



[www.firefighternearmiss.com](http://www.firefighternearmiss.com)

## Report of the Week

**Even Overhaul Isn't Safe.**

**12/02/2010**

**Report Number:** 10-0001146

Report Date: 10/14/2010 16:52

### Synopsis

Facepiece becomes tangled in debris.

### Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Captain

Department shift: 24 hours on - 24 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 14 - 16

Region: FEMA Region VIII

Service Area: Urban

### Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 10/13/2010 16:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Told of event, but neither involved nor witnessed event

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Situational Awareness
- Equipment
- Teamwork

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury

### Event Description

Note: Brackets denote reviewer de-identification.

I was removing a burned up mattress and box spring from the second story window of a townhome fire. The mattress and box spring had burned completely through and all that was left was the metal framework of them. When I went to throw them out of the window, part of the metal frame hooked the loop of my air hose between the regulator on my face piece and the connection on the harness. When it caught the hose, it pulled my face piece forward breaking the seal on my face piece and pulling me out the window with the mattress and box spring. I leaned back and began to remove my face piece to prevent myself from going along with the frames. My two partners, [Firefighter A] and [Firefighter B], heard the air rushing and were able to help support me to keep me from falling out the window. My helmet had been dislodged and fell out the window. I was

**Even Overhaul Isn't Safe.**

1 of 3

able to remove my face piece and, with the help of [Firefighter A] and [Firefighter B], I was able to free myself from the framework. I just thought this might be an interesting topic to discuss and remind people about.

### **Lessons Learned**

Have situational awareness of yourself and partners at all times.

Anticipate the unexpected and seemingly simple procedures as being potentially dangerous.

All firefighting activities are potentially dangerous.

Always work together as a team - multiple firefighters were able to stop a two-story fall of this member by working together.

Although the atmosphere was mostly clear during this overhaul operation, the removal of the face piece would have had a worse outcome if severe IDLH atmosphere was present.

TRAIN and always and be familiar with your equipment.

### **Report of the Week**

“Expect the unexpected.” This phrase is repeated countless times in a variety of different environments to remind people to keep their situational awareness (SA) high. Despite the warning, we continue to fall victim to situations where one of the SA loss factors catches us off guard. As a result, a seemingly innocent event collects extra respirations and heartbeats as we find ourselves struggling to avoid injury.

*I was removing a burned up mattress and box spring from the second story window of a townhome fire. The mattress and box spring had burned completely through and all that was left was the metal framework of them. When I went to throw them out of the window, part of the metal frame hooked the loop of my air hose between the regulator on my face piece and the connection on the harness. When it caught the hose it pulled my face piece forward, breaking the seal on my face piece and pulling me out the window with the mattress and box spring. I leaned back and...*

We often enter a chaotic environment in the performance of our duties with the expectation that order will be restored. The actions we take on the scene are usually well planned and the outcome of the incident can be predicted, ending without consequence. For example, we respond to a grass fire use a hoseline to extinguish the fire - end of story.

However, sometimes things don't always work out as expected because the once chaotic environment could still have factors occurring that could impact your outcome. If our simple grass fire was ignited by an unseen downed power line, the incident quickly transforms from a mundane into life-threatening incident. Report [10-1146](#) describes an occurrence where a similar predictable incident takes an unanticipated turn. Once you have read the entire account of [10-1146](#) and the related reports, consider the following:

1. What role do situational awareness and training play when “unexpected” events occur?
2. How can we use Crew Resource Management to reduce the number and mitigate unexpected situations?

3. How does equipment familiarization increase the odds of surviving an unexpected event?
4. Can you recall any unexpected events that you have been involved with during your career? How did you handle the situation?
5. Is it possible to anticipate and plan for the unexpected?

**Related Reports – Topical Relation: Unexpected Occurrences**

[06-376](#)

[07-927](#)

[08-167](#)

[09-979](#)

[10-839](#)

Submit your report to [www.firefighternearmiss.com](http://www.firefighternearmiss.com) today so everyone goes home tomorrow.

Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.