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Report of the Week

Why can't I hear you?

2/29/08

Report Number: 08-083

Report Date: 02/11/2008 1040

Demographics

Department type: Paid Federal

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: 24 hours on - 24 hours off

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 4 - 6

Region: FEMA Region IV

Event Information

Event type: On-duty activities: apparatus and station maintenance, meetings, tours, etc.

Event date and time: 02/10/2008 0730

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Witnessed event but not directly involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again?

What do you believe caused the event?

- Human Error
- Decision Making
- Individual Action
- Training Issue

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Minor injury
- Property damage
- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury

Event Description

While checking out the fire apparatus, the captain started the vent saw in the bay around another firefighter who had no hearing protection. This was poor decision making on his behalf. When asked why he was doing this he stated that it was cold outside and that he always does this. The other firefighters were in-between other fire department vehicles and the bay door. If the chain had come off it could have injured the other firefighters and damaged the equipment within the bay.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned were that all power tools need to be started and run outside of the building. The training on safe operation of all power tools needs to be enforced. The SOG's need to be rewritten and all personal need to keep safety in mind

Discussion Questions

A near miss is not always a heart pounding, life threatening event. Often the near miss isn't readily recognized by one or even entire groups of firefighters. The level of risk assumed as part of the work blinds us (read - reduces situational awareness) to the lower level threats. These ignored low level threats become the links that eventually form a chain to injury. Once you have reviewed [08-083](#) in its entirety and [06-248](#) as a related occurrence, consider the following:

1. Does your department's power tool and equipment check procedure include include provisions for inclement weather checks?
2. How familiar are you and your crew members with the manufacturer's recommendations for checking out the various power tools in your inventory?
3. Are "eyes, ears and hands" (safety glasses, hearing protection and work gloves) readily available to all members during power tool checks?
4. If yes, are they used at all times?
5. If provided, but not used, why not?

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.