



Hazards Associated with Vehicle Extrication

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As we continue to evolve so does technology and the intelligence associated with automobiles. Push button ignition/smart keys, multiple batteries, lightweight metals, stronger construction are all additional hazards that we encounter more frequently than ever. It's likely you will be faced with one or more of these hazards on the next "routine" MVC.

Boron Steel

Manufacturers continue in stride to increase miles per gallon, in part by decreasing weight. They accomplish this using lightweight metals where possible, most commonly in non-structural components, and sometimes structural members as well. In recent years production began utilizing "Super Steel" that is 25% stronger than traditional steel but 30% lighter. Couple this with the use of the -ium metals and vehicle extrication efforts continue to grow with challenges.

Batteries

We are all aware of the hazards of the Lithium-Ion batteries in electric vehicles, but don't miss what's right under your seat. Knowing the location of additional batteries within vehicles could be critical in providing safety for not only us, but the patients inside a vehicle as well. Often these extra batteries for the computers and controlling devices for the vehicles are under seats, floorboards and sidewall coverings. There are many useful resources that are downloadable to your smart device that can pinpoint the locations of batteries, fuel lines, airbags, and super steel referenced by make and model. Such a resource could speed up extrication efforts and keep responders and victims safe. **TIP:** Check out the Euro RESCUE app!



Proximity Keys

How close is too close for a smart key? Many studies have shown that 10-20 feet away from the vehicle, these Smart Keys lose their signal. Removing the key from the vehicle or the patient and placing it in a secure place on scene as far away as possible is the best solution. A good solution is to deliver the key to the command officer and have them maintain control of the key, as they should be disengaged from activity in the hot zone. Think of this as a lock out tag-out situation, ONE person should be responsible for that key's possession. Once the incident is de-escalated, they can return the key to the vehicle for towing purposes or to whomever is taking possession of the vehicle.

Don't cut corners on the basics. Practice these **every** time:

- Proper roadway blocking
- Scene Size-Up and 360 to assess for hazards
- Reflective Vests
- Chocking Wheels / Immobilizing the Vehicle
- Isolating Batteries and Airbags



Boron steel pipe in the "A" post of a VW Beetle