

Southwest Fire Operations Risk Management Newsletter

Wildland Firefighter Fatalities in the United States: 1990-2006

As any wildland firefighter will agree, our job is a high-risk occupation evidenced by injuries and fatalities each year. Since the 78 tragic firefighter fatalities experienced during the Big Burn in 1910 to the more recent Esparanza Fire claiming the lives of five wildland firefighters in 2006, have we continued to provide 'lessons learned' so that these tragedies don't continue to repeat themselves.

The recent report, "Wildland Firefighter Fatalities in the United States: 1990-2006" relies on information obtained from the Safety Gram comparing data from the original report from 1990-1998. This report is sponsored by the NWCG Safety and Health Working Team and the MTDC

Fire and Aviation program. The Safety and Health Working Team collects and analyzes data to validate and prioritize safety issues and works to improve firefighter health, safety, and effectiveness.

To summarize highlights from this document, the following are statistics:

- From 1990-2006, 310 persons died during wildland fire operations.
- The number of wildland fire-related fatalities increased 26 percent from the initial period (1990-1998) to the most recent period (1999-2006).
- The leading causes of death are now aircraft accidents

(23.2%) and vehicle accidents (22.9%), closely followed by heart attacks (22%).

A recent report published by the United States Fire Administration (USFA) determined that 115 firefighters died on duty in 2007 with heart attacks still the leading cause of death. Stress and over exertion were contributing factors.



This report is available online at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/html00512853/>

Username = t-d
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Photo of the month?

What's wrong with this picture?

THINK SAFETY!!



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FAM

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Special points of interest:

- *Wildland Firefighter Fatalities in the United States: 1990-2006*
- *Red Lights & Sirens Interim Directive*
- *Understanding the 'Accident Prevention Analysis' (APA)*
- *2008 WCT Implementation Guide*
- *Burn Injury Protocol update*

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We're on the web!!

**Http://
fsweb.r3.fs.fed.us
/public/r3/
swasafety/**

**SAFETY
STARTS
WITH
YOU!**

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:

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MTDC:

Leslie Anderson—Missoula, MT

For More Information:

[Http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/council/index.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/council/index.htm)

Red Lights and Sirens (Interim Directive 5120-2008-1)

After many years of research and hard work, the Interim Directive (5120-2008-1) has been issued and approved effective February 25, 2008 regarding the use of Red Lights and Sirens during emergency vehicle operations in the Forest Service.

This Interim Directive provides guidance regarding the determination and use of red lights (or amber) and sirens on any wildland fire vehicles.

The ID provides guidance for Forest Supervisor responsibility to determine if all, or any, of their wildland fire vehicles will be equipped with red lights

and sirens or amber emergency lights; where no region-wide program and standards for the use of red lights and sirens exists, and to develop a forest level program to ensure that use of red lights and sirens or amber emergency lights is compliant with the policy.

It also provides guidance for the District Ranger to be responsible for the recommendation to the forest fire program manager any candidates for certification as emergency vehicle operators.

The Interim Directive provides language addressing the required training, qualification, and certification standards for emergency vehicle operators who will utilize

red lights and sirens on public roads. It also covers 'Certification and Record Keeping' requirements and installation procedures for amber lights, red lights and sirens.

This Interim Directive was developed referencing the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards contained in NFPA 1451 and NFPA 1002 which address program management, training and certification of wildland fire emergency vehicle operators.

For those Forests who choose to have red lights and sirens on their emergency vehicles, compliance is required by 2011.

Concerns associated with use of 'Energy Drinks' on the fireline!

Can the popular energy drinks like Red Bull, Venom, and Adrenaline Rush affect your health and performance on the fireline?

Be advised that these types of beverages contain large doses of caffeine and other legal stimulants like ephedrine, guarana, and ginseng. Energy drinks can also contain as much as 80 mg. of caffeine, the equivalent of a cup of coffee.

Individual responses to caffeine will vary, and these drinks should be treated with caution because of how powerful they are. These energy drink's stimulating properties can accelerate the heart rate and blood pressure (sometimes to the point of heart palpitations), dehydrate the body, and prevent sleep. Energy drinks should not be used while exercising as the combination of fluid from sweating and the diuretic quality of the caffeine can

cause severe dehydration.

Be aware of what you are drinking! Although energy drinks are not necessarily 'bad' for you, they should not be seen as natural alternatives to improve performance and concentration either. So, when using energy drinks—use them with caution and minimize their use while out on the fireline. Stay well hydrated using the right liquids such as water, water, and water.

ARE YOU FIREFIT?

Preparing for the upcoming fire season while maintaining wellness!

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

Alas, spring is here with fire season lurking around the corner. What's a wildland firefighter to do?

No problem - simple steps will help you achieve fitness before the fire season begins. It doesn't matter if you are a veteran firefighter or support personnel, this information is meant for you.

The Southwestern Region extends our invitation for you to become healthier during 2008. All that is required is the interest in taking care of yourself and your employees while supporting and encouraging them to engage in a wellness program.

ARE YOU FIREFIT?

The Southwestern Region is fortunate to have implemented the 'Excused Absence' for Wellness program which allows employees up to 3 hours a week of TFC66 time for fitness during established core hours. This along with the established fitness guidelines for wildland fire personnel provide such a wonderful opportunity to engage in a program. All that is needed is support and approval from your supervisor along with the completion of Medical Approval documentation.

Walking for Fitness:

Walking is a great exercise for achieving overall health and wellness. Walking requires little if any specialized equipment and can be done anywhere—home or office.

All that is required to start a walking program is the initiative and desire to become healthier. You can always walk - even if the weather is not cooperative.

A great incentive when starting a walking program is to purchase a Pedometer to 'count your steps' on a daily basis. The recommendation is to try and complete **10,000 Steps A Day!** You will be amazed either how little you walk daily or how much you walk!

Simple things like taking the stairs rather than the elevator or parking your car at the far corner of the parking lot rather than right by the door will amaze you.

You might think that **10,000 Steps A Day** isn't much—just try it!

Important Tips:

- Breathe throughout the exercise.

- Wear comfortable, supportive shoe wear.
- Warm-up and cool-down as you would any with exercise routine.
- Change your walking routine—add hills or stairs occasionally or wear a pack or added weight for more resistance.
- Stop if you feel pain or other symptoms exist.

HAPPY WALKING!!



"Fitness can neither be bought nor bestowed, Like honor it must be earned."

- anonymous

Understanding the 'Accident Prevention Analysis' (APA)

"Human error is not the cause of failure. It is the effect, or symptom, of deeper trouble."

The Accident Prevention Analysis (APA) is a formal process appropriate for investigation and analysis of an accident, serious accident or serious near-miss that has potential to serve as a warning of an institutional or cultural fault latent within the organization. This process is a formal accident investigation, meeting the requirements of Executive Order 12196, FSM 6731, FSH 6709.12 and generally complying with the procedures displayed in the Accident Investigation Guide (USDA Forest Service publication 0567-2806-MTDC).

As compared to the Serious Accident Investigation (SAI), and APA takes a much different approach to interviews, treatment of those involved in the accident, analysis of causal factors and in the speed and scope of dissemination of valuable 'lessons learned'. Much of the energy of an APA is devoted to accurately understanding and then displaying how and why the decisions and actions of the employees involved in the accident made sense to those employees up until the time of the accident. If the decisions leading up to an accident made sense to qualified normal employees, then other qualified, normal employees can make exactly the same decisions with exactly the same, or worse, outcome. A strategic approach

to organizational safety takes this knowledge and places the responsibility upon managers to manage the way employees perceive and react to similar risks.

There are two key components of APA:

1. Conducted Under the Ethical Blanket of a Just Culture. This grants employees a safe and formal way to disclose their errors.
2. Features a Story. The accident narrative section is replaced by a factual story of the accident using professional storytelling techniques to maximize widespread organizational learning.

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“Burn Injury Protocol” update

With the recent concerns related to burn injuries, the Forest Service is working on a joint letter (HR/FAM) to provide national direction. The letter is expected to be distributed by the end of April 2008 and will outline the following items:

- OWCP implementation of a 24/7 hotline with an OWCP specialist available to provide direction and answer questions.
- Recommendations to ensure that every injured FS employee be provided a “patient advocate” to support and ensure their care.

Preparing for the Interagency Medical Qualification Standards

REMINDER: the Interagency Medical Qualifications Standards Program (MSP) will be implemented in the Southwestern Region starting October 1, 2008.

Luckily, we in Region 3 are trying to be proactive and preparing ahead of implementation. We recently provided two (2) MSP Workshops, provided by Barb Sivey (MSP Administrative Support) on February 20 in Phoenix, AZ and February 21 in Albuquerque, NM. These workshops were designed specifically for those fire staff members who will be directly involved in the implementation and administration of the MSP Program on their Forests/Units.

Begin now by doing the following items:

- Inform and prepare your Forest/Unit personnel on the process:
http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/index.htm
- MSP Coordinators can apply for a CAS account now through the website:
<http://secure.chsmedical.com/cas/>
- Start collecting information on your employees now to enter them into the database (CAS).
- Have employees with ANY medical conditions (asthma, allergy, hearing) start developing a documentation packet to accompany their physical.

For any specific questions or concerns that can't be answered through the MSP website, please contact Barb Sivey (Boise, ID) @ bsivey@fs.fed.us

2008 Work Capacity Test Implementation Guide

The **2008 Work Capacity Implementation Guide** has recently been approved and sent out nationally for immediate implementation. This ‘revised’ guide provides guidance and direction needed for those Regions who have not yet implemented the Medical Standards Program (MSP) as well as those Regions that have implemented the MSP.

Regardless of whether a Region has implemented the MSP or not, Health Screening Questionnaires (HSQ) will have to be processed at the Unit level.

The primary changes to the HSQ process, as outlined in the Implementation Guide include the following:

- The HSQ process for all employees (including AD employees) has been delegated back to the Forest/Unit level HSQ Coordinator.
- Each Unit should designate a primary and alternate HSQ Coordinator to review and process ALL HSQ's for that unit.
- Each HSQ Coordinator will be required to complete and sign a ‘Medical Confidentiality Statement’ prior to administering the

program. This form will then be maintained at the unit level with a copy faxed to ASC-HCM.

- The HSQ Coordinator will make a determination of clearance based on the completed HSQ.
- Those individuals needing further Medical Evaluation (based on their HSQ) will be provided the necessary paperwork to receive further medical evaluation.
- ASC-HCM will review and process received Medical Evaluation information from the Physician and notify the individual of their status for WCT clearance once obtained.
- Only one (1) Health Screening Questionnaire form (OPM Approved) will be used for all FS employees. (FS-5100-31/OMB 0596-0164).
- Employees are responsible for maintaining good physical conditioning and health in preparation of the Work Capacity Test and fire season.

Once the process is implemented, it will become more streamlined and efficient and allow the Units a quicker response time for HSQ processing.

Some of the important items to keep in

mind related to the Guide include the following:

- Employees could be required to re-take the WCT before the 12 month expiration date under certain circumstances.
- Employees required to pass the WCT normally will be informed at least four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled test date, to allow time for fitness training in preparation for the test. For prospective employees, the recruitment notice will serve as the notice.
- Employees are encouraged to maintain high fitness levels year-round through a personal fitness program such as ‘FireFit’ (<http://www.nifc.gov/FireFit/index.htm>) and “Fitness and Work Capacity—3rd Edition”.
- WCT Administrators are still required to adhere to the certification process as outlined in the Guide. Certification is good for 3 years OR if the process changes which it has!

The **2008 WCT Implementation Guide** can be found on the R3 SWA Safety website.