The Efficiency of Companion Rescuers with Minimal Training

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Whereas the theoretical efficiency of companion rescue is never questioned, serious doubts are expressed when it comes to the reality of survival chances.

In a field experiment including 30 novice companion rescuers, the potential level of efficiency was determined during three days with various rescue scenarios. The rescuers were trained in three 45 min. practical workshops (single and multiple burial search, probing, excavation and triage).

The rescue scenarios were set up as realistically as possible using life sized buried objects in hard debris. The complexity of the rescue scenarios varied between the number of buried subjects, their depth and proximity to each other, the number of rescuers, and size of the debris field.

The target of the experiment is to show what efficiency companion rescue can provide if the instruction, the rescue systems as well as the rescue equipment is optimized for novice companion rescues.

Data collected in the field included, 1) times for coordination, 2) times for each individual phase of the search process (Signal, Coarse, Fine & Pinpoint), 3) triage measures, 4) as well as the different stages of excavation, plus 5) photos and video documentation.

Results show that companion rescue is very efficient and residual survival chances are surprisingly high even in multiple burial situations.