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BC Ambulance Service

BCAS PROVIDES DISASTER TRAINING

VICTORIA – A new Multi Casualty Incident (MCI) training program is teaching BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) paramedics how to prepare for and handle the worst incidents.

“The BCAS plays a critical role in the triage, treatment and transportation of patients at some of BC’s worst Multiple Casualty Incidents”, said Health Minister George Abbott. “I am encouraged by the proactive approach that the BCAS is taking to ensure all paramedics have the best skills and training available to deal with these tragic events”.

An MCI event involves many agencies both on and off the scene. The course put on by the BCAS is designed to have Police, Fire and BCAS working together at a scene to achieve the best possible outcome. The course also incorporates working with Health Authorities to ensure individual hospitals are not overwhelmed by major incidents.

The BCAS has co-ordinated over 160 regional training courses across the province, providing MCI training to over 1,500 paramedics and more than 200 individuals from partner emergency service agencies such as fire and search and rescue. BCAS expects to complete training for all 3,300 BCAS paramedics by the end of 2008.

“This one day course gives paramedics the education and tools to deal with major emergency situations that involve multiple patients at one scene,” said the BCAS Chief Operating Officer, Sue Conroy. “Unfortunately, BCAS has had to respond to a number of Multi Casualty Incidents in recent years, such as the Abbotsford Hot Air balloon crash which involved over 2 air ambulance and 30 ground ambulance resources.”

“Instructors go over the order of action on arrival at the scene, emphasizing scene set-up and control as the first action required. Triage follows, and is the quick evaluation of casualties, with the assigning of degrees of urgency for treatment based on the type of injuries presented”, explained Conroy.

“Having taken the course I now know that our approach to a multi casualty incident would be very organized and would enable us to give clear directions to each other and our emergency service partners”, said Jane Christy, Lillooet Unit Chief. “We also have new tool kits with the supplies needed to manage these types of scenes”.

In addition to providing the skills and knowledge to manage a scene the BCAS is also equipping stations and vehicles with the tools to manage an MCI event. MCI kits have been prepared for ambulances, stations, and medical support units: each with increasing amounts of triage tape, triage tags, and supplies to set up an MCI scene. The total investment made by the BCAS to date is over \$785,000 on training and supplies.

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