

FATALGRAM 11-09

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Labor & Safety Standards
Occupational Safety & Health



Date of incident: June 26, 2010

Industry: General

Location: Chena Hot Springs, Alaska

Summary: An employee was asphyxiated due to inhalation of products of combustion during a fire in an employee housing cabin.

Description of Accident: The victim was a maintenance employee who was off duty at the time of the accident. At approximately 0325 hours, an employee residential structure fire was reported using the 911 system. It was unknown if there was anyone in the structure, but the victim was not accounted for at the time of the fire.

No one witnessed the start of the fire. It was reported to be past the incipient stage when it was detected. Employees were directed by their employer to use fire extinguishers and garden hoses in attempts to extinguish the fire. As this was a remote location, the fire department arrived on scene approximately 90 minutes later and reported that the structure had completely burned down.

Alaska Occupational Safety and Health as well as the State of Alaska, Department of Public Safety investigated the accident. The investigations revealed that the structure had a working smoke detector and that the employer had developed and implemented an Emergency Action Plan and a Fire Prevention Plan along with a No Smoking Policy for the employee housing structures. The cause of the fire was found to be accidental with contributing factors due to smoking in the sleeping area portion of the building. Finally, the investigation revealed that the victim was unable to perform self-rescue from the structure due to intoxication.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

- Ensure that all employees are informed/trained and periodically reminded of workplace policies, programs and procedures.
- Ensure that employees are properly trained and qualified to extinguish incipient stage fires when directed/expected to do so by their employer.
- Ensure that employees receive training and education commensurate with those duties and functions that fire brigade members are expected to perform. Such training and education shall be provided before they are directed to perform fire brigade emergency activities by their employer.