



PHASES OF STABILIZATION

By Cris Pasto

After several years and several hundred cars, I've become comfortable with a concept which makes the process of stabilization a more orderly, more efficient process.

There should be several underlying goals in selecting a method for stabilizing a vehicle on its side or roof. They include safety, speed, repeatability in procedure, compatibility with various vehicles, patient access freedom, and extrication option freedom.

With common situations like the side resting and roof resting vehicles there is a degree of stabilization effort required that is unique to each situation. Vehicles with little damage resting on flat ground with no entrapment require very little effort, however vehicles with entrapment are going to require more precautionary measures to accommodate the extrication. Both situations have the similar starting points, however they differ in how far they progress in sophistication.

Neither stabilization effort has an end until you leave the scene. I'll quote Ron Moore's phrase a thousand times which is, "stabilization is one thing that never ends" until the call is over.

Certain crashes only require so much in terms of stabilizing, however, others require a significant amount and the situation may be dynamic in that the stabilization will evolve as the extrication methods employed get more sophisticated.

Patient access is a vital event which should take place very early in the rescue. Unnecessary delays in getting to the victim don't do a whole lot in terms of public relations, and do even less for the patient's well being. Completely prepping a scene for a sophisticated evolution prior to patient access could leave the patient unattended for an undue amount of time.

I believe in performing enough stabilization to safely access the patient, and continue the process of stabilization during the patient access phase to accommodate the anticipated future operations. This would involve employing more equipment, beefing up restraints, checking purchase points, or adding redundant supports.