

# Casualty rescued from chaotic crash scene

Career firefighters from Perth Station exemplified best practice, teamwork and efficiency during a recent road crash rescue incident that saw a vehicle lodged under the collapsed facade of a building.

The car versus car collision in Newcastle Street, West Perth, resulted in damage to vehicles, a street light, a power pole and the exterior of a catering business. Arriving at the scene, responding firefighters were confronted with a car and driver trapped under tonnes of brick and concrete.

Station Officer Wayne Spear said the scene presented a number of operational hazards for Fire and Rescue Service crews and other emergency personnel, making it a complex incident response.

“There was glass, three tonnes of rubble on the vehicle and downed power lines,” Wayne said.

“Crews were also concerned about the risk of further structural collapse, damaged asbestos and live electricity in the building.

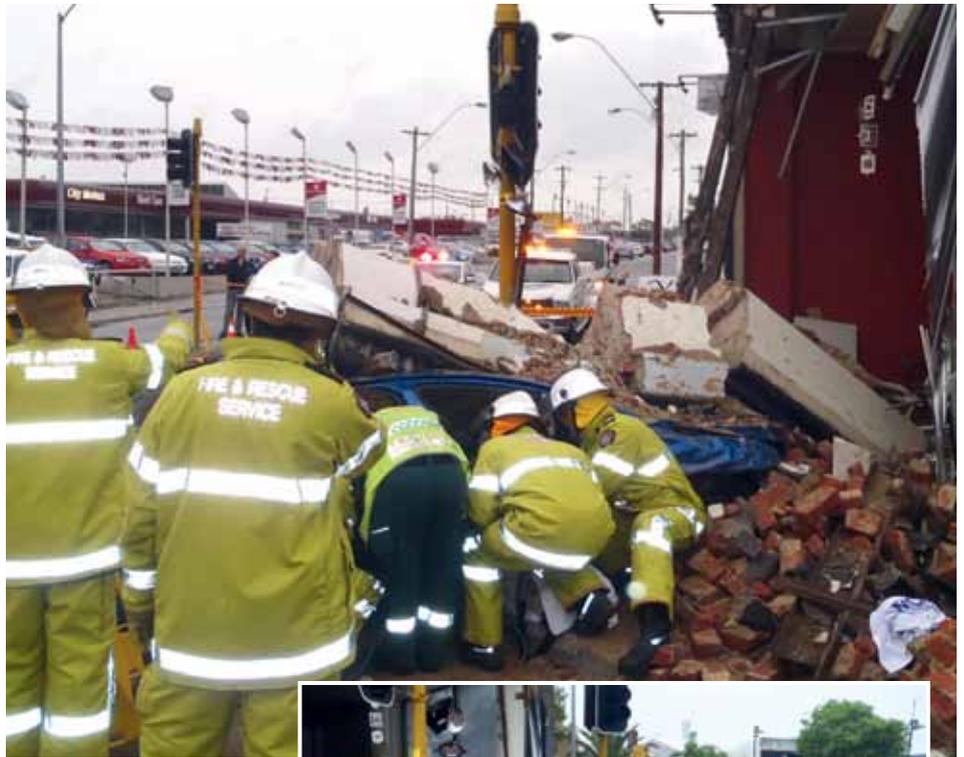
“All of these factors contributed to limiting access to the casualty.”

To balance the urgency of rescuing the injured driver and the safety of emergency personnel, the incident controller established a communication and management structure to coordinate the extrication.

Wayne said that whilst outer and inner working circles were established, a St John Ambulance paramedic assessed the casualty and briefed the station officer.

“This provided a time scale to work to, with consideration given to whether immediate removal or further treatment of the casualty was required before extrication,” he said.

“In line with usual practice, firefighters ensured the patient was well protected from glass and operating rescue tools.



- ▲ FRS crews work to free the trapped driver.
- ▶ The damaged car caught under tonnes of rubble.



“As part of the hazard management process, the vehicle battery was disconnected and spilt fuel dealt with by crews on standby fire management.

“Three teams of firefighters carried out the extrication with the use of hydraulic cutters and spreaders.

“Crews also helped to manage patient injuries, ensuring proper spinal care, lifting and transfer to the ambulance.”

Perth District Manager Syd Bignell and Acting Chief Operations Officer Lloyd Bailey attended the scene to provide operational support and an urban search and rescue perspective as part of overall incident management.

“This emergency response demonstrated best use of personnel, with experienced senior firefighters mentoring junior crew members,” Syd said.

“In the recovery phase of the incident volunteers from Northshore State Emergency Service helped the City of Vincent to stabilise the damaged building using acro props.

“The ability to operate with multiple action plans and coordinate the assistance of other agencies resulted in a complex incident being resolved successfully.”

Agencies that supported the operation included the SES, St John Ambulance, WA Police, Main Roads WA and the City of Vincent.