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Report of the Week

"Roll the tanker" takes on a new meaning
8/22/08

Report Number: 08-142

Report Date: 03/13/2008 16:57

Demographics

Department type: Volunteer

Job or rank: Driver / Engineer

Department shift: Respond from home

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 0 - 3

Region: FEMA Region VI

Service Area: Rural

Event Information

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

Event date and time: 03/11/2008 10:15

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event: Fog with reduced visibility

What were the contributing factors?

- Training Issue
- Human Error
- Weather

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Property damage

Event Description

Tanker/Tender driver was responding to a structure fire and came upon a curve in the road. He slowed down but the back wheels of the tandems went off the pavement and started digging into the soft dirt. The apparatus then rolled over 3/4 times. Driver did have on a seat belt per our SOG's. Driver was not injured.

Lessons Learned

The tanker was built as a fire apparatus not a conversion. This prevented major damage or even death. Lesson learned is to have more driving on the apparatus prior to assigning drivers [and wear seat belts].

Discussion Questions

Twelve firefighters have died this year as a result of vehicle collisions. Four of the twelve were confirmed ejected from apparatus or vehicles (Source: USFA). Tanker/Tenders lead the list in the apparatus type most involved in firefighter fatality collisions. The reporter of [08-142](#) rolled the tanker but is a survivor because he did *"...have on a seat belt per our SOG's. Miraculously the "...Driver was not injured..."* when the rig finally came to rest. That places this event in the mitigation phase of the error management model; seat belts being the last resort for survivability if errors are not trapped or avoided. Additional attention needs to be placed on the driving and handling of the tanker/tender itself due to its heavy weight, narrow roads traveled and high center of gravity. The message

is clear: seat belts save lives, but keeping the rig from rolling over in the first place is the higher priority. Once you have reviewed [08-142](#) in it's entirety, consider the following:

1. Do you require a periodic skills assessment of your department's tanker/tender drivers?
2. How stringent do you believe seat belt SOPs should be enforced?
3. Has your department adopted a "cold response" SOP/SOG for tanker/tender response?
4. How often is your tanker/tender inspected to DOT standards?
5. What benchmarks do you use for initial qualification of tanker/tender drivers?

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.