



BLOCK 5 - RESCUE

Lessons Learned

“A Good Plan, Violently Executed Now, Is Better Than a Perfect Plan Next Week.”

General George S. Patton

BLOCK PURPOSE:

The focus of this block was to evaluate our victim removal skills. Observations were focused on speed and efficacy, not on specific techniques or tasks. Scenarios were timed, and patterns of performance were reflected in crew speed.

Hopefully everyone left the drill with plenty of ideas for further discussion and crew-level drills. Following are some observations of best practices and areas for possible improvement that were noted across all shifts.

The times of each shift are at the end of the document

VICTIM LOCATION AND PACKAGING:

- Spending a long time coming up with a perfect plan utilizing multiple straps, complex packaging etc. took longer than quickly committing to a method and adjusting/asking for help as needed.
- If a victim isn't moving like you expect, figure out why; don't keep trying something that isn't working. A victim stuck between a wall and a mattress or with a shoulder in a door frame won't move. Assess the hangup, adjust as needed, and move.
- We are skilled as a department at task-centric, IPS-based scenarios where we are graded on deploying a strap properly or executing a specific drag. The “fire” in the basement drill was intended to force situational awareness. Isolating the victim by dirty dragging to a threshold or closing the door to the fire room isn't on an IPS skill sheet, but could save their life.
- We have a Mission Driven Culture. Whoever finds the victim needs to have a plan already built for size and presentation of various victims. Have a plan and own it.

VICTIM MOVEMENT:

- There were two main difficulties observed with strap use: issues adding a second rescuer to a drag, and making a corner before the victim when gripping the strap at the very end. Develop methods to effectively add a second person to a drag and negotiate corners.
- Exerting force from both ends of a victim wasn't productive *unless* rescuers were standing and able to get the victim off of the ground, and they paused for a moment to coordinate. Dragging and pushing at the same time resulted in the "pusher" driving the victim into the ground and hindering the "dragger."
- Crews that moved up stairs most efficiently moved head first, with 1 or 2 rescuers above to pull/lift and 1 or 2 to lift legs completely off the ground from below. Feet first and/or face down was a less effective method for movement up stairs.
- When lifting the victim out of a window the arm bar technique proved to work well when the victim's feet were to the window. When the victim was head to the window the two-person scoop was most effective. Conclusion: There are efficient techniques to remove a victim from the window regardless of their orientation.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

- The basement drill created a scenario where the victim's removal required a CO decision to use the entire crew for the rescue or split and continue the primary. A good litmus test would be to ask this question: by splitting my crew, are we delaying the exit of the victim out of the IDLH? If the answer is yes, then lean toward dedicating your crew to removing the victim and having another crew continue the search.
- When directing a crew member in zero/low visibility it was more effective to direct them physically vs. verbally. Pulling or pushing the rescuer's bottle left/right proved to be the best way to guide a rescuer who is dragging a victim backwards. This allowed the rescuer to focus on dragging the victim and not on where they were going.
- Crews who were able to avoid over-communicating were able to reduce "stop points" and continue forward progress. Less communication/chatter resulted in faster times across all crews and shifts. If scenarios are trained on and talked about *before* the event, very little talking needs to happen *during* the event.

SELF-EVALUATION FOR FTOs

- The goal of evaluating victim removal skills with the drill was met; however, few crews completed primary searches beyond finding and removing the victim. Designing scenarios to provide a "good rep" and not just an isolated task is always a challenge.

- Smoke machines were a constant issue, not everyone got the same zero-visibility rep.
- The red light and propane heater were easily ignored/overlooked as being “fire.”

SHIFT TIMES

BASEMENT DRILL			4TH FLOOR VES DRILL	
B SHIFT			B SHIFT	
3:01	AVERAGE		4:01	AVERAGE
2:15	FASTEST		2:53	FASTEST
4:58	SLOWEST		6:01	SLOWEST
C SHIFT			C SHIFT	
4:05	AVERAGE		4:47	AVERAGE
2:15	FASTEST		1:58	FASTEST
5:17	SLOWEST		6:55	SLOWEST
A SHIFT			A SHIFT	
4:37	AVERAGE		3:41	AVERAGE
2:18	FASTEST		2:29	FASTEST
7:24	SLOWEST		5:18	SLOWEST