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Raccoon saved after shutting down Burlington intersection

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A busy intersection in Burlington came to a standstill on Friday after a small raccoon became trapped atop a traffic light stand.

The little critter caused quite a stir, bringing out about a dozen workers from multiple organizations.

"It was one of those fluke things that, in 21 years of business, we've never seen," said Bill Dowd of Humane Wildlife Control, who performed the rescue.

As a crowd of about 40 looked on, a the workers from Humane Wildlife Control, Burlington Animal Shelter, Burlington police and Burlington Hydro gently lifted the animal to safety at Fairview St. and Cumberland Ave.

"We were about 45 feet in the air in the city's lift truck and we got above the raccoon," said Dowd, who eventually captured the animal using a snare pole.

"I had to hold it inside a bucket," he said. "The animal was starting to get really agitated with all the commotion."

Dowd said the raccoon was released near some railway tracks behind the busy intersection.

Traffic was stopped in all four directions during the rescue, in case the animal tried to jump to the ground, he said.

The Burlington Animal Shelter and Humane Wildlife Control began receiving calls from motorists around 10 a.m. about the trapped raccoon, Dowd said.

The animal, who is about four months old, was released around 2:30 p.m.

It is unclear why the raccoon was in the light stand. Raccoons are nocturnal and generally try to avoid being spotted by humans, Dowd said.

"Maybe it's one of those teenage things," he said, speculating that the raccoon "just wanted to create some traffic chaos."

"It all ended well."



A worker lifts a raccoon to safety at the intersection of Fairview St. and Cumberland Ave. in Burlington on July 23, 2010.

Humane Wildlife Control