



NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VEHICLE PLUNGES OFF WEST MARIN CLIFF ONTO THE BEACH AND ROCKS BELOW, PROMPTING HELICOPTER RESCUE

On Friday, November 13th, 2015, at approximately 11:50 PM, Officers with the Marin Area Office of the California Highway Patrol were dispatched to a call of a traffic collision on SR-1 (Shoreline Highway), south of Stinson Beach. Responding officers were advised that a vehicle had traveled off of a cliff and into the ocean below where the vehicle was partially submerged. The caller was unable to advise of an exact location however it was learned that both occupants were seriously injured and at risk of being fully submerged as the tide was coming in. Due to the fact that the tide was on the rise and the parties were unable to determine their exact location, a CHP helicopter was requested to search the area.

Emergency crews from the CHP, Marin County Sheriff's Office and Marin County Fire all responded to the area and began the search for the vehicle. CHP helicopter H-32 arrived overhead of the suspected location and began searching for the vehicle along the shoreline using night vision goggles and the aircraft spotlight. At approximately 12:23 AM CHP Flight Officer/Paramedic Shaun Bouyea spotted the vehicle at the base of a cliff with waves crashing against the vehicle. Due to the inaccessibility of the vehicle from the roadway above, the rising tide, and the reported major injuries to both parties, CHP Pilot/Officer Chris Omalza determined that they would have to land the helicopter as near as possible to the vehicle and hike to the occupants to render aid. After surveying the area, Officer Omalza was able to safely land the helicopter at the southernmost end of Stinson Beach.

Once on the ground, the officers proceeded to hike approximately 100 yards over and around rock outcroppings to the vehicle and began rendering medical treatment. Officers Bouyea and Omalza were able to coordinate emergency responses from paramedics and fire crews. The flight crew was able to relay detailed information to fire crews who accessed the collision site from Stinson Beach with extrication equipment. While battling the rising tide and waves crashing against the rocks and the vehicle, crews were able to extricate the driver, a male resident of Stinson Beach, as well as the passenger, a female resident of Stinson Beach, and prepare them for transport. The male driver was loaded into H-32 and the female passenger was loaded into a REACH Air Ambulance and both parties were flown to a Bay Area trauma center with major injuries. Both occupants were extricated and in flight to the hospital by 1:15 AM, approximately 20 minutes prior to the peak of high tide.

At this time we are withholding the names of the involved due their life threatening injuries. Alcohol and/or drugs are not suspected in this collision. Our preliminary investigation indicates drowsy driving may have contributed to the collision. Crews had to wait until daylight and low tide to request tow equipment to remove the vehicle, which was completed Saturday afternoon.

Any additional inquiries regarding H32's involvement in this rescue should be forwarded to Officer James Andrews at jandrews@chp.ca.gov

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