



Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

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Director

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE **Fuel Tanker Rollover**

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A fuel tanker carrying 1,600 gallons of kerosene rolled over and down a hillside Tuesday, October 11th in Clear Lake when the private driver it was on gave way. The Redwood Empire Hazardous Incident Team (REHIT) comprised of personnel from the Ukiah Fire, Ukiah Valley Fire, and Cal Fire agencies and the Division of Environmental Health was called to assist in the effort to siphon off the load before the tanker could be removed.

The procedure required the pneumatic drilling, referred to as cold tapping, into three fuel tank compartments. It is a high risk procedure that REHIT personnel train extensively on. About 1,084 gallons of kerosene was siphoned into another tanker in an operation that lasted over 10 hours.

It was the second incident in a little over a week that REHIT personnel responded to. On Monday, October 3rd a 48 foot tractor trailer carrying frozen food went off Low Gap Road and down a steep embankment just west of Ukiah High School. Before the tractor could be righted and removed two 125 gallon fuel tanks were cold tapped and the diesel fuel pumped into 55 gallon drums.

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In the Lake County operation, REHIT was contacted by Jay Beristianos, the new Northshore Fire Chief. Jay had been a REHIT member for many years while working for Ukiah Valley Fire. Jay knew the capabilities of REHIT and the equipment carried on the Haz Mat big rig. The Lake County Haz Mat Specialists quickly joined forces with REHIT and went to work on stabilizing the kerosene truck preparing it to be cold tapped and off loaded. The atmosphere was constantly monitored for flammable vapors while the cold tap and off loading procedures occurred.

Chief Beristianos said he was happy with the safety and cooperation that both Haz Mat teams provided with each other.

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