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RollTek® investigation reveals product role in California rollover

Three firefighters walk away from potentially deadly accident

Westfield, Ind. – June 10, 2010 – Today IMMI concluded a rollover accident investigation that further demonstrated the vital function that RollTek® side roll protection can serve in protecting firefighters.

Three California-based firefighters were responding to a reported tree down at approximately 1:30 a.m., on Feb. 26 when their fire apparatus overturned and crashed on a steep mountain road. After the vehicle lost contact with the roadway, it rolled 360 degrees down a steep embankment, traveling approximately 40 feet before hitting a large pine tree where it came to a stop. The firefighters extricated themselves from the vehicle and were transported via ambulance to a local hospital for medical evaluation. One of the three firefighters was treated for a minor shoulder injury, and the other two suffered no injuries at all. All three were released shortly after.

The battalion chief responsible for specifying the apparatus with RollTek explains his view on the role of the technology in the incident. “They knew the truck was equipped with airbags, but weren’t aware of how the system worked. The guys were ecstatic afterwards and said it had saved their lives,” he recounted. “That night after they were released from the hospital, they came directly to my office to tell me about it. They were three very appreciative firefighters.”

This department leader explains how options were specified for the truck. “When I ordered the truck from Pierce in 2005, the RollTek option was presented to me, and I ordered side roll protection without giving it a second thought. Firefighter safety is paramount to me,” he said. “Obviously we never intended to use the system, but it worked as intended and more than paid for itself by keeping our firefighters safe in this life-threatening accident.”

Jim Chinni, Director of CAPE®, the crash-test facility at IMMI®, investigated the RollTek deployment. “The driver’s suspension seat pulled down, all of the seat belt pretensioners deployed to hold firefighters securely in their seats, and the side airbags installed in the truck inflated to cushion their heads and necks,” he explained. “Most critical was that the firefighters were all wearing their seat belts, which enabled RollTek to do its job.”

RollTek is manufactured by IMMI, the leading provider of seat belt systems and advanced occupant protection for commercial vehicles. RollTek was introduced on fire apparatus in 2003 and is now protecting thousands of firefighters in cities and counties throughout the U.S.

RollTek side roll protection is one of several **LifeGuard®** technologies offered by IMMI to protect professional drivers and operators. IMMI utilizes a modern crash-test facility, sophisticated engineering and advanced manufacturing operations to develop and supply innovative, proven solutions for customers worldwide. Other LifeGuard products include frontal collision protection, on-board vehicle data recorders and hands-free SCBA holders for fire apparatus.

About IMMI

For more than 45 years, IMMI, based in Westfield, Ind., has been an industry leader in the design, testing and manufacturing of advanced safety systems. IMMI produces hundreds of innovative products for various sectors, including the commercial vehicle, fire/ambulance, child seating, school bus and motorcoach industries. A well-established global presence with facilities in North America, Asia and Europe, IMMI brings safety to people throughout the world.

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