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## Report of the Week

Running wrong = multiple near-misses  
5/16/08

**Report Number: 08-175**

Report Date: 04/14/2008 1033

### Demographics

Department type: Volunteer

Job or rank: Fire Chief

Department shift: Respond from home

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 11 - 13

Region: FEMA Region III

Service Area: Suburban

### Event Information

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

Event date and time: 04/14/2008 0435

Hours into the shift:

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

Do you think this will happen again?

What do you believe caused the event?

- Procedure
- Human Error
- Training Issue
- Communication
- SOP / SOG

What do you believe is the loss potential?

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

### Event Description

While in route to a confirmed garage fire, the engine driver turned the incorrect direction at a four way intersection of an alley and a main street. The engine was laying LDH supply line at the time. While backing out of the alley the company chief was attempting to move the LDH from the apparatus path and was almost struck. He was acting as a spotter for backing, but communication with the driver was ineffective and the engine did strike a parked vehicle.

### Lessons Learned

An independent spotter is necessary. Drivers and spotters must be trained in proper hand signals and use them at all times. Other members of the engine crew should be assigned to move hose if necessary.

### Discussion Questions

The full content of this week's event narrative reveals the result of the compounding effect of a single error. Recovering from an error that occurs under

a time compressed situation leads to actions that only seem to magnify the initial snafu. After you have read the entire account of **08-175** and considered the common elements of the related reports, consider the following questions:

1. What is the first step you take after recognizing you have made a wrong turn while responding to an incident?
2. What steps do you take to maintain discipline and crew cohesion while recovering from an error?
3. Do you think it is more difficult to recover from an error that occurs with crew members you know, or crew members you are unfamiliar with?
4. Place yourself in this week's scenario. How would you extract you and your crew from the situation and still make it to the fire?
5. What effect do you think the "confirmed garage fire" has on the various elements of this incident?

*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.*