

The Virgin Islands Consortium

18-Wheeler Overturns While Attempting Water Delivery; Driver Saved By St. Croix Rescue Squad

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ST. CROIX -- Members of the St. Croix Rescue Squad, a locally-funded first responder agency, on Wednesday rescued a man who was trapped in an overturned 18-wheeler, according to Rescue Chief Gregory Richards.

According to Mr. Richards, speaking to The Consortium via telephone this morning, at about 8:22 a.m. on Wednesday, the 911 emergency call center notified Rescue of an 18-wheeler belonging to Vivot Equipment Corporation, that had overturned while attempting to deliver water in Estate Sion Hill, near a new development that is being constructed.

The chief said while attempting to navigate the muddy terrain on a hill -- made difficult by the torrential rainfall that had affected St. Croix a day earlier -- the driver lost control and the truck overturned. The victim, who suffered some lacerations and abrasions about the body, was extricated by squad members, who utilized the jaws of life equipment and special techniques.

"The victim was pinned in the vehicle, and there was no way to get him out except for using specialized rescue techniques and extrication procedures," Mr. Richards said. "It was one of the more difficult encounters we've seen in recent times." One of the victim's legs was trapped underneath a seat, and the steering wheel had lowered to his chest area, making it difficult for him to move. Squad members were able to cut out the seat from around the victim, cut the door and remove him from the truck -- precariously stationed on the slippery hill.

Mr. Richards said St. Croix Rescue Squad is the government agency responsible for extricating victims from extreme accidents. The group responds to about 30-40 motor vehicle accidents (MVA) annually, he said, adding that Wednesday's occurrence was an extreme case, and took the team about 1 hour to rescue the victim.

"Sometimes the patients are entrapped and there's no other way to get them out. Sometimes they are not that severe, so there are times when we don't have to get into the jaws of life and the fancy rescue equipment," he said.

And MVAs are not the group's only job, Mr. Richards made known, revealing that they respond to marine accidents as well, and with two ambulances, the St. Croix Rescue Squad serves as a backup for the Emergency Medical Services (EMS), when that service is overloaded.

The victim was transported to the Juan F. Luis Hospital by EMS for medical attention.

Feature Image: Overturned 18-wheeler, belonging to local company Vivot Equipment Corporation.