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Subject: Blue Alert- Cutting Activities Ignite Trailer Fire

Title: Blue Alert- Cutting Activities Ignite Trailer Fire

Date: March 28, 2000 Identifier: 2000-NV-NTSBN-010

Lessons Learned Statement: Identify hazards and ensure controls in place have been maintained prior to starting work.

Discussion of Activities: On March 27, 2000, two employees (a construction mechanic and a senior engineer) were removing components from an excessed motorized trailer utilizing a cutting torch. During the cutting activities sparks/slag ignited some insulation on the trailer. One of the employees attempted to extinguish the fire; however, the fire extinguisher on the employee's vehicle was previously discharged and ineffective. The fire grew until a gasoline line on the trailer became severed. The gasoline tank on the trailer was empty. The gasoline line had some residual fuel, quantity unknown, which continued to burn. The fire department responders were called and quickly extinguished the fire.

Analysis: The fire extinguisher on the employee's vehicle was not serviced within the time frame required. The employee utilizing that fire extinguisher was not aware that his unit had been previously discharged. Only one fire extinguisher was available in close proximity to the incident scene. The cutting on the motorized trailer modified the trailer. At least one of the employees involved was instructed to not make any modifications to that trailer without input from the vehicle and equipment maintenance personnel so that all hazards could be identified and the work assigned to the appropriate craftsmen. Procedures were in place that require fire extinguishers to be recharged after use. Fire extinguisher training is conducted annually.

Recommended Actions: Ensure work controls are in place and hazards are analyzed and reviewed by other groups who can offer valuable input for hazard controls. Perform inspections of safety equipment according to inspection schedules and prior to starting an activity to ensure they are fit for use. Maintain fire extinguishers in a ready state and inspect them frequently.

Estimated Savings/Cost Avoidance: N/A

Priority Descriptor: Blue

Work/Function: Safety

BN Functional Categories: N/A

Hazard: Other

ISM Core Function: Define Scope of Work, Analyze Hazards

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