

May 8, 2014

Fire Department and ABC Recycling combine forces to rescue people trapped in vehicles

Campbell River Fire Rescue crews are enhancing their skills thanks to a partnership with ABC Recycling.

Working together, ABC Recycling uses heavy equipment to set up vehicles on their property in simulated crash scenarios for emergency responder training. The vehicle arrangements can involve multiple vehicles, including small cars and pick-up trucks as well as commercial vehicles.

“Members of Campbell River Fire Rescue regularly arrive at crash scenes where they face the challenge of freeing people from vehicles, and the opportunity to train at the ABC recycling yard is an effective way to enhance those skills,” says Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Doherty. *“These types of training resources are difficult to come by, and we appreciate the opportunity to train our members in what we refer to as ‘auto extrication’ before the vehicles are taken apart or demolished.”*

Some of the tools crews use during training exercises include heavy hydraulics (known as the Jaws of Life), portable hand tools, vehicle stabilization equipment, air bags and pneumatic tools.

“Maintaining proficient knowledge and skill level is critical in the fire service, especially with vehicle construction and technology changing every year,” Doherty says. *“The enhanced safety features in passenger compartments of today’s vehicles – including multiple airbags and seatbelt pre-tensioners – as well as hybrid and electrical technology creates an elevated risk to emergency responders trying to rescue people trapped in vehicles.”*

The new arrangement is also an improvement on past practice of towing available vehicles to the Fire Hall for training and then transporting them back to recycle yards.

“This partnership reduces the logistical and financial challenges for all parties involved, not to mention we’re short on space for this type of training at the No. 1 Fire Hall downtown, and the sight of wrecked vehicles downtown was less than appealing,” Doherty adds.

Campbell River Fire Rescue responds to calls for road rescue on more than 450 square kilometres ranging from south of Sailor Road on the oceanside route, to Cranberry Avenue on the Inland Highway, west along Highway 28 to Buttle Lake, down Westmin Rd to Nystar Mine and north on Highway 19 to Amor de Cosmos towards Sayward.

###

Contact: Thomas Doherty, Deputy Fire Chief

250-286-6266