# Fatal Head-On Collision on Interstate 15 Highlights Challenges for Emergency Responders in Mojave Desert



On the Saturday before Easter in 2024, a severe accident occurred along Interstate 15 in the Mojave Desert, near Halloran Springs. The crash involved a head-on collision between a Mercedes GLE 350 and a Kia Sorrento around mile marker 145. Initial reports indicated multiple injuries and fatalities, including children.

The San Bernardino County Fire Protection District, specifically Fire Station 53 located in Baker, responded to the scene. Captain Dan Tellez of the station, which is responsible for a 93-mile stretch of I-15, led the emergency response team, arriving approximately 40 minutes after receiving the call. The station's remote location and the sparse distribution of medical facilities substantially delayed the response and subsequent medical interventions.

Among those involved in the collision were William Coddington driving the Kia with Alicia Ramos and four children towards Los Angeles, and in the opposite direction, Cristobal Cortes Castillo with Iliana German and her two children. The tragic outcomes of the crash included the deaths of Ramos' 13-year-old son Isaac, German's 11-year-old son Derek, and significant injuries among other passengers including the amputation of Coddington’s 3-year-old son Liam’s arm.

The incident revealed the challenges faced by first responders in remote areas of the Mojave Desert, exacerbated by the extreme weather conditions and the infrequency of nearby medical facilities. Rescue efforts were further complicated by holiday traffic and poor weather, which impacted the deployment of medical helicopters. Ultimately, victims were transported 30 miles south for helicopter evacuation due to cloud cover preventing closer landings.

The freeway accident not only highlighted the logistical challenges in emergency responses in isolated regions but also underscored the ongoing risks faced by motorists along this busy interstate corridor. The California Highway Patrol continued to investigate the crash more than a month after the event.