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Report of the Week

Equipment mounts count.

10/15/2009

Report Number: 09-906

Report Date: 10/02/2009 13:47

Synopsis

Fan falls from apparatus enroute to call.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Battalion Chief / District Chief

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region V

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

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

Event date and time: 09/28/2009 00:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Told of event, but neither involved nor witnessed event

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Equipment
- Procedure

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury
- Property damage

Event Description

One of our truck companies was using our spare aerial apparatus, which consists of a quint that was taken off the front line and placed in reserve status, as a spare truck company. Due to the limited amount of compartment space, a gas-powered PPV fan was strapped to the side board of the apparatus using rubber bungee straps. At some point in the truck company's response to a working commercial building fire, the fan became dislodged and fell under the apparatus. It was still attached by one or more straps and was dragged to the incident scene under the apparatus. The fan was damaged beyond repair. Had the fan not become lodged under the apparatus, but instead, had flown off the truck, there was a good possibility that a civilian's vehicle could have been damaged and a civilian could have been severely injured or killed.

Lessons Learned

Ideally, equipment should be stored inside compartments to prevent this from happening.

If equipment must be stored outside of a compartment, a more secure method should be used to fasten the equipment to the apparatus, such as ratchet straps. Personnel on apparatus need to check daily that fasteners are on securely, correctly and are not damaged or weather worn.

Discussion Questions

Losing a piece of equipment can have a devastating effect on a company's efficiency. The nature of apparatus evolution, advancement in equipment technology, and budget limitations all impact how fire departments operate daily. The first chain to failure is when equipment needs to be jerry-rigged to a piece of the apparatus. Once you have read the entire account of 09-906 and the related reports, consider the following:

1. Is your reserve fleet equipped with sufficient clamps and mounting brackets to sufficiently secure your most unwieldy pieces of equipment?
2. What is your fire department's plan for outfitting reserve apparatus to better receive and secure equipment from a frontline rig?
3. Has your department considered creating a "ready" reserve fleet that outfits reserve apparatus so that companies changing over only need to move minimal amounts of essential equipment?
4. Have you considered acquiring a reserve rig and spending time in advance of need placing equipment on the rig so that clamps and mounting brackets can be ordered and installed?
5. Have you been ordered to "make it work" even though you were not comfortable with a jerry-rigged clamp/mount? Check with your colleagues to see if they have any strategies for going beyond "making it work."

Related Reports

05-221

06-414

07-741

08-322

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.