

## MEDICAL GUIDANCE NOTE

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**Title:** IDENTIFICATION OF USAR MEDICAL PERSONNEL  
**Last revised:** January 2011

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### 1. Background

1. It has been acknowledged that there are several potential issues pertaining to the obvious identification of Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) medical personnel by the local population. In particular, medical personnel can sometimes be placed under significant pressure to divert from their primary task (USAR medical operations) to render medical assistance to the wider affected community. While it is acknowledged that the identification of medical personnel both within the team and between teams is important, in some instances it is preferable that a USAR medic is not obviously recognisable by the wider community so that they can focus on their primary mission.
2. A perceived unwillingness to render medical assistance to the wider community in such circumstances may have adverse ethical, political, security and national (home country) implications.

### 2. Recommendation

1. The MWG recommends all medical personnel within a USAR team wear a green helmet when deployed away from their Base of Operations (BoO). If this is not practicable, then they should adopt the use of a prominent green marking displayed on their helmet e.g., green reflective tape.



Photo courtesy of T Glass



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2. A similar identification issue may arise within a team's BoO where the BoO Medical Station (BMS) is unintentionally prominently identified to the affected community. This may result in significant pressure on the BMS to address the healthcare needs of a very large group. It may also pose a security risk to the BoO. Again, a perceived unwillingness to render medical assistance may have similar adverse ethical, political, security and national (home country) implications.
3. It is therefore recommended that the BMS be marked with prominent green marking e.g., green flag.
4. The above recommendations are indicated for those situations where medical identification to the wider community may result in potentially adverse consequences. However in other situations where this is not likely to be an issue, standard markings as are customary within the team may be utilised.
5. It is acknowledged that the adoption of these recommendations is entirely at the discretion of the USAR team management. However, in situations where a team elects to remove or supplement formal medical markings for the reasons identified above, these recommendations should be adopted as they serve as a universal indicator of medical personnel.