



Smokejumpers



by Meish Goldish

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Lightning Strike

It all started with a bolt of lightning on a summer afternoon in July 2012. The lightning struck a tree in a part of Montana's Lolo National Forest called Rattlesnake Wilderness. In an instant, the tree burst into flames like a giant match. The fire quickly spread to other trees. In no time, a **wildfire** covered the area.

A wildfire burning in
a forest in Montana

Nearby, an airplane was on **fire patrol**. When the plane's pilot saw smoke rising from the forest, he immediately radioed fire officials on the ground. The wildfire was moving up a hill that had no roads. Officials knew that firefighters on the ground would have a hard time reaching the blaze. This was a job for smokejumpers!



Smokejumpers are firefighters who **parachute** from airplanes to reach wildfires. They often need to land in **remote** areas where there are no roads.

Ready, Set, Jump!

Eight smokejumpers at a **base** in Missoula, Montana, were sent out as the **first responders** to the wildfire. Their base was about ten miles (16 km) from the blaze. The firefighters quickly put on their padded jumpsuits, strapped on their parachutes, and boarded an airplane. When the plane was flying over the **jump spot**, the smokejumpers leapt out.

These smokejumpers landed near a wildfire in Alaska. Sometimes, smokejumpers land as close as 25 feet (7.6 m) from a fire!



Smokeyjumpers have bases in several western states, including California, Alaska, and Montana. These states are places where many wildfires occur during the summer months.

As the smokejumpers fell through the air, their parachutes opened. They guided themselves to the ground near the fire by tugging on their parachute straps, or toggles. The jumpers had to steer carefully. Why? One wrong move could cause them to be blown off course and into the flames.



A jumper who accidentally lands in a tree will tie a rope to a branch so that he or she can climb down to the ground. The jumper may have to climb more than 100 feet (30.5 m)!

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About the Author

Meish Goldish has written more than 200 books for children.
His book *Disabled Dogs* was a Junior Library Guild Selection in 2013.
He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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Smokejumpers

On a July afternoon in 2012, a bolt of lightning struck a tree in Montana's Lolo National Forest. The tree burst into flames and the fire quickly spread, sending clouds of smoke into the sky. Soon, a small plane appeared overhead. Several smokejumpers dropped out of the plane and parachuted to the ground near the blaze, ready to fight the wildfire.

Look inside to find out more about these courageous firefighters and how they use their quick thinking and expert skills to battle wildfires. You'll also go behind the scenes to learn how smokejumpers train for their jobs so that they are ready to spring into action at a moment's notice.

Aviation Firefighters City Firefighters Hotshots

*Marine Firefighters **Smokejumpers***

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