



Town of Falmouth
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NEWS RELEASE - 2019-03

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Falmouth Fire-EMS Responds to Multiple Grass Fires on side of Maine Turnpike

On Monday afternoon at 1:16 p.m. the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department was called to a report of a two possible grass fires on the side of the Maine Turnpike just north of Exit 53. Two Falmouth engines were dispatched and responded along with the Fire Chief. As units responded they were advised of multiple calls coming in to 911 stating that there was a grass fire at mile marker 53 and another one at mile marker 56. Chief Howard Rice requested a 3rd engine to respond from Falmouth based on the updated reports.

Chief Rice arrived on scene at exit 53 to find 2 separate small grass fires. One was right at the on-ramp between the on-ramp and the highway and another one was approximately 500 feet north on the side of the highway. In the distance there appeared to be smoke from a larger grass fire so Chief Rice directed incoming units to stop at the first fire and he continued north to investigate. At mile marker 54 there was a 3rd fire, a little bigger than the first two. About this time, dispatch advised of a large fire at mile marker 56 that had reportedly jumped the roadway and was spreading rapidly. Falmouth Engine 4 was directed to stop at the first fire at the on-ramp and then proceed to the 2nd one. Falmouth Engine 1 was directed to stop at the 3rd fire at mile marker 54, and Falmouth Engine 2 and Chief Rice responded to the 4th fire at mile marker 56. Chief Rice also requested 2 additional out of town mutual aid engines to respond to the Turnpike from the south. Portland sent 2 engines (Engine 11 and Engine 9) to the Turnpike.

Engine 4 extinguished the grass fire at Exit 53 then proceeded to the next one and put that out as well with the help of a truck and crew from the Maine Turnpike. Engine 1 stopped at the 3rd fire at mile marker 54 and extinguished it. Engine 4 also made it up to this fire and their crews assisted Engine 1.

Chief Rice arrived at the 4th fire and reported a fire that was approximately 100 feet long and 30 feet wide. It had not spread across the roadway, but it was going up a hill toward a large field. Engine 2 arrived, and crews were able to stop the spread of the fire before it got to the large field. The 2 Portland engines soon arrived, and their crews assisted the Falmouth crews with overhauling and putting out hot spots at the fire. The 4th fire was the largest of the fires and burned approximately ½ of an acre.

A Maine Forest Ranger arrived on scene to investigate the cause and to document the fires. It is estimated that a total of 1.5 acres burned along the turnpike. There were no injuries on scene. The fire crews were assisted with traffic control by the Maine State Police and the Maine Turnpike Authority crews. Cumberland Fire Department covered the Falmouth Central Fire Station.

End of release.

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