



County of Los Angeles

June 9, 2026

Dawyn R. Harrison  
County Counsel

**Board of Supervisors**

Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor, First District

Holly Mitchell  
Supervisor, Second District

Lindsey P. Horvath  
Supervisor, Third District

Janice Hahn  
Supervisor, Fourth District

Kathryn Barger  
Supervisor, Fifth District

TO: EDWARD YEN  
Executive Officer  
Board of Supervisors

Attention: Agenda Preparation

FROM: LILIANA CAMPOS  
Litigation Cost Manager

RE: **Item for the Board of Supervisors' Agenda  
County Claims Board Recommendation  
Ismael Carbajal v. L.A. County Fire Department, et al.  
Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 22STCV02846**



Attached is the Agenda entry for the Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation regarding the above-referenced matter. Also attached are the Case Summary and Summary Corrective Action Plan to be made available to the public.

It is requested that this recommendation, Case Summary, and Summary Corrective Action Plan be placed on the Board of Supervisors' agenda.

LC:tf

Attachments

## Board Agenda

### MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation: Authorize settlement of the matter entitled Ismael Carbajal v. L.A. County Fire Department, et al., Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 22STCV02846, in the amount of \$2,000,000, and instruct the Auditor-Controller to draw a warrant to implement this settlement from the Fire Department's budget.

This lawsuit arises from injuries Plaintiff allegedly sustained when two tires detached from a Fire Department truck and struck Plaintiff's vehicle.

## CASE SUMMARY

### INFORMATION ON PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF LITIGATION

CASE NAME	Ismael Carbajal v. L.A. County Fire Department, et al.
CASE NUMBER	22STCV02846
COURT	Los Angeles Superior Court
DATE FILED	January 24, 2022
COUNTY DEPARTMENT	Fire Department
PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AMOUNT	\$ 2,000,000
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF	GARY DORDICK, ESQ. Dordick Law Corporation
COUNTY COUNSEL ATTORNEY	MELISSA A. MCCAERTY Deputy County Counsel
NATURE OF CASE	<p>This incident occurred on September 29, 2021, when a Los Angeles County Fire Department vehicle had two of its tires become detached and roll into traffic striking the vehicle Plaintiff was driving. Plaintiff alleges he sustained injuries and damages.</p> <p>Due to the risks and uncertainties of litigation, a full and final settlement of the case in the amount of \$2,000,000 is recommended.</p>
PAID ATTORNEY FEES, TO DATE	\$ 92,878
PAID COSTS, TO DATE	\$ 102,244



## Summary Corrective Action Plan

The intent of this form is to assist departments in writing a corrective action plan summary for attachment to the settlement documents developed for the Board of Supervisors and/or the County of Los Angeles Claims Board. The summary should be a specific overview of the claims/lawsuits' identified root causes and corrective actions (status, time frame, and responsible party). This summary does not replace the Corrective Action Plan form. If there is a question related to confidentiality, please consult County Counsel.

Date of incident/event:	September 29, 2021
Briefly provide a description of the incident/event:	<p>On September 29, 2021, a Fire Fighting Construction Equipment Operator (FFCEO), was driving eastbound on State Route Highway 126 at Chiquito Canyon Road in the City of Castaic in a 2017 Dodge Ram 4500 ("Dozer Tender") when he felt a vibration.</p> <p>The Dozer Tender dropped towards the left corner and began to veer out of control. The FFCEO slowed down, gained control, and slowly drove towards the right shoulder of the road. As the Dozer Tender was coming to a stop, two tires dislodged from the Dozer Tender and rolled eastbound on the highway. As vehicles swerved to avoid the rolling tires, one of the tires hit another oncoming vehicle.</p> <p>At the same time, Plaintiff was driving westbound on State Route Highway 126, in the far-right lane and observed two tires bouncing towards his vehicle. Plaintiff was driving a 2005 Ford Explorer and was traveling approximately 55 to 60 MPH (the speed limit at this location is 60 MPH). Plaintiff applied his brakes, but one of the tires struck the front of his truck. The truck pulled to the left, crossed all lanes, rolled over, and came to rest on its side near the guardrail.</p> <p>Plaintiff was wearing his seatbelt at the time of the accident and was able to self-extricate from his vehicle. There was no airbag deployment and Plaintiff was ambulatory at the scene. He was transported BLS to the hospital by ambulance where he complained of pain to his head, neck, and back. He was prescribed medication and released later that day.</p> <p>CHP also responded to this incident. The CHP investigation determined the Dozer's left rear tire wheel nuts stripped from the bolts causing the tires to detach.</p>

1. Briefly describe the **root cause(s)** of the claim/lawsuit:

The Dozer Tender's left rear tire wheel lug nuts stripped from the studs.

The FFCEO failed to recognize signs of loose lug nuts or wheel during an apparatus check on the morning of the incident.

2. Briefly describe recommended corrective actions:  
(Include each corrective action, due date, responsible party, and any disciplinary actions if appropriate)

1. The Department now requires that lug nuts must be torqued to manufacturing specs by qualified personnel. Thus, when tires are changed in the field by vehicle operators, a final torque must be completed by Fleet Mechanics with calibrated wrenches.

The maintenance of the wheels and tires as well as ensuring the lug nuts were properly secured to the wheel studs is the responsibility of the Department. This was completed in August 2025.

2. The Department initiated an internal investigation into the incident on November 14, 2022. The Department reviewed the incident and determined that the FFCEO appropriately conducted the requisite visual inspections of the wheels and tires (including the rims and lug nuts) for the entire month of September 2021. Given this and his personnel history, he was issued a Notice of Instruction on November 29, 2022.

3. The Department issued an Executive Action to establish a standardized procedure to ensure that vehicle tires are properly secured after service, reinforcing expectations for follow-up torque checks, documentation of the mechanical verifications, and oversight practices.

The Executive Action directly addresses the mechanical factors that contributed to the wheel separation and supports operator awareness by reinforcing the importance of monitoring vehicle condition and reporting tire changes promptly so that follow-up checks can occur.

3. Are the corrective actions addressing department-wide system issues?

- Yes – The corrective actions address department-wide system issues.  
 No – The corrective actions are only applicable to the affected parties.

Name: (Risk Management Coordinator)  
Joanne Schaeffer

Signature:



Date: 4/23/26

Name: (Department Head) /  
Julia Kim on behalf of Fire Chief Anthony C. Marrone

Signature:



Date: 4/23/2026

**Chief Executive Office Risk Management Inspector General USE ONLY**

Are the corrective actions applicable to other departments within the County?

- Yes, the corrective actions potentially have County-wide applicability.
- No, the corrective actions are applicable only to this department.

Name: (Risk Management Inspector General)

Betty Karmirlian

Signature:

*Betty Karmirlian*

Date:

4/23/26