


Topic for Discussion!

Fire Rescue Guidelines from Mercedes

Report by Len Watson

An informative report for discussion and study - This report has been produced in Adobe portable document format (pdf) and can be downloaded and saved. It has been secured to prevent unsolicited changes and published on the net for your benefit and the purpose of sharing information to stimulate interest and invite comment from rescue professionals. Within Adobe Professional 6 or later, the facility exists for notes to be made and placed on the document wherever the reader considers appropriate and can be saved when closing the document. Simply right click the mouse and select the available tool/option you wish to use.

In the interest of sharing information we would ask the reader to consider sharing their views and comments with other rescue professionals. To send, simply follow the instructions and attach your notes file using the Reply icon at the end of this document. We at resQmed will respect your confidence and will only ever release information on our study site with your permission.

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Rescue Guidelines from Mercedes -

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Overview

While it is all very good for Mercedes Benz to produce rescue guidelines for the emergency services they should stop short as far as extrication evolutions and trauma care are concerned, One must suspect their motives as these productions fall far-short of good practice in terms of the real-world situation where persons are trapped in-vehicle.

It is true that fire departments are very much in need of information on new vehicle technology and risk assessed control measures and critical risk information, but to gloss over the subject must surely be tantamount to neglect and the dissemination of disinformation on their part.

To look through 'Guide for Rescue Services - Passenger Cars' we see that these publications are for world-wide distribution on the internet and in several languages. They all begin with an overview of 'Patient Suitable Rescue'. To quote Mercedes

Daimler Chrysler claim that their top priority has traditionally been to guarantee the highest possible standards of safety. Their guidelines contain various methods for rescuing crash victims from a vehicle... and their statement continues... where they emphasise that these guidelines cannot be considered exhaustive and on no account should they, nor are they intended to, act as a substitute for specialist training and specialised

So why did they bother in the first place? That's one for you the reader to think about.

Argument

So that we are under no illusion, the purpose of 'extrication' is to release the casualty and deliver them to a critical care facility in a similar or more stable condition than when the operation began' - Robert Walmsley. To expound further on this, it is now recognised that to suitably 'rapid access' the casualty with a view to retrieval and/or stabilisation and to secure their release in-line with critical care management, is the optimum way forward.

The realisation of good extrication evolutions must be measured by the above criteria. In terms of patient care Mercedes gloss over an introductory logic that is basically sound and redrawn from any number of the first aid manuals already in existence. After the introduction they 'don't let the patient get in the way of a bloody fine rescue'!

Before we go any further with this debate, we must appreciate that of the vehicle population, there are literally hundreds of models on our roadways, all of different makes, sizes and ages, and all with different specifications.

Overall the extrication evolutions Mercedes show in their productions are minimal and do not nearly cover all the vital areas of extrication. They have also fallen foul of the trap that we all did initially and show extrication techniques where the need for the particular technique being shown does not actually arise in the real world. This has culminated from the practise of using vehicles with minimal damage or no crash damage at all for training purposes.

The technical information is informative but they, as do all productions by other motor manufacturers, carefully avoid the real issues that rescuers really need to know the answers to. Instead Mercedes show some bad or inappropriate practises. Perhaps this picture depicting a real life situation will offer some enlightenment to Mercedes as to the real needs of rescue personnel fighting to save a life -



The most common front-seat entrapment (normally caused when converging vehicles meet or the car is in collision with a tree or lamp standard) where the roadwheel and suspension, wheel-arch, floorpan, windscreen pillar and doorpost, are driven back into the passenger space trapping the driver in the front-seat.

Discussion

Now Mercedes, in the battle to save life where do we begin? Tell us about immediate casualty care and gaining immediate access to open and maintain a vital airway when the paramedic arrives on scene first. How can the fire department de-energise a car when you have sited the battery under the drivers feet (Mercedes A class - Right hand drive) or placed the battery in anyone of several places. When called upon to perform a 'Rapid Extrication' do you really imply that we spend the time, using invaluable power hydraulics, to hunt out the battery when the spreader is urgently needed to quickly release restrictions on the deteriorating casualty trying desperately to breathe. Consider also there are many crashes where the battery will be inaccessible to disconnect e.g. under-rides, over-turned etc.

In forcing the front door nearest the trapped patient and removing the side of the vehicle (rear door complete with the B post), give us the inside story on how we safely manage undeployed SIP systems especially where the battery cannot be disconnected and energised wiring to electric seat controls, windows and doorlock solenoids run alongside wiring to a door mounted airbag. If short circuited, how many undeployed modules on the SIP system will deploy? Even where the battery has been disconnected, what are the risks from static accumulation - See [http://www.resqmed.com/Rescuer Beware Airbag.pdf](http://www.resqmed.com/Rescuer+Beware+Airbag.pdf)

This is just the tip of the iceberg. The subject matter is vast and has grown out of control over the last six years. Arguably you have left rescuers out on a limb and a prayer but more so, what have you and others in the motor industry created for their customers; those unfortunate enough to have a serious crash?

To say that you and the motor industry at large have gone some way, with the introduction of new designs and SRS, to reduce the 'Car User' fatality rate is a matter for debate. For those of you who wish to participate in this debate I would like to steer you towards the study program – <http://www.resqmed.com/SRSperspective.pdf>

Mercedes Reply

Awaiting input

Dear Rescuer

When you have read the Mercedes publications I would like to hear your comments. You may wish to give them a rating of between 1 – 10. Even better, if you should choose to treat these publications individually, give each a rating between 1 and 10. The professional rescuers' views are most important to the development of rescue, especially poignant and constructive comments. You may wish to create a list of pertinent questions that we can submit to the motor industry at large. I look forward to reading your communications and will add your comments under the heading 'Debate'.

We trust that this information will be treated with respect and not used to gain a 'knee-jerk' reaction. We are circulating this information with a view to inspire the informed study of Extrication Rescue. If you wish to contribute or have a query we would appreciate hearing from you.

Debate, Questions and Answers

Awaiting your input

References:

DaimlerChrysler - Guides for Rescue Services

http://information.aftersales.daimlerchrysler.com/dc_gsp-ti/0-751-572008-1-572552-1-0-0-0-0-0-8518-572008-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0.html

resQmed's free study program - First Impact

www.resqmed.com/SRSperspective.pdf

Crash Rescue - Vehicle Extrication Rescue and In-Vehicle Prehospital Trauma Care

www.resqmed.com/Crash_Rescue.htm

Rescuer Beware – The implication of airbag recalls

http://www.resqmed.com/Rescuer_Beware_Airbag.pdf