



POLICY ON THE DISPOSITION OF PATIENTS IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ON NOTIFICATION OF A MASS CASUALTY INCIDENT

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This document is a policy of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and relates to the disposition of patients within the emergency department who have either been medically assessed or who are awaiting medical assessment at the time of notification of a mass casualty incident.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this document the term “casualty” refers to people involved in a mass casualty incident who require medical assistance and “patient” refers to all others seeking treatment.
- 1.3 The policy is applicable to emergency departments in general.

2. POLICY CONTENT

- 2.1 ACEM believes that all hospitals should have plans that allow the reception of casualties in the event of a mass casualty incident, which must include measures to rapidly increase throughput and exit of patients out of the emergency department.
- 2.2 ACEM believes that all patients and casualties, regardless of origin, should be given care according to need.

3. PROCEDURE AND ACTIONS

- 3.1 Emergency departments, hospitals and healthcare systems should make plans to provide care for all people seeking care during a mass casualty incident, regardless of origin.
- 3.2 Capacity to deal with a mass casualty surge includes creating capacity within the hospital and healthcare system to allow immediate disposition and decanting of patients from the Emergency Department once initial assessment has been completed and resuscitation commenced.
- 3.3 In the extraordinary circumstances of a mass casualty incident, plans may include the provision of care in locations not normally used for this purpose, within the hospital or in the community.
- 3.4 Emergency departments should ensure that those patients who choose not to seek care in an emergency department because of a mass casualty incident should be given clear alternatives within the community.