

La Plata Police Department – Emergency Operation Plan

	Title: Construction Accidents/ Collapses		Annex: EOP-35		
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Approved by: Chief Carl Schinner					CALEA 5 th Edition
CALEA Standard: 46.1.2					Pages: 6

01 PURPOSE: The purpose of this annex is to supplement the *Natural-and-Man-Made Disasters* portion of the Emergency Operations Plan. Used in conjunction with the La Plata Police Department’s emergency plans, this annex provides general guidelines for use by first-responders to construction sites and projects where a significant accident has occurred or where a structure or trench has collapsed or caved in. These guidelines are intended to be flexible since no two situations are the same, and to allow first-responders to adapt to rapidly changing conditions.

02 ASSUMPTIONS

- A. Construction sites and projects are dangerous for construction workers. They are even more hazardous for police officers, who are routinely dispatched with fire/rescue to construction site accidents, because officers generally do not have the construction “hard hats” or the types of shoes normally worn by construction workers. However, officers must still respond to the scene (and sometimes they are the first to arrive) to perform a multitude of tasks.

- B. This Annex concerns itself with only those types of accidents and mishaps that occur on a construction site or in an area under construction.

- C. Until determined otherwise, the scene should be treated as a crime scene by first responders. And, since criminal investigators, representatives from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH), and possibly the State Medical Examiner, will respond to the scene, first responding officers will need to preserve the scene and any evidence connected thereto.

- D. Of course, the role of first responding police officers is to begin life saving efforts in the absence of fire/rescue, provided officer safety is maximized

03 PLAN:

A. ON-DUTY SHIFT SUPERVISORS SHOULD:

1. If hazardous materials may be involved (see Hazardous Materials Annex), decide on site entry from an upwind, upgrate, and upstream direction, if possible.
2. Be aware of the need for all officers to observe all conditions, events, and remarks during their initial approach to the scene, and after their arrival.
3. Be cognizant of the fact that construction sites can contain liquefied and compressed gases, flammable chemicals, electrical and other hazards (if the construction accident is the result of an explosion or results in an explosion.
4. Be cognizant that buildings under construction may have slip, trip, and fall hazards, and hazards from above and below, such as holes in ceilings and floors).
5. Be cognizant of possible blast and explosion hazards.
6. Encourage responding officers to have their flashlights with them because some buildings under construction may be poorly lighted (especially the area where the victim(s) may be located). The use of a flashlight is especially useful in a collapse situation.
7. Upon arrival, establish a Command Post a safe distance from the scene and ascertain from officers who have already arrived the nature of the incident (if fire/rescue has arrived, establish the police command post in close proximity to, or as part of the fire/rescue command post).
8. Communicate any information about the incident to the Charles County Communications Center, to be relayed to responding fire/rescue apparatus, such as:
 - a. Nature and extent of incident.
 - b. Number of persons injured.
 - c. Types and severity of injury(s)/Illness.
 - d. If an explosion occurred.
 - e. If fire is involved.

- f. If hazardous materials are involved
9. Direct officers to isolate and secure the area using crime scene tape or other physical barriers, to define the potential crime scene and to prevent others from becoming endangered.
10. Be cognizant that rescues should only be accomplished by appropriately equipped personnel. Prior to the arrival of fire/rescue personnel, the rescue of persons by police officers should only be undertaken in the most severe circumstances. Additionally, unless immediate life-saving efforts are necessary, police officers should refrain from entering collapsed buildings or structures.
11. Request additional officers and resources, as necessary, taking into account the possibility that evacuations of neighboring buildings or properties may be needed.
12. Ensure notifications of Command Staff members, the State Fire Marshal (if necessary), and Town Planning and Code Administration (building/electrical) Inspectors.
13. In the event of a trench collapse or cave-in, be especially aware that below-ground utilities (electrical, natural gas, and/or water) may be present and may be involved. Additionally, first responders must realize the hazards posed by shifting or unstable dirt near the cave-in site. Fire/rescue has specialized units dispatched to cave-ins. Be sure to communicate the nature of the incident to the on-duty Communications Specialist for fire/rescue. For a major building collapse or cave-in, the Charles County Fire Department's Cave-In Rescue Team will be summonsed.
14. Be aware that **electrocution** is one cause of death in construction, and many electrocutions are the result of a construction worker's contact with overhead power lines (i.e., a boom truck, backhoes, ladders, or scaffolding coming into contact with lines). If an electrocution has occurred, consider:
 - a. Quickly but thoroughly surveying the scene to determine if it is safe for first responders to approach. If not safe, or unsure, keep officers and others back until the scene has been determined to be safe.
 - b. Ensure that responding fire/rescue is notified of the situation.
 - c. After fire/rescue arrival, coordinate with the fire/rescue incident commander.
 - d. As necessary, designate officer(s) to assist investigators and City inspectors.

B. ELECTROCUTIONS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES: In the event of contact between equipment and overhead power lines:

1. It is recommended that persons on the equipment not touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. In fact, touching anything in contact with the ground can be fatal.
2. Others should be kept a safe distance from the equipment and hazard. Everyone should be warned NOT to touch the equipment or its load, including buckets, outriggers, load lines, or any other part of the machine.
3. Ensure PEPCO/BG&E has been notified.

C. DEALING WITH ELECTROCUTION VICTIMS:

1. Approach with caution the area where the victim is located because until the victim is free of contact with the current, s(he) is an electrical conductor. Touching someone still in contact with a live circuit may electrocute the rescuer(s).
2. If an appliance is the source of the electricity, shut off the current at the fuse box, or if it can be done safely, unplug the appliance immediately (simply turning off the appliance is not adequate).
3. Once safe, if fire/rescue is not yet on the scene, check to see if the victim is breathing or has a heartbeat. Begin CPR, if necessary.
4. If the victim was struck by lightning, check immediately for breathing and pulse. Since the current has passed through the body and disappeared, the rescuer need not worry about sustaining a shock, and treatment can begin immediately. Be aware, however, that lightning may strike again.
5. When breathing is re-established, treat the victim for shock by elevating the feet and covering the victim with a blanket.
6. Relinquish care of the victim to fire/rescue personnel upon their arrival and assist as necessary.

D. OVERTURNED MACHINERY OR TOPPLED CRANE:

1. Be aware of the special hazards posed by overturned machinery and cranes, such as:
 - a. Power lines taken down (presence of energized wires).

- b. Spillage or leakage of diesel fuel and other flammable liquids.
 - c. Explosion and fire potential.
 - d. Possible involvement of hazardous materials.
 - e. Heavy equipment operator trapped or pinned.
 - f. Other vehicles/persons trapped or pinned under the equipment
2. Evacuations of adjoining or neighboring buildings may be necessary, especially those on which a crane has toppled.
 3. If a crane has toppled onto railroad tracks, or a piece of heavy equipment or machinery has overturned in the track bed, follow the guidelines listed in EOP Annex 039-Train Derailment.
 4. Approach the area with caution because of possibly unstable ground (soil).
 5. Be alert for above and below ground utilities that may or may not have been disturbed.
 6. Fire/rescue will need a large area in which to work in order to stabilize the equipment (to keep it from shifting and harming rescuers), possibly land a medevac helicopter, etc.

INFORMATION SOURCES:

BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion)

National Fire Protection Association, Internet

<http://www.nfpa.org/Research/fireinvestigation/alertbulletins/bleve/bleve.asp>

20 December 2001

ELECTROCUTION

Construction Safety Association of Ontario, Internet

<http://www.csa.org/news/magazine/archives/Spring2000/shock.htm>

17 January 2002

ELECTROCUTION RESULTING IN CARDIAC ARREST

Columbia University, Internet

http://www.cpmcnet.columbia.edu/texts/guide/hmg13_0006.html

17 January 2002

Jeffress, Charles N., 10th Annual Construction Safety Conference

Speech – Construction Safety Council, 16 February 2000,

Chicago, Illinois

Martinette, Buddy. “Trench Rescue Incident Management and Support Operations”