Mass Casualty Triage Pack - SMART Triage Pack

Summary The policy specifies the use of SMART Triage Tags which provide a standard tool for mass casualty triage process for both Health Response Teams and Ambulance Services in a mass casualty incident. This policy supersedes the previous policy of Triage Label (PD2005_482).

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Branch contact 02 8396 5012
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Functional group Clinical/Patient Services - Incident Management, Medical Treatment, Nursing and Midwifery
Population Health - Disaster management
Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health and Safety
Applies to Local Health Districts, Government Medical Officers, NSW Ambulance Service, Public Hospitals
Distributed to Public Health System, Government Medical Officers, NSW Ambulance Service, Ministry of Health
Audience Health Response Teams under the disaster management Medical Services Supporting Plan

Secretary, NSW Health
This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is mandatory for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.
MASS CASUALTY TRIAGE PACK – SMART TRIAGE PACK

PURPOSE
This policy specifies the use of Mass Casualty Triage Pack - SMART Triage Pack in a mass casualty situation to denote the priority for treatment under the Medical Service Supporting Plan (GL2010_011).

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS
This policy sets the requirements of the use of the SMART Triage Pack for casualty triage process, documentation in the field and when patients are immediately transported to hospital. The SMART Triage Tags become part of the patient’s medical records.

In Local Health Districts, the SMART Triage Packs are to be stored and formed part of the Health Response Team Medical Equipment list requirement (PD2009_080).

In Ambulance Services of NSW, the SMART Triage Packs are to be stored in the Ambulance vehicles for first responders’ use in mass casualty incident.

IMPLEMENTATION
This policy will be implemented across Local Health Districts and Ambulance Services of NSW in 2011.

In Ambulance Services of NSW, SMART Triage Packs are currently held in supervisors and Special Operations Team responder vehicles across the State.

In Local Health Districts, each Health Response Team Medical Equipment Kit requires two Mass Casualty Triage Packs. Ambulance Service of NSW has purchased one Smart Triage Pack and additional SMART triage Tags for each Health Response Team Equipment Kit in Local Health Districts. Local Health Districts will be responsible to replace all old triage labels by the 31st December 2011 and for future replacement.

Local Health Districts
Local Health Districts are responsible for:

- implementation of this policy and replacement of the remaining old triage labels in the Health Response Team Equipment Kit at the hospital locations within their district by 31 December 2011.
- ensuring that the policy is brought to the attention of staff who are responsible for maintenance, storing and management of the SMART Triage Packs for the Health Response Team Equipment Kit.
- future replacement of the SMART Triage Pack items.
Ambulance Services of NSW
Ambulance Services of NSW is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy and progress the replacement of the remaining old triage labels in accordance of the services budget allocation.
- ensuring that the policy is brought to the attention of staff who are responsible for maintenance, storing, management and use of the SMART Triage Pack.
- future replacement of the SMART Triage Pack items.

NSW Health Counter Disaster Unit
NSW Health Counter Disaster Unit is responsible for:

- the development of this policy incorporating the new national Triage Tags
- the review and update this policy every 3 years or if any request is made to NSW Health Counter Disaster Unit following a mass casualty incident or operation.

REVISION HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Amendment notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>Deputy-Director-General</td>
<td>Policy introduces the Mass Casualty Triage Pack.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1987</td>
<td>Director-General</td>
<td>Originally issued as Circular 87/62</td>
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<td>(PD2005_482)</td>
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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Triage Process

Triage was first introduced in military context as a system of sorting the casualties for medical treatment in the field. In recent decades, the triage concept has been adopted and implemented in the disaster medical management and emergency departments.

In the context of medical management in a mass casualty situation, the aims of triage are not only to deliver the right patient to the right place for optimal treatment, but also to ‘do the greatest good for greatest number’ with the valuable medical resources at the scene which should not be diverted to treating an irrecoverable condition.

1.2 Australian Standard Mass Casualty Triage Labels (Tags)

In early 2010, the SMART Triage Tags were approved as an Australian standard mass casualty triage label by the Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) following consultation with jurisdictional Health Departments.

The SMART Triage Tags provide a standard tool for mass casualty triage process for both Health Response Teams and Ambulance Services in a mass casualty incident. These tags also provide, for the first time, a national consistency for mass casualty triage tags across Australia allows inter-operability.

The SMART Triage Tags meet world’s best practice and have been tested and evaluated for Australian conditions. The system was used during major incidents including the 2005 London bombings.

2 SMART Triage Pack

The SMART Triage Pack (Red colour for Ambulance Services and Green colour for Health Response Team) consists of:

- SMART Triage Tags
- Triage Sieve and Casualty Count Chart
- Paediatric SMART Tape
- CBR Tag
- Light stick and pencils

Photo source: SMART TAG™
2.1 SMART Triage Tag

The Mass Casualty Triage Tag (SMART Triage Tag) is an interchangeable triage tag that enables field documentation. The tag is durable, waterproof and can be written on when the tag is wet.

Each Mass Triage Tag has an individual barcode and unique identifier number. The unique identifier number should be recorded in all patient documentation. Each SMART Triage Tag also has a plastic bag with main pocket for Triage Tag and small front pocket to store CBR Tag.

The SMART Triage Tag has a prominent priority numbering and matching colour system\(^1\) on the tag (Table 1). A separate Black colour triage tag is used for deceased persons.

\(^1\) The blue colour corner of the SMART Triage Tag is referred as fourth priority (Expectant). The Expectant priority refers to casualty whose condition is so severe that they cannot survive despite the best available care and whose treatment would divert medical resources from salvageable patient who may then be compromised. This category (Blue – Expectant priority) is not used in NSW; however it is used in some jurisdictions in Australia.
Table 1 – Mass Casualty Triage Colour and Priority Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>First (Immediate) Priority</td>
<td>Casualties who require immediate life saving procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YELLOW</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Second Priority (Urgent)</td>
<td>Casualties who require definitive treatment within four to six hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Third (Delayed) Priority</td>
<td>Less serious casualties who do not require treatment within the above times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Dead Category</td>
<td>Deceased persons can be declared dead by an Ambulance Officer or a nurse. However, deceased persons must be certified as dead, by a registered medical practitioner. These are labelled and left undisturbed, in situ, and Police Forensic Services Group notified (note responsibility of the Institute of Forensic Medicine in mass casualty incidents).</td>
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</table>

While there is no longer a need to use multiple triage tags to reflect patient’s changes in condition and priorities. The SMART Tag provides documentation for recording patient changes in condition. For example Total score 10 or less is equal to Priority 1. The time of condition changes should be recorded using 24hours time recording method.
Before the patient is transferred to definitive health care facility, the Ambulance Loading Point Officer will complete and remove the transport tag (at the side of the SMART Triage Tag) for records. This documentation enables the tracking and accounting of the casualty’s movement.

The SMART Triage Tag will be attached with patient who is then transferred to the definitive care destination.

2.2 Triage Sieve and Casualty Count Chart

A double sided card with an adult triage sieve process and the casualty count chart is attached to the SMART Triage Pack with an elastic band. The card is also made from the same waterproof material as the triage tags.

The chart provides a quick reference of the triage sieve process and a casualty count record is a document that can be used by Ambulance First Responders and Health Response Team to track the number of casualties and the clinical acuity.
2.3 Paediatric SMART Tape

The durable Paediatric SMART Tape is an evidence based system\(^2\) enables Ambulance First Responders and Health Response Teams to make non-biased triage decisions for children from 3kg/50cm to 32kg/140cm\(^3\). The use of this tool has been incorporated into the existing Health and Ambulance training programs.

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2.4 CBR Tag

The Chemical Biological and Radiological (CBR) Tag provides a form to record the details for contaminated casualties from an incident involving chemical, biological, radiological or infectious agents. However, the CBR Tag does not replace the SMART Triage Tag and does not have the unique identifier barcode and number. Therefore, the CBR Tag must be used together with the SMART Triage Tag.

The unique identifier number of the victim’s SMART Triage Tag is required to be documented on the CBR Tag. The completed CBR Tag is to be inserted in the front clear plastic pocket of the SMART Triage Tag.

3 Training

The Mass Casualty Triage Pack has been incorporated in the Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS) course and Ambulance training programs. Updated training will be provided for existing trained health and ambulance personnel.

A train the trainer course has been conducted for relevant ambulance clinical educators, health services disaster coordinators and nominated health and ambulance services personnel, to ensure that the training process is undertaken across NSW Health.

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4 The term “WMD” used in the SMART Triage Pack or Education Pack, should be referred as “CBR”. “WMD” is a term used in USA but not in Australia. In Australia, the term “CBR” is used instead.
Education packs were distributed to the relevant health and ambulance services for training purposes.

Each Education Pack consists of:

- 1 training DVD
- 1 training course presentation
- 1 Training Manual
- 8 Triage Exercise Cards
- Triage sieve and Casualty Count
- Paediatric SMART Tape
- SMART Triage Tag
- Deceased Tag
- CBR Tags
- Light stick

### 4 Supplier Details

The manufacturer, TSG Associate Company has appointed a distributor within Australia for future orders.

The distributor is Midmed and the company details are:

Postal Address -
PO Box 508
Morningside QLD 4170

PH – 07 3348 9155

FAX – 07 3348 9950