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Report of the Week

"Practice What You Preach."

4/5/2012

Report Number: 05-0000650

Report Date: 12/05/2005 23:19

Synopsis

Near miss during ladder climb pointed out by observant officer. Potential injury averted.

Event Description

On Dec. 1, 2005 myself and a company officer conducted a safety awareness class to a neighboring department. We provided information etc. about this website and how we as a department have created an internal program to assist in the submissions of "near misses" on this website. After the instruction, an 11 year veteran was showing the company officer the department's new 100' aerial apparatus. The ladder was extended and the firefighter began to ascend the ladder with no helmet, ladder safety belt/harness. The ladder was approximately 70% erected. I then explained to the firefighter, company officer from the neighboring department and other fire personnel that this is a near miss since the firefighter ascended this aerial without safety precautions and without personal protective equipment, helmet. (I pointed out that) He could slip and fall which could lead to death or serious injury. This firefighter understood as well as the witnesses.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned for me was we have the responsibility to our profession to spread the word and share for those uninformed about the near miss website and how this can benefit many firefighters, departments, etc. To correct this situation would be revamping SOG's, emphasis on training, equipment checks and any non-emergency activity. In this incident there was approximately 70 years of experience in the fire service. This action has obviously occurred many times, because it was a surprise as I noted and commented on his actions.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Fire Chief

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region VI

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

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

Event date and time: 12/01/2005 14:00

Hours into the shift: 5 - 8

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

"Practice What You Preach."

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Weather at time of event:

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What were the contributing factors?

- Procedure
- Human Error
- Communication
- SOP / SOG
- Decision Making

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Unknown
- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury
- Minor injury
- Other

Report of the Week

This month's calendar topic is personal protective equipment (PPE) and new resources have been posted to support the reinforcement of this critical topic. This week's ROTW highlights the importance of all team members sharing in the responsibility of ensuring each others' safety, even in non-operational situations. Firefighters/EMTs are constantly reminded of the importance of properly maintaining and wearing PPE. Policies, procedures and ongoing training continuously drive home the safety aspect of PPE. Most of us get it. We understand! But, do we practice what we have learned and if so, do we share this commitment with other firefighters/EMTs? Report [05-650](#) illustrates the need to use appropriate PPE in all situations and that all members should be empowered to speak up when they notice improper PPE use or lack of PPE use.

"A group of firefighters was conducting a safety awareness class for a neighboring fire department. Part of the presentation contained information regarding the National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System. The group explained how their department had created an internal program to submit near miss reports into the system. After the presentation, an 11 year veteran of the hosting department was showing one of our instructors their new 100' aerial apparatus. A member of the host department extended the ladder and a firefighter began to ascend to the top without a helmet or ladder safety belt/harness. An explanation was provided to the aerial demonstration participants that what had just happened was considered a near miss. The firefighter ascending the ladder slipped and fell thus demonstrating that without safety precautions or proper PPE in place, his actions could have resulted in injury or death."

To lessen the impact of injury or death of firefighters/EMT, a comprehensive PPE program needs to be established in your department. It is each person's responsibility to make sure that PPE is being worn not only by you but also by your brother and sister firefighters/EMTs. There is no excuse when a firefighter/EMT becomes injured or dies due to injuries related to not properly

wearing PPE. It is up to each of us to make sure the PPE is in a working condition and used.

Consider the following questions for discussion:

1. When is the last time you reviewed your department's PPE procedures?
2. Do your PPE procedures address EMS incidents, training evolutions and routine vehicle fires?
3. Are you familiar with OSHA 1910 General Industry Standard as it relates to PPE?
4. How do you maintain your PPE? Do you check for usability? How often do you check?
5. Do you train on when to use PPE? Is it dictated by the evolution or event?

Related Reports – Topical Relation: Personal Protective Equipment

[05-497](#)

[10-439](#)

[11-304](#)

Have you implemented a PPE program for your department? Was it successful in protecting your operating firefighters? Submit your report to www.firefighternearmiss.com today and be part of the team that provides vital information to protect other firefighters.

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.

If you would like to subscribe to the ROTW please e-mail ROTW@firefighternearmiss.com with "Subscribe" in the subject line.

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National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System
4025 Fair Ridge Drive
Fairfax, VA 22033
P: 571-238-8287
F: 703-273-0920
info@firefighternearmiss.com
www.firefighternearmiss.com