

Rescue Services Training Together

The Introduction

Planning and Preparation are essential skills for the professional in whatever field of activity he/she specialises. The lecturer would never take to the rostrum without planning the presentation, the footballer would never take to the field without careful planning of tactics. The recent Diamond Jubilee was a great success, not only, because it had been planned and prepared for very carefully, but also because the many different agencies taking part had been involved in the input and so each and every individual new exactly what they had to do.

In the emergency services the planning and preparation for various scenarios is carried out on a regular basis but always as an individual team, specialising in their own expertise, which is commendable but it lacks the overall picture of a group exercise involving more than one speciality.

On an individual basis most personnel strive to better their performance in the many and varied tasks in which they are trained, keeping upto date with new techniques and modern equipment. This should be encouraged by the management and indeed taken further by the possibility of cross-training with other agencies likely to be involved in emergency situations. If this avenue of expertise has not been explored then perhaps now is the time to push it forward.

Today the most common emergency where many agencies are involved is undoubtedly the Road Traffic Collision (RTC); the release of any individual/s from this situation is duly praised, but could the service that is delivered on site be bettered by a greater understanding of what others, involved in the recovery, are doing?

Does the reaction by the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) satisfy the reaction of the Medical Service, do they work in harmony, are they a well oiled machine? Who takes the lead? Who has the knowledge to take the lead? The action of one group is very dependent on the action of the other. What is the way forward when the FRS is looking for medical advice so that they can formulate a plan and the medical team is looking at space creation and the guidance of casualty removal? In this uncertainty both sides of the operation are looking for someone, with appropriate knowledge to take a leadership role so that time is not wasted through lack of understanding of each others role and how it is carried out. To add to this potential difficulty consideration must be given to the involvement of the police and the importance of their presence in overseeing the scene and the authority they carry in helping to manage the scene.

These many questions do raise issues of performance standards; although physical rescue and on site medical intervention have made impressive inroads to giving the best possible outcome to casualties, now might be the time to give consideration to cross training work shops whereby all agencies can see the difficulties that each discipline must deal with at an incident.

Such a move would undoubtedly enhance even more the success rate of many incidents and would further consolidate the "on job" experience for those less experienced individuals.

It is a fact that when money is scarce the first savings to be made are by reducing training costs and in the current financial climate no one would disagree.

In the "Fire Rescue Service" (FRS) the current training is minimal on a basis because of the lack of funding; even used cars are difficult to come by! How can skills be enhanced without the necessary materials? Is it possible to make a sensible training program?

Interestingly enough although money is scarce there has been an increase in the sale of motor vehicles by about 6% so far this year (June 2012) and statistically this would suggest that there will be more road traffic collisions!

The "Fire and Rescue Service" (FRS) are finding themselves attending more road based incidents than in past years, not because there has been an increase, its because we have a better understanding of the casualty centered approach and the need to attend this type of incident to facilitate a quicker resolve.

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/reported-road-casualties-gb-main-results-2010>

However, in the early stages of cross training there would be no requirement for major resources, training can be carried out as a paper exercise where many questions can be answered and many scenario's explored and all ranks can attend.

Initially the training sessions would be classroom based and entail the basic requirements and responsibilities of each agency being explained. From this first important step progress can be made and from this it would be possible to prepare a constructive training program, which is acceptable to all involved. From a cross training perspective it is important to be able to walk before running.

The key is to establish regular training sessions where the difficult questions can be answered and every one involved knows exactly what is going on and how it is going to be achieved; good communication. Inter Agency training is also paramount for good Preparation and Planning.

We constantly preach the term casualty centered rescue, but what does this really mean if we are not working effectively together?

Casualty Centered is the action that is taken on scene that is focused on improving or stabilizing the casualty's outcome and well being.

Summary

Whilst the Rescue and Medical services in this country are second to none there is always room for improvement whether that is on an individual basis or team basis. Any rescue should be seen as a team effort of everyone (all agencies) involved and this attitude is essential to create the dynamics of a multi agency casualty centred rescue.