

## Heavy Rescue - Recovery Agencies

Why we need to work closely with these agencies



Having spent many years developing and working in the rescue environment it has become very apparent that we should broaden our cross platform relationships.

Often we talk about a close working relationship with the Police and Medical teams, which is extremely important to aid the progression of rescue.

When was the last time you thought about the other agencies such as recovery teams? I have been on many an incident where we have needed their assistance to carry out a rescue, but for most they are an after thought as we prepare for the recovery phase of an incident.

There are key points that we need to answer to allow for a sound understanding.

- Do we have such a facility (recovery team) local to our response area
- What are the response time frames
- Do we have a good working relationship with these teams
- What or how much knowledge do we have about their capabilities and how can we assist them on scene

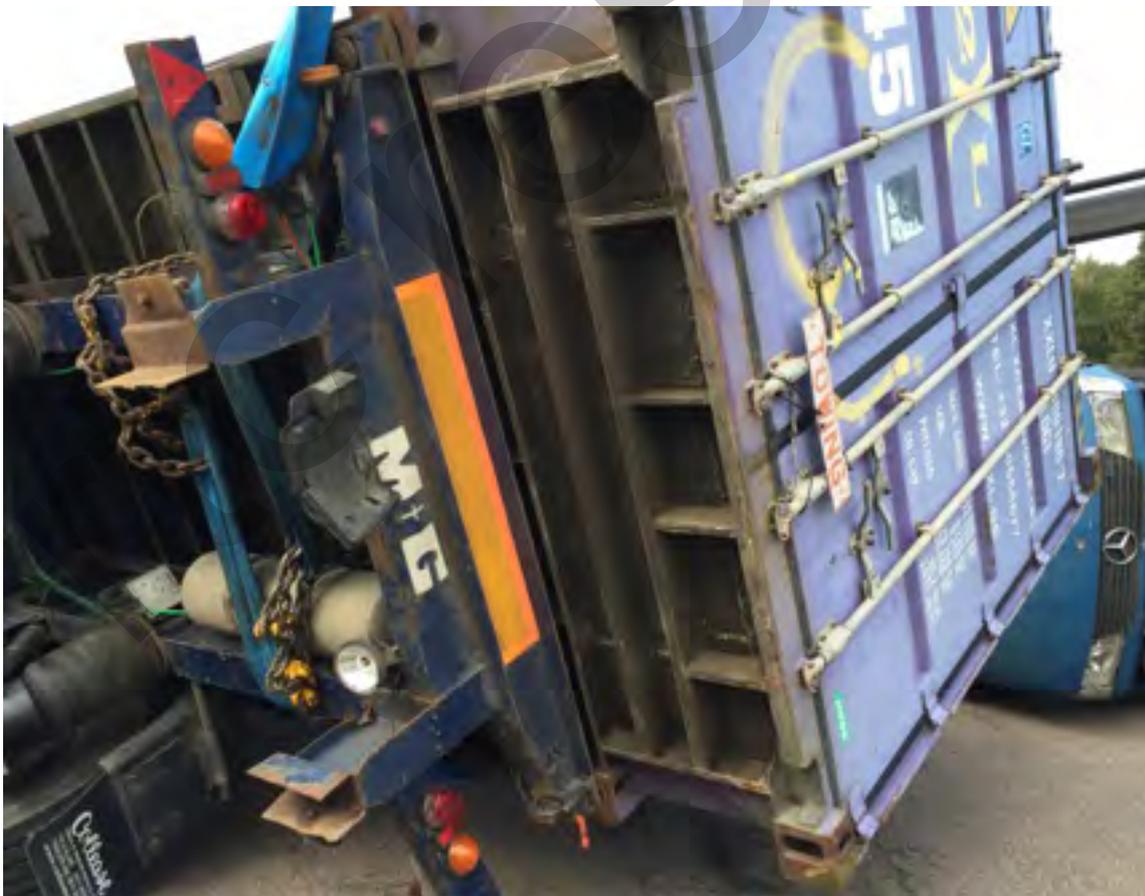


- What are the logistics of using such teams
- Are they on any PDA (pre determined attendance) for heavy vehicle incidents
- What local arrangements are already in place
- Who will pay for their services

These are but a few of the areas we need to take into account:

Lets have a look at each one.

- Firstly to make it a viable option one would suggest that a local recovery partnership should be formed, we may well have one based several miles away, think about this, we will have to wait for their attendance, with todays advancements in medical intervention and working practises post hospital, we only have so much time available to wait for these experts to arrive on scene, remember that heavy recovery units do not travel at our response speeds.
- We have already mentioned that recovery vehicles are not as quick to respond due to many logistical factors, we must look at the resources we have available within our county and projected response times.
- Good working relationships between recovery/rescue teams in a pre-incident environment. For most we train and work with the other emergency services on a regular basis and in most cases work very well together, but I ask you this, when was the last time you worked with a private recovery team? Do you know them, are you aware of the working procedures they use, are you fully versed in what they can achieve on scene? Again these are the many factors that need to be addressed.



- We make arrangements for these teams to attend incidents, but what do we actually know about them, do we just expect that they will arrive on scene and make good the mess we face? Perhaps we should take some time and form a better relationship with these teams so that we can better prepare for their arrival and in most cases work with them to achieve a quicker resolve.
- To be able to effectively use these teams there needs to be a system in place to get them quickly to the scene of operations, what do you already have in place if anything, to make this happen?
- How long into an incident is it before it is decided that they are needed? How much time has passed, have we reduced the survival time of the casualty/s by increasing the rescue time?
- One would suggest that heavy recovery teams be added to the PDA for certain incidents? That way we have them on route if needed, this in itself can reduce rescue times, which is the basis for a better outcome in most cases.
- What financial arrangements have been made, recovery agencies in some cases respond for free, if they are needed to carry out a rescue/recovery they claim back fees from the insurance companies. This would have to become a localised agreement.

There are many issues that need to be thought through and planned out. Its now time that we need to accept that these experts are actually a huge benefit to the rescue scene when heavy objects/ vehicles have been involved, most have many years of experience and can advise emergency services on the best plan of action, they also have the equipment on hand and are experts in its use.



When faced with a large road vehicle in a testing position (on its side/angle) are we happy with managing a quick lift to free a trapped casualty? If it was a curtain sider or a tanker, would we know the best places to place our lifting systems, making sure we do not compromise the integrity of the unit we are lifting, such as puncture the side wall of a tanker, creating an environmental catastrophe.

In the pictures above, taken with permission from "Heavy Rescue consultant John Coupland" at the Emergency services show, you can see how effective they are and what can be achieved, this HGV was being moved around like a toy, an excellent demonstration of the skills these guys have.

Vehicle recovery agencies should be involved in emergency planning. As much as we preach about interagency cross platform training with medical, police and other rescue services, we need to start bringing heavy vehicle recovery agencies into the fold.

Lets work closely with these teams and get them on the road to all incidents involving heavy vehicles, they have the experience and equipment to greatly enhance our overall rescue capabilities, which should not be ignored.

As always I welcome your views [rtc.rescue@gmail.com](mailto:rtc.rescue@gmail.com)

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