



For Immediate Release

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Merced County Fire Department Awarded Grant for Extrication Equipment for Emergency Response 'Jaws of Life' cuts down time to rescue crash victims

Merced, Calif. – Merced County Fire Department was awarded a \$74,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) for the purchase of new extrication equipment that will be used to rescue crash victims. Known as the “jaws of life,” first responders use these rescue tools to break apart a wrecked vehicle with victims trapped inside. These new tools help reduce the time it takes to rescue and treat crash victims.

In 2020, Merced County Fire responded to 2,837 crashes in which 95 required extrication.

The newer equipment is 50 percent lighter, safer and easier to use, allowing us to rescue victims faster, which ultimately increases their chances of survival. In many cases, even minutes without treatment can be a matter of life and death, which is why it is important to have reliable equipment that allows first responders to provide care as quickly as possible.

Delays in extrication can negatively impact the patient’s critical “golden hour” of trauma survivability. The “golden hour” for Emergency Medical Services is the core principle of rapid intervention in trauma cases: 1) get to the patient quickly, 2) treat what can be treated on scene, and 3) quickly get the patient to the right hospital. Anything that can be done to reduce each of these time periods aids in patient survival and recovery.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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