

Shingle Springs man dies fighting fire

Updated 8:20pm:

Michael Hallenbeck, 21, of Shingle Springs is the firefighter who died Saturday fighting a small fire near Sierra-at-Tahoe.



Michael
Hallenbeck

He was a member of Organized Crew 36 on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

Hallenbeck was struck by a tree at approximately 5:30pm during the initial attack on the Sierra Fire, just inside the LTBMU boundary south of Echo Summit.

“Our hearts go out to the family, friends and fellow crew members of this brave firefighter,” Randy Moore, U.S. Forest Service Pacific southwest regional forester, said in a statement. “The loss of any member of our Forest Service family is a tragedy. The grief we are feeling at the sudden loss of two of our firefighters; Dave Ruhl last week on the Modoc National Forest and now Mike Hallenbeck on the basin, reminds us of the sacrifices these men and women make every day.”

The Sierra Fire is one of several dozen lightning-caused fires that began on multiple national forests in Northern California

on Aug. 8.

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The blaze in which a U.S. Forest Service firefighter died was caused by lightning in the backcountry of Sierra-at-Tahoe.

The firefighter's name has not been released pending notification of family. He was struck by a tree on Aug. 8.

The fire burned about one-tenth of an acre in "very rugged terrain," Lisa Herron with the U.S. Forest Service told *Lake Tahoe News*. The Sierra Fire was not burning in the ski resort boundaries.

Officials said there was no spread overnight, but crews are returning today to make sure no hot spots developed.

— *Lake Tahoe News staff report*