

## Motor vehicle accident . Case Study . Hector's story

*Approximately 1.3 million people die on the world's roads each year, while tens of millions of others are injured or disabled. Over 90 per cent of these deaths occur in low and middle-income countries.\**

*Motor vehicle accidents can occur anywhere, but in places where road conditions are poor and quality medical services are scarce, your chances of survival plummet without medically-led assistance.*

### Hector's story ...

Hector Brouwer de Koning was working in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a site project manager for a global engineering, construction and consulting company. The site was about 100 miles from Abu Dhabi – literally in the desert. Hector and the team were living in a makeshift camp during the construction phase and had to drive to a nearby town to do their shopping.

"On the way back to camp one night, a bank of fog suddenly settled on the road, making visibility poor. We were driving about 50 miles an hour when we hit the fog and didn't see a tanker-truck stalled in the middle of the road. We crashed into it head-on and were all seriously injured."

It took two hours for the local emergency service to extract the three passengers from the wreckage before they were taken to the nearest hospital, almost two hours away.

Once at the hospital, the International SOS Assistance Centre was called. Hector had eight broken ribs, a perforated lung, a broken leg and both of his wrists were broken along with his upper arm. He needed treatment that the hospital could not provide. In consultation with International SOS physicians it was agreed Hector needed to be evacuated from the UAE and taken back to the USA.

International SOS stepped in to arrange everything for Hector's journey, which included bringing his wife and an International SOS doctor to UAE to accompany him on the long and painful flight home.

"The doctors that International SOS arranged for me were great," Hector said. "They met my wife at Zurich airport and flew to Abu Dhabi to meet me."

With numerous broken bones, Hector needed to remain immobilised for the 26-hour trip back to the USA. This required special in-flight arrangements, including an inflated stretcher to cushion shaking and bumping.

"International SOS arranged for a whole section of seats to be blocked off for our stretcher on the commercial flight home, and arranged for a private hospital jet to take us from Atlanta airport home to Kansas City. They took care of all immigration documentation while we were transferred to the private jet, and then had an ambulance meet us at Kansas City airport to take us to hospital."

Getting home was just the start of Hector's long road to recovery, but one year and 13 surgeries later he had fully recovered and returned to work. He has since accepted a new overseas assignment in India.

"Knowing that International SOS is always there ready to take action, I'm confident I'm in good hands anywhere my company sends me."

Hector

\* WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety 2009