

Resource use v time factors

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What do we mean by this title and how does it fit into the rescue environment?

At nearly every incident we attend where there is a casualty involved;

I'm sure we will all agree that the casualty/patients need to be transported to a facility that can provide lifesaving care at the earliest opportunity, therefore the time that they are on scene and in transport needs to be reduced as much as possible.

How can this be achieved? We already know that there a myriad of factors and ways we can reduce those times, Rescuers are developing in road crash rescue all the time and have progressed along way over the last few years with developments in equipment and medical research/intervention.

Training is taking a better direction being more casualty centered with new skills, safer and more efficient ways of working.

As rescuers we still get times when we become too focused or don't fully understand the situation to direct/orchestrate the rescue in a logical sequence of actions, or to orchestrate a well-run systematic approach.

Everything that we do needs to add to the overall objective, which is a safe, time focused, casualty centered, controlled removal of the casualty into a form of medical transport. The quicker we can get the casualty/patients into lifesaving care "hospital" or in some cases it may be to remove them from the vehicle to allow roadside medical intervention that cannot be carried out in situ within the confines of the vehicle.

One example of where we don't get this right, which as a rescuer I have observed on many occasions is at the early stages of arriving on scene the focus seems to be on setting up an equipment staging area (always a topic for debate) which we won't go into here.

There will be occasions with minimal crewing where this needs to be carried out, or when resources allow it to be established alongside simultaneous activity. At more complex, larger incidents we may need to set up logistical areas while command teams are formulating a rescue plan.

One example, you attend a two-vehicle incident with one vehicle resting on top of the other (half on half off) with two casualties in the lower vehicle you carry out a 360, send in your casualty carers and have your pump operator finish scene safety. You only have a crew of four. The fourth crew member then starts setting up an equipment staging area, nice and neat equipment sheet and then a structured layout of equipment.

Some would say there is nothing wrong here, I would agree to some extent, this is a general theme we see a lot, in reality you will make the right decisions based on what you are faced with, crew numbers and level of skills available to you.

The main goal is to extricate the person/s from the vehicle in a time factored way, or should we say as quickly as possible without compromising casual care, safety or good technical evolutions.

In the example mentioned above where we have the last crew member setting up an equipment staging area, would it be a better option to actually deploy them to start initial stability and get equipment into place so that when oncoming appliances arrive they can carry on with finishing the stability that has already been prepared for them (time save). I appreciate that for some this is not an option due to "SOP, s - regulations" operating procedures.

By working this way, we are adding to the end objective and reducing time on scene for the casualties. Everything we do on scene must contribute to the goals set by the OIC (officer in charge) and medical teams. The end goal is to get the casualty/patients to life saving care as soon as practically possible.

The equipment staging area will self-evolve in the location stipulated by the OIC as the incident progresses.

For me the debate is using a crew member to carry out tasks that are not at the early stages directly aiding the safe and effective resolve of the incident.

Yes we need an equipment staging area, do we focus resources at the early stages to set one up or could they be better used to carry out technical tasks that will help speed up the rescue phase?

I liken this to the first stages or compartment firefighting, evidence has shown that what happens i n the first 5 minutes or our attendance can have a huge impact on the outcomes of the incident. In our case the future recovery and rehabilitation of the casualties.

Use your resources effectively and prioritise tasks based on the situation and skill sets of your crew, do not make the judgmental error of having crew members at the early stages carry out tasks that do not directly contribute to the speedy resolve of the incident. That said, safety is a must and should be a priority to safeguard on scene rescuers.

Yes we will need an equipment staging area as stated already, but when does it become a priority task with minimal crewing, can we do other progressive jobs to aid recue such as, place stability equipment so that its ready, could we peel and reveal earlier on in the incident, could we assess internal space creation and so on.

This is a difficult topic to cover by text; a better way is to have that debate and dialogue.

A good topic for debate let me know your thoughts – rtc.rescue@gmail.com

The most
dangerous phrase
in the language is "we've
always done it this way."

RTTC Rescue