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## 2. DEFINITIONS

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#### 1. Mass Casualty Incident

Any event resulting in a number of victims large enough to disrupt the normal course of emergency and health care services.

#### 2. Emergency Services

Those services which are specifically designed to respond on a daily basis to emergency situations: Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, Accident and Emergency Department.

#### 3. Health Care Services

All services which are providing health care to any kind of patient: Hospital, Polyclinic, Health Center/Clinic, Ambulance Service. In many countries, these services are regulated by the Ministry of Health.

#### 4. Mass Casualty Management

Management of victims of a mass casualty event, aimed at minimizing loss of life and disabilities.

#### 5. Mass Casualty Management System

The group of units, organizations and sectors which work jointly, through institutionalized procedures, to minimize disabilities and loss of life in a mass casualty event

through the efficient use of all existing resources.

The Mass Casualty Management System is based on:

- Pre-established procedures, to be used in daily emergency activities and to be adapted to meet demands of a major incident
- Maximization of the use of existing resources
- Multi-sectoral preparation and response
- Strong pre-planned and tested coordination

This System is developed in order to:

- Accelerate and amplify daily procedures in order to maximize the use of the existing resources
- Establish a coordinated multi-sectoral rescue chain
- Promptly and efficiently bring disrupted emergency and health care services back to routine operation.

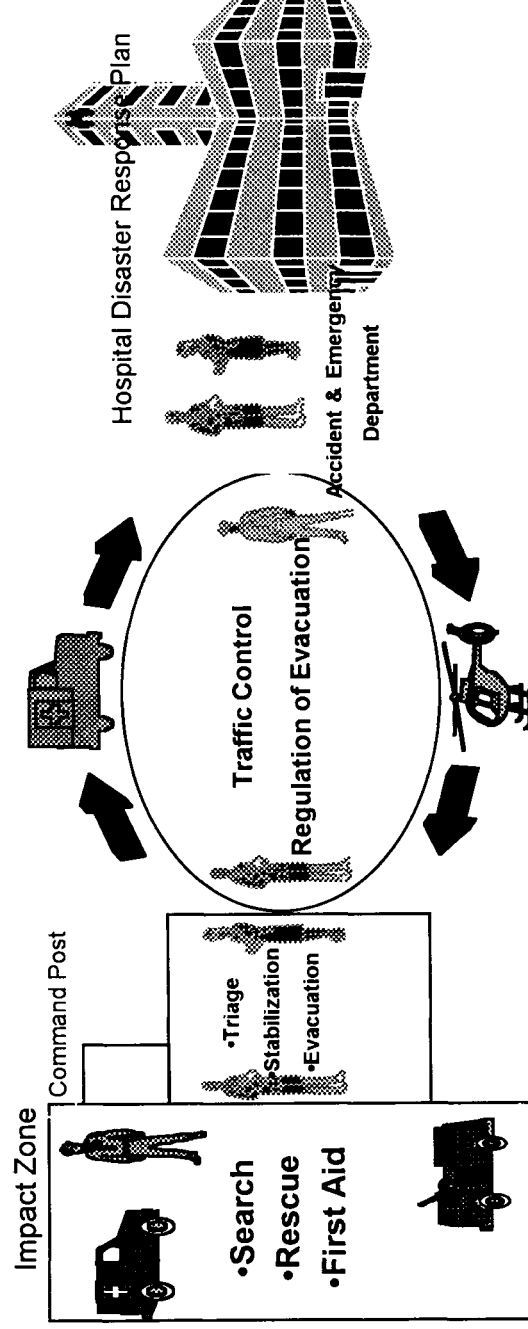
#### 6. Rescue Chain

The Rescue Chain, the essence of the Mass Casualty Management System, involves the Ministry of Health, private hospitals, police, fire service, NGOs, transport services, and communications (see Figure 1).

This chain starts at the disaster site (with activities like initial assessment, command and control, search and rescue, field care), continues with transfer of victims to adapted facilities (using procedures for

FIGURE 1. MASS CASUALTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

## A Multi-Sectoral Rescue Chain



PRE-HOSPITAL ORGANIZATION

HOSPITAL ORGANIZATION

regulation of evacuation and ambulance traffic control), passes through hospital reception (with activation of the hospital disaster response plan), and ends only when the victims have received all emergency care needed to stabilize them.

The implementation of this Rescue Chain requires the existence of:

- An efficient Accident and Emergency Department
- A basic radiocommunications network
- Coordination procedures among all sectors involved
- Skilled multi-sectoral rescue teams

As in any chain, the strength and reliability of the system depends on that of each link; if one fails, the entire system will be compromised.