



[www.firefighternearmiss.com](http://www.firefighternearmiss.com)

## Report of the Week

**Stabilize for Safety.**

**11/18/2010**

**Report Number:** 10-0001186

Report Date: 11/08/2010 08:09

### Synopsis

Car not properly stabilized during extrication.

### Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly volunteer

Job or rank: Lieutenant

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 52 - 60

Years of fire service experience: 7 - 10

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Suburban

### Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc

Event date and time: 10/07/2010 17:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Equipment
- Decision Making

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury

### Event Description

Our unit responded to an MVC with entrapment. Extrication procedures were initiated. The vehicle was on its right side and the driver's door had to be forced with spreaders. I enlisted the help of another firefighter to help with the operation. The controls could not be reached from the ground. I climbed on top of the vehicle and popped the door. The vehicle was not properly stabilized for this type of operation and created a hazard for the personnel in and around the vehicle.

### Lessons Learned

Ensure that the proper equipment is available and properly utilized during the situation.

**Stabilize for Safety.**

1 of 2

## Report of the Week

This week's ROTW, [10-1186](#), takes us to the scene of a vehicle on its side with an entrapment. These scenes contain a multitude of possibilities for injury and probabilities for things to go wrong. The threats on the extrication scene can be found in the surrounding environment, such as the tools used to perform the work, the vehicle itself, and the actions of the extrication personnel.

*Our unit responded to an MVC with entrapment. Extrication procedures were initiated. The vehicle was on its right side and the driver's door had to be forced with spreaders. I enlisted the help of another firefighter to help with the operation. The controls could not be reached from the ground. I climbed on top of the vehicle and popped the door. The vehicle was not properly stabilized for this type of operation and created a hazard for the personnel in and around the vehicle.*

What seems like a good idea at the time is often looked at in the aftermath as an action that needed more thought. As the reporter cites in [10-1186](#), the risk assumed by the reporter did not take into account the hazard of the unstable vehicle or the risk to the other on scene personnel. Luckily, the reporter saw the value in sharing this incident so the rest of us can benefit; rather than normalize the act and repeat it until a tragedy forced a change of practice. This reporter has seen fit to interrupt an error chain before a lesson had to be learned the hard way. Once you have read the entire account of [10-1186](#), and the related reports, consider the following:

1. Review your department's SOP for vehicle stabilization. What practices do you use to stabilize the vehicle on its side?
2. Is there a safety officer assigned to your extrication scenes?
3. List 5 undesirable outcomes that could have resulted from this incident.
4. What alternative methods could be employed to remove the victim from the vehicle resting on its side?
5. What is the spreading force on your spreaders? How does that force impact an operator?

## Related Reports – Topical Relation: Vehicle Stabilization

[06-348](#)

[08-031](#)

[08-279](#)

[08-652](#)

[09-325](#)

Submit a report to [www.firefighternearmiss.com](http://www.firefighternearmiss.com) today, so everyone goes home tomorrow?

Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.