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Report of the Week

A Fourth of July to remember
7/3/08

Report Number: 07-731

Report Date: 02/17/2007 1040

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Captain

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 7 - 10

Region: FEMA Region IX

Service Area: Suburban

Event Information

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

Event date and time: 07/01/1989 1300

Hours into the shift: 24+

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- SOP / SOG
- Situational Awareness
- Procedure
- Human Error
- Decision Making

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Property damage
- Lost time injury

Event Description

We responded to a working residential house fire that was caused by children playing with fireworks that are illegal in this state. Fire quickly spread to the attic of this 3,000 square foot semi-custom home with a tile roof. Occupants were on vacation as this was the 4th of July weekend. The first engine company to arrive assumed command and reported a working fire. Upon arrival of my unit, a ladder company, we were instructed to provide vertical ventilation. Time in the incident was about 20 minutes. I completed the cut with a power saw and was preparing to exit the roof when I saw 2 members of my crew (the captain and other driver) fall through the roof sheathing and into the well involved attic. I attempted to rescue both, as my side of the roof was still intact. While en-route to their location, I too, fell into the well involved attic. I became trapped for approximately 7 seconds in heat and fire that was approximately 2000 degrees. For reasons unknown, I was able to jump out of the hole I had fallen into, and self extricated my self off of the roof. I received 1st and 2nd degree burns to my left hand and left leg. The only reason that I am able to share this story is because I was wearing full protective clothing with my SCBA face piece on. This

would not have been a survivable incident if we had not been wearing full protective clothing.

Lessons Learned

#1 Lesson learned. The wearing of full protective clothing with the SCBA face piece on saved our lives. #2 Residential light weight truss construction with tile roofs is a killer for firefighters. #3 Our department policy is not to vertical ventilate these roofs any longer.

Discussion Questions

[07-731](#) recounts a harrowing experience for three members of a roof ventilation team. Because the likelihood of a fire goes up on July 4th due to the misuse of fireworks, our risk assessment skills need to be sharper than ever. After you have read the entire account of [07-031](#), consider the following:

1. What are the local jurisdiction's rules governing fireworks in your area?
2. Who is responsible for enforcing fireworks' laws in your jurisdiction?
3. Have you ever responded to a fireworks related injury that was not preventable?
4. How are fireworks injury incidents handled in your jurisdiction?
5. Does your department participate in any pre-July 4th public safety message programs?

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.