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## Mass Casualty Management: Accounting for Hospitalized Victims

### SUMMARY

Procedures for accounting for victims hospitalized during a mass casualty incident (MCI) should be noted in response and recovery plans and coordinated in advance between law enforcement agencies and local hospitals. To avoid miscommunication, it may be necessary to dispatch personnel to establish face-to-face contact with area hospitals.

### DESCRIPTION

The fire that destroyed the Station Club in Warwick, Rhode Island on February 20, 2003, resulted in 96 deaths and more than 200 injuries. Approximately 186 victims were evacuated by ambulance, but incident command (IC) did not always record the hospitals to which patients were transported. Other victims self-dispatched to emergency rooms in private vehicles. As a result, IC encountered difficulties accounting for all of the victims after the incident.

Law enforcement personnel were dispatched to area hospitals to compile an accurate list of victims and their status. State troopers or officers from the nearest police station visited each healthcare facility in the area, including some in Massachusetts, to account for victims hospitalized during the incident. A protocol enabling hospital staff to phone or fax patient information to the West Warwick Police Department was eventually implemented, but face-to-face contact proved to be an effective means of avoiding miscommunication when initially accounting for hospitalized victims.

Procedures for accounting for victims hospitalized during an MCI should be noted in response and recovery plans and coordinated in advance between law enforcement agencies and local hospitals. The *Rhode Island Station Club Fire After-Action Report* recommends dispatching personnel to establish face-to-face contact with area hospitals to avoid miscommunication.

### CITATION

Titan Systems Corporation. [\*Rhode Island: The Station Club Fire After-Action Report: State, Local, and Federal Government and the Private Sector\*](#). July 2004. (LLIS.gov ID# 10806)

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