

Product Applications FROM THE FIELD

Interviews with end users of EMS products

ICY ROADS? NO PROBLEM

If there's one thing they don't typically do in Texas, it's ice. So when a major winter ice storm hit the state capital of Austin in January, it created a bit of havoc. From midnight on Jan. 15 to noon on Jan. 18, Austin-Travis County EMS fielded a combined 1,246 calls for service, including 200 vehicle collisions that required their assistance.

With so many units responding to so many wrecks, that latter number could easily have gone up. But those who drive the service's vehicles were well-prepared for the unlikely conditions they faced. For the last year, they've

trained using the SkidCar platform.

"During the ice storms," says Scott Lindsley, a district commander who's one of five ATCEMS personnel certified as SkidCar instructors, "we encountered a lot of the things we're trying to teach them to handle: the icy conditions, how to steer into a skid, the use of throttle and braking under less-than-perfect road conditions—basically how not to lose control, but if you do lose control, how to recover."

The department discovered the SkidCar system at a show around two years ago and has been using it for roughly a year. All new hires get time on it, and this year, medics began using it in semiannual retraining.

The SkidCar system consists of a frame with training wheels that fits under a vehicle (in the emergency services' case, an ambulance, fire truck or police cruiser) and a hydraulic dolly that raises and lowers it. This enables customizable low-speed training in which drivers can be subjected to a variety of forces and situations. This teaches them, by experience, to make better decisions to minimize risk behind the wheel.

For Austin-Travis County, the system has streamlined and improved training.

"We taught EVOC principles, but it was always on dry pavement," says Lindsley. "We used to go to a wet track at a local university, but that was all we could do. SkidCar allows us to do the same training, but at low speed and under a much safer, more controlled environment."



Find out what the SkidCar System can do for you. Call Toll-free 866.754.3227 or www.skidcar.com
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