

Agricultural Rescue

**By Lionville Fire Company
May 19, 2018**

On Saturday, May 19th, at 6:28 PM, The Chester County Rescue Taskforce (CCRTF) was dispatched to the 3300 block of Horseshoe Pike, in Honey Brook Township, to assist The Honey Brook Fire Company (Station 33) with a confined space rescue of a 3-year-old boy, who fell into a manure pit inside the family's barn.

The Lionville Fire Company, along with The Fame Fire Company, Downingtown Fire Department, West Whiteland Fire Company, Longwood Fire Company, Wagontown Fire Company and The Chester County Hazardous Materials Team, responded as part of the CCRTF.

Despite the 20-minute drive from the station to the scene, the child was still alive, and responsive, upon our arrival. Capt. Esterlis, along with rescue technician Greg Cazillo, debriefed Deputy 33 and came up with a game plan for the rescue. Meanwhile technician Dan Chapman & Lt. Will Behrndt donned their water rescue gear, and harnesses, then prepared to make entry into the pit. Honey Brook firefighters, along with several taskforce members, had the pit already well ventilated & were in the process of carrying equipment & plywood to the entrance of the pit. The pit was actually a concrete trough, below the barn floor, and had a 6" thick louvered concrete deck above it. This deck is an area where the farm animals walk & are milked. The louvers make the cleanup of manure easy by just scraping & washing it through the louvers. The child fit through a 9"x 30" access hole in the floor and fell about 6' down into the manure. Thankfully, he did not sink and was told by family members, as well as firemen, to stay still. He did as he was told & didn't move. Manure is very much like quick sand, in that the more you move, the deeper you sink. Several family members and firefighters tried to enter through the 4'x6' clean-out opening but were stuck as soon as they stepped in the 4' deep manure.

The rescue team's game plan was to make entry via a ladder & lay plywood on top of the manure, then crawl out to the child. It was a good plan and worked like clockwork. The child was safely extricated and was transported to a local hospital for treatment, while rescue personnel decontaminated their gear and equipment.

From the time of our arrival, until the child was extricated, only 17 minutes had passed. Dan & Will then spent another 10 minutes down there removing the plywood, so the farmer would not have to do it himself. We had air monitors on our guys the entire time & not once did the alarms pick up any hazardous atmosphere.

This successful rescue is the result of quick thinking, dedication and long hours of specialized training. Chief Bill Minahan would like to congratulate the entire CCRTF team & as well as everyone involved in the rescue, for a job well done.

Units: **Rescue 47, Utility 47, Boat 47-2, Chief 47, Assistant 47**

Mutual Aid: **33, 89 EMS, Medic 93, 25, 45, 46, 53, 6, 15, 35**





