

Issue: Trauma Site Clothing for Remote Health Staff

Raised by: Various

Background: There have been numerous calls for establishing an appropriate clothing set for Remote Health staff attending trauma scenes.

Discussion: Quite a number of considerations are involved in determining suitable trauma site clothing:

Identification of staff type: There is strong interest in being able to identify staff type at an accident scene. This was a particular concern arising at the Ghan Disaster Debriefing. Labels that can be changed between staff types is preferred to eliminate the need for multiple clothing sets. An alternative is the use of the international symbol or a common term such as "Emergency Health Worker"

Colour: It is considered important to distinguish from other services, including St John personnel. Colour also affects visibility.

Visibility: Strongly reflective markings are important for night time scenarios

Durability and comfort: There is an obvious imperative that clothing used at trauma scenes should be protective, both from wrecks, and possible extended exposure to the elements. Against this is the need for materials that are not excessively hot for general NT climatic conditions.

Cost: Most clothing options under consideration that are of adequate quality and appropriateness would constitute a formidable cost burden to the Branch relative to the probable level of use.

Lengthy discussion and exploration of different types of trauma scene clothing has confirmed the inherent difficulty in recommending a preferred set of clothing that will be appropriate and acceptable to the remote context. There is however recognition of the substantial need that exists to address the applicable OH&S risks associated with staff attending trauma scenes.

Similar debate has occurred recently amongst retrieval service staff in the NT regional hospitals, and those services have reached a decision to proceed with an appropriate option. Best Practice group believe there is merit in utilising the same concept but in a limited way, ie adopt the shirt component only which can be utilised by wearing as an over-shirt. Apart from agreeing with the appropriateness of clothing type there is the added advantage of uniformity with other departmental staff who may also be present at more significant trauma scenes.

Consultation: Ghan Disaster Debriefing Group, Ian Norton (ED, RDH), St John Ambulance

References: Product Guides

Outcome: An initial limited release of two trauma scene shirts each for ten* health centres with higher levels of trauma will be made, with a view to wider implementation as indicated.

These shirts will be in line with the clothing being procured by other Departmental retrieval personnel.

Labels indicating staff type will be utilised.



* Batchelor, Pine Creek, Ti Tree, Elliott, Jabiru, Kings Canyon, Hermannsburg, Adelaide River, Ali Curung, Daly River