

RESCUE POINTS TO PONDER

BY RAY DOWNEY

The events depicted in these photos offer a number of points to ponder. We'll give you a few, in no particular order of importance. Write to us with your own operational considerations of the scenarios depicted, and we'll publish them in a future issue.



Larkspur, California: Seven hundred cubic yards of rock collapsed off the side of a quarry wall. (Photos by R.C. HALL)

- How much of a concern is there about secondary collapse?
- What precautions would you take to protect the rescuers while they are operating?
- Will using heavy equipment affect the remaining wall? Could the vibrations cause an additional collapse?
- How do you set your priorities in beginning the search operation?
- Whom do you seek out for information regarding potential victims?
- Are there possible victims other than those in the automobiles? If so, how many?
- Where would you get the necessary heavy equipment?
- Would you rely solely on heavy equipment, or would you have rescuers perform a hand-by-hand search for trapped victims?

RAY DOWNEY is a battalion chief, chief of rescue operations, and a 33-year veteran of the City of New York (NY) Fire Department. The former captain of Rescue Company 2, he is the USAR task force leaders representative to FEMA for all 26 teams and is a member of FEMA's USAR Working Group for Equipment, Advisory Committee, and Technical Review Panel. Downey is also the author of the book *The Rescue Company*, the video *Rescue Operational Planning: Factors for Success*, and the video series *Collapse Rescue for the Fire Service*, published by Fire Engineering Books and Videos.



Virginia Beach, Virginia: A two-vehicle accident in which one car overturns results in severe injuries to passengers. (Photos by Martin Grube.)

- Is it necessary to have a charged handline in place during this type of operation?

- Is it more likely that there will be a fuel spill because the vehicle is upside down?

- Would you ever consider uprighting the vehicle prior to forcing the doors?

- Would you consider making entry through the rear window?

- How else could you stabilize the vehicle if you didn't have chocks, cribbing, and wedges?

- Would you stabilize only the rear of the vehicle?

- What precautions must you consider with regard to the exposed exhaust system, catalytic converter, etc.?

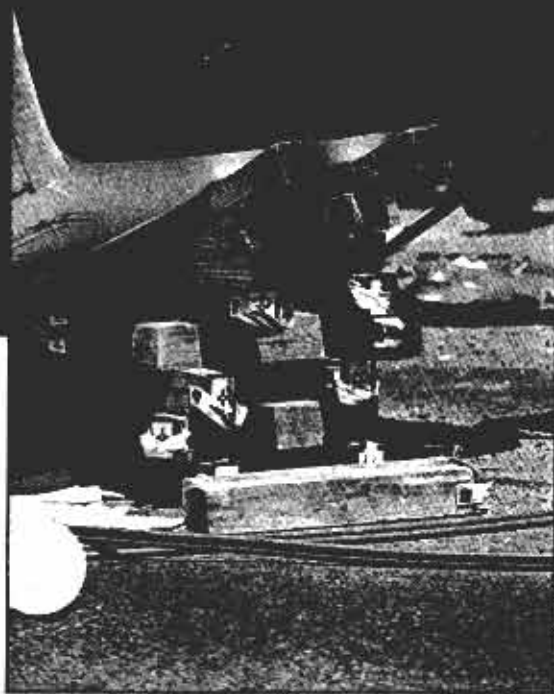
- What other points of entry would you consider for patient access?

- What is the "Golden Hour," and how does it relate to vehicle extrication?

- Is it necessary to wear protective clothing at these incidents?

- When and how should you protect the patient?

- Name as many safety issues as possible that need to be addressed during vehicle extrication incidents.



If you would like to submit photos for Apparatus, EMS, Prevention, or Rescue Points to Ponder, send them with a short description of the incident to: Points to Ponder, Fire Engineering, Park 80 West, Plaza 2, 7th Floor, Saddle Brook, NJ 07663.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIA BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT