

Noise on the rescue scene

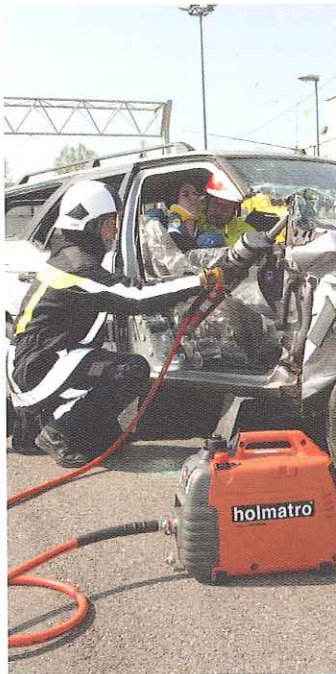
Holmatro's Ian Dunbar reports on attaining high standards of casualty-centred rescue

The concept of extrication being casualty-centred is well established and as technical rescuers we are now more considerate than ever towards the needs of the victim and the medical interventions they require. A rapid and reliable assessment of a critically-ill casualty will provide the information upon which an extrication plan can be formulated. Without knowing the degree of entrapment and the nature and extent of their injuries, a casualty-centred rescue cannot be planned or performed effectively. The casualty's condition is the fundamental basis of your extrication plan. But can we further improve our casualty-centred approach by taking care of a more basic issue which affects every rescue scene?

Communication is Vital

A look at any reference to pre-hospital primary and secondary surveys will place great emphasis on looking, listening and feeling to identify time critical injuries. The role of the medic is to perform these surveys to establish the casualty's condition and provide a base line by which subsequent reassessments can be measured. If there are high levels of noise on the scene, it is more difficult to assess the casualty's vital signs and simple communication between the medic and victim (which is also important to establish and monitor conscious level) is also compromised.

Every rescue scene will produce noise. But like any other variable, this must be controlled. For



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safety and to ensure effective working, on scene communication amongst crews is vital. However, this must be considerate to the role of the medic. A clear briefing performed at an appropriate distance from the vehicle, coupled with understanding of tactics and tools that are required, will reduce the need for unnecessary communication and noise on the scene.

Intelligent Use of Tools

Your equipment, by its very nature will produce noise. However, intelligent use will reduce the noise emissions that directly affect casualty care. Ideally your hydraulic pump should produce the minimum noise levels, even during tool operation. It should be positioned at an appropriate distance so as to allow effective working but not affect communication, and because of this it should be compact, light and easy to carry. When hydraulic tools are no longer required, your pumps must be turned off. This will ensure that during the critical extrication phase, the physical removal of the casualty is well controlled and not compromised in any way.

Of course it is not possible to work in silence, but the medic's role requires noise levels to be kept to a minimum. Choosing the right equipment and adopting the right tactics to reduce noise, will assist this vital communication and promote a more casualty-centred rescue and also maintain the safety of crews on scene.

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