

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT SUMMARY: 11 FATALITIES AND 74 ENTRAPMENTS

For the fourth consecutive year, monumental forest and wildland fire suppression problems continued to plague the nation. Last year saw some 73,000 fires burn approximately 5,000,000 acres. The major problems reached a climax with the enormous Yellowstone blazes.

A review of 1988 major accidents and "near misses," based upon data gathered by the NWCG Fireline Safety Committee, reveals the following:

- There were 11 fatalities associated with forest and wildland fire suppression operations.
- There were 74 entrapments.

Six fatalities resulted from aircraft accidents and one firefighter was killed in a vehicle accident. Three firefighters were killed by falling trees. One person was killed during a prescribed fire operation.

1988 Fatalities

Date	Location	Cause	Organization
May 24	Oregon	Fire	(Contractor)
July 14	Oregon	Aircraft	USFS
Aug. 10	Montana	Vehicle	BIA
12	California	Aircraft	USFS
19	Wyoming	Aircraft	BJJ
9	Washington	Aircraft (2)	(Canadian)
9	Montana	Tree Falling	(Contractor)
11	Wyoming	Aircraft	(Contractor)
Oct. 11	Wyoming	Tree Falling	BJJ
Dec. 14	North Carolina	Tree Falling	VFD

In addition, there were a number of municipal and rural fire department personnel nationwide, who lost their lives while responding to grass or brush fires.

The fatality record for the 1988 season represents a reduction from the 1987 season, when 12 individuals lost their lives during fire suppression efforts.

The 74 reported entrapments compare favorably with the 1987 season, when there were nearly twice as many (144) shelter deployments.

1988 Entrapments

DATE	FIRE	LOCATION	PERSONS	SHELTERS DEPLOYED	INJURY
4/7	Sanderson	Florida	2(St)	no	1-burns
5/24	Blue Hole #6	Oregon	1	no	fatal
6/20	Wampsee Bay	Florida	2(St)	yes	none
6/23	Brewer	Center N.F.	18(FS)	yes	4-burns
7/1	Stockyard	Hivawatha N.F.	1(St)	no	1-burns
7/5	Flatfish	Bridger-T N.F.	2(Vol)	no	1-burns
7/15	Clover Mist	Yellowstone N.F.	3(NFS)	yes	none
7/20	Camp	Los Padres N.F.	2(FS)	no	2-burns
8/26	Eagle Bar	Payette N.F.	23(FS)	yes	1-burns
9/9	Canyon Cr.	Levia & Elk N.F.	20(FS)	yes	9-burns

Sixty-six shelters were deployed in the 74 entrapment situations. Twenty of the firefighters sustained some degree of burn injury.

The chain of fire related events began on April 7 in Florida and concluded on December 14 in North Carolina.

Predictably, August and September were the peak months for forest and wildland fire suppression accidents and incidents.

These figures are based upon all incidents that have been reported. The NWCG Fireline Safety Committee would appreciate notification from agencies that experienced other deployment or major accidents in 1988, so that the information can be added to trend data and shared with other agencies. Individuals involved in deployment incidents/accidents would not be identified.

If other major fireline incidents did occur in 1988, please forward to:

Chairman, NWCG Fireline Safety Committee
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| <p>F Fight fire aggressively but provide for safety first.</p> <p>I Isolate all action based on current and expected fire behavior.</p> <p>P Recognize current weather conditions and obtain forecasts.</p> <p>S Sure instructions are given and understood.</p> | <p>O Obtain current information on fire status.</p> <p>R Remain in communication with crew members, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.</p> <p>D Determine safety zones and escape routes.</p> <p>E Establish hookouts in potentially hazardous situations.</p> <p>R Retain control at all times.</p> <p>S Stay alert, keep calm, think clearly, act decisively.</p> |
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