

GREEN SHEET

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

Informational Summary Report of Serious CAL FIRE Injuries, Illnesses, Accidents and Near-Miss Incidents



Firefighter Pinned by Apparatus Near Miss Vehicle Accident with Minor Injuries to a Firefighter

May 23, 2009

09-CA-BDU-005207

09-CA-CSR-000035

California Southern Region

A Board of Review has not approved this Summary Report. It is intended as a safety and training tool, an aid to preventing future occurrences, and to inform interested parties. Because it is published on a short time frame, the information contained herein is subject to revision as further investigation is conducted and additional information is developed.

Lookouts

Communications

Escape Routes

Safety Zones

SUMMARY

The following information is a preliminary summary of an incident that occurred during the daily operational check out of the assigned apparatus to the station. Apparatus during a routine brake check escaped from the chock blocks while the operator tried to reach for the knob of the spring brakes resulting in the apparatus crashing into the rear access of the apparatus bay pinning the operator between the building and the apparatus.

CONDITIONS

Weather

Temperature: 78* F
Relative humidity: 27%
Winds: Calm
Visibility: Clear

Surface

Ground: Asphalt
Grade: Approximately 3%

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

On May 23, 2009, at approximately 1030 hours, the operator assigned to the station was conducting the daily vehicle inspection of the apparatus in the City of Yucaipa of the San Bernardino Unit. The apparatus was parked approximately 30 feet from the rear entrance of the apparatus bay of the fire station and the chocks placed under the rear wheels. The location of the apparatus was on a slight grade at approximately 3 percent rise in elevation from the surface of the apparatus bay floor. The cab of the apparatus was fully extended in the forward position. The operator had rinsed the apparatus down and was cleaning the under carriage before checking the air brakes on the self adjusting brake system. The operator asked for the firefighter's assistance to check the brakes as this was common practice. The operator went to the front of the apparatus to enter into the driver side to release the brakes. The cab of the apparatus was tilted forward and fully extended and being held in place by the metal retention bar for safety. As the operator stood on the step of the cab of the apparatus, the operator reached in the cab to release the brakes. The firefighter assisting the operator was observing the rear of the apparatus and the driver for further instructions. The operator released the knob to the air brakes and the apparatus moved forward ejecting the chock blocks approximately 3 feet out to either side that were placed under the rear wheels of the apparatus. The apparatus rolled down the slight grade towards the rear of the apparatus bay and came to rest partially inside the rear of the apparatus bay. The operator tried to reach for the knob for the air brakes while the apparatus was rolling but was struck by the driver's door on the apparatus. The door pushed the operator into the

body of the tilted cab pinning the operator briefly. The operator was unable to pull on the knob for the air brakes and was dropped to the apparatus bay floor when the apparatus cleared the side of the bay door. The apparatus came to rest up against the top of the opening just inside the doorway. The firefighter assisting immediately went to the aid of the operator and checked for injuries. The operator appeared to be ok and the firefighter stated that he would get help. The firefighter then secured the brakes on the apparatus by pulling the knob for the air brakes and went to get the Captain. The Captain on duty observed the operator on the apparatus bay floor when he came out from the office and made the appropriate contacts for further medical assistance and treatment. Upon arrival of the Captain from the responding engine company, the Captain grabbed the chocks that were ejected out from the apparatus and placed them back under the rear wheels. Prior to the arrival of the responding engine company an AMR paramedic unit was treating the operator. The injured operator was placed in the ambulance and transported to a nearby hospital for further treatment and evaluation.

INJURIES/DAMAGES

The operator was complaining of hip and abdominal pain and was transported to a local hospital for evaluation and further treatment. The operator was treated and released the same day.

SAFETY ISSUES FOR REVIEW

- All personnel should review Maintenance procedures as outlined in policy.

Follow the guidelines that are listed in the California Commercial Driver Handbook 2009, Section 5, Page 70:

Inspecting The Air Brake System; under “Walk Around” it states, “Check Brake Adjustment on S-Cam Brakes. Park on level ground and chock the wheels to prevent the vehicle from moving. Release the parking brakes on the truck or tractor and the emergency brakes on the trailer so you can mark the push rod in the unapplied position.

- All personnel should review the Chock block policy listed in the 4300 and the 6800 Handbooks

- CAL FIRE 4313.4 B8

On a steep slope, “set” Chocks. After chocks are down and cables are attached, operator should slowly and carefully let engine roll into the chocks, allowing the leading edge of the chock to dig into the soil.

- CAL FIRE 6700 (6851.1 CHOCK BLOCKS)

All CDF mobile equipment and local government mobile equipment under CDF administration or control shall be equipped with the correct number of chock blocks in the appropriate design, and equally matched by vehicle size and/or weight in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. Lost or damaged chock blocks can be replaced through your local fleet manager. Each individual operator of CDF mobile equipment has the primary responsibility to park his/her vehicle in a safe and secure manner based on conditions. (conditions are outlined in 6851.1)

- CAL FIRE 7000 (7060.3 CHOCK BLOCKS)

All CDF mobile equipment and local government mobile equipment under CDF administration or control shall be equipped with the correct number of chock blocks in accordance with CDF Policy. Each individual operator of CDF mobile equipment has the primary responsibility to park his/her vehicle in a safe and secure manner based on conditions. Chock blocks shall be used whenever an employee is under a vehicle, e.g. performing preventive maintenance, repair, etc.

NO FIREFIGHTERS LIFE IS WORTH SIMPLE PROPERTY!

INCIDENTAL ISSUES FOR REVIEW

- Establish that the proper equipment is in place and verify the equipment used to conduct the needed service is adequate.
- Establish that the process to check out apparatus meets department policy and is following the needed safety requirements.
- Establish that all personnel utilize appropriate locations to check out apparatus and equipment. As outlined in the California Commercial Driving handbook.
- Review and establish guidelines for proper location to ensure apparatus in on a level surface for equipment check out and service.
- Ensure that the apparatus being checked out is in the proper position so the driver operator has the ability to observe and control the apparatus as outlined in the DMV Commercial driver's handbook.