

POST-CRASH RESPONSE

Post-crash response is vital to saving lives and has been an essential Pillar within the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. By giving someone first aid within the first 10 minutes after a crash, their chances of surviving increase by 60-70 per cent.

Unfortunately, despite often highly motivated and capable crews, post-crash care is generally poorly resourced in the EASST region. In Tajikistan, most emergency rescue vehicles are over 20 years old and sparsely equipped, and fewer than 11 per cent of seriously injured road victims are transported to hospital by ambulance.

Improving capacity for emergency response and post-crash care can make a vast difference to saving lives. In 2016 the WHO estimated that improving emergency care “could address over half of the deaths in low and middle income countries”.¹ For this reason, one of EASST’s core aims is to build resilience and capacity for emergency response across the region: to improve post-crash response and save lives.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

In July 2012, EASST and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service, with the support of the UK Embassy in Kiev, donated two fully equipped fire appliances along with much-needed fire suits, equipment and training to the town of Korosten near Chernobyl in Ukraine, replacing the local fire station’s Soviet era appliances and worn uniforms. The donations consisted of de-commissioned equipment from the UK which had come to the end of its shelf life but was still safe and perfectly useable.² In the past, such equipment would have been sent for scrap, but through this project and subsequent projects, many items are being reused and re-purposed around the world where they are vitally needed.

¹ World Health Organisation (WHO), Post-Crash Response: Supporting those affected by road traffic crashes, 2016, <https://www.who.int/emergencies/care/en/>

² The donation included parts to enable the changing of the steering mechanism from right to left hand side.

The initial donations to Korosten have been supplemented and replenished over the years with additional deliveries and renewed training. As a result, despite being a relatively small crew in a remote area, the Korosten fire fighters are frequently called to large-scale incidents due to their enhanced capability and response times. In 2015 they were called to a large forest fire towards the Chernobyl exclusion zone where they worked for two days to stop the fire’s development in an area that could have triggered a humanitarian and ecological disaster.

EASST and Kent Fire & Rescue are now collaborating with the Lviv Institute for Fire Safety, the main institution providing training for fire fighters in western and central Ukraine. The aim is to develop their coordination with other emergency service agencies (police and ambulance) to further improve their capacity for emergency response, specifically road crash response. Previously, each agency (police, fire and ambulance service) would work from their own action plan to respond to road traffic collisions, with no joint agreements or training programmes. Following a mission by EASST in 2016 and a demonstration by Kent Fire and Rescue on the importance of partnership working for casualty reduction, the services established a joint working group with named representatives from each agency to develop a programme of partnership working for casualty reduction. The working group also includes EASST partners, Road Safety Support Foundation, and the local authorities. The Lviv Institute now hopes to open a dedicated training centre for the emergency services where they can develop joint response plans. EASST is supporting this through the donation of a ‘transformer car’ in 2019 - an essential teaching resource for road traffic collision rescue, and for joint fire, police and ambulance personnel training at simulated crash scenes.

IMPROVING CAPACITY FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Since 2015, with the support of DfID and the UK Embassy in Tajikistan - and under the umbrella of FIRE AID - EASST has been implementing a project in Tajikistan with SESHAA working in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and supported by the Young Generation of Tajikistan. Tajikistan is the poorest country in Central Asia, and the fire service is tragically underequipped. During an initial visit to the country the project team visited a fire station housing just a single 25-year old vehicle to serve 50 villages and a key international road connecting Tajikistan to neighbouring countries.

The Chief of the Republican Fire Service warmly welcomed the initiative to improve the country's capacity for emergency response. Within six months the first donation of fire-fighting PPE and medical equipment was delivered, along with 'train the trainer' instruction on how the equipment should be used. This was supplemented in 2016 with hydraulic extrication equipment essential for road crash response, and additional training by UK volunteer firefighters in emergency post-crash medical care.

In 2017, a convoy of three fire appliances and an ambulance were driven over 4,000 miles through from the UK to Tajikistan. These donations, along with other equipment and 'train the trainer' instruction on road crash response, were delivered by UK firefighters to create Tajikistan's first ever cadre of road crash response trainers.

This support is already helping Tajik emergency services respond to disasters faster, safer and more effectively. In 2019, a second convoy of vehicles is being delivered along with training by Women in the Fire Service (a UK based organisation) to provide basic mountain rescue and first aid skills to women in rural communities in the Pamir Mountains - an area of increasing tourism but remote and difficult for emergency services to access - as well as rope rescue training by SESHAA (vital when vehicles drive over cliffs). The training will help save lives during the 'golden hour' of emergency rescue to prolong life until other emergency services arrive.

“Since 2014 FIRE AID has delivered over 200 fire appliances, 10 water rescue boats, 10 ambulances, three 4x4 response vehicles, two Incident Response Units and over 2,000 sets of Breathing Apparatus as well as training over 5,000 firefighters in over 50 countries.”





FIRE AID

AID AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EASST's initial collaboration with Kent Fire and Rescue Service in Ukraine in 2012 was the catalyst for the development of a new humanitarian rescue organisation – FIRE AID.

FIRE AID and International Development is an umbrella organisation of fire and rescue organisations carrying out humanitarian projects in low and middle-income countries. Its members deliver ethical and sustainable donations of fire and rescue equipment and training to emergency services, including a particular focus on post-crash response.

It was founded in 2014 by EASST, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Operation Florian, the Staffordshire Emergency Services Humanitarian Aid Association (SESHAA), the UK Rescue Organisation (UKRO) and Blythwood Care, and became a registered UK charity in 2017. Its Steering Committee now includes the National Fire Chiefs Council, Asian Fire Services Association, Women in the Fire Service and the World Rescue Organisation.

Within five years FIRE AID has grown to include 30 member organisations and has delivered projects in over 50 countries worldwide. FIRE AID also facilitates a central database for sharing equipment donated by UK Fire and Rescue Services, saving useable but redundant

fire and rescue kit and in-date medical equipment from being scrapped.

The support of UK fire services is essential to FIRE AID's work. UK Fire and Rescue Services have donated more than 200 fire trucks, 2000 breathing apparatus sets, and many hundreds of uniforms and other personal protective equipment to FIRE AID projects. Moreover, they support serving firefighters to volunteer on projects, sharing their valuable knowledge and skills with over 5,000 firefighters from emergency services facing huge challenges in other countries. This is an important aspect of FIRE AID's work – no equipment is donated without training, monitoring and care to ensure it is not wasted, including training in maintenance and ensuring the availability of spare parts and adequate storage facilities.

FIRE AID also offers UK firefighters fantastic development and learning opportunities, as well as building professional relationships and collaboration between UK fire services – so the UK benefits too.

As a founding member of FIRE AID, EASST has worked with other member organisations to deliver equipment and training to Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine to improve post-crash response and save saveable lives.

“South Wales Fire and Rescue Service takes great satisfaction in gifting ‘end of life’ appliances and equipment which has now become part of our core business. Gifting to FIRE AID is both environmentally and morally the best outcome that we can achieve and we hope to maintain this policy and relationship for as long as possible.”

Richard Prendergast, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

“I am delighted to celebrate the results of our joint project in partnership with EASST to strengthen the capabilities of emergency service personnel on both banks of Nistru River. We are proud to be able to share the best of UK practices and experience in emergency response and we are already seeing results: over 200 lives have been saved.”

HE Lucy Joyce, British Ambassador to Moldova