

# **Car smashes into pole, becomes engulfed in fire; occupants air lifted to St. Louis**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - A car lost control and collided with a pole, then ignited into a blazing fire before firefighters extinguished it about 1 p.m. on Thursday at Landmarks Boulevard and Ridge Street in Alton.

The crash occurred in the Kentucky Fried Chicken/Taco Bell parking lot and workers came out with fire extinguishers to assist until the Alton Fire Department quickly arrived. Alton Fire Chief Bernie Sebold said it was one of the worst motor vehicle accidents he had covered in his 24 years of fire service and 22 years with the Alton Fire Department.

"The vehicle was headed westbound on Landmarks toward Downtown Alton when it left the roadway and struck the light pole in the Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell parking lot on the passenger side of the vehicle," Sebold said. Sebold was one of the first to arrive on the scene and he pulled out a fire extinguisher from his vehicle to assist, then firefighters arrived about 30 seconds later.

Firefighters and Alton Police Department members did an excellent job at the scene, Sebold said, extinguishing the fire and assisting the two victims, a driver and passenger.

"The firefighters pulled a hose line from the truck and put water on the fire. They quickly got occupants out of vehicle to be transported," Sebold said. "They were both transported by ambulance to local hospitals and sent by helicopter to St. Louis for burn injuries."

Sebold said the car fire made the situation even worse.

"Frequently we deal with extricating victims from a car accident, but when a vehicle is on fire it compounds the situation and makes it worse for the patients involved," he said. "My fire department members and Alton Police did a fantastic job getting the patients removed and to the hospital. The Alton Police Department is now on the scene doing reconstruction."



