

A major crash involving two trucks saw firefighters and emergency personnel confronted with a tangled mass of twisted metal, piles of spilt grain and a driver badly trapped in the wreckage.



## Rescue goes with the grain

The incident occurred when a road train fully laden with grain and an empty farmer's truck collided on the Quairading-York Road.

The grain truck had overturned, coming to rest upside down. Its cab was largely flattened by the impact, trapping the driver by his feet.

Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service crews from Beverley, Quairading and York were first on the scene, followed by Ellenbrook Fire and Rescue Service.

They joined WA Police and St John Ambulance personnel who were also assisting the rescue effort.

Volunteer crews initially stabilised the rolled road train and began the laborious process of clearing a way through to the driver.

Quairading VFRS Captain Peter Hudson, a veteran volunteer with 37 years of operational experience, said it was one of the most challenging road crash rescues he had attended.

"The road train had ploughed into the bush, crashing through several trees and causing massive amounts of debris," Peter said.

"We couldn't see the driver at all, only hear his voice.

"It was a matter of persevering for close to two hours for the volunteer crews who chain sawed and removed the trees, and cleared away material like twisted and broken panels, hoses and air conditioning parts.

"This allowed ambulance officers and career firefighters with heavy duty cutters and spreaders to go in closer to the casualty."

Station Officer John Guhl said when he and his fellow Ellenbrook firefighters arrived the volunteers had made great progress.

"Because of the way he was positioned, all we could see was part of the driver's back amongst the wreckage," John said.

"His arms and legs were trapped behind the crushed truck cab, sleeper and dashboard."

The Ellenbrook crew worked in challenging, cramped and oily conditions to begin the long extraction process.

"After more debris was removed, the driver's arm was found to be looped through part of a door frame, so the team had to do some precision cutting," John said.

"It was necessary to work on the wreckage slowly and precisely to ensure the safety of the rescuers and minimise the possibility of further injury to the driver.

"In the beginning there was only a very small opening to work in, but bit by bit the crew were able to make progress."

John said the firefighters made a point of explaining every step to the driver, offering him reassurance and building a good rapport.

"After three hours, the team's painstaking and precise work was rewarded with the casualty safely removed and handed over to St John Ambulance paramedics."

The injured driver was then transported by RAC Rescue helicopter to Royal Perth Hospital for further medical treatment.



Career and volunteer Fire and Rescue Service firefighters and St John Ambulance officers at the scene of the truck crash rollover.



RAC Rescue crew members and paramedics stretcher the patient to the helicopter for transport to Royal Perth Hospital.  
Photos courtesy of The West Australian.