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Year of Death: 2002

The 5 firefighters were passengers in a van headed from Oregon to Colorado to fight the Hayman fire. There were a total of 11 firefighters in the van and a total of 8 vans in a caravan. The caravan had just stopped in Parachute, Colorado for food and fuel. As the vans traveled along a rural interstate highway, the 21-year-old driver of the van containing the 5 firefighters lost control. The van veered left onto the median and rolled a total of 4 times. The driver reached for a cup and was distracted when the van veered left.

Four of the firefighters died immediately and the fifth died on June 24, 2002, as the result of his injuries. Only 1 of the 5 firefighters that died was wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash. Four of the 6 surviving firefighters were wearing seat belts. The firefighters were traveling in a Ford Econoline E-350 Super Duty van. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that stretch vans such as the one involved in this crash are 3 times more likely to roll over when they carry 10 or more passengers. The NHTSA expressed concerns about vans manufactured by Ford, Chevrolet, GMC, and Dodge. The driver of the van pleaded guilty to 1 charge of careless driving and was sentenced to 50 hours of community service.

