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Report of the Week

Are those your boots that I smell burning?
9/17/2009

Report Number: 09-871

Report Date: 08/29/2009 20:48

Synopsis

Boat fire presents difficult situation for FF's.

Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 0 - 3

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

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

Event date and time: 03/05/1983 02:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event: Not reported

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Teamwork
- Situational Awareness

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Property damage

Event Description

A two person crew extended a hose line down a narrow boardwalk between two boats, one of which was on fire. Most of the fire had been extinguished. The idea was to extend the hose far enough to reach the cabin area and put out the remainder of the fire. We did not know, but fuel had spread on the water surface and, as a result, the fuel flashed under us. We used a fog stream to push the burning fuel away from us so we could exit. There were no injuries.

Lessons Learned

Have an exit plan for all situations and use foam on all boat fires.

Discussion Questions

Once the fuel hits the water the area enveloped by fire will be defined by two factors: the fuel-air mixture and the evaporation rate of the fuel. The limited access for firefighters at marina incidents makes the case for back up lines stronger. Once you have reviewed the entire account of 09-871 and the related reports below consider the following:

1. If your department responds to marine incidents on the water, is the response assignment designed around the traditional 3-Line Tactic (i.e., attack line, back up line and exposure line)?
2. How long does it take for your response assignment to get the evolution described in the Event Narrative in operation?
3. Take the boat out of the water and put it on a trailer on the interstate. What differences and similarities can you identify?
4. What other hazards might you encounter when attacking watercraft fires?
5. Have you trained in surviving a fall into the water with your PPE on?

Related Reports

07-724

07-938

09-420

Have you had a near- miss fighting a watercraft or other marine fire? Submit your account to www.firefighternearmiss.com today.

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.