

GREEN SHEET

San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD)

Preliminary Summary Report of SFFD Line of Duty Death



Firefighter Fatality

Date of Event: Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Time of Event: 1007hrs

**Location of Event: Division of Training, 2310 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA
94110**

This Summary Report is intended as an aid in accident prevention and to provide factual information of the incident. Information contained within may be subject to revision after further investigation is conducted and other reports and documents are received.

Summary

At approximately 0900hrs, Wednesday, October 7, 2020, Engine 3 (E03) went out of service to the Division of Training (DOT) to conduct a probationary firefighter pump drill. The intended drill was to practice for the Standpipe Evaluation. Due to COVID restrictions, Engine 3 conducted this drill alone.

During the course of the drill, the Firefighter Paramedic (FF/PM) working on the third floor, returned to the fire escape and inadvertently opened the gate on the wye which did not have a hose line attached. The stream of water coming from the wye struck him in the chest, knocking him backwards into the fire escape railing, causing him to fall backwards off the fire escape. The member was treated on scene for critical, traumatic injuries, and transported to the closest trauma center. The FF/PM succumbed to his injuries on October 7, 2020.

Sequence of Events

At approximately 1000hrs, Engine 3 (E03) arrived at the Division of Training to conduct a probationary standpipe drill. Prior to commencement of the drill, the Lieutenant (LT) gave direction to each member of their assignments and expectations. The Probationary Firefighter (PX/FF) was instructed to place the apparatus and operate the pump on E03 as a first in standpipe operation. The assigned driver of E03 was directed to function as a supply company utilizing a second engine supplied by the Division of Training. The FF/PM was directed to operate a small line off the wye from the standpipe on the third floor of the tower to simulate firefighting activity. The LT and FF/PM set up the wye, 50 feet of small line hose and nozzle on the third floor prior to starting the drill.

The PX/FF positioned Engine 3 in front of building with the tailboard just past the entrance of the building. The PX/FF made a reverse lead into the standpipe off the number five outlet of the engine and charged the standpipe at 100 psi as per DOT protocol. When the standpipe was fully charged, the PX/FF increased the pressure to 115 psi to account for elevation.

Once the standpipe was charged, the FF/PM on the third floor began to flow water out of a window from the previously connected small line off the standpipe. This continued for a period of time to demonstrate for the PX/FF a dangerously low tank level that required intervention on his part.

During this period, the assigned Driver of E03, who was operating the relief pumper (RP) provided by DOT, hooked up a supply line with the assistance of the LT. The LT snubbed the line and the Driver proceeded to the hydrant. At this point, the Driver put the RP in pump, and exited the RP, connected the large line hose to the #5 outlet of the RP to supply E03. This supply line was never charged.

While this was occurring, the LT returned to the PX/FF at the pump panel to discuss actions in a potential depleted water supply issue. The PX/FF opened and closed the gate valve 3 times to alert the crew inside of a diminishing water supply and throttled down to 100psi.

The LT looked up from his position at the pump panel to see the FF/PM standing on the third-floor fire escape. It is not known why he was standing on the fire escape at this time as the drill was not completed. The LT observed the FF/PM opening the gate of the wye without the hose line attached. The stream coming from the open outlet on the wye struck the FF/PM in the chest causing him to lose his balance, fall backwards into and over the railing of the fire escape to the ground below.

Description of Injury

The FF/PM sustained critical, traumatic injuries, was treated on scene, and subsequently transported to the closest trauma center. Later that morning the FF/PM succumbed to his injuries.

Contributing Factors

- Because of COVID 19 concerns, multi company drills are suspended.
- E03 was forced to conduct a pump operation drill alone which would typically require two engine companies and 8 personnel.
- Each FF was required to carry out tasks individually which are normally done as part of a team.

Safety Issues for Review

- In response to COVID restrictions, extreme caution must be exercised when conducting drills individually that normally require multiple companies
- Review the Hose and Hose Appliances Manual Sections 10.8, 10.36, and 10.48 related to standpipe procedures
- Review the safety issues taken from the NIOSH investigative report F2017-15
- Review the safety issues taken from the NIOSH investigative report F2010-25



View looking East of Engine 3 and fire escape with standpipe connections



Close up view of the third floor fire escape and standpipe outlet



Standpipe outlet on third floor fire escape