



# NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release**

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## **Vehicle crashes into Port Royal fire station Sunday, injuring driver and damaging firehouse**

Port Royal firefighters narrowly escaped injury Sunday when a sport utility vehicle crashed through the front of the town's main fire station at Paris Avenue.

The driver was hurt and, after being removed from the Ford Escape SUV by firefighters using the Jaws of Life, was taken by ambulance to Beaufort Memorial Hospital for potentially serious injuries, Beaufort-Port Royal Fire Chief Reece Bertholf said.

"This incident remains under investigation but I am extremely proud of the way our firefighters at the Port Royal station responded just seconds after their own lives were endangered," Bertholf said. "They sprang into action to help the driver and to prevent any further damage."

The accident occurred around 2 p.m. Sunday when firefighters at the 1750 Paris Avenue station heard a vehicle revving its engine louder and louder, Bertholf said. Moments later, the vehicle crashed through a structural pillar on the fire station's porch, coming to rest on the exterior wall.

After alerting Emergency Dispatch, the firefighters found the single occupant of the vehicle still in the front seat with serious injuries. The concrete and steel reinforced column rested on the car's hood after crashing through its windshield.

Beaufort County paramedics provided the driver with emergency medical care and took him to the hospital.

"This rescue was completed within minutes of the crash by crews that at the time of the crash were fearful for their own safety," Bertholf said. "The way in which these firefighters responded to this incident is a testament to the professionalism, skill and training of the men and women who serve the City of Beaufort and Town of Port Royal as firefighters."

Once the driver was on his way to the hospital, various crews came together to ensure that emergency services in Port Royal weren't interrupted:

- The Town of Port Royal Police Department provide scene and traffic control
- The Office of the Town Manager and Town Building Codes arrived to provide support and to evaluate the structural integrity of the fire station
- The Town of Port Royal's public works team helped temporarily patch the building
- The Town's building inspector determined the fire station didn't need to be closed and that emergency services could continue from that location.

No further vehicle information or patient information was available as the incident is under investigation by the South Carolina Highway Patrol.

**END**