Learning Event

Safer Together

Loss of Vehicle Control - Crossing Watercourse

Hazard
Land Transportation

led to

Unwanted Event
Loss of Vehicle Control

Description

A dual-cab light vehicle with a single occupant was travelling to a rig camp location on a public access road. It was night time and water was flowing over the crossings.

The driver entered a crossing where height of the water was unknown and there were no flood markers in place. Whilst traversing the crossing, the depth of the water and the strength of the current moved the vehicle sideways. The vehicle came to rest on submerged debris.

The driver phoned for help and was retrieved from the vehicle by the rig crew.

No injuries were sustained by the driver or the rescue party.

Risk Event Statement

Due to driving through a flowing watercourse, loss of vehicle control may occur leading to vehicle damage and/or fatality by drowning.

Habits

✔ Driver had completed a recognised 4WD course

✗ Driver focused on getting to rig camp and drove through water course

Learnings

> The level of the water and speed of the current at the entry point of the crossing was not indicative of the conditions further into the crossing.

> Limited visibility (night time) and lack of flood markers made it difficult to assess flow conditions.

> When faced with flooded crossings, notify supervisor to re-assess journey management plan.

Considerations

> Review watercourse crossings within your work environment for frequency of use and available infrastructure (depth indicators). Identify alternate routes when flooded.

> Use comms tools (e.g. stickers in vehicles) to remind drivers about the hazards associated with crossing flooded watercourses.

Could this happen to you?

> Do you cross any watercourses in conducting your work? Do they have depth indicators?

> Do you know how to assess whether (or not) it is safe to cross a flooded watercourse? Can you assess the depth of the water at the lowest point / how strong the current is / road and flow conditions below the surface of the water?