



SAFETY GRAM

Fatalities, Entrapments and Serious Accident Summary for 2003

The following data indicate the fatalities and major accidents in calendar year 2003. It includes serious vehicle accidents, fatalities burn-over/entrapments and injuries associated with wildland and prescribed fire operations. This summary will show two fatalities which occurred on an All Risk Incident, the Columbia Space Shuttle Recovery incident. This information was collected by the NWCG Safety & Health Working Team, with confirmation of the fatalities from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Date	Jurisdiction, Location	Activity and Type of Accident	Agency/Entity of Personnel Involved	Number of People	Shelter Available	# Shelters Deployed	Fatalities	Injuries
2/1	Santa Barbara, California	Training, Heart Attack	County	1			1	
3/15	Salisbury, Missouri	Firefighting, Sickness	Salisbury Fire Dept. Volunteer	1			1	
3/27	Columbia Recovery Incident Angelina NF, Texas	Aviation, Helicopter 407	State of Texas & Contractor	5			2	3 injuries
4/3	Gallipolis, Ohio	Driving, Pumper Rollover	Gallipolis Fire Dept. Volunteer	1			1	
4/13	Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin	Firefighting, Collapsed	Elkhart Lake Fire Dept. Volunteer	1			1	
4/28	Chapel Hill, N. Carolina	WCT, Heart Attack	N. Carolina State	1			1	
5/11	A-Bar Incident, Coronado NF	Firefighting, Entrapment	Federal / FS	3	Yes	3		None
5/15	Fort Apache I.R. White River, Arizona	Sawtooth RX, Entrapment	Federal/ BIA	1	Yes	1	1	
5/22	New Castle, Wyoming	Driving, Tender Rollover	New Castle Fire Dept. / Cadet	2			1	1 injury

Date	Jurisdiction, Location	Activity and Type of Accident	Agency/Entity of Personnel Involved	Number of People	Shelter Available	# Shelters Deployed	Fatalities	Injuries
6/26	Jenny Incident, Gila NF	Driving, Tender Rollover	Animus Fire Dept. Volunteer	1			1	
6/29	Mapleton, Oregon	Driving, Van Rollover	Contract	10				Minor neck and back injuries
7/22	Cramer Incident, Salmon-Challis NF	Fire Fighting. Entrapment	Federal/ FS	2	Yes	0	2	
7/25	McGinnis Flats Incident, Colville I.R.	Aviation, Helicopter Kaman K-1200	Contractor	1				
7/26	White Mtn. Apache I.R., Aspen Ridge Area, AZ	Aviation, Helicopter Bell 206L-3	Federal/ BIA & Contractor	4			2	Two injuries
7/26	America Flat Incident, Silver City, Nevada	Firefighting, Engine Entrapment	Lyon County Fire Dept.	0		1		
8/6	Inkom, Idaho	Driving, Truck Rollover	Inkom Fire Dept. Volunteer	1			1	
8/15	Boles/Rattlesnake Complex Dept of Natural Resources, Montana	Sleeping, Heart Attack	Massachusetts Wildfire Crew, State	1			1	
8/19	Slims Incident, Nez Perce NF, Idaho	Firefighting, Heart Attack	State of Idaho Inmate	1			1	
8/24	Vale, Oregon	Driving, Van Accident	Contractor	8			8	
8/28	Lightning Complex, Wallowa-Whitman NF, Oregon	Driving, Crew Cab Pickup Accident	Contractor	5				Neck & Back injuries
8/28	Devil Fire, Santa Clara Unit CDF, California	Firefighting, Entrapment	California Inmates, 2 Dozer Operators	55	Yes	55		Two minor burns
10/3	Highland, California	Aviation, Repositioning, P2V	Contractors	2				

Jurisdiction, Location		Activity and Type of Accident	Agency/Entity of Personnel Involved	Number of People	Shelter Available	# Shelters Deployed	Fatalities	
10/21	Bremer County, Oran, Iowa	Firefighting, Heart Attack	Oran Fire Dept. Volunteer	1			1	
10/29	Cedar Incident, Cleveland NF, California	Fire Fighting, Engine Entrapment	Novato Fire District, Engineer	4	Yes	0	1	1 Critical, 2 minor injuries
TOTAL							30	

During 2003, seven fatalities were reported involving heart attacks, sickness and a collapsed firefighter. These fatalities show that physical fitness and medical condition of all firefighters are still critical factors to consider in fighting fires. During the period from 1998-2003, firefighters were involved in 30 serious vehicle accidents that resulted in 37 fatalities as well as personal injuries, 12 fatalities in 2003 alone. Mechanical failure has rarely been a contributing factor; rather human factors have strongly contributed. Human factors include fatigue, level of proficiency, experience in the vehicle type and unsafe operator practices, to mention a few. All managers and supervisors must take every measure to ensure their employees are properly trained and experienced in the vehicles they are assigned to drive. Every driver should work to eliminate distractions and have adequate rest prior to driving.

Timely reporting of entrapments or fatalities is necessary. 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 NWCG Safety & Health Working Team requests any Investigation Reports from agencies that experienced the above or other entrapments/ major accidents in 2003. Please mail reports to the following address or email them to: stan_palmer@nifc.blm.gov.

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