

# Report: Capt. fell from truck because of coat issue

Updated Sept. 14:

By Kathryn Reed

An internal investigation by Lake Valley Fire Protection District revealed the captain who fell out of a moving engine was taking off his coat and his gear got hung up on the door lever.

The firefighter, whose name has not been made public, had to be airlifted to a hospital after the Aug. 27 incident. While he was released a couple days later, he has not returned to work. He sustained a concussion, and injuries to his head, face and hands.

Lake Valley isn't saying if he isn't at work because of the injuries or if he was placed on leave.

The crew was on their way home after being at a vehicle accident near Strawberry that afternoon. The truck was going about 25 mph. The engineer who was driving was able to pull over about 54 yards from where the captain landed.

Fire Chief Tim Alameda would not answer questions. He merely said read the online report.

That report says, "Fire district personnel tested numerous scenarios related to how the passenger door opened. Based on a series of scene reconstructions, it is likely the movement of the fire captain in the seat resulted in the protective cargo pant covering to catch on the outer lip of the passenger door handle. This caused the handle to unlatch the passenger door, ejecting the fire captain."

The state has not made a finding yet. The Occupational Safety

and Health Administration has six months to each a ruling. "This is still an open investigation," Jeanne-Mairie Duval with CalOSHA told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The Lake Valley report states the captain had taken his seat belt off. This violates local and state law. It must be fastened at all times when a fire truck is moving.

Because Alameda isn't talking, it's not known if the captain or either of the two other firefighters who were in the engine were disciplined. The captain had the most seniority of the three.