

Hose & Nozzle Magazine Reports on Apparatus Accidents - 1968 to 1978

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From *Hose & Nozzle* magazine come these assorted apparatus accident reports from 1968 to 1978. They're listed with issue dates only, alas. None of the stories include the accident date. Only a couple have photos, which are below. Left to right, top to bottom: Forest Hill FD (two photos) (1974), Black Mountain FD (1978), Burlington FD (1972), and East Side FD (1975). Click to enlarge:



Mar-Apr 1968 - Rocky Mount chiefs car was struck by a second car running a red light. Asst. Chief John Sykes was responding to a fire. The driver of the other car said "she did not know what color the traffic light was" and "got excited when she heard the siren and hit the accelerator instead of the brakes." Chief Sykes received minor injuries. Damage to the "fire car" was \$1,300, and \$400 to the other.

Mar-Apr 1968 - Statesville pumper collided with two cars and caused a chain reaction accident while responding to a "fire at a shopping center." The 1966 American LaFrance pumper was "crossing the square" when it collided with a Cadillac automobile. The car had reportedly entered the intersection with a green light. After the pumper struck the Cadillac on the right side, the car was pushed into a 1967 Pontiac which had stopped at the intersection. The apparatus "then slammed into" a 1966 Pontiac GTO which was parked. A "chain reaction collision" then occurred involving "a 1966 Chevrolet, a 1962 Dodge, and a Chevrolet." There were no serious injuries. Damage to the fire truck was estimated at \$4,000, and between \$3,000 and \$200 for the various automobiles. The driver of the Cadillac was charged with "failure to yield to right of way to emergency equipment."

May-Jun 1968 - Union Road (Gaston County) fire truck overturned while responding to a call. The driver experienced a brake failure as the 1952 Dodge was attempting a turn at an intersection. The truck, which was "made top-heavy by a full load of water," was "evidentially travelling at a moderate rate of speed." The apparatus "was described as a total loss." Firefighter Roger Jenkins, 18, was treated and released from Gaston Memorial Hospital.

Sep-Oct 1968 - Kinston apparatus nearly destroyed after collision with a bus, which had pulled around a car stopped at an intersection. The fire truck was answering a call that "turned out to be a false alarm." The officer, Lt. Odell Turner, was thrown from his seat, over the windshield, and into the street. Driver Linwood Small was able to exit the truck but collapsed onto the pavement. He was wearing his seat belt, but "the blow ripped the seat loose from the truck and he got a rough blow to the lower part of his stomach" along with a back injury. Firefighter Randall Cribb was riding the tailboard. He was "thrown over the top of the truck onto the sidewalk." The truck received an estimated \$22,000 damage. The "engine was torn loose from its supports, the chassis was bent about 45 degrees," and "the transmission fell out on the ground." A "woman from New Jersey" was also injured, in addition to the three firemen. The bus sustained \$10,000 damage.

Nov-Dec 1969 - Kinston apparatus struck by car at the intersection of East Washington Avenue and Tiffany Street. It was responding to a fire when the automobile "slammed into the control area on the left side" of the truck. The driver of the car saw a police car in the intersection, which was also responding to the fire. He thought the officer was stopping another automobile. The driver of the car had a green light and did

not see the fire truck "until it was in front of him." The street was also reportedly wet from recent rain. The 1969 model car received \$3,000 damage. The apparatus damage was expected to be high. The driver of car was charged with "driving too fast for conditions and failure to yield for an emergency vehicle."

Mar-Apr 1970 - Monroe pumper struck by train while fighting a brush fire just west of the Secret Avenue crossing. The 1948 Mack pumper (750 GPM) was "practically demolished" when it was struck by a Seaboard Coastline train. The apparatus had pulled onto the tracks to fight one of three brush fires in the Camp Sutton area. Police were contacted to notify the railroad, and were informed that they had forty-minutes until the next rain. Firefighters were attempting to back the truck off the tracks when the train approached. Two firemen at a distance tried to flag the engineer. The train was traveling about 25 MPH at the time of impact. The engine was knocked down an embankment. The truck was expected to be a total loss.

May-Jun 1970 - Conover tanker overturned while responding to a barn fire. The apparatus was struck broadside by a Chevrolet automobile, which caused the truck to spin and overturn. The apparatus operator was pinned under the apparatus until "some twenty persons lifted the truck sufficiently" to slide him free. Firefighter Ronald Kaylor, 37, suffered lacerations, broken ribs, and a lapse of memory. He was transported to Catawba Memorial Hospital. The driver of the car entered the "crossroads under a green traffic light" and did not see or hear the approaching fire truck. No charges were filed. Both vehicles were destroyed.

Mar-Apr 1972 - Burlington engine declared a total loss after striking a car and then the wall of a building. The apparatus was responding to a warehouse fire. The apparatus operator swerved to avoid a collision at an intersection. The American LaFrance pumper struck the car, and then struck a wall. The driver of the fire truck was transported to the hospital for treatment of lacerations of the head, arm, and legs. See photo above.

Jul-Aug 1972 - West Yadkin (Yadkin County) apparatus caught fire while crews battled a woods fire. The apparatus was driven into a "broom-sage field" that was subsequently ignited by the truck's exhaust. The tires and seats were burned and the paint blistered. The apparatus was valued at \$8,000 to \$10,000 and declared a total loss.

Jan-Feb 1973 - Two Henderson fire trucks collided while responding to a house fire on West Andrews Avenue. Three firemen were injured, one seriously. Fire Chief Ranger Wilkerson said the accident happened when "the two vehicles were attempting to get in position to fight the fire." One truck backed into another. The three firefighters riding on the tailboard were pinned between the trucks. Firefighter Richard Moore, 44, received multiple fractures of both legs and was transported to Duke Medical Center. Firefighters Marshall Atkinson, 29, and Walter Fuller, 24, were treated at Maria Parham Hospital for leg and hip injuries. The trucks had passed the residence that was "poorly marked with street numbers." Damages were estimated at \$4,500 and \$5,000 for the trucks.

Nov-Dec 1973 - Kinston pumper-tanker overturned on Highway 55 about eight miles north of town. The "county truck" was responding to a call at the "Biggy Kilpatrick residence at Kinston Route 1." The road conditions were wet, with a "driving rain." The apparatus was following a "county pumper" when a pedestrian flagged down the pumper, to give directions to the fire. Though the pumper successfully slowed, the pumper-tanker began to skid on the wet pavement in the curve. Another car was approaching and the driver attempted to pull the apparatus onto the shoulder to avoid a collision. The softened shoulder, weakened by about three inches of rain, "gave way" and the pumper-tanker "laid down on its side" in the ditch. The driver received a minor cut on his hand from the broken windshield. Damage was estimated at \$10,000.

Mar-Apr 1974 - Parkwood (Durham County) tanker overturned into a ditch while turning from Highway 54 onto Massey Road. The 1,300-gallon apparatus was responding to a reported house fire. It was turning "at a very slow speed" when the "load of water shifted." The apparatus turned on its side and then rolled "completely back on its wheels." There were no injuries. The truck was declared a total loss.

Jul-Aug 1974 - Forest Hill (Forsyth County) pumper collided with a car driven by a "couple on vacation from Chicago." The apparatus operator experienced a brake failure and was unable to stop. The 1960s (?) Mack was responding to an alarm and struck the second vehicle at an intersection. Both vehicles were believed to be total losses. The apparatus operator was not injured. The two occupants of the car received minor injuries.

Jul-Aug 1974 - Wilmington pumper collided with a car at the intersection of North Fourth Street and Nixon Street. The 1966 pumper experienced a brake failure while responded to a reported house fire, that was actually an automobile fire. The engine was traveling approximately 20 MPH at the time of the accident. It had been traveling faster, but the driver "geared down" as they approached the intersection. Damage to each vehicle was estimated at \$1,500.

Nov-Dec 1975 - East Side (Randolph County) pumper declared a total loss after colliding with a tractor-trailer truck at an intersection on Highway 65. Two firefighters were slightly injured. Estimated losses for both vehicles was approximately \$35,000. See above photo by Griffin Craven.

Sep-Oct 1978 - Black Mountain (Buncombe County) pumper crashed into an "occupied home." The American LaFrance pumper was "not on an emergency run" and was being operated by a reported "driver trainee." Nobody was home at the time of the accident. Damage to the structure and apparatus was extensive. See above photo by "Glenn."

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