

## What do we do to protect the casualty ?

Having witnessed myself, and been privileged to information from colleagues that have attended incidents with similar problems, I thought I would post this information on casualty protection at RTC's

As we all know after our own safety the **casualty is the primary** concern, there are many hazards at an RTC/MVA that can have an adverse effect on the casualty, such as glass dust or shards, flying projectiles, debris falling from the roof during removal, glass shards from a broken sun roof, bits of plastic from cutting and peel and reveal techniques, weather conditions and so on.

Many fire services nowadays carry some kind of casualty protection sheeting, are they always used? There is no room for cutting corners when it comes to casualty treatment and protection.

One of the best and cheapest pieces of casualty protection we can use is a clear plastic sheet or even a large piece of bubble rap, bubble wrap is great as it also offer insulation in cold conditions. There are also purpose made sheets with clear windows in them for casualty protection, these sheets will completely cover the casualty and the medic during the extrication / space creation phase. They allow light in and help prevent the casualty feeling claustrophobic



In these pictures you can see that the casualty and the medic are completely covered in a clear sheet this will protect the casualty from most debris and glass shards. If we carry these sheets, we should be using them!! However always consult with the medic / doctor before hand to make sure that it will not hinder any medical interventions.

The use of casualty protection should be common practice at all RTC's/MVA's where any space creation or glass management will take place. Again common sense should dictate when you use it during the incident.

Also consider the use of Bump hats, hearing protection, eye protection and possibly even respiratory protection if no positive pressure oxygen is being used, which will be on rare occasions.

If we are cutting laminated glass then additional sheeting should be used across the width of the windshield for extra protection along with hard protection. (teardrop)

The teardrop is another common piece of equipment used today for casualty protection when carrying out any cutting, spreading and ramming.



We must **never** place hard protection between undeployed airbags and the casualty. If there is an accidental deployment of an airbag there is the real risk of projecting the Teardrop with considerable force into the casualty or rescuers, possibly causing serious or fatal injury. So we must think about using soft protection.

When using a Teardrop don't be shy, get a grip of it firmly and use it for maximum effect, I have observed on many occasions rescue personnel holding it with little control and thought as to what its full purpose is, if it is not held firmly will it stop any projectiles, or will the teardrop be knocked from your grip? Its there for a reason so use it correctly. Yes it is just a piece of plastic how hard can it be I hear you ask, look around when you next see it in use and perhaps you may think differently. After all we are using it for a reason!

rtc rescues