

# Mass/Multiple Casualty Triage 9.1

A multiple casualty incident (MCI) is any situation where the number of sick or injured patients exceeds the available local, regional or state EMS system resources to provide adequate care in a timely manner to minimize injury and death. An MCI may be the result of a man made disaster or a natural event.

## Purpose

- The goal of the Mass/Multiple Casualty Triage protocol is to prepare for a unified, coordinated, and immediate EMS mutual aid response by prehospital and hospital agencies to effectively expedite the emergency management of the victims of any type of MCI.
- Successful management of any MCI depends upon the effective cooperation, organization, and planning among health care professionals, hospital administrators and out-of-hospital EMS agencies, state and local government representatives, and individuals and/or organizations associated with disaster-related support agencies.
- Adoption of a system that meets the Model Uniform Core Criteria (MUCC) as developed by the CDC.

## EMS Provider Role

- All providers must have thorough knowledge of both the Incident Command System (ICS) and the triage system.
- Within the scope of the MCI, the EMS provider may perform procedures within their scope of practice.

## Scene Assessment and Triage Priorities

1. The initial response team should assess the scene for potential hazards, safety and number of victims to determine the appropriate level of response.
2. Notify agency dispatch to declare an MCI and need for interagency support as defined by incident level. Agency dispatch should coordinate request for additional resources and contact local mutual aid, regional and state level agencies for assistance and notification as needed. Determine air medical transport availability.
3. Identify and designate the following positions as qualified personnel become available: EMS Command responsible for overall command of all EMS resources and tactics; Triage Officer responsible for overseeing all triage group activities; Treatment Officer responsible for overseeing all treatment group activities; Staging Officer responsible for overseeing staging of all arriving ambulances and other mobile EMS resources; Loading Officer responsible for overseeing loading of all treated patients into ambulances, buses, and helicopters and logging patient information, tag numbers and coordinating hospital destinations
4. Identify and designate EMS sector areas of MCI including Triage, Treatment, Staging and Loading.
5. Post incident MCI Plan.

## Triage Process

Utilize a triage system such as "SALT" (Sort, Assess, Lifesaving Interventions, Treatment/Transport) to prioritize patients. SALT is part of the CDC - sponsored project based upon best evidence and designed to develop a national standard for mass casualty triage.

- Assess each patient as quickly as possible.
- Conduct rapid assessment.
- Assign patients to broad categories based on need for treatment (Still, Wave, Walk)
- Remember: Triage is not treatment! Stopping to provide care to one patient will only delay care for others. Standard triage care is only to correct airway and severe bleeding problems.

Protocol Continues 

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## SALT Triage Categories:

**RED**

Immediate: Immediately life-threatening problems, high potential for survival

**YELLOW**

Delayed: Serious (not minor) injuries requiring care but management can be delayed without increasing morbidity or mortality

**GREEN**

Minimal: Injuries require minor care or no care

**GREY**

Expectant: Unlikely to survive given available resources.

**BLACK**

Dead: Patient is not breathing after opening airway. (In children, if after giving 2 rescue breaths, if appropriate.)

## Tagging System

- Use water-repellent triage tags with waterproof markers and attach to the patient.
- Indicate patient's triage priority, degree of decontamination performed, treatment and medications received.

## Triage in Hazardous Material Incidents

### Decontamination

The need for decontamination is the "first triage decision." Since decontamination can be a lengthy process, the "second decision" is which patient(s) are the first to be decontaminated. The "third decision" is based on need for treatment during the decontamination process, since only simple procedures such as antidote administration can be accomplished while wearing PPE.

### Identification and Treatment

- Signs and symptoms of exposure will usually dictate the treatment required, however, at the earliest possible time, identification of the specific chemical should be made.
- Reference additional hazardous materials protocols as necessary.
- Request additional resources. Initial antidote and medical supplies may be limited to priority patients.
- Respiratory compromise is a leading factor of fatalities due to hazardous material exposure.
- Symptoms of chemical exposure may be delayed and occur suddenly. Constant reevaluation of respiratory status is necessary.

Protocol Continues

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## SALT Mass Casualty Triage Algorithm

(Sort, Assess, Lifesaving Interventions, Treatment/Transport)

