

Lessons Learned from Jose Mata



Incident occurred in Yuma, Arizona in December, 2011
Presentation by Gary Smith
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Jose Mata Explains What Happened

- ❑ Use of PPE while doing routine – long sleeved shirt and overalls – took off gloves
- ❑ Value of training – pay attention - quick thinking – muscle memory
- ❑ Confidence in his plan to escape – knows prevailing wind conditions
- ❑ First people see Jose with vapor coming off of his body
- ❑ First sensation – Skin is very hot and then a million needles
- ❑ Value of glasses - frozen overalls - difficulty in running – heard frying noise
- ❑ Started taking clothes off instead of keeping water coming
- ❑ Cutting overalls off – Jose is sitting on a cement block, they are pouring water over his head and right shoulder – they took off his shirt – it was frozen to skin

Scott Melton, Jose, Sandra Review the injuries

- ❑ Western PreCooling Steps-up for Jose and for the industry
- ❑ Jose gets cold from inside-out, water causing colder sensation
- ❑ Transported with cloths on - medic unit and ER at Hospital contaminated
- ❑ Being mindful about frozen clothing and take shoes and socks off
- ❑ Experience of escaping from inside of the cloud rather than moving from the outside of the cloud
- ❑ Don't worry about your privacy – get the cloths off – it's far better than the burn center experience!

Summary Points by [Scott, Jose](#), and Gary

- ❑ Coldness associated with flashing gas – removing heat from the body
- ❑ Taking clothes off or touching his body created more pain
- ❑ In shock, pain sensitive, extreme chill – combative and pushed people away, resisted nasal cannula (for breathing support)
- ❑ Hands swollen and burned
- ❑ Breath like a fish and taste the air, don't breath in through your nose
- ❑ Decon or transport? Treating combative, semi-conscious victim – make the best choice from some very tough choices

Assistant Chief Dennis Light, Yuma Fire Dept.

- ❑ Good address, someone in charge to meet the fire department, personnel accountability, priority for first life safety concerns
- ❑ Personal protective equipment – firefighters don SCBA – be ready!
- ❑ Full decon – initial “hasty” decon followed by thorough shower remove all clothing (in pieces if necessary to prevent skin injury)
- ❑ Other medical interventions coordinated with the decon...but continue decon, especially eyes and respiratory and then body
- ❑ Water – shower, low setting fog for hasty decon, drench hose
- ❑ Alkaline burn awareness – don’t cover or use salves or oils
- ❑ Chaotic curve – coordination between first responders and industry

Jose and Scott Sum-Up the Bottom Line

- ❑ Last thought before passing out was Jose's young son; wedding rings
- ❑ Be careful, wear PPE, think about your family
- ❑ 17 days later, 20th of December, first sight was his son
- ❑ Bad day for the equipment was also a good day for the training; the team is a family, they didn't think twice on taking care of Jose
- ❑ Know what to do immediately – add that tool to your toolbox
- ❑ All of those who have had a near-death experience realize the importance of being ready to act and SURVIVE
- ❑ Power of positive thinking and the value of family, friends, and to do good things – appreciate your life! Please make the right decisions!!!