



File 6730
Code:
Route
To:

Date: July 13, 2007

Subject: 72-hr briefing of FR 420 - Water Tender Accident

To: Forest Supervisor

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Preliminary factual findings: At approximately 1615 hours on July 09, 2007, the operator of water tender 5 (WCF Unit 7501) was returning to the Schultz fire after filling with 3000 gallons of water in Cheshire. At approximately 1630, while traveling north on FR 420, the water tender operator moved the water tender to the right side of the road to allow several vehicles to pass. After the vehicles passed, the water tender approached a curve in the road and remained on the right side of the road. As the right wheels traveled on the shoulder of the road, the shoulder gave way. As the right front tire began to slide down a ten foot embankment, the operator was able to get the tire back on the road. The rear tires, which support the load, caused the shoulder to give way even more. The momentum of the water in the tank shifting caused the water tender to slide down the embankment and roll to the right. The water tender came to rest on its cab. The operator and passenger were wearing seatbelts. They were also wearing hardhats and were not injured.

Narrative: Water Tender (WT) 5 WCF 7501, 1992 Ford L9000, license number A258642, with 3000 gallon.

WT-5 was assigned to the Schultz Fire. The operator was returning to the fire for the second time after filling with water from a city hydrant in the Cheshire sub-division and was traveling on FR 420.

FR 420 is a level 3 dirt road which is maintained and had been bladed 3 weeks prior to the accident. At the location of the accident, FR 420 is 15 feet wide of hard surface with a 4 % out slope. As you are facing the direction of travel, there is a cut-bank on the left side of the road and an embankment dropping approximately ten feet on the right.

WT-5 traveled for 51 feet on the shoulder of the far right side of the road before the shoulder gave way. The right front tire began to slide down an embankment but the operator was able to get the tire back on the road. The rear tires, which support the weight of the load, caused the shoulder to give way even more.



The combination of the shoulder giving way and the momentum of the water shifting in the tank caused WT-5 to start sliding down the embankment and roll to the right. WT-5 rolled over and came to rest on its cab at the bottom of a ten-foot embankment in Schultz Creek.

Records indicated appropriate vehicle inspections had occurred prior to the incident.

/s/ Alvin Brown acting for
GENE WALDRIP
District Ranger

cc: Bequi Livingston
Alex Perez
Linda M Murphy
John Booth
Alvin R Brown