

Response time - a challenge for the rescue driver



As a professional rescue driver, you know the importance of keeping response time as short as possible. Even if modern technology and communication develop and contribute to decrease response time, there are still many potential challenges on the way to the incident scene that cannot be avoided by the help of hi-tech solutions. Instead, these challenges originate from conditions such as weather, location availability and vehicle condition – all which potentially could cause delays. Whatever the reason, you have to deal with the stress and frustration when response time is delayed. That's why it's a good idea to identify and consider the specific reasons for delays, and identify how to cope with them in a way that's optimal for your organisation or unit.

$$\text{Response time} = \text{Dispatch time} + \text{Turnout time} + \text{Travel time}$$

Traction is key when every second counts

Losing traction while driving to the incident scene is a threat to response time. If you unexpectedly end up in a slippery situation, you're at risk of losing valuable time. That's why traction is crucial for keeping response time short. Accordingly, if traction is lost, it's crucial to get it back as soon as possible.

Why do I lose traction – and response time accordingly?

You're the expert and you know the driving conditions in your specific area inside out, so you're well aware of why you may lose response time due to lost traction. However, it could be wise to consider some of the reasons for increased response time from a general perspective – and also consider if there are common solutions to seemingly different problems.

Primarily, the reasons for delays differ depending on your geographical location. It's quite obvious that, in a congested city centre the rescue driver is facing challenges very different from those in a remote, rural area. Yet, there are similarities and possible workarounds that apply to most rescue operations – wherever they are.



Traffic

Out in the countryside heavy traffic may not be an issue, while rush hours in the cities could be a large threat to response time. As an experienced urban rescue driver, you know how to take alternative routes to the incident scene when traffic is dense. This may include unorthodox shortcuts that in turn could put you in new challenging situations. For example, to quickly get to a faster road you need to cross a large lawn. If it's raining, this lawn could be wet, muddy and slippery and you could be delayed. Wintertime, your alternative routes may not be snow cleared and you could be delayed...



Avoiding traffic may put you in slippery situations

City-planning

For centuries, architects have focused on design and aesthetics; it's their job. How to manoeuvre a hook and ladder truck or even a conventional fire truck in an emergency situation, has not been the main issue over the years. Actually, many city centres in the world were built in a time when the fire brigade arrived by horse and carriage...

Today, city-planning is a compromise, taking several interests and needs into consideration. Availability for rescue operations is one such need. However, the prioritization of this need varies between countries and regions. From a rescue driver perspective, city-planning could be a reason for increased response time since narrow streets or too sharp turns may force you to take routes that are not ideal for your vehicle. For example crossing lawns, parks or muddy industrial lots.



City structure and built environment may put you in slippery situations

The vehicle

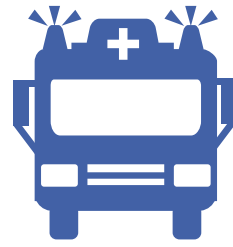
The vehicle itself could be a reason for increased response time. The rescue vehicle is a compromise concerning size, weight, machinery, manoeuvrability and equipment. These factors are given and could have an effect on response time. There is also a risk of the wrong vehicle being sent out. It may appear that another (available) vehicle would have been a better choice.

Also the condition of the vehicle could impact your response time. Policies and budgets for rescue service vary all over the world. There are rescue drivers who have access to cutting-edge technology, vehicles and equipment, while others have to deal with out-dated apparatus and struggle to get the funds necessary for routine maintenance...

Road conditions

No matter where in the world you are, and no matter the season or weather, there is a common truth: When roads are slippery – no matter why – and you lose traction, you also lose valuable response time! Of course slippery roads in snowy and icy conditions cause delays if you get stuck, but you could get stuck with spinning wheels on a slippery sports field also in the summer.

Depending on the equipment and method, it takes varying amounts of time to get traction and get you back driving to the incident scene. If you need to mount tire chains, it costs valuable response time. Also, digging or sanding you out of a slippery situation will increase response time.



Your vehicle may not be optimized for slippery conditions



Losing traction is losing valuable response time

Automatic tire chains – an optimal solution for rescue vehicles?

Probably, you're well aware of the different methods to get traction if you get stuck in slippery conditions. Maybe your vehicle is already 4x4 equipped and maybe you carry a set of tire chains? However, since no method is ideal for all situations, the optimal method must be a compromise taking several factors into consideration, such as weight, cost, reliability, effectiveness and the time needed for engagement. From this perspective automatic tire chains may well be the optimal solution, offering a range of benefits that are especially useful for the rescue driver:

Instant traction

You get traction immediately, so you don't lose valuable response time. Actually, if you suspect slippery conditions you can engage automatic tire chains before encountering the slippery area. In this way you ensure that traction isn't lost from the beginning.

Ease of use

An automatic tire chain system is engaged by the flip of a switch, without stopping the vehicle. It's as easy as that!

Disengage when not needed

As soon as the road is dry again, just disengage the system by flipping the switch.

Effective, reliable and durable

An automatic tire chain system is a well-tried solution that provides the traction comparable to conventional tire chains. It gives you the traction needed in critical situations when you must not lose valuable time. Actually, even if your tires are not optimal for the slippery situation, the automatic tire chains give you traction irrespective of tire type or wear and tear.

Permanently installed

An automatic tire chain system is permanently installed and ready to use whenever you need to get traction. There is no measure to be taken, other than flipping the switch.



Low weight

An automatic tire chain system only adds limited weight to the vehicle – approx. 110 lbs. (50 kg) and it takes no compartment space, so you don't have to drop other important equipment.

Fits a wide range of vehicles

An automatic tire chain system fits anything from light to heavy vehicles, so you can have the benefits of instant traction on any emergency vehicle. Also, it's perfectly fitted to the specific vehicle measures, providing optimal performance irrespective of vehicle make and model.

Low maintenance

There's nothing to replenish and an automatic tire chain system is virtually maintenance free. Engage the system occasionally to keep the self-lubricating bearings in good condition. That's it.

An automatic tire chain system could be an ideal traction control system for rescue vehicles



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Onspot is a world leading provider of traction control. The Onspot Automatic Tire Chain System offers excellent performance, reliability and ease of use. It is sold worldwide for use on commercial vehicles, rescue vehicles and school buses in order to increase safety and convenience while reducing loss of time due to slippery road conditions.