



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

For Immediate Release

July 3, 2004
5 PM

Firefighter Shelter Deployment Update

Yesterday, two Hotshot crews were working the southeastern flank of the Nuttall Fire when westerly winds and fire intensity increased. Concerned about their escape route, most of the crew members and a Group Supervisor went into an aspen grove located east and outside of the fire's containment line. Some of the crew members plus two Helitack crew members, two EMT/Paramedics and four overhead personnel continued up the hill towards a helicopter landing site (H-2). One individual sustained heat related illness while hiking up the hill to the aspen grove.

At H-2, a heavy ash and ember "rain" occurred. At approximately 1:45 pm, as a precautionary measure, eleven of the twelve firefighters deployed their fire shelters. None of the twelve crew members sustained injury. The crew members remained in their shelters for approximately 15 minutes.

When fire activity moderated, the Group Supervisor hiked to H-2 from the aspen grove to contact the remainder of the group. He then hiked back to the aspen grove with two EMT/Paramedics to treat the crew member who was suffering from a heat related illness. The injured crew member was subsequently air lifted and admitted to a Safford hospital for a heat-related injury, but this injury occurred prior to and independent of the shelter deployment.

According to Dan Oltrogge, Incident Commander for the Southwest Area Incident Management Team managing the Nuttall Fire Complex, "The skill level and leadership these firefighters demonstrated reflects their exceptional ability to successfully work in a hostile and extremely difficult environment. The way they responded was absolutely outstanding and that's why they came off the mountain."

For more information about the Nuttall Fire Complex, please visit www.fireteam-sw.com/oltrogge/incidents/nuttall, or call (928) 348-9425 or (928) 348-0261 with questions or concerns.

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