

Firefighter in recovery

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An Amarillo firefighter who fell off a firetruck Saturday night remained in critical condition Sunday at Northwest Texas Hospital, the Amarillo Fire Department reported.

Brian Hunton, 24, who has been with the department for about two years, had surgery shortly after the accident and was in the hospital's intensive care unit late Sunday. Hunton's condition had stabilized, but he was not yet conscious, said AFD Capt. Bob Johnson.

"It was a quite a serious (head) injury," Johnson said.

The accident occurred about 10 p.m. when Ladder Truck No. 3 was responding to a fire in the 2600 block of South Polk Street. The truck left the Central Fire Station at Fourth Avenue and Van Buren Street and went north before turning right on Southwest Third Avenue.

While the truck was turning, Hunton, who was sitting in the back seat behind the driver, fell to the street, according to police reports.

It appeared at the scene that the truck door may have come open while the truck was turning. The truck was traveling at a relatively low speed at the time of the accident, reports said.

APD's Traffic Investigation Unit and the city of Amarillo's Risk Management Department are investigating the accident. AFD also has requested the help of the State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas, Johnson said.

"We just want to make sure that this doesn't happen again to our people," Johnson said.

AFD has also set up a fund at Amarillo National Bank to help Hunton and his family cope with his injuries, Johnson said.

Johnson said almost 50 firefighters came to the hospital to check on Hunton.

"It was word of mouth - no one told them to come down," he said. "It was really a neat

display of support and togetherness. We are like a family."

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