

Disaster strikes

Mock crash tests skills

The disaster wasn't real, but had it been, Oakland County emergency units would have been ready.

A mock disaster held at the Troy Civic Center Oct. 9 tested the response times and skills of local agencies, including Troy police and firefighters, Suburban Ambulance, Civil Air Patrol and seven county hospitals, including Crittenton Hospital in Avon Township.

Sponsored by Oakland County division EMS & Disaster Control, the mock disaster consisted of a chemical tanker colliding with two school buses, creating a leak of chlorine gas and a string of injuries.

"Victims" were provided by American Red Cross, Macomb County Community College, Boy Scout troops and other organizations.

The exercise tested readiness for dealing with accidents involving hazardous chemicals. It also tested the ability of rescue workers to categorize patients according to injuries, to administer preliminary treatment and to transport victims to appropriate hospitals.

The disaster was captured on video tape by the Troy police and firefighters. The tape will be used to further study and improve emergency responses.



Victims who were overcome by the gas were helped off the bus by Troy police officers and rescue workers.



The injured didn't take their roles lightly, laying on the grass outside the disaster. Some got into the drama by moaning, others by assisting their injured "classmates."

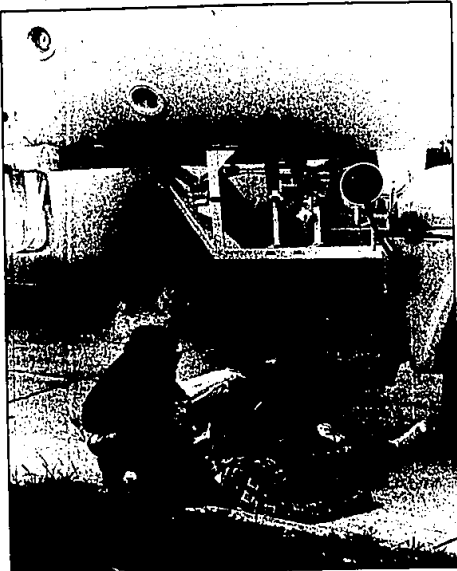


In the disaster, firefighters sprayed the leaking tanker with cold water to cool it down and prevent it from bursting into flame. Rescue workers wore gas masks and carried heavy oxygen tanks while helping those overcome by the gas.

Photos by Craig Gaffield



The realism of the crash was created by a smoke bomb underneath the tanker (right) which theoretically began leaking chlorine gas after it collided with two buses. Rescue workers (above) carried victims off the buses to be tended to by Oakland County Emergency Medical Service personnel.



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