

# Southwest Fire Operations Health and Safety Newsletter

## Remembering the Dude Fire: “Lessons Learned” 20 Years Later

Early spring 1990 was turning out to be unusually hot and dry. Temperatures had been hovering above 100 degrees for weeks with no measurable precipitation and humidity in the single-digit percentiles. The Tonto National Forest, often a refuge for Phoenix residents, was bone dry.

Them came that fateful day, June 25, when a lightning storm moved across the Mogollon Rim just north of Payson, sparking a new fire. Wayne Stutzman, a resident northeast of Payson, heard several claps of thunder between 11:55a.m. and 12:25p.m. and by 12:30p.m., ashes were falling on his deck.

This new fire, the Dude Fire, soon had firefighters on it and by June 26, 1990, a Type I Incident Management Team was assigned

management responsibilities for the fire. By 2:30p.m., fire had overrun Walk Moore Canyon trapping firefighters by flames and intense heat. As a result, eleven firefighters deployed emergency fire shelters, including members of the Perryville crew (Arizona Department of Corrections).

At approximately 2:24p.m., as fire overran Walk Moore Canyon, the Perryville crew, along with other fire personnel, were split apart by a wall of flame pinching them off and separating them. By 2:30p.m., six Perryville crew members, including a corrections officer, had perished. Crosses now mark the exact locations of the fallen firefighters.

What can the Dude Fire and other wildland fires teach us? How can we best capitalize on these learning opportunities from the past and carry forth these valuable lessons learned into the future?

Adopting proven leadership techniques from the military, the Forest Service, along with other federal wildland fire agencies, have been using these tools such as Staff

Rides, Tactical Decision Games, and Sand Table Exercises to pass along these valuable lessons.

<http://www.fireleadership.gov>



The Northern Gila County Historical Society will commemorate the 20th anniversary on June 26, 2010 to show appreciation for all firefighters.

The event will be held from 11:00-1:00pm at the Rim Country Museum, 700 Green Valley Parkway in Payson, AZ.

The event will start with a welcome and prayer to honor the fallen firefighters followed by a BBQ lunch catered by Gerardo's.

The museum will host a Dude Fire exhibit which will open on June 2, 2010 with firefighters and their families receiving free admission.

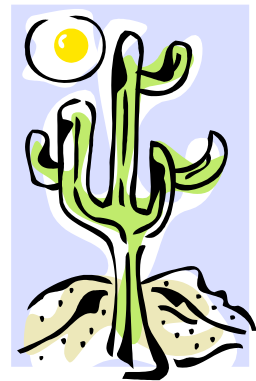
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FAM

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### Special points of interest:

- *Commemorating the Dude Fire 20 Year Anniversary*
- *Heat Stress and Related Disorders*
- *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)*



### We're on the web!!

[Http://  
fsweb.r3.fs.fed.us  
/public/r3/  
swasafety/](http://fsweb.r3.fs.fed.us/public/r3/swasafety/)

**SAFETY  
STARTS  
WITH  
YOU!**

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# Wildland Fire Operations Risk Management Council

## Our Vision

Regardless of the mission, the challenge, or the environment, Forest Service employees engaged in fire management and all-risk incident response activities are safe, effective, and error-resilient.



## Our Mission

To promote a comprehensive, proactive, and recognizable program that significantly advances the safety and effectiveness of Forest Service employees.

## Our Goal

Improve employee performance through information transfer and education with an emphasis on **Strong Leadership**, a **Comprehensive Operational Approach**, and **Focused Action**.

## Risk Management Council Members:

### NIFC:

Larry Sutton — Boise, ID (Council Chair)

### Region 1:

Steve Zachry—Missoula, MT

MaryJo Lommen (EMS) — Missoula, MT

### Region 2:

Ted Moore—Lakewood, CO

### Region 3:

Bequi Livingston—Albuquerque, NM

### Region 4:

Steve Holdsambeck—Ogden, UT

### Region 5:

Peter Tolosano—Sacramento, CA

### Region 6:

Shelby Gales—Portland, OR

### Region 8:

Lea Wofford— Atlanta, GA

### Region 9:

Bill Reynolds—Eagle River, WI

### Region 10:

Gary Lenhausen—Anchorage, AK

### NEA:

Bob Hartlove—Newton Square, PA

### Public Affairs Officer:

Mike Apicello—Boise, ID

### Aviation Safety—NIFC:

Ron Hanks—Boise, ID

### MTDC:

Leslie Anderson—Missoula, MT

### For More Information:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/council/index.htm>

## Are You Using The Right Kind of Chain Saw Chaps?

A National Safety Alert and accompanying Memo from the National Cache System was issued in June 2009 regarding Chain Saw Chap safety.

Prior safety inspections revealed that chain saw chaps produced using USFS Specification 6170-4E (April 1997) were still being used. This model was superseded by USFS Specification 6170-4F (January 2000). However the current specification (6170-4F) provides a higher level of protection or cut resistance.

In order to reduce the risk of injuries due to chain saw operations, chaps must be inspected to ensure that they provide adequate protection. Any chaps that are not labeled with USFS Specification 6170-4F or do not meet current ASTM performance requirements must be removed. These removed chaps should not be donated to other agencies or entities and must be properly destroyed or made unserviceable.

The USFS 6170-4F (or later) chaps will have a leg width of at least 14 inches, black-colored webbing and trim, and are labeled with specification number 6170-4F.

For more information regarding the Chap safety, please contact Gary Hoshide, Program Leader, MTDC, 406-329-1029 (office) or [ghoshide@fs.fed.us](mailto:ghoshide@fs.fed.us)

## Heat Stress and Related Disorders

Wildland firefighting is arduous work often with long shifts on steep terrain in higher heat and elevation. During hard arduous work, especially in a hot environment, the body cools itself through the production of sweat and process of evaporation.

During sweating, the body loses a lot of fluid and the heart and circulation function and ability affected. These fluids must be replaced, and if not, related medical disorders can occur which can result in heat stress, heat stroke and possible death.

In order to maintain appropriate hy-

dration, fire personnel must understand their own fluid loss. Water and electrolytes must be properly replaced, such as with water and sports drinks. Drinking too little water can lead to dehydration while consumption of too much water can also lead to serious illness or death.

In order to maintain proper hydration:

- Firefighters should drink small amounts of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes. About one-third to one-half the consumption should be with a sports drink (electrolyte replacement).

- Firefighters should monitor their hydration status during work by paying attention to: urine color and body weight.
- Firefighters should monitor consumption of energy drinks, or caffeine drinks, especially during work assignments.
- Anyone showing symptoms of heat stress related illness should seek immediate medical attention.

For more information, contact MTDC, Tech Tip 0851-2324-MTDC, June 2008.

## ARE YOU FIREFIT?

# Implementation of Wildland Fitness Testing Regionally

<http://www.nifc.gov/FireFit/index>

2009 proved to be a good year for the Interagency Wildland Firefighter Fitness Program, FireFit. This was the year to really get the newly implemented 'Wildland Fitness Assessment Battery' (WFAB) out to the field.

Region 4 has been assessing some of their wildland firefighters since the summer of 2008 and continues to re-test those individuals and start new testing on new firefighters.

Region 3 used 2009 as a milestone to get the first national IHC (hotshot) crew tested and begin the evaluation process for hotshot crews nationally. The Sacramento IHC crew (New Mexico) graciously hosted the WFAB evaluation team of Katie Sell, Ph.D. and Bequi Livingston (CPTC) along with videographers, Kristin Mangillini and Joshua Sandman in August 2009 at their facility.

The crew not only surpassed our expectations but proved to be in very good health and fit. Despite the numerous assessments that were performed with the crew, very little discrepancies were found in the current Sacramento IHC PT program. Between incorporating a team building 'dynamic warm-up' each day prior to PT, the crew incorporates Yoga and Pilates and ensures that all of the essential fitness components are used in order to maintain overall health and fitness and mitigate injuries.

The WFAB are used to evaluate the components of fitness to include:

- Aerobic fitness
- Muscle Strength (power)
- Muscle Endurance
- Flexibility
- Core Stability

They are a great way to develop a baseline and determine a plan for improvement. Most important, they can help to identify any imbalances that may lead to injury.

The WFAB will continue in 2010 and being implemented with Helitack crews (Sandia Helitack, June 2010) and at the R8 Advanced Fire Academy.

**Kudos also to Lincoln Zone Dispatch and Albuquerque Zone Dispatch for being the first dispatch centers nationally to implement the "Are You FireFit" challenge! Way To Go!!!!**



### Walking Lunges:

Take advantage of those frequent trips to the restroom by doing some simple walking lunges. These are great for strengthening the quadriceps muscles and utilizing the hamstrings (opposing muscles). Start by keeping good posture with head and chest up and shoulders back (abs in). Lunge forward with the right leg, making sure to keep a 90 degree angle and the knee not to extend beyond the toes (don't let the knee touch the ground either). Hold slightly and straighten and repeat with the left leg while walking forward—see how many it takes.

## Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/administrative/cism/documents/2010/2010\\_requesting\\_cism\\_support.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/administrative/cism/documents/2010/2010_requesting_cism_support.pdf)

Critical Incident Stress Management response is an important step in providing support and assistance to anyone that has been involved or associated with a stressful event. This could include fatalities, injuries, and incidents and near-misses. The CISM response should be timely and comprehensive and provided by personnel who have been through CISM training or equivalent.

The CISM response has many components as no one intervention technique will prove effective in all situations. What is most important is to ensure that CISM support is immediate!

What is important to remember is that

any person that has experienced a traumatic or critical incident can experience emotional reactions that have the potential to interfere with their ability to function normally. These individuals may experience the effects immediately or later with most people experiencing emotional aftershocks long after they have passed through a horrible event. These can occur as long as weeks or months after the event has occurred.

These folks need immediate help! It is critical that the potential signs and symptoms are recognized and dealt with accordingly. The understanding, compassion, and support from loved ones usually helps the stress reactions to pass more quickly.

Occasionally, the event is so painful that professional assistance may be necessary when the person has troubles managing by themselves.

Signs and symptoms of a stress reaction can include:

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Behavioral

Any of these symptoms may indicate the need for medical evaluation. When in doubt, contact medical help.

R3 has developed a CISM program as shown in the website above.



**Quote of the Day:**

**“Worry only about the things under your control, the things that can be influenced and changed by your actions, not about the things that are beyond your capacity to direct or alter.”**

~Charles E. Hummel

**R-3 SAFENET Update**

To date, 2010 has continued to experience a decline in submitted SAFENETS in the Region. We don't know if the safety mishap/near-miss occurrence is truly declining or if people are just choosing not to use the system as it was intended. Only one 2010 SAFENETS has been submitted to date with a supplemental 'corrective action' posted:

**#844RRGSAFE: 04/01/10—USFS—Little Fire—NM; Communications Related — \*Supplemental Corrective Action posted.**

The SAFENET system is currently undergoing revision to help make the process more user-friendly. We do encourage the continued use of SAFENETS as they are a great mechanism to elevate a ground operations health or safety issue that has not, or can not be mitigated/resolved at the local unit. We do however encourage those submitting the SAFENET to try and get it resolved locally, if possible, first. SAFENETS are not designed for retaliatory purposes and will be reviewed prior to posting by the SAFENET coordinator.

<http://safenet.nifc.gov/>

**Lightning Safety in the Southwest  
When thunder roars, Go indoors!**



.Living in the southwest has it's perks, including abundant sunshine, hot weather and spectacular thunderstorms!

However, with those thunderstorms also comes the threat of lightning. Each year in the United States, more than 400 people are struck by lightning. On average, between 55-60 people are killed; hundreds of others suffer permanent neurological disabilities.

Lightning safety may be an inconvenience but it can also save your life, especially when working outdoors. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), many victims say that they were "caught" outside in the storm and couldn't get to a safe place. This is usually the case during wildland fire suppression.

However, with proper planning and education, these tragedies and near-misses can be mitigated.

Realizing that there is 'no safe place' outside during a thunderstorm, the following tips can be followed to better your chances to ride the storm safely:

- Avoid open areas! Don't be the tallest object in the area.
- Stay away from isolated tall trees, towers, or utility poles.
- Stay away from metal conductors such as wires or fences.
- If in a group of people, spread out.

In the event that someone does get struck—**Act Fast!**

- It's okay to touch the victim as they will need immediate medical attention.

- Call for help—9-1-1!
- Provide immediate First Aid and CPR (AED if available and needed).
- If possible, move the victim to a safe place.

Remember to stay apprised about storms in your area through NOAA or other means.

Be sure to include lightning safety information to all fire personnel and crews during safety briefings.

For more good information on lightning safety, please visit:

<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/more.htm>