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## Accidents/Vehicular

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Article published Friday, March 11, 2005

### 4 firefighters, motorist hurt in collision on Bancroft Street

Trapped crew members are rescued

By **CHRISTINA HALL**  
**BLADE STAFF WRITER**

Four Toledo firefighters and a woman were hurt yesterday when a fire engine, responding to a blaze, and a car collided at Ashland Avenue and Bancroft Street.

For 30 minutes, other Toledo firefighters crawled atop the truck's mangled metal, trying to extricate their four colleagues from the vehicle, which, after the initial impact, crashed into a tree and sheared off a power pole.

Fire Lt. Michael Duran and firefighters Tom Marciniak, Brian Schoen, and Matt Viertlbeck suffered nonlife threatening injuries in the crash that occurred while they were responding to a blaze at 4748 Violet Rd.

Their engine, No. 7, which was following a heavy rescue squad from the same station, collided with the car at 1:50 p.m. All were westbound on Bancroft.

The car's driver, Mercedes McDuffey, 20, of Homer Avenue, stopped for the rescue squad. She said she didn't hear the fire engine even though both rigs had their lights and sirens on, police Officer Dave McClellan said.

He said Ms. McDuffey, who may have been on a cell phone, pulled in front of the engine. The rig hit the driver's side of the car, which spun.



Rescuers extract their colleagues from the wreckage of a fire truck that struck a tree and a pole after colliding with a car.  
( THE BLADE/KEVIN NORTZ )

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The engine continued westbound and avoided several other vehicles.

"I looked out and saw the fire truck bouncing down the street and smoking," said Regina Warren, who works at the American Petroleum gas station at the intersection.

The engine driver, Mr. Marciniak, lost the air brakes and steering and the rig then slammed into the pole and the tree, Fire Chief Mike Bell said.

"All you could see was dust and smoke," said Terrance Johnson, 35, who saw the crash from a nearby market.

Mr. Marciniak and Mr. Schoen, who was in the back seat, freed themselves and began to help their colleagues while inside the damaged truck. Meanwhile, firefighters in the rescue squad - whose job it is to extricate people trapped inside vehicles - saw the accident in their rear-view mirror, radioed for help, turned around, and began the rescue effort.

Lieutenant Duran, 45, and Mr. Viertbeck, 29, were in fair condition at St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center. Mr. Marciniak, 55, and Mr. Schoen, 34, were treated at the hospital.

Ms. McDuffey was treated at Toledo Hospital, police said.

The accident remains under investigation.

Authorities believe the engine is a total loss. A new fire truck costs between \$250,000 and \$300,000. A spare truck will be used at station No. 7.

The accident cut power to 919 customers in the area. Power was restored last night.

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