fire Los Padres NF CA	Firefighting Working a spot fire when they were cut off	Fed/FS	Entrapment Taking action on spot fire when cyclonic wind event occurred	4	3		2 FF minor burns to ears; 1 FF partial thickness burns to hands
6/14	Camp Lejeune Wildfire Highway 17 Verona, NC	Directing traffic Struck by semi in dense smoke	VFD/Verona/ Onslow County Deputy Sheriff	Struck by semi Near a fire in dense smoke	2		2	
6/22	6-40 Fire CAL FIRE Shasta Trinity Unit Hayfork, CA	Firefighting Water delivery to hose lay	VFD/Douglas City	Rollover	2			Minor abrasions, treated at hospital and released
6/23	Valley Fire Wilson Valley Road & Highway 371 Aguanga, CA	Driving Returning to duty station from incident	CAL FIRE/CA	Rollover of Crew Transport vehicle	16			Fire captain and 3 FF treated at hospitals; 12 FF medical evaluations
6/28	South One Fire Great Dismal Swamp NWR Suffolk, VA	Firefighting Suppression of spot fire	Contractor	Snag hit FF on head and shoulder	2			Eye lacerations and two broken shoulder bones
6/28	Green Rock Fire North Carolina FS Lenoir, NC	Firefighting Improve containment lines	State/NC	Lightning Strike hit near-by snag	8			6 FF treated and released; 1 FF suffering memory loss; 1 FF sustained leg muscle damage
6/29	Indians Fire Los Padres NF CA	Firefighting Firing dozer line	Fed/BLM	Medical Compartment syndrome	1			Transported to hospital, FF's right calf surgically removed, full recovery is expected
6/29	Walla Valley Fire Grand Canyon NP Grand Canyon, AZ	Aviation Private air ambulance transport	Fed/BIA	Mid-air collision 2 private air ambulance helicopters	1		1	1 private citizen; 5 air ambulance employee fatalities

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7/1	Iron Complex Shasta-Trinity NF CA	Firefighting Constructing contingency line	Contractor	Dozer (D83E) rollover	1			Broken shoulder and ribs
7/1	Canyon Complex Plumas NF Paradise, CA	Firefighting Line construction	Contractor	Dozer (D-7) rollover	1			Broken shoulder and ribs, ear severed and reattached
7/3	Oso Fire CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit Philo, CA	Firefighting Laying water hoses	VFD/Anderson Valley, CA	Medical Heart attack	1		1	
7/4	Iron Complex Shasta Trinity NF CA	Firefighting Using a "Stubby 2" ignition device	Fed/FS	Burns Stubby 2 ignited pre-maturely in FF hand	1			2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree burns to fingers, transported to burn center
7/4	Canyon Complex Plumas NF Paradise, CA	Firefighting Mop-up operations	State/CA	Burns Firefighter fell in stump hole	1			Burns to legs and back, transported to burn center
7/8	Dome Fire Yuma Field Office – BLM Welton, AZ	Firefighting Engine operations	City/Sun City West, AZ	Burns Right leg burned	1			2 <sup>nd</sup> degree burns to leg between ankle and knee, transported to burn unit
7/25	Eagle Fire Shasta-Trinity NF Redding, CA	Firefighting Securing fire line in mop-up operations	Fed/NPS	Hazard tree Firefighter was struck by a falling tree top	1		1	
7/25	Camels Hump Fire Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, WA	Firefighting Felling snags during helispot construction	Fed/FS	Hazard tree Firefighter struck by tree while swamping	1			Fractured vertebra
7/26	Panther Fire Klamath NF Yreka, CA	Firefighting Fire reconnaissance for Type I organization	VFD/East Pierce Fire & Rescue, WA	Entrapment Firefighters were overrun by fire front	2	1	1	No injuries sustained by second firefighter
7/29	Harley Creek Fire Helena NF Neihart, MT	Firefighting Line construction	Fed/BIA	Firefighter was hit by hazard tree	1			Injuries

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7/31	BTU Lighting Complex CAL FIRE Butte District Unit, CA	Firefighting Mop up operation	State/CA	FF fell into hot ash pile	1			2 <sup>nd</sup> degree burns to R leg and minor burns to L leg, transported to burn center
8/2	Shasta Lightning Series CAL FIRE Shasta Trinity Unit French Gulch, CA	Driving Fire suppression repair activities	Contractor	Water tender rollover	1			Minor injuries
8/2	SHU Lightning Complex CAL FIRE Shasta Trinity Unit Platina, CA	Driving Fire suppression repair activities	Contractor	Water tender rollover	2			Minor injuries
8/5	Buckhorn Fire Shasta-Trinity NF Redding, CA	Aviation Firefighter transport from helispot	12 contractors and 1 Fed/FS employee	S-61N helicopter crashed on lift-off and burned	13		9	4 personnel received critical injuries and severe burns
8/14	Lags Junction area on Highway 93 McGill, NV	Driving Returning from Rich Incident, Plumas NF	Fed/FS	Single vehicle rollover	1			Minor head, upper torso injuries, treated and released
8/17	Horse Mountain Fire Wild River Ranger District Siskiyou NF Medford, OR	Firefighting Initial Attack	Fed/BLM	Hazard Tree Snag fell into live tree, branch hit FF from behind	1			FF had back pain and tingling sensation in his extremities
8/19	Snow Creek Complex Deschutes NF OR	Firefighting Holding action of hand line	Contractor	Struck by a falling snag	1			FF received right arm and upper back injuries
8/21	Bradley Fall Fire NC Division of Forest Resources Saluda, NC	Firefighting Scouting fire line	State/NCDFR	Firefighter fell at least 50 feet off of a Big Bradley Falls	1		1	
8/25	Siskiyou Complex Fire Six Rivers NF, CA	Firefighting Road improvement	Contractor and Fed/FS Dozer Boss	Brake failure and Operator & Dozer Boss jumped from run-away grader	2		1	Operator received head injuries and later died; DB received ankle injury
8/30	East Bench Fire Golden Valley County Ryegate, MT	Driving Initial Attack	County/VFD	Engine rear-ended another engine	3			2 FF had serious injuries; 1FF had minor injuries, all transport to hospital



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9/1	Smitty Fire, CAL FIRE Stead Airport Stead, NV	Aviation P2V retardant plane	Contractor	Aircraft engine fire Crashed on take off	3		3	
9/6	Siskiyou/Blue Fire Complex Six Rivers NF	Repairing Fire suppression damage repair	Contractor	Dozer went over embankment and rolled	1			Operator received minor head injuries
10/1	Sacramento Fire Havasau Wildlife Refuge AZ	Firefighting Fire Suppression	State/AZ Dept. of Corrections	Medical Heart attack	1		1	
10/3	Chalk Fire Los Padres NF King City, CA	Driving Travelling from ICP to fireline	Fed/FS	Engine left road, over corrected, hit a dirt embankment and rolled	5			Treated at local hospital and released with minor injuries
10/23	Somerset County PA	Driving Responding to fire	County/VFD Hooversville	Water tender rollover	2			Both FF injured with injuries
11/15	Freeway Fire CAL FIRE Corona, CA	Firefighting Initial Attack	City/Corona Fire Dept	Engine was burn over during IA	4			4 FF suffered minor injuries/burns, treated & released from local hospitals
11/25	Inchelium Pile Burn Spokane Agency WA	Prescribed Fire Ignited slash pile	Fed/BIA	Burns FF threw opened drip torch and clothing ignited	1			FF received 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree burns to his back and right leg
					<b>121</b>		<b>25</b>	

For calendar year 2008, through 12/31/08, there have been twenty five (25) fatalities.

**Driving – 2:** Two fatalities occurred while firefighters were responding to a wildland fire.

**Entrapment/Burnover – 1:** One fatality occurred while firefighter was doing fire reconnaissance.

**Medical Emergencies – 3:** Three fatalities have occurred; one responding to fire, two heart attacks while fighting fire.

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**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.

The NWCG Safety & Health Working Team would like to request any Investigation Reports from agencies that experienced the above or other fatalities, entrapments, and major accidents in 2008 or previous years. Safety Gram reporting criteria can be found at [http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/shwt/safetygram\\_criteria.pdf](http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/shwt/safetygram_criteria.pdf).

Please mail reports to the following address or email them to: [stan\\_palmer@nifc.blm.gov](mailto:stan_palmer@nifc.blm.gov).

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