



www.firefighternearmiss.com

Report of the Week

Maintain the Circle of Safety

05/13/2010

Report Number: 10-0000295

Report Date: 02/19/2010 11:04

Synopsis

Circular saw strikes FF's leg.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Battalion Chief / District Chief

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 43 - 51

Years of fire service experience: 27 - 30

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

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

Event date and time: 07/04/2008 00:00

Hours into the shift:

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

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Decision Making
- Situational Awareness
- Teamwork

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury

Event Description

We had two three person companies assigned to a working fire in a single story residence. We were operating in the defensive strategy. One of the companies was working a 2.5" handline on the delta side of the structure. The second company involved was a truck company assigned to open up an overhead garage door using a gas powered circular saw. The truck was also located on the delta side.

Both companies were working in close proximity to one another and at some point, one of the firefighters on the attack line came into contact with the saw operator. The saw operator was shoved forward causing him to lose control of the saw. This allowed the spinning blade to strike his leg. Fortunately, his finger slipped off of the throttle at the time of the mishap and his turnout pants provided enough material to absorb the energy of the now decelerating rpm's of the blade. Inspection of the bunker pants revealed that the blade made its way through all of the layers, but the operator sustained only a superficial abrasion to his leg.

Maintain the Circle of Safety

1 of 2

Lessons Learned

Firefighters should not underestimate the dangers associated with power saws. Saw operators must be given adequate space to operate. This includes a buffer zone which allows them room to move clear of a "bucking" saw. Crews working in close proximity to power saw operators must exercise good situational awareness to ensure they do not invade their immediate work or hazard zone. Company officers must function as spotters for their crews to ensure these types of incidents are avoided.

Discussion Questions

The tendency of crews to "crowd" each other as they work toward completing their independent, but mutually interrelated missions is an often observed phenomenon on the fireground. Company officers and command officers must be alert to ensure that their crew gives each other enough elbow room to complete each task. Since, all crews are working toward the same goal. Once you have read the full account of [10-295](#) and the related reports, consider the following:

1. Does your department have safeguards in place that would prevent an incident like this from happening?
2. Given the same scenario, what actions would you have taken to prevent this incident?
3. Where and when would have been the appropriate times to intervene?
4. What emotions, mindsets, or other conditions led to this event?
5. How often do you train on power saw operations or train with a company that uses power saws?

Related Reports – Power Saw Operations

[05-374](#)

[06-248](#)

[07-1134](#)

[08-165](#)

[09-506](#)

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.