

BLUE SHEET

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY REPORT



Firefighter Burn Injury

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Jesusita Fire

CA-LPF-001479

**Firefighter Burn Injury Investigation
CA-CSR-000031**

This Preliminary Summary Report is intended as an aid in accident prevention and to provide factual information from the first 24 hours of the accident review. To that end it is published and distributed within a short time frame. Information contained within may be subject to revision as further investigation is conducted and other reports and documents are received.

Synopsis

On the afternoon of Wednesday, May 6, 2009, several engine companies assigned to structure protection on the Jesusita Fire, North of the City of Santa Barbara, experienced extreme fire behavior related to the surfacing of strong down slope (sundowner) winds typical of the area. This sudden increase in fire behavior resulted in the burn over of a Ventura County engine company, causing burns and smoke inhalation to the engine crew members. During this same fire behavior event, several other engine companies and overhead personnel were required to take refuge in structures and apparatus. This event resulted in significant damage to two Type One engines, two light duty vehicles, and minor injuries to fire personnel.

Narrative

Strike Team VNC 1580A was assigned to structure protection in the Spyglass Ridge Road area of Mission Canyon. One of the Engine Companies had deployed two attack lines around structures, and one line for engine protection. At approximately 1610 hrs, a strong down canyon wind spread the fire toward the structure. The firefighters retreated into the structure and were forced out when the structure became well involved. Three Firefighters were transported to the Grossman Burn Center in Sherman Oaks where the Firefighters were admitted for burns and smoke inhalation.

Strike Team LFD 1001A was assigned to structure protection in the Holly Road area of Mission Canyon. During the increased fire behavior, individuals assigned to two light duty vehicles took refuge inside structures. The two light duty vehicles were destroyed by fire. One minor eye injury was reported. The individual was treated and released at a local hospital. Civilians on Holly Road that chose to stay after the evacuation order was given remained in their home through the increased fire behavior event. These civilians were escorted from the area afterwards with no injuries and minor damage to the structure.

Strike Team LFD 1002A was assigned to structure protection in the Palomino Road area. Strike Team LAC 1240A responded from staging to assist Strike Team LFD 1002A. In the process of turning around one engine from Strike Team LAC 1240A, the fire behavior increased. The Engine Company attempted to defend the engine. As the fire behavior continued to increase, the Engine Company took refuge in the closest structure. The structure subsequently caught fire. The Engine Company escaped the structure without injury, returned to the Engine and exited the area. The engine sustained minor damage.

Strike Team XVE 1550A was assigned to structure protection in the Tunnel Road area. A Santa Paula Engine from the Strike Team was providing structure protection as the fire behavior increased. The Engine Company took refuge in a structure. Due to changing fire behavior the engine was repositioned and received minor damage while backing. An engine company from Ventura City, also assigned to the Strike Team, took refuge in their engine while engaged in structure protection in the same area. While

inside the engine, fire shelters were taken from the plastic containers but not deployed. No injuries occurred.

Recommendations For Immediate Corrective Actions

- Assure resources assigned to staging are fully briefed on current and expected weather and fire behavior.
- Have communications broadcast significant changes in fire weather.
- Ensure all personnel utilize appropriate PPE at all times.