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Report of the Week

Check that tool?

9/10/09

Report Number: 09-744

Report Date: 08/08/2009 11:51

Synopsis

Daily equipment checks pay off.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Federal

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: 24 hours on - 24 hours off

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 7 - 10

Region: FEMA Region VI

Service Area: Rural

Event Information

Event type: On-duty activities: apparatus and station maintenance, meetings, tours, etc.

Event date and time: 07/30/2009 11:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event:

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Decision Making
- Individual Action
- Equipment
- Human Error

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Unknown

Event Description

While checking out the chain saw on the engine, I noticed the saw would not start. I took it upon myself to take the saw apart and check the spark plug. It did not seem to be firing and I found the plug saturated with fuel. I cleaned the plug and put the saw back together. It still would not work! It was determined that the fuel to oil mixture was off. There was too much oil in the fuel so I replaced the old fuel with the proper mixture. This corrected the problem.

Lessons Learned

Check and start all equipment thoroughly no matter how monotonous it may seem. Had we needed them on an emergency, both chainsaws would have been out of service because they were not properly checked.

Discussion Questions

Check that tool?

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This seemingly mundane near- miss is an excellent example of the reporter recognizing the “bigger picture.” Without the reporter’s attention to detail and skill level the saw would not had work at the most important time at the incident scene. Once you have reviewed the entire report of 09-744 and the related reports, consider the following:

1. When was the last time your power tool checkout procedure was compared to the manufacturer’s recommendations?
2. When was the last time your power saws were serviced by a licensed manufacturer’s representative?
3. What is the proper fuel/oil mix for your power tool cache?
4. Who is your local service representative for the power tools in your cache?
5. Is your power tool knowledge vernacular (handed down by word of mouth) or institutional (certified training)?

Related Reports

05-579

06-566

07-1157

08-641

Have you checked your apparatus and equipment to avoid an injury? Submit your account to www.firefighternearmiss.com today, ensures others to adopt your best practice.

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.