

Student's 'emergency stretcher' invention could prove a lifesaver

June 12 2012



Final year Product Design student Craig Ball and the Rapid Evacuation Stretcher he designed, now on display at the University of Derby 2012 Degree Shows.

A portable rescue stretcher to allow firefighters to more easily haul unconscious or injured people out of danger has been designed by a University of Derby student - with input from a county fire service.

The Rapid Evacuation Stretcher (RES) device was created by Craig Ball as a final year project for his BA (Hons) Product Design degree course,

and is on display alongside fellow students' products as part of the [University's 2012 Degree Shows](#).

The annual Degree Shows - which this year began on June 1 and end tomorrow (June 12) - feature free public exhibitions of works by students in visual communications, film, photography, textiles, fashion, product design, architecture, fine art and many other subjects at the University's Markeaton Street and Britannia Mill sites, in Derby.

For his work, Craig talked to [firefighters](#) at Shropshire [Fire](#) and Rescue Service, where his father Brian has worked for 15 years, before designing his RES. He then returned with the prototype stretcher, which is fitted with carry handles, so its officers could suggest further practical improvements.

Craig, originally of Newport, Shropshire, said: "As far as I'm aware fire services don't already have a portable stretcher of this kind, which one officer can pull.

"The idea is that the rolled-up RES could be strapped up alongside the firefighter's breathing apparatus tank. When a two-person team enter a building and find a casualty the RES could be unrolled and secured around the injured person, who would then be dragged to safety by one officer while the other guided them out."

As well as his father, Craig received a lot of help from Watch Commander Adam Matthews at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. He also received manufacturing help and materials for his product from IC International Ltd of Telford.

"I've taken the product as far as I can as a degree project, fashioning it in the same heat resistant materials the fire services use. I'm now hoping it will be seen and developed further by a company specialising in this

field," added Craig.

John Redmond, Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "We are very pleased to have helped Craig in the development of his product and we wish him well for the future."

Terry Watson, Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Product Design at the University of Derby, added: "We impress on our degree students the importance of proper research and practically based design, as soon as they begin developing a product.

"Craig has taken this onboard and produced something which could very well find its way into commercial development."

Provided by University of Derby

Citation: Student's 'emergency stretcher' invention could prove a lifesaver (2012, June 12)
retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2012-06-student-emergency-stretcher-lifesaver.html>

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