

Crew Resource Management and Near Miss Reporting for Technical Rescue

Crew Resource Management

Crew Resource Management (CRM) originated in the late 1970's in response to improve aviation safety after a run of human error based aviation accidents. CRM concentrates on interpersonal communication, decision making, situational awareness and leadership. This management model can be successfully applied to the disciplines of technical rescue to reduce errors and injuries to rescuers and victims. When applied appropriately CRM can help to preserve traditions as well as provide a new way of thinking about risk management.

Technical Rescue incidents occur relatively infrequently, yet they demand a high degree of knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully mitigate the situation. This is classically defined as a high-risk, low-frequency operation on a risk-frequency matrix. We should have an extremely low tolerance for system failures, injuries or losing one of our own. It is incumbent upon every technical rescuer from the highest ranking member to the most junior member to operate with two parallel principals: to provide life safety and rescue services to our community. The other principal is to send our people safely home to their families after each mission or training.

Lessons Learned

Only a few select individuals will truly develop a mastery of skills based on actual hands on rescue; this known as experiential learning. To overcome this we classically provide training, education and testing to provide more experience. Additionally it is important to provide both transparency and a constructive way of completing a lessons learned and sharing this information within the rescue community.

Lessons learned shall be based on the following principals:

1. Identify areas of the incident that went well (strengths).
2. Identify areas of the incident that need improvement (missed opportunities).
3. Identify contributing factors of accidents, errors and failure points.
4. Provide recommendations on how to correct noted deficiencies.
5. Support the experiential learning concept.
6. Support near-miss reporting.

Near Miss Reporting

To err is human... When an error occurs it is important to recognize the value in sharing with the rest of the rescue community. A near -miss is an unintentional unsafe occurrence that could have resulted in an injury, fatality, or property damage. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented an injury, fatality or damage. There are many ways of sharing or reporting a near-miss; these may be as simple as a briefing of the team, an internet blog or a departmental safety bulletin. A valuable resource can be found at www.firefighternearmiss.com and allows users to anonymously submit a report, search the database and research learning materials. No matter what method you use is not what 's important, what is important that what you may have learned "the hard way" may prevent someone else from injury or worse.