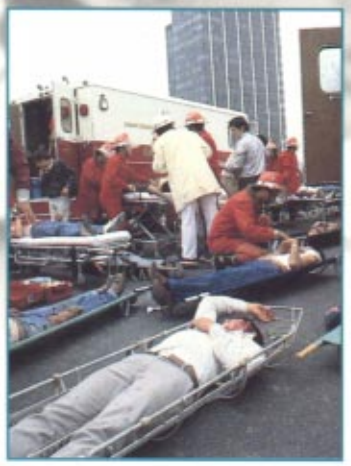
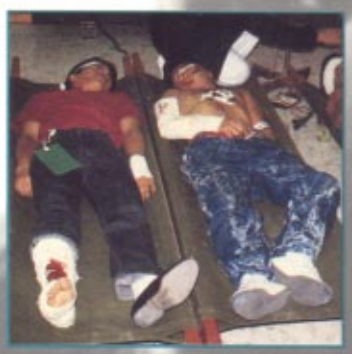
PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION





ESTABLISHING A MASS CASUALTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

ESTABLISHING A MASS CASUALTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Pan American Health Organization
Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Regional Office of the
World Health Organization

PREFACE

When an accident or disaster involving large numbers of injuries occurs, the first to provide emergency assistance are communities closest to the site of the incident. During the last 20 years the Caribbean and Latin America have given special attention to training emergency personnel in triage and in providing first aid either at the site of an accident or disaster, or at the hospital. The entire Region is now familiar with methods of classifying casualties, and this process has proved to be the most efficient means of ensuring survival of the injured in a mass casualty situation. However, there are still serious gaps in the coordination process, a situation that is most pronounced in remote areas or those with limited resources.

Many lives have been lost in mass casualty situations because resources were not mobilized efficiently. The challenge we face is this: the more scarce the resources, the more efficient the organization must be. This publication describes the steps to designing a mass casualty management system that will ensure the highest possible survival rate. It focuses on the involvement of police, firefighters, Red Cross volunteers, health center and hospital staff. If these professionals form part of the structure that we refer to as the mass casualty management "system" in this publication, they can positively contribute to saving lives.

We hope that this publication will provide the necessary information to guide disaster managers and health care professionals in establishing or reviewing their own mass casualty management system.

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