Southwest Area Incident Management Team – Dan Oltrogge IC

Shelter Deployment Fact Sheet

Nuttall Fire - Coronado National Forest, Safford Ranger District

- On July 2, 2004, the Flagstaff, Augusta, Lassen and Plumas Hotshots, portions of the Structure Protection Group, Firing Group Supervisor, Division Echo medic team and a safety officer were assigned to a Firing Group.
- Based on information from an IR flight, crews were advised during the 7 AM briefing of a 5 to 7 acre slop-over. After scouting the slop-over and posting a lookout above a helispot (H4), line construction began.
- Late that morning lookouts observed an uphill run on the ridge west of H4 - all engine resources from the Structure Protection Group, who were establishing a hoselay, were directed to hike out to their apparatus at DP20.
- Shortly after that the Lassen and Plumas IHC's, who were working the upper end of the slop-over, also moved out to DP20.
- The Flagstaff and Augusta IHC's, who were working on the lower end of the slop-over, moved out to the main line and began to prepare the line for burning out from where the burn stopped the night before, down to H4. After a 10 AM briefing the Division Echo Supervisor, Jayson Coil, and the Superintendent from the Mt. Taylor IHC met with the Firing Group Overhead at a lookout location above H4. All other crews assigned to the Division remained at the DP20.
- Shortly thereafter, a downhill crown run was observed and reported by a lookout, and was communicated to all Division personnel.
- After it was determined that fire was established below H4, members of Flagstaff IHC began burning out around H4, while the Augusta IHC's moved to support the burnout.
- Shortly after the burnout around H4 began, fire intensity increased. The fire made a rapid uphill run of about ¼ mile.
- Based on observations from crewmembers and reports from lookouts, crewmembers above H4 determined that they could not safely make it to H4 and reversed course, moving upslope to a pre-identified aspen grove on the lee side of the ridge that had been partially under burned by the slop-over. 10 firefighters made it to the H4, where they joined 2 helitack personnel that had been previously inserted into H4. There were now 12 firefighters at H4.
- During the hike to the aspen grove, a member of the Flagstaff IHC sustained a heat stress-related illness and became immobile – members of the Flagstaff and Augusta IHC's evacuated the crewmember to the aspen grove.
- During this time members of Flagstaff IHC continued firing around H4 to increase the black and add an additional margin of safety.
- H4 began to experience ash/ember wash and heavy smoke. After the fire made its runs and conditions began to improve, a fire whirl moved across H4 with enough force to blow the helmet off one of the firefighters.
- Based on ember/ash fallout and heavy smoke conditions - 11 of the 12 individuals at H4 deployed their shelters.
- **None of the 12 firefighters sustained injury.**
- After scouting a safe route from the aspen grove to H4, Chris Wilcox, the Firing Group Supervisor, hiked to H4, and then returned to the aspen grove with Division Echo Supervisor Jayson Coil and a paramedic.
- At the aspen grove the ill crewmember from Flagstaff IHC received ALS treatment for heat exhaustion.
- After conditions improved, the Plumas IHC began to clear the trail from below DP20 down to the aspen grove.
- Once the route was completed, the ill crewmember was carried uphill via stokes litter to DP20 where care was transferred to a waiting ambulance.
- All crewmembers and overhead involved were transported back to the ICP, and were provided an opportunity to stay in an area hotel for the night.
- The ill crewmember was admitted to the hospital and is expected to be released on July 6.
- On July 3 all involved personnel were provided an opportunity to participate in a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.
- An After Actions Review (AAR) was also completed on July 3. The proceedings will be disseminated widely throughout the wildland fire community.

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