

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - EMERGENCY RESCUES USING LINE RESCUE SKILLS

554. Dr S.C. Thomas to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

- (1) Which department under the Minister's jurisdiction has responsibility for conducting emergency rescues involving line skills?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that Fire and Rescue Service crews attached to the metropolitan fire service have been called on in recent emergencies which have necessitated competency in line rescue skills?
- (3) How are Fire and Rescue Service crews trained and prepared for rescue emergencies involving line skills?
- (4) How often are refresher courses conducted for the personnel involved in these circumstances?
- (5) Is the Minister aware of concern within the ranks of career fire-fighters about a lack of training in line rescue skills?
- (6) Is the Minister aware that career fire-fighters involved in such emergency rescues are at greater risk without adequate refresher training?

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

- (1) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) is a combat agency and provides line rescue capabilities in metropolitan and country areas through its Operational Services Division. WA Police also have a combat role in certain cases.
- (2) Yes. FESA advise during the past 12 months there has only been one specific line rescue incident, which involved the mid-pitch retrieval of two workers from a building maintenance unit in the CBD. However, three further incidents have occurred where roping techniques have been used to undertake rescues:

- the rescue of a disoriented person from a steep slope in Mosman Park
- a rescue off rocks at Henderson
- assistance to WA Police to retrieve deceased persons from a ship's hold.

These incidents did not require full line rescue competencies. All of these incidents have been conducted in a most professional manner and did not test the technical capabilities of the rescuers to any great level.

- (3) FESA advise they have a number of levels of competency for Line Rescue. There are four phases or modules, which take 16 days to complete, and are used to build the competencies. The modules include:
  - Phase 1 - Line Rescue in conjunction with Confined Space Rescue - aligned to national competency standard PUA SAR 005A;
  - Phase 2 - Mid-pitch rescue - covers establishing anchor points and conducting rescues from great heights;
  - Phase 3 - Complex multi anchors and complex raising and lowering systems;
  - Phase 4 - Complex scenarios and assessment.
- (4) FESA advise Line Rescue technicians are trained and qualified to conduct unsupervised refresher or maintenance training as part of FESA's Standard Operating Procedures. Periodic maintenance training is conducted, usually quarterly, which can be adjusted to the requirements of technicians. This system is coordinated by Station Managers and is included in management plans. Recommendations are for formal refresher activities to be conducted 6 monthly with 12 monthly validation and enhancement.
- (5) Yes. FESA advise that career firefighters have raised concerns regarding specialist rescue capabilities. FESA has made a clear commitment to this competency and this has been communicated to all technicians through FESA's Rescue branch. A plan to enhance the training of technicians has been developed and will commence soon. All technicians have been advised of the plan of action.
- (6) One of FESA's core values is safety and the safety of firefighters will not be compromised. FESA has made a clear and transparent commitment to maintaining competencies of all qualified Line Rescue technicians. A plan to enhance the training of technicians has been developed and will commence soon. All technicians have been advised of the plan of action. All technicians are able to access Line Rescue equipment to conduct maintenance training. In addition, FESA is planning a refresher session for instructors and technicians to assist those who have not maintained their skills.