



FIREFIGHTERS
Pompiers Sans Frontieres Canada
WITHOUT BORDERS

February 22 2011

Summary of Paraguay 2011 Deployment

On January 20 2011 a four member team of volunteers from Firefighters Without Borders Canada deployed to Paraguay's capital city of Asuncion.

The team consisted of Derek Dickson (North Vancouver City fire Department), Norm MacLeod (Mission Fire Department), Brian Metzack (Richmond Fire Department) and Brad Knorr (Errington Fire Department).

Over the course of ten days our team delivered the following training;

-Two day program of Auto Extrication (heavy rescue)

One day classroom theory and one day practical

-Two day program of Auto Extrication (basic)

One day classroom theory and one day practical

-Three day program of high-rise structure responses

Two days classroom theory and one day practical (theory portion included modules relating to fire science: reading smoke etc.)

Overall, the training reached approximately 150 fire fighters from numerous cities and department within Paraguay, and two firefighters from Brazil. (Who had heard about our program, and traveled to Paraguay to take part and evaluate our team). The range of seniority was from rookies to captains to the second in command from the city of San Bernardo, Brazil.

The overall results of the training were very positive; with the feedback form the firefighters, officers and members of the board of directors being consistently positive. In addition, we have also received an informal invitation to deliver a similar training program into Brazil.

The team of coordinators in Paraguay did an admirable job of preparing at their end, with many of the finer details of organization having been well planned ahead of schedule. Each training session was saw pre-registration, hand-outs prepared with translated copies of the presentation materials in both hard copy and on CD. In addition, T-shirts relating to each module had been screened and were for sale at the academy during sign in. Cost of attendance for the Heavy Rescue and High-rise response training was approx. \$15.00 per person and for the Basic Auto-Ex approx.. \$10.00.

While the overall training program was a success, it did not come without some challenges, primarily, the weather. The practical day of heavy rescue saw temperatures on the humidex reach 45degrees followed by thunderstorms and heavy rain. Both Auto Ex practical days were conducted in automotive scrap yards, as vehicles for demolition are difficult and costly to come by. The scrap yard setting meant some minor safety concerns as far as clear working areas and access to the vehicles. In the case of the heavy rescue practical, two of the three allotted vehicles were deemed to be un-usable because of their location and lack of sufficient, safe access. In both instances, steps were taken to address the issues and the training proceeded without incident.

Weather also provided some challenges during the high-rise training evolutions, with temperatures again exceeding 40degrees. This was anticipated during the last day of theory so Brad Knorr established a plan to record baseline vitals. Two days later during the practical, Brad was appointed as safety officer and took charge of monitoring vitals and coordinating re-hab. This approach to safety was met with some raised eyebrows, but after a brief but thorough explanation from Brad, our Paraguayan counterparts adapted readily.

Our team was also anticipating the arrival of the 11 crates of donated equipment that left Vancouver in late November. While we were in country the shipment had made it as far as Buenos Aires, Argentina. Sadly however, a dock workers strike prevented it's arrival prior to us leaving. To date, it has still not arrived, but may be in Asuncion by the 25th of Feb.-23-11

In closing, I would like to commend the members of Team Paraguay 2011. This team performed seamlessly and represented Firefighters Without Borders Canada with the utmost of dedication and professionalism.

I offer them my personal thanks for sharing the load and elevating the reputation of both our organisation and Canadian Firefighters in general.

Regards

Derek Dickson
Team Leader
FWB Paraguay 2011