



SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT

Incident Commander Interviews and Statements

Randolph, NH

HWY19MH010

(27 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TRUCK/MOTORCYCLE COLLISION *

RANDOLPH, NEW HAMPSHIRE * Accident No.: HWY19MH010

JUNE 21, 2019 *

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Interview of: DANA HORNE
Chief, Randolph Fire Department

Via Telephone

Tuesday,
June 25, 2019

APPEARANCES:

RONALD KAMINSKI, Senior Survival Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Dana Horne:

By Mr. Kaminski

4

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. KAMINSKI: The date is June 25th, 2019. I'm going to be
3 talking to Chief Dana Horne, D-A-N-A, H-O-R-N-E, and he is the
4 Chief of the Randolph Fire Department.

INTERVIEW OF DANA HORNE

5
6 BY MR. KAMINSKI:

7 Q. Chief, why don't you just start with just give me a
8 description from the time you go the call and when you go out
9 there, what you all -- what you saw and what you all did?

10 A. Okay. At approximately 6:30, my pager went off advising of a
11 EMD call pending. They toned the ambulance to a EMD call pending,
12 Emergency Medical Dispatch pending, and the Randolph Life Squad,
13 which we don't -- isn't very active at the moment. And the two of
14 those were toned to a, what appeared to be -- what was coming in
15 on the on the computer from 911 as a possible car accident.

16 At that point, as soon as that tone finished, my personal
17 cell phone rang and one of my fire members was standing on scene
18 and advised me that they had a pickup truck on fire, multiple
19 motorcycles damaged, and appeared to be some fatalities. At that
20 point I -- I was outside a restaurant and my son was in the
21 restaurant, who is also on the fire department with me. I ran in,
22 got him out of the restaurant, got in his pickup, and headed to
23 the scene. It is approximately -- from the scene, it's probably
24 10 miles from where we were sitting, or a little less.

25 At that point, he -- as we passed my house, he dropped me out

1 of my vehicle -- out of his vehicle, so I could grab my own and my
2 gear, and I followed him out to the scene. He was approximately a
3 half mile ahead of me when he got on scene and called me on the
4 radio and advised me that there was definitely a vehicle on fire
5 and multiple casualties at that time.

6 I pulled in soon after him, and while I was getting my gear
7 on, I was advised by one of my members of my department who was on
8 scene of what he took a quick overview of what was going on. He
9 said there was vehicles in the woods, multiple fatalities, and a
10 pickup truck fully engulfed in flames.

11 I, at that point -- when we were initially called, Gorham was
12 called also with us. When the second call came, second tone went
13 off, the tone went out for Randolph Fire and Gorham Fire, and,
14 which is extremely good idea. It doesn't always happen that way,
15 but because there was fire, it did. So the Gorham fire engine was
16 not very far behind me. They came into the scene, oh, I would
17 say, 2 to 3 minutes -- 2 minutes probably behind me as I pulled
18 up. So I was directing them into the scene, advising them of what
19 they had to do for fire suppression.

20 I'm not EMS, but I knew the first -- my captain on Gorham,
21 stepping of the Gorham engine, is also an EMT. So I advised him.
22 I offered a quick overview of what I saw. There was a man injured
23 on one side of the road they were attending to who was conscious,
24 I could tell. And on the other side of the road was two or three
25 subjects doing CPR on a person there. I advised my Captain that

1 there was CPR in progress. He said, we've got to check what we
2 have for viable people first, and he proceeded to get out and
3 start fire suppression.

4 Soon after him, came an ambulance from Gorham and they began
5 taking over EMS procedures from there. I directed, I took command
6 and was soon advised that my radio wasn't working. It's an
7 extremely bad radio reception area, no cell service, no radio
8 service whatever. And I moved myself to Gorham's engine and
9 grabbed the radio out of the engine, and then I proceeded to take
10 command from there and just direct people into the scene:
11 Jefferson Fire Department coming from the west and Gorham Fire and
12 EMS coming from the east. The Gorham ambulance, Gorham had called
13 another ambulance, so I spent most of my time at that point
14 directing vehicles into the scene and trying to get people, get
15 resources where they needed to be.

16 First priority, of course, as we pulled up, was getting the
17 fire out. I was afraid the fire was going to extend into the
18 woods.

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. So that was first priority was getting the fire out. And as
21 soon as that was accomplished, then I took over -- actually I took
22 over running the engine so that they could proceed to search for
23 bodies. There was some question at that time as to how many
24 people were actually missing. The motorcycle group, being --
25 staying at a motel near there, very near there, they weren't sure

1 how many had left with that grouping of motorcycles, so they
2 couldn't give us an accurate count of how many people were
3 actually missing. So some of my guys took thermal images and
4 began searching the woods and the fields around the area and
5 whatnot to make sure that we weren't missing anybody.

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. And then from there it just became a process of making sure
8 the fire was out and then just we -- they had -- the ambulance
9 people that did take the one viable patient wanted a helicopter.
10 They had one started out of -- our helicopter comes out of
11 Lebanon, New Hampshire, out of Hanover Hospital, Lebanon, New
12 Hampshire, and they had started the helicopter. So they came to
13 me and asked me if I could set up a landing zone somewhere in the
14 near area, and I took -- I proceeded to tell my Randolph people
15 that they could take the Randolph engine away from the scene and
16 go set up a landing zone.

17 Soon after they got a landing zone set up, word came in that
18 the weather was not permitting the helicopter to come from that
19 direction, so the ambulance proceeded on to the hospital in Berlin
20 where they had another helicopter meet them there at the hospital.

21 Q. Okay. Yeah, there was another -- I did see one helicopter.
22 It starts with a D? Is that what it is?

23 A. DHART. Yeah, it's called DHART. Dartmouth-Hitchcock is the
24 name of the hospital in Lebanon, and it's Dartmouth Hitchcock
25 Emergency whatever; it spells out the word DHART --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- is how we -- you know, and that's how it's called by us.
3 We say, you know, get DHART in the air and they call out a
4 helicopter.

5 Q. Right. So then they were the ones that responded to the
6 hospital?

7 A. No, they didn't. They were unable to respond because of
8 weather.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So then it becomes a Maine Med. Flight out of Lewiston,
11 Maine, is on the other side of us, and they were the ones who
12 responded to -- Maine Med Flight. Weather was better on the
13 eastern side of us than it was on the western side of us, so --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Just for clarification, I am also assistant chief in Gorham,
16 as well as chief in Randolph. So a lot of times I refer to my
17 guys, it's -- you know, it's kind of a general term because the
18 Gorham guys are my guys too. So --

19 Q. Sure, sure.

20 A. Yeah, just for clarification.

21 Q. And the fireman that you said that -- I guess he just
22 happened to be on scene?

23 A. Happened -- yeah, happened to be on scene. He's a federal
24 U.S. Forest Service employee. He fights forest fires for them.
25 He's my fire warden, a state appointment in the town of Randolph.

1 He's technically part of my department. Not that active, because
2 a lot of what we do as a fire department is, unfortunately, is
3 this type of stuff, it's car accidents, and he's not a big medical
4 person. He doesn't -- in fact he's having a very hard time
5 dealing with this. But --

6 Q. I was going to ask you, is it possible that maybe you could
7 talk to him. Is it -- I'd like to be able to get a statement from
8 him.

9 A. Yeah, yeah. I could give you his number. He's probably more
10 than willing to talk about it.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. He was at the debriefing with us (indiscernible) the critical
13 management last night with us, so --

14 Q. Good, good.

15 A. He's -- I've been checking in on him. He was overwhelmed.

16 Q. Sure, sure.

17 A. He was really overwhelmed. The scene -- you know, without
18 getting too graphic with you, the scene was quite horrific, as in
19 parts and pieces.

20 Q. Yeah. I did read some of the -- I read some of the --

21 A. Yeah. Yeah.

22 Q. -- the reports that have come in from the other fire
23 departments and that.

24 A. Yeah, and there was a lot of parts and pieces and --
25 unfortunately, you know. Very fortunate for myself, I did not see

1 -- even though I was there at the scene, I didn't focus on a lot
2 of that. I did see -- what finally broke me, about, oh, 45
3 minutes in or so, I realized that the front tire on our engine had
4 a large chunk of something on it, and I saw it, and that was my
5 break point. I walked away. Somebody took my truck, and I walked
6 away and I went and sat in my truck for 5 to 10 minutes to get
7 myself pulled together --

8 Q. Sure, sure.

9 A. -- and came back and did what I had to do.

10 A. But there, unfortunately -- Jeff Parker is his name. This
11 gentlemen saw a lot of that. But on the positive side, he was
12 able to -- when he called me, he was able to give me an exact
13 location of where it was, because dispatch in Gorham was getting
14 various reference points. Two motels, which are about a half mile
15 apart, were the reference points that 911 was giving. And he was
16 able to tell me, you know -- I say it's Uncle Elman (ph.). My
17 uncle used to live in the house right there, and he was able to
18 say to me, it's Uncle Elman's driveway. It's right at his
19 driveway.

20 Q. Oh, okay.

21 A. So I was able to direct units to exactly where they were
22 going and that was a benefit in my mind. It wasn't a mystery as
23 to, you know, whether they were going to run into it before they
24 got somewhere or whatever, you know. So --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. So his name is Jeff Packer? Is it P-A --

3 A. Parker. Parker, P-A-R-K-E-R.

4 Q. P-A-R -- oh, Parker. Okay.

5 A. Parker. Yep, yep. Yeah.

6 Q. Yeah. So if you could maybe give him a heads up. You can
7 either have him give me a call or give me his number --

8 A. Yeah, yeah.

9 Q. -- and if -- again, tell him that if I don't answer, I'll
10 give him a call when I can.

11 A. Okay, okay.

12 Q. So -- okay. So there were just -- so how many people were
13 transported then from the scene?

14 A. From the -- I believe they transported three: the gentleman
15 who was very critical and two more minor cuts and abrasions type
16 thing, I think is what it turned out to be. I believe all in all
17 they transported three. I'm not sure if Gorham -- Gorham
18 transported the most critical one, and I think Berlin may have
19 taken one of the other patients or both of the other patients.
20 I'm not sure.

21 Q. Yeah. Berlin -- I talked to them at Berlin. They just
22 transferred one. They said they transported one.

23 A. Yeah, yeah, they transported one. Okay. So Gorham's second
24 ambulance must have transported the third. It was later in the
25 evening before I even realized that they had transported three

1 people. I -- my understanding initially was they had only
2 transported one. In fact, I had released -- the Berlin ambulance
3 came to me and said, can we be released? And I said, let me check
4 with command -- with EMS command, but I believe you can be because
5 I think they're all set. And then they had a patient walk up to
6 their ambulance, so they ended up transporting one.

7 Q. Okay, okay.

8 A. Yeah, yeah.

9 Q. So was it -- other than the communication, was there any
10 other issues out there? Is that kind of the regular thing with
11 your issue with the communication, because of the phone --

12 A. Oh, communications, yeah, because of that --

13 Q. -- cell coverage?

14 A. -- we know that there are, yeah, we know there are certain
15 areas. It's gotten better. It's gotten much better over the
16 years, but we're well aware of -- see, our radio, our radios work
17 off of a repeater that is down here in Gorham. It's -- well, it's
18 down here in Gorham; it's at Mount (indiscernible). I'll sit in
19 my house, I can see the tower out my front window. But our
20 repeater is on that tower and there are points where it gets
21 hidden and we can't trip it.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And that's one of the, that's one of the points right there.
24 So we can't -- our dispatch in Gorham talks to us, that repeater,
25 but with low wattage portables, we can't trip the repeater from

1 that spot.

2 Q. Sure.

3 A. Once I got onto the mobile in the truck, I was fine.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. My truck that left to go set up a landing zone, he was having
6 a hard time reaching dispatch in Gorham, so I finally had him talk
7 to me and I would relay to them. So I became, you know, an in
8 between for him, so --

9 Q. Yeah, okay.

10 A. Yeah, but it's -- communication is a real problem. And
11 there's a dead zone for cell phones for, I don't know what there,
12 about 4, 5 miles right there that they just don't work. So --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. And it happens at that spot, if you walk around you can get
15 cell service. This gentleman, Jeff Parker, that I just mentioned
16 to you, he proceeded to tell me last night exactly where to stand
17 and you can get all the cell service you want. But it's up next
18 to a building that's there at the scene.

19 Q. Oh, my gosh.

20 A. And he says, I can -- he says, if you go there, he says,
21 you'll have all the service you want. But service is relevant to
22 people's phones, also.

23 Q. That is true, yeah.

24 A. Yeah, you know. So I had people there that could talk and
25 other people -- I didn't have any service most of the time, and

1 then finally when I moved away from the scene to another location,
2 I was able to get service. So it's very relevant that way. But I
3 think that's something that we've got to -- I've had a lot of
4 people come up to me in the last 2 or 3 days that are way up the
5 food chain, and say what can we do for you? And I think I'm going
6 to get back to some of them and say --

7 Q. Good.

8 A. -- this is what you got to do for us.

9 Q. Great.

10 A. This is what you got to work on, you know. Because the
11 dispatcher, the poor dispatcher, she was overwhelmed and she was
12 having real issues because some of the calls were coming in clear
13 and some of them weren't, you know, so --

14 Q. How many dispatchers do they have? That's at Gorham? That's
15 where they were --

16 A. That's at Gorham.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. That's a single dispatcher. She's all by herself.

19 Q. Oh, my God.

20 A. And she does -- yeah, see, she does Gorham police. She's
21 technically a police dispatcher, and the fire -- Gorham Fire and
22 EMS dispatch fire. But Randolph and Shelburne Fire are dispatched
23 by her, by -- we pay a cost for dispatch. The towns of Shelburne
24 and Randolph pay a cost into the dispatch center. But she's just
25 a single dispatcher. She's all by -- and she -- we have, you

1 know, of course there's multiple dispatchers and some of them are
2 better than others. And this one here is -- it was just
3 outstanding. She's got one of those level voices that doesn't
4 change with the situation, and not all dispatchers are like that.

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. So you're able to hear her. And, see, we have a fatal over
7 in almost that same direction in February. We had a bad multiple
8 vehicle pile-up and a fatal there, and the dispatcher on that
9 morning was the other dispatcher that's extremely good. She's an
10 EMT and she just did an amazing, amazing job of dispatching.

11 Q. Yeah, that makes a big difference when you have a good
12 dispatcher. No doubt.

13 A. Oh, it's huge. It's huge, you know. And we have an amazing
14 mutual aid system up here. So it -- you know, Jefferson come in
15 and did traffic on that end for me, and Gorham covers me on -- we
16 have a very small department. We only do, you know, I hate to
17 say, probably 15 calls a year, most of them being this type of
18 backing up the ambulance on car accidents.

19 Q. Really?

20 A. Yeah. And -- we're a very small department. And so because
21 of that, I don't have a large volume of trained, well-trained
22 guys. I have some very dedicated small corps of guys --

23 Q. Right.

24 A. -- that do. But Gorham is my first, is my first call, and
25 they're very good about it, the mutual aid system, which is

1 outstanding. The state of -- the Coos County that we're in now,
2 has what they call North Pac, Northern New Hampshire Mutual Aid
3 District, and --

4 Q. Yeah, I've seen that online. I was doing some reading and I
5 saw them, yes.

6 A. Yeah, every department in the state, in Coos County, some in
7 Carroll, and a couple in Vermont, are all members of that. Every
8 department, but one in Coos County, are members of North Pac. And
9 they do an amazing job.

10 You know, the comment I made the other night to somebody was
11 we call out the world and if we don't need them, we'll send them
12 home. And that's basically what we did that night.

13 Q. Sure. Yeah.

14 A. I didn't use those words over the radio, but I was real close
15 to it, you know. Because they kept asking me, well, do you still
16 need this coming; do you still need -- and I said, I don't know
17 yet, just send them, you know.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. And they all come. Everybody comes and nobody agues, nobody
20 complains because they came for no reason, no nothing. Because,
21 you know, it's just an amazing, amazing system.

22 Q. Sure. Now as for responding and departments, the list I have
23 so far is Randolph, Gorham, Berlin, Jefferson, and Lancaster EMS.
24 Is there anyone else I'm missing?

25 A. No, that's -- as far as our end of it, you know, non-police

1 end of it, that's all that were there. Jefferson does not have an
2 ambulance service of their own. They have some -- they have a
3 fast squad, what they call a fast squad. And their ambulance is
4 Lancaster ambulance, covers the town of Jefferson. So that was an
5 automatic that when Jefferson was coming, they automatically tone
6 the Lancaster ambulance to come too. Because we actually thought
7 we might have some savable patients at one point.

8 Q. Sure. Right.

9 A. You know, and -- but, yeah, those are the -- that, and then
10 of course on the police end of things and DOT and everything else,
11 it was a lot of other agencies there (indiscernible) --

12 Q. Well, I'm seeing that probably that -- well, the State Police
13 came, probably the Coos Sheriff Department.

14 A. State -- yeah, yeah. Coos County Sheriff's Department, State
15 Police -- well, there are two police officers that were there that
16 are the Town of Randolph and the Town of Jefferson both have,
17 quote/unquote, "police officers." Very small time. The Jefferson
18 one is mainly for directing traffic at one of our local
19 attractions. But anyway, they were there. Fish and Game had one
20 -- had some officers there.

21 Q. I did see that, yes, Fish and Game was --

22 A. Fish and Game, yeah, yeah. And then, unfortunately DOT here
23 called out -- Department of Transportation, you know, I call them
24 our plow guys, but the guys that take care of our roads.
25 Unfortunately, they got called out to clean up the road, and their

1 guys came into the scene and spent 2 hours standing there looking
2 at this horrific scene and were told to go home, they didn't need
3 them, you know. So we got another 10 guys that got involved in
4 this that didn't need to be involved in it, but --

5 Q. Right.

6 A. But DOT was there. We went over the list Saturday before the
7 news conference, and I believe that covers it. Coos County
8 Sheriff's Department, the State Police. I asked the state trooper
9 the other night, I says -- he called me, I said, how many units
10 did you have there? And he said, I really can't give you an
11 accurate count. I says, all in all, I says, one of the newspapers
12 asked me how many first responders were on scene, and I said, I
13 would dare guess 50 people. And he said, I wouldn't doubt that
14 fact at all, you know.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. It was just that much of a mass call, and --

17 Q. Well, you see that when the smaller communities like that,
18 when there's a mutual aid call like that, there's a lot of people,
19 volunteers will all come out for that. Yeah.

20 A. Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

21 Q. Now, the -- who would I -- who's a good person I should talk
22 to with the Coos County emergency management? Is there -- do they
23 have an emergency management department? I --

24 A. Emergency management, that's -- each town has an emergency
25 management director, but emergency management, I want to say,

1 Homeland Security, Heidi Lawton. I don't know if you have that
2 name or not.

3 Q. No, I don't.

4 A. Jeez, I probably got her card here somewhere too, but Heidi
5 Lawton is her name. She's Homeland Security, but she covers the
6 northern part of New Hampshire as our emergency management
7 basically.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah. That's the name. I don't know as I've got a card
10 anywhere with her number on it.

11 Q. Okay. I'll be able to look her up. I'll find her.

12 A. Yeah, yeah.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. That's somebody you'd want to talk to. She was on the phone
15 with me Saturday making sure that I didn't need anything. And she
16 was at the press conference Saturday in Lancaster. I did see her
17 over there too. So --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah, she's very involved in everything that goes on in the
20 north country and takes very good --

21 Q. That's a good thing.

22 A. Yeah, very good to us. Just helped me get a grant for a
23 generator at my fire station and things like that.

24 Q. That's awesome, yes.

25 A. So she's very -- very good, very good.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay, Chief. You've given me some great detailed information
4 here.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. You've given me so much information, I don't have too much --
7 too many follow-up questions here.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. But I would like to ask if you could have Mr. Parker give me
10 a call when he gets a chance.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And just tell him that I'm just going to ask him pretty much
13 the same thing, just, where were you when you saw what happened,
14 and just get a description of what he saw and then I guess what he
15 did until you got there. I'm sure he was pretty busy.

16 A. Yeah. Yeah.

17 Q. As well as being traumatized.

18 A. You know, just -- yeah, well, I was just going to say don't
19 be surprised because he may get into some details that -- you
20 know, he did last night, he told us some details that a lot of
21 people don't want to hear, but it's all part of the game and it
22 helps him talk it out a little bit, too.

23 Q. Yes, absolutely. Yeah.

24 A. But, you know, like I say, I can't stress enough of how
25 horrific a scene it was with parts and pieces.

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. You know, I have no other way of saying it to you than that.
3 It just, it -- these people just exploded. It -- you know, and
4 I've used the reference on Saturday, and somebody used it last
5 night, of bowling. There was a dozen motorcycles there and this
6 guy drove into them like bowling pins and --

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. -- everything just went flying. So --

9 Q. Yeah, yeah. Okay. Well, Chief, I thank you very much and it
10 sounds like, you know, you did a heck of a job out there under
11 these circumstances.

12 A. Yeah, I appreciate that. Oh, just -- yeah, horrific, yeah.

13 Q. And is there -- one other thing, is there anyone other than
14 Mr. Parker, maybe, that you think that I should talk to, to give
15 me any other --

16 A. I don't know. I was trying to think of that as I was talking
17 to you, and like I said, we did this briefing last night, so I
18 heard a lot of the players talking last night about, you know,
19 what (indiscernible). But I don't know of anybody else that would
20 have any more detail.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I'll get -- I'll try to get Mr. Parker to call you because,
23 like I said, he was like the third car in line, stopped in
24 traffic, and walked up to the scene. And he's a -- like I said,
25 he's a wildland's firefighter. He goes west most all summer to

1 fight fires, but he's used to having an engine with him with some
2 equipment in it.

3 Q. Oh, okay.

4 A. You know, a trauma kit and that type of stuff.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. And he didn't have anything in his personal vehicle, and that
7 upset him very much, you know, so --

8 Q. Sure, sure.

9 A. But he saw a lot at the very initial scene, so I will get him
10 to call you.

11 Q. Okay, yeah. I mean, if not tonight, but within the next
12 couple days. I'll be here probably through the end of the week,
13 so, you know, whenever he feel comfortable, have him give me a
14 call.

15 A. Okay. This is going to sound like a dumb question, but I --

16 Q. No.

17 A. -- just, I'll ask you your name again?

18 Q. Sure. It's Ronald --

19 A. Ronald.

20 Q. Kaminski, K --

21 A. Kaminski. Okay.

22 Q. K-A-M-I-N-S --

23 A. All right, hang on. Hang on.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. K-N?

1 Q. K-A-M-I-N-S-K-I. Nice Irish name.

2 A. Okay. Yes, see, I thought so, too. So --

3 Q. (Laughing.)

4 A. All right. All right, I will have him give you a call.

5 Q. Okay, Chief. Thank you so much for your help, sir.

6 A. Okay. Thank you.

7 Q. Okay. Bye-bye.

8 A. Bye.

9 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: TRUCK/MOTORCYCLE COLLISION
RANDOLPH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
JUNE 21, 2019
Interview of Chief Dana Horne

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY19MH010

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: June 25, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Deborah Dowling Sweigart
Transcriber



SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT

Gorham Fire Chief Statement

Randolph, NH

HWY19MH010

(2 pages)



Gorham Fire and EMS
Town of Gorham New Hampshire

347 Main Street Gorham NH 03581 603-466-2549



James Watkins



On the evening of 6/21/19 I responded to a motor vehicle accident involving motorcycles. Due to coming from home I came in from Route 2 Jefferson. When I arrived on scene I saw the pickup truck on fire on the right side of the road, CPR was being done a patient on the left side of the road. Gorham Fire Engine 3 had parked in the middle of the road and there were several motorcycles laid down in the road way with a lot of debris. I reported to Randolph Chief Horne who was having a difficult time with the scene. I instructed Chief Horne to report to Engine 3 and man the radio as our portable radios would not work in that area. I then took operations of the scene. The fire was being contained by the Engine Company. EMT Lozeau was walking away from the patient that CPR was being performed on. She advised me that he was a "black tag", however the three bystanders were still doing CPR. I grabbed the cardiac monitor and applied a 4 lead on the patient while compressions were still being done. I showed the 3 bystanders that the patient was in "asystole" and explained that there is nothing we can do. I then returned the cardiac monitor to the ambulance and saw that the EMS crew was applying a c-collar to a patient in the ditch and placing the patient onto a backboard. I then went to them and stated they needed a helicopter. A helicopter was requested. I then noticed a body in the ditch near the patient that was being packaged. I then went back to where the trailer was. I noticed one body under the trailer and several bodies in front of the truck. I then had Lt. Horne gather up as many blankets and tarps. At this point the fire was out that had consumed the pickup. Once he returned we started covering the bodies. Once the bodies were covered and the additional ambulances arrived from Gorham, Berlin and Lancaster I instructed the EMS personnel to do another sweep of the people involved to see if they were ok. I then had the Engine Company continue to cool the engine block of the truck. I then instructed Capt. Cloutier and Capt. Dustin to use the thermal camera and check the wooden area, tall grass and bushy area to see if there were any more bodies. This was done several times throughout the two hours. Once the block was as cool as we could get it, I instructed the Engine Company to break down the hose and lift the hose up directly, not to drag the hose in order to keep as much debris in place as possible, which they did. At this point the scene was no longer active. I then went to the first responders and started checking on them. Several first responders were physically shaken up over this scene. I spent the next hour checking in on them. I left the scene at approximately 2100 hours and returned home.

Respectfully

James Watkins
Fire Chief
Gorham Fire & EMS