
7. ASSISTANCE FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES OR TERRITORIES

A mass casualty event is likely to overwhelm a community that has only limited resources. Plans and procedures should be established to identify and list sources of external assistance. Neighboring facilities must be identified, canvassed and enumerated. Account must be taken of the possibility that these facilities will also be overextended. Therefore, contingencies should be sufficient to account for the worst possible circumstances.

Neighboring countries or territories should be approached and their agreement sought for mutual support. If international borders are crossed, the Foreign Affairs Ministries should be involved in the agreements.

A. MOBILIZATION

With proper and sufficient plans for assistance established, accounting for the broadest spectrum of situations, the type of assistance required must be clearly defined. The decision to seek external assistance must be taken as soon as possible taking into account the best interest of the victims and the outside resources being called upon.

When external assistance is necessary, the EOC will issue the request to the potential responder (countries or territories, regional and/or international organizations). To facilitate this request/response process, formal protocols should be adopted with neighboring countries or territories and with key regional and/or international agencies.

All requests for external assistance emanating from various sectors, agencies or national organizations must be channelled through the EOC. To bypass this essential coordination hub only adds to the confusion.

B. INTEGRATION OF EXTERNAL STAFF

Assisting countries/organizations must ensure that personnel sent correspond to requested specifications. Arriving teams must report directly to the EOC from whence they will be dispatched to a specific sector leader for assignment. Any external team must be integrated into the local response and operate under local coordination consistent with local procedures.

To facilitate smooth integration of external teams, regional standardization of disaster response procedures and joint regional training is recommended.