CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Crash of Airtanker Claims the Life of Pilot

Sacramento - This evening emergency personnel were able to access the crash site of a CAL FIRE airtanker that had crashed near Yosemite National Park and determined that the pilot on board had died. The CAL FIRE airtanker (Tanker 81) based out of the Hollister Air Attack Base had been fighting the Dog Rock Fire near El Portal when officials lost contact with it late this afternoon.

The pilot's family has requested we withhold release of the pilot's name until all immediate family can be notified.

"This crash underscores just how inherently dangerous wildland firefighting is and the job is further compounded this year by extreme fire conditions," said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE director. "We have secured the crash site and will be cooperating with the NTSB on their investigation."

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the pilot's family during this difficult time," said Jeff Cavarra, program director for DynCorp International.

CAL FIRE operates 22 other Grumman S-2T airtankers across California. http://calfire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact_sheets/S2T.pdf