Entrapment

Entrapment calls are a frequent and highly variable 9-1-1 call type. Victims may be physically trapped, unable to escape because an exit is blocked, or endangered by conditions such as fire, water, machinery, confined spaces, or other hazards. Because no single questioning sequence applies to every entrapment situation, telecommunicators must combine effective information gathering, situational awareness, foundation call-handling skills, appropriate protocols, and event-specific questioning. This course uses instruction, knowledge checks, and realistic call scenarios to help telecommunicators gather critical information, determine appropriate response needs, and provide useful Pre-Arrival Instructions.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of information gathering and situational awareness when handling entrapment calls.
2. Conduct an effective initial survey to obtain the location, chief complaint, caller information, victim information, hazards, injuries, and other essential details.
3. Apply foundation skills such as guided flexibility, the Journalistic Investigative Approach, thinking in multiples, identifying red flags, inverted visualization, and the balcony approach.
4. Demonstrate courtesy, confidence, and concern when communicating with callers experiencing stressful or life-threatening entrapment situations.
5. Apply appropriate questioning, protocol selection, resource considerations, and Pre-Arrival Instructions to a variety of entrapment scenarios.

Module 1: Introduction to Entrapment Calls

Entrapment occurs when a person cannot escape a situation because they are stuck, caught, physically unable to remove themselves, or prevented from leaving by hazards such as fire or water. This module introduces the wide variety of circumstances telecommunicators may encounter and explains why general questions must be followed by event-specific questioning to create an accurate picture of the emergency.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Define entrapment in the context of emergency communications.
2. Explain why entrapment calls require flexible and thorough information gathering.
3. Describe the relationship between general questioning and event-specific questioning.
4. Explain how gathered information supports dispatch decisions and Pre-Arrival Instructions.
5. Recognize the importance of agency standard operating procedures when responding to unusual entrapment events.

Content/Activities

- Introduction to entrapment calls
- Types and circumstances of entrapment
- Information gathering and situational awareness
- General versus event-specific questioning
- Dispatch and Pre-Arrival Instruction considerations
- Review of agency standard operating procedures
- Scenario reflection questions

Module 2: Initial Survey and Situational Awareness

The initial survey provides the foundation for an effective response by gathering essential information at the beginning of the call. Because entrapment situations may be unusual or difficult to classify, telecommunicators must keep an open mind, select the protocol closest to the circumstances when appropriate, and continue gathering details that improve situational awareness.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the purpose of the initial survey during an entrapment call.
2. Gather essential information including location, chief complaint, caller identity, and caller location.
3. Identify additional questions needed to determine the number and condition of people involved.
4. Evaluate special circumstances such as injuries, disabilities, children, pets, and other scene considerations.
5. Use gathered information to help determine the type and quantity of resources required.

Content/Activities

- Situational awareness
- Initial survey questions
- Emergency location
- Chief complaint
- Caller name and telephone number
- Caller location versus incident location
- Number of people involved
- Children and other vulnerable persons
- Injuries and special needs
- Pets and scene considerations
- Resource determination
- Protocol-selection reflection activity

Module 3: Foundation Skills for Entrapment Calls

Foundation skills are the building blocks of effective call handling and are especially important when the circumstances of an entrapment call do not fit neatly into a standard protocol. This module reviews techniques that help telecommunicators gather comprehensive information, maintain awareness of the larger emergency, and communicate effectively with callers.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Apply guided flexibility when balancing protocol use with professional judgment.
2. Use the Journalistic Investigative Approach to gather comprehensive call information.
3. Apply situational awareness and thinking in multiples to evaluate the full scope of an emergency.
4. Recognize red flags and use additional questioning to clarify inconsistent or incomplete information.
5. Apply location, visualization, communication, and call-control techniques to improve emergency response.

Content/Activities

- Guided Flexibility
- Journalistic Investigative Approach (5Ws + H)
- Weapons, Hazards, and Injuries
- Situational Awareness and Thinking in Multiples
- Red Flags and Inverted Visualization
- 300 Call Syndrome
- Where Within the Where
- Balcony Approach
- Three C's: Courtesy, Confidence, and Concern
- Knowledge Check 1

Module 4: Submerged Vehicle Entrapment

Submerged-vehicle calls require rapid information gathering and immediate action because conditions can deteriorate quickly. This module uses a call involving a vehicle upside down in water to demonstrate location questioning, communication techniques, resource considerations, and the SCWO escape sequence.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Apply “Where Within the Where” questioning to determine the location of a submerged vehicle.
2. Use the Three C’s to communicate calmly and effectively with a caller in immediate danger.
3. Explain the SCWO sequence for occupants of a sinking or partially submerged vehicle.
4. Identify additional questions needed to determine occupant and water conditions.
5. Evaluate potential specialized rescue resources based on information gathered from the caller.

Content/Activities

- Submerged Vehicle video
- Call Analysis
- Where Within the Where
- Three C’s
- SCWO: Seatbelt–Children–Window–Out
- Occupant questions
- Water-depth and vehicle-movement questions
- Boat, helicopter, dive-team, and water-rescue considerations
- Caller-safety Pre-Arrival Instructions

Module 5: Elevator Entrapment

Elevator entrapments may involve anxiety, panic, power failure, smoke, fire, injury, or other hazards. This module examines common elevator types and demonstrates how telecommunicators can use confidence, concern, location gathering, and appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions to support callers until rescuers arrive.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify common types of elevators and information relevant to an elevator rescue.
2. Recognize emotional and physical concerns associated with elevator entrapment.
3. Demonstrate confidence and concern when communicating with trapped occupants.
4. Gather specific information about occupants, elevator location, building conditions, and hazards.
5. Identify appropriate safety considerations and Pre-Arrival Instructions for an elevator emergency.

Content/Activities

- Passenger elevators
- Freight elevators
- Sidewalk elevators
- Stage lifts
- Vehicle lifts
- Elevator entrapment video
- Call Analysis
- Foundation Skills: Confidence and Concern
- Elevator Rescue protocol considerations
- Fire and smoke considerations
- Occupant condition and anxiety questions
- Floor and elevator-number identification
- Power-failure questions
- Elevator-door safety instructions

Module 6: Storm Drain Entrapment

Unusual entrapment reports can sound unbelievable, but telecommunicators must avoid dismissing them without investigation. This module uses a storm-drain scenario to reinforce the 300 Call Syndrome and the importance of precise location questioning.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain how the 300 Call Syndrome applies to unusual or seemingly unbelievable calls.
2. Maintain professional objectivity when evaluating an unusual entrapment report.
3. Gather precise highway and roadway location information.
4. Determine whether the victim can communicate and whether injuries are present.
5. Use specific landmarks, direction of travel, mile markers, and caller information to assist responders.

Content/Activities

- Storm Drain video
- Call Analysis
- 300 Call Syndrome
- Where Within the Where
- Highway identification
- Direction of travel
- Mile markers and landmarks
- Caller vehicle description
- Victim communication
- Injury assessment

Module 7: Playground Equipment Entrapment

Children can become trapped in playground equipment in many different ways, creating a stressful situation for both the child and the caller. This module focuses on gathering information about the victim, equipment, body position, injuries, breathing, and precise location while using communication techniques to manage panic.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Gather victim-specific information during a playground-equipment entrapment.
2. Describe the type of equipment, trapped body part, and victim position for responders.
3. Determine whether the victim is injured, breathing normally, or experiencing immediate danger.
4. Apply the Three C's and repetitive persistence to manage a panicked caller.
5. Use inverted visualization to help responders locate victims within large parks or recreational areas.

Content/Activities

- Playground Equipment video
- Victim age
- Injury versus simple entrapment
- Equipment description
- Body-part and body-position questions
- Breathing assessment
- Call Analysis
- Three C's
- Repetitive Persistence technique
- Inverted Visualization

Module 8: Child Locked in a Vehicle

A child locked inside a vehicle can quickly become a life-threatening emergency, particularly in extreme heat. This module uses a poorly handled call to demonstrate the consequences of insufficient information gathering, poor situational awareness, ineffective communication, and failure to recognize rapidly changing conditions.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Recognize the potential urgency of a child locked inside a vehicle.
2. Apply the Journalistic Investigative Approach to gather information needed to assess the situation.
3. Identify how victim age and environmental conditions can increase the seriousness of an entrapment.
4. Demonstrate the Three C's when communicating with a panicked caregiver.
5. Explain the importance of remaining on the call and monitoring for changing conditions until responders arrive.

Content/Activities

- Baby in Car video
- Call Analysis
- Example of ineffective call handling
- Situational awareness failures
- Lock Out–Lock In protocol considerations
- Journalistic Investigative Approach
- Victim age and vulnerability
- Heat and environmental concerns
- Three C's
- Caller monitoring
- Pre-Arrival Instruction considerations

Module 9: Workplace and Machinery Entrapment

Workplace environments can present specialized hazards when a person becomes trapped by machinery or equipment. The course applies foundation skills and event-specific information gathering to a forklift-accident scenario so telecommunicators can evaluate injuries, hazards, resource needs, and rescue considerations.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Apply foundation skills to an entrapment involving workplace machinery.
2. Gather information about the victim's position, injuries, and mechanism of entrapment.
3. Identify potential hazards associated with machinery and the surrounding work environment.
4. Determine when specialized rescue resources may be necessary.
5. Use gathered information to support appropriate dispatch and Pre-Arrival Instructions.

Content/Activities

- Forklift Accident scenario
- Event-specific questioning
- Injury assessment
- Machinery and workplace hazards
- Resource determination
- Foundation-skills application
- Call-analysis activity

Module 10: Entrapment and Fire Escape Scenarios

Fire can create an entrapment even when a person is not physically stuck because smoke, flames, terrain, or blocked exits may prevent escape. This module applies situational awareness, precise location gathering, hazard identification, and caller-safety principles to fire-related entrapment scenarios.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Recognize how fire or blocked escape routes can create an entrapment emergency.
2. Gather detailed location information for victims in remote or structural environments.
3. Identify fire, smoke, terrain, and other hazards that may affect rescue operations.
4. Apply the balcony approach and Journalistic Investigative Approach to develop a broader understanding of the incident.
5. Use information gathered to support dispatch decisions and appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions.

Content/Activities

- Mountain Fire Escape scenario
- House Fire scenario
- Where Within the Where
- Balcony Approach
- Journalistic Investigative Approach
- Hazard identification
- Victim-location questions
- Fire and smoke considerations
- Pre-Arrival Instruction considerations
- Scenario call analysis

Module 11: Course Review and Knowledge Check

The final portion of the course reinforces the major concepts used throughout the entrapment scenarios. Learners review how initial surveys, foundation skills, situational awareness, event-specific questioning, communication techniques, and Pre-Arrival Instructions combine to support effective call handling.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Integrate initial-survey information with event-specific questioning.
2. Select and apply appropriate foundation skills to varied entrapment scenarios.
3. Evaluate information for hazards, injuries, location, victim needs, and resource requirements.
4. Apply effective communication techniques when callers are frightened, panicked, or reporting unusual circumstances.
5. Demonstrate understanding of the primary call-handling concepts presented throughout the course.

Content/Activities

- Knowledge Check 2
- Review of entrapment call-handling principles
- Review of Foundation Skills
- Review of situational-awareness techniques
- Review of scenario-specific questioning
- Review of Pre-Arrival Instruction considerations
- Course completion / Congratulations

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn a certificate and continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within 30 minutes.

- CE hours awarded: 1
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browse