

MASS DECONTAMINATION

Purpose:

- To establish a general guideline for operations when a large number of civilians need to be decontaminated at an incident.

Guideline:

- Critical to managing the decontamination of large numbers of patients is gaining control of the crowd. Repeatedly giving definitive instructions on what to do over loud speakers is important, along with having an adequate number of properly protected personnel directing the victims through the decon process.
- Providing verbal instructions may be all that is needed to care for the ambulatory populations, but non-ambulatory victims will require more assistance and equipment (e.g., backboards).

Mass Decontamination with Master Stream / Hoseline Considerations:

- For large numbers of contaminated victims use hose lines and master streams such as deck guns or an elevated master stream
- Use Elevated Master Streams using fog nozzles with LOW pressure to rain the water down on the victims like a giant shower.
- If Master Streams are not available, handlines with a fog nozzles at low pressure can be used
- Position the decontamination area upwind and uphill of the Hot Zone.
- Personnel wearing full structural gear and SCBA may approach the victims to provide direction and guidance

Mass Decontamination Considerations:

- Remove contaminated and exposed victims from the high-hazard area. Isolate and secure them in a holding area at the outer periphery of the hot zone.
- Medical providers may access the patients in the holding area to initiate triage and administer basic care
- Separate victim(s) into groups
- Symptomatic and asymptomatic (no symptoms)
- Ambulatory (walking) and non-ambulatory (not-walking)
- The type of mass decontamination system is dependent on the number of victims, the severity of injuries and the resources available

- **Symptomatic Patients:**
 - Begin emergency gross decontamination immediately on victims who are symptomatic
 - Have visible product on their clothing
 - Were in close proximity to the discharge
 - In mass casualty setting life safety takes precedence over containing runoff
 - Set up decontamination in an area such that the decontamination water will flow away from your operation and into the grass or soil if possible
 - Provide privacy only if it will not delay the decontamination process
 - Remove all of the victims clothing
 - As resources become available separate decontamination lines may be established for male and female patients as well as families
 - Provide emergency covering for patients (such as blankets and sheets)
 - Transfer patients to EMS for triage and treatment

- **Asymptomatic (no symptoms)**
 - Process patients through the gross decontamination shower with the clothes on
 - Set up tents, taps and shelters and provide showers or and improvised wash system
 - Patients should be numbered and bags should be used to store their personal effects (Use last four of SS#)
 - Provide emergency covering for patients (such as blankets and sheets)
 - Transfer patients to a holding area for medical evaluation