# What if the police want to question witnesses right away?

If the person requires treatment at the hospital, the police officer will usually accompany the patient in the ambulance. If the patient is emotionally upset, Psychological First Aid only takes minutes and can be highly beneficial to you in ascertaining clearer and more concise information from a witness.

### Work with a buddy



In most incidents, but especially during an MCI, it is important to work collaboratively. Always aim to have a

buddy with you so that, as a team, you can work together to identify threats, observe the situation and monitor each other's physical and mental wellbeing. Taking care of yourself is key to your success during an MCI and checking in with your buddy can ensure that you are both doing good work.

### **Guiding principles for communication**

As a responder, whether or not the person you are treating is a casualty or potential suspect, it is important and professional to build a relationship based upon a climate of trust, respect, empathy and justice.

As a firefighter you may be the first person in authority that the person has seen. If the person is a suspect, studies show that perpetrators are more cooperative with the police and are more likely to confess, if treated with empathy right from the first contact with a person in authority.

Casualties and civilians who assist at the scene of

an incident have stated that the initial words of a first responder have a major impact on their emotional recovery. As a professional, when you show respect and empathy for all those involved they feel valued and appreciated and this has led to a speedier recovery. When dismissed, when the efforts of civilians have not been acknowledged, it can have a long-lasting negative impact.

If you can't thank the person at the time, a follow-up communication will assist in reducing long-lasting negative impacts.

### Things to say to victims/witnesses

- Provide clear information.
- Clearly state what you can and cannot do.
- Ask what the person is feeling or how they are doing.
- Tell the person that you feel touched or are moved by their pain or situation.
- Thank them (if appropriate) for the help they have provided to others.
- Help people focus on short-term goals. This will help them cope with the immediate reality more effectively.
- Be willing to accept people for who they are, what they say, how they express their concerns, and how they define their particular losses.
- Be tolerant if people repeat their stories. This is common. Remember that "time, talk and tears" are important elements of healing.
- Always try to get back to people if you say you will.
- Do not claim that you fully understand the person's situation.
- Do not try to tell people how they should or should not be feeling even if their feelings seem inappropriate to you.





# Tips for firefighters after a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI)





### LOOK

## • Gather information

- Provide practical assistance
- Link

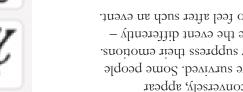
- stroqqus • Connect victims with social
- Teach coping strategies
- Link with collaborative services



release of hostages or victims. support staff as to how best facilitate the eventual will be important to have discussions with these waiting to hear from their trapped relatives. It Family Reunification Centre for family and friends VS workers and/or DPS Volunteers may set up a

has been made. may want to wait for treatment until that contact for them to concentrate on anything else. They until they have made that contact it will be difficult reassure them that they are okay. For many people, to their families or friends as soon as possible and Victims and witnesses will want to reunite or talk

police. paramedics or any potential testimony for the will not affect or jeopardize their treatment by with their family members in a safe way that A Victims Services Worker can help them reunite





# You may be the first car

5. Enhance natural resilience

3. Reduce stress-related reactions

2. Connect to restorative resources

1. Establish safety and security

oplectases:

tamilies.

4. Foster adaptive short- and long-term coping

aftermath of a disaster or MCI. It has five key tool intended to be delivered in the immediate

victims who have experience an MCI and affected

can practice Psychological First Aid (PFA) with

Victims Services Workers, or other trained persons

Everyone is very upset. What can I do to help

shooter or terrorist event) then the police will be

If the MCI involves a crime scene, (e.g., an active

Psychological First Aid is a quick, effective

What is psychological first aid (PFA)?

close to the scene. engines will be arranged for ambulances and fire an MCI a staging area Otherwise, typically, in incident command setup. you will join be part of or second car and thus

# What will my role be?

there is no "right" way to feel after such an event. Everyone will experience the event differently – may appear very calm or suppress their emotions. exhilarated that they have survived. Some people They may be crying or, conversely, appear



calm people down?

in charge of the scene.

# Tips for arriving on scene:

or bright lights. Victims may be trightened by loud noises sirens off as you approach the scene. • If possible, turn emergency lights and

been threatened; there may or may not be injuries,

shooting or other event. People's lives may have

transportation accident, an earthquake, a mass

multiple casualties. This could be after a major

been through a traumatic situation involving

What is a mass casualty incident (MCI)?

how you should approach the situation and to

managing casualties and their families after an

The following tips can help you in treating and

check with your immediate supervisor to confirm

MCI. This information is general in nature; always

An MCI is any event where people have

answer specific questions.

- sgaibauorins and may not be entirely aware of their individuals may be fleeing the scene Remember to use extreme caution as
- and evacuation of casualties. in order to start rapid retrieval, treatment site outside the immediately affected area • Think about setting up an additional triage

### What reactions will they be having? This was a pretty scary experience for people.

angry or sad. after an MCI. People may feel confused, scared, It will be normal for people to feel very anxious

- Contact and engage
- Provide safety and comfort
- Stabilize

### Listen