

TERRACE STORIES

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REPORTING · 29th November 2009

TERRACE SEARCH AND RESCUE DEPLOYED BY CHOPPER AND TRUCK

Merv Ritchie

UPDATED Original story remains below

The Terrace Water Search and Rescue (SAR) technicians who left by helicopter have returned to Terrace and those who left by the SAR support vehicle, to attend the scene of a truck accident on Highway 37 north of Bell 2, are turned around and are on their way home.

Dave Jepson reported there were two occupants in the tractor trailer unit travelling north to Alaska with a load of groceries. At approximately 3:00 am the unit missed a corner and drove straight off of the highway directly into the Ningunsum River, 30 kilometers north of Bell 2. The river depth was estimated at 3 feet and the unit remained upright and on its wheels 20 feet into the river.

The first vehicle to come across the scene was an hour later. At 6:30 am the Stewart RCMP and BC Ambulance Service were called out to the scene who in turn notified the Terrace Water Search and Rescue team.

"The Stewart Fire Department, the Stewart BC Ambulance Service, the Stewart RCMP and the Department of Highways all worked together and did a tremendous job on rescuing the occupants from the cab." Jebson stated after he returned to Terrace.

At 8:00 am Canadian Helicopters lifted off the ground in Terrace with 4 Water SAR members and the remaining SAR crew started the long drive in the support truck.

Jepson stated the RCMP and BC Ambulance service were able to construct a bridge to the tractor portion of the truck using pallets from the now demolished trailer. Just prior to the helicopter arriving on the scene the two occupants were able to walk across the structure safely and unharmed.

The BC Ambulance crew and the RCMP had determined the helicopter was not going to be able to land safely at the location and decided to take steps to rescue the occupants on their own.

On the return flight, after communicating with those on the ground, Canadian Helicopters flew along Highway 37, located the SAR support vehicle and informed the technicians their services were no longer required. The helicopter returned to Terrace landing at approximately 12:30 pm.

Original post here

At 8:00 am this morning, Sunday November 29, crew members of the Terrace Water Search and Rescue boarded a Canadian Helicopters Unit for a hurried flight north. The rescue truck with more Search and Rescue technicians are also now on the road.

A tractor trailer unit left highway 37 late last night north of Bell 2 and is currently lodged in the Ningunsaw River. It has been reported the driver is still in the unit, unable to exit safely. There is no reports of injuries and due to the location and lack of communications we are unable to report any further details.

At shortly before 10:00 pm Saturday evening Drive BC reported the highway was closed due to a vehicle accident 17 kilometers north of the Bob Quinn lake maintenance yard, which is relatively close to the reported location of this incident. Drive BC reopened the highway an hour later at shortly after 11:00 pm.

We do not have confirmation if this is the same incident or not. If it is the occupant(s) of the tractor trailer unit endured a long cold evening in the river.



You can see the pallets stacked towards the passenger door of the tractor in this picture - photo by Dave Jepson



Photo by Dave Jepson

Tractor Trailer in the Ningunsaw

Comment by S.V.F.D. Fire Chief John Ginka on 3rd December 2009
All the emergency response agencies in the Stewart area work together. We put our heads together and come up with the best solutions for the incident

put our heads together and come up with the best solutions for the incident. That's the upside. On the down side, the trip back was a white knuckler with highway 37 and 37A being in the worst shape I'd seen them all year. I hope it's not a sign of things to come.

Terrace water SAR, unsung heroes

Comment by *bill (braam)* on 29th November 2009

Another indication of Terrace emergency service's excellent capabilities. Terrace does have four facets of emergency service readily available at a moments notice. Terrace's SAR, along with police, fire and ambulance, at your service, 24/7. Thanks guys!
