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Report of the Week

Standing in the jump seat; what do you do?
5/2/08

Report Number: 08-072

Report Date: 02/07/2008 1300

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Fire Chief

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 52 - 60

Years of fire service experience: 30+

Region: FEMA Region V

Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

Event type: Vehicle event: responding to, returning from, routine driving, etc.

Event date and time: 09/15/2007 1100

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?

What do you believe is the loss potential?

Event Description

We were responding to a fire alarm with [name deleted] Engine #1. We responded with 4 along with a duty Chief. I am sitting in parking lot leaving to attend a meeting when Engine #1 passes me with 2 men standing up in the back jump area - guess what 'not seat-belted in'. This is a policy infraction. The response was a distance of less than 1 mile and there was nothing showing at fire alarm. Alarm was reset by duty Chief. I took a ride to follow the engine and talked with duty the Chief and then met with the duty crew. Embarrassed and upset that we took for granted a short trip and that nothing can happen.

Outcome: I met with crew and discussed the incident. There will be retraining on policy plus a look at Near-miss site and FF Close Calls site. Can this happen again – yes. I am sad to say yes but we always talk about the things that can happen and will happen. This was a learning experience that will not be forgotten. Training, teamwork, and the reliance of all are to keep things on track when it comes to safety of our own. Brackets [] denote identifying information removed by the reviewer.

Lessons Learned

Do not take for granted that the rules/SOG's are always followed. Hold officers accountable. Hold the engineer and the crew accountable. As a measure to prevent this, we preach daily to use seat belts! Sit down, belt in!!!! [Department name deleted] has taken pride in protecting our own. Training, safety and policies by the membership are for the membership. We will continue with this. Brackets [] denote identifying information removed by the reviewer.

Standing in the jump seat; what do you do?

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Discussion Questions

1. Does your department still permit personnel to stand on the rig during any type of apparatus movement?
2. Does your state or jurisdiction have a mandatory seat belt law on the books? Are fire departments exempt?
3. If you wear your seat belt, have you ever "cheated" and unbuckled it as the rig was arriving at the scene but still moving?
4. Have you ever exited a moving piece of apparatus? Why?
5. Has wearing a seat belt ever prevented you from making a rescue, advancing an attack line, venting a roof, converting a cardiac arrest patient, or otherwise adversely impacted your performance?

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.