

## **Sound Practice No.2**

### **Makati Emergency Management Services System (MEMSS)**

#### **Overview**

Makati City is able to deliver health services in times of disaster through its Emergency Management Services System (MEMSS). MEMSS provides a standard approach on health and emergency management. It addresses day-to-day situations on medical and related emergencies and takes a great part in disaster risk management.

What makes MEMSS work for what is intended in a satisfactory and timely manner is due to the quality and quantity of personnel trained in pre-hospital care and the priority put by the city authorities on disaster management. The latter is manifested by the mayor's political commitment and through the provision of funds for updating capabilities such as equipment. Enhanced by its components, MEMSS represents multi-agency approach and coordinated response in delivering emergency services to the citizens based on acceptable practices derived from latest experience abroad and guided by standards issued by recognized authorities.

The MEMSS is a continuous program has helped in mitigating disasters for Makati City. As Makati City has demonstrated that MEMSS works, other local government units (LGUs) might learn from it.

#### **Background**

Prior to the implementation of MEMSS, health and emergency situations are handled on a community-based approach until the introduction of a program that provides a system for emergency response involving multiple agencies of the city government. The beginnings of the Makati Emergency Management System (MEMSS) can be traced to the pre-hospital emergency care system organized by the Department of Emergency Medicine of the Ospital ng Makati (Makati Hospital) and the Makati Rescue (formerly the Makati Youth Emergency Rescue Team or MAYERT).

A newspaper article in 1998 (Manila Standard, "An innovative system: Makati emergency service is TV's '911' come to life", January 11, 1998) called the MEMSS "an innovative system." At that time, there construction boom in the city at that time; the city government expected work-related accidents in the construction sites. It was estimated that almost 10,000 will need emergency

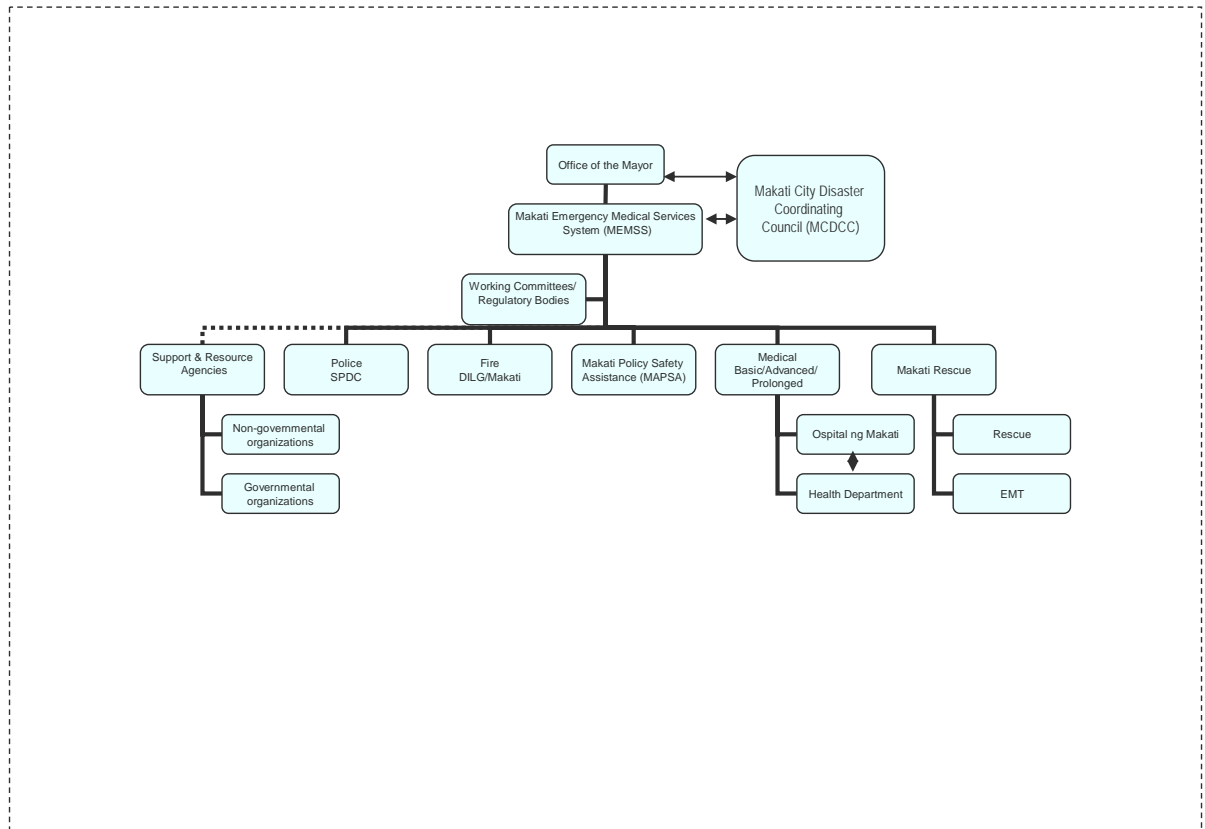
medical care, of which 2,800 were expected to be critical.

Through City Ordinance No. 97-093, the Makati Emergency Medical Services (called Makati EMS) was created, attached to the Office of the City Mayor. The ordinance authorized Makati EMS (or MEMS) “to initiate and coordinate the organization of the Makati Emergency Medical Services System (MEMSS).” Through time, the Makati EMS has helped professionalize emergency rescue services in Metro Manila and the rest of the Philippines.

## **Details**

Each of the participating units in MEMS have reached certain standards and practices which are worthy of emulation and offers useful benchmarks. The MEMS (Figure 1) consists of:

- **Ospital ng Makati (or Makati Hospital):** The hospital spearheads emergency medical services for the city and acts as the medical control institution for emergency medicine. Training in emergency medicine is offered at the Ospital ng Makati.
- **Makati Rescue:** Makati Rescue provides pre-hospital care and undertakes technical search and rescue services. It has a supply of necessary rescue equipment such as specialized tools like hydraulic spreaders, cutters, water rescue equipment and a complete set of rescue gear like medical extrication devices and trauma kits.
- **Makati Fire Department:** Makati Fire Department renders services to promote fire safety, to suppress fires and conduct EMS fire-related rescue. It has the reputation of having been awarded the Most Outstanding Fire Stations in the NCR in 1997. It has kept high performance standards through human resource development and acquisition and maintenance of advanced fire-fighting equipment.
- **Makati Health Department:** Makati Health Department provides community health services and emergency transport. It has eight fully equipped basic life support (BLS) ambulances allocated to the barangays to ensure timely delivery of pre-hospital emergency care.
- **Makati Police Department:** Makati Police Department provides the needed security, scene (crowd control) and traffic management during emergencies, i.e., pre-hospital operations. Makati Police Safety Assistance (MAPSA): MAPSA is a separate group organized by the city government to assist local police in traffic management. It handles security needs of the response teams in combination with the police. MAPSA members may also provide first responder care.

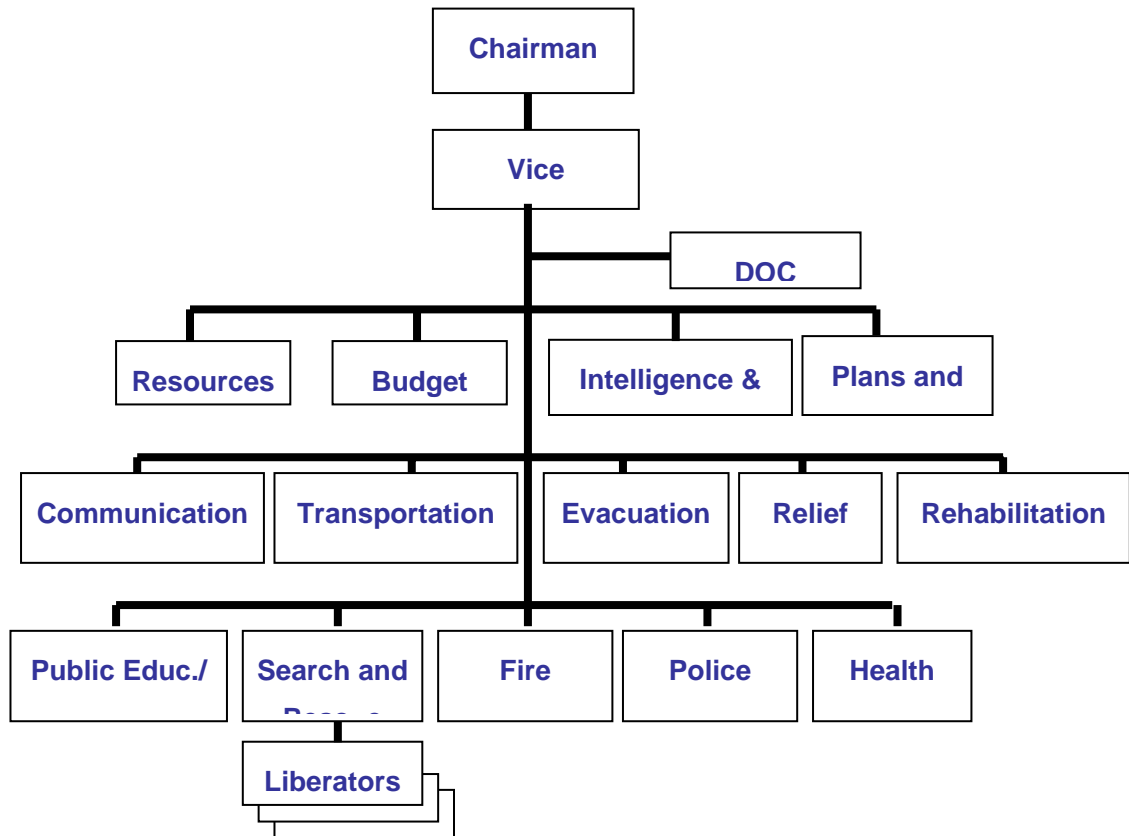


**Figure 1.** Makati Emergency Management Service System

- Makati City Disaster Coordination Council (MCDCC) (See organizational chart in Figure 2): MCDCC, as a specialized task group consistent with the country's disaster management organizational set-up, is participated in by the MEMSS, General Services Division, Makati Action Center, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) reservist, Department of Environment and Public Works, Solid Waste Management Division, and Makati Social Welfare and Development. The MCDCC provide medical and relief assistance during the recovery phase.

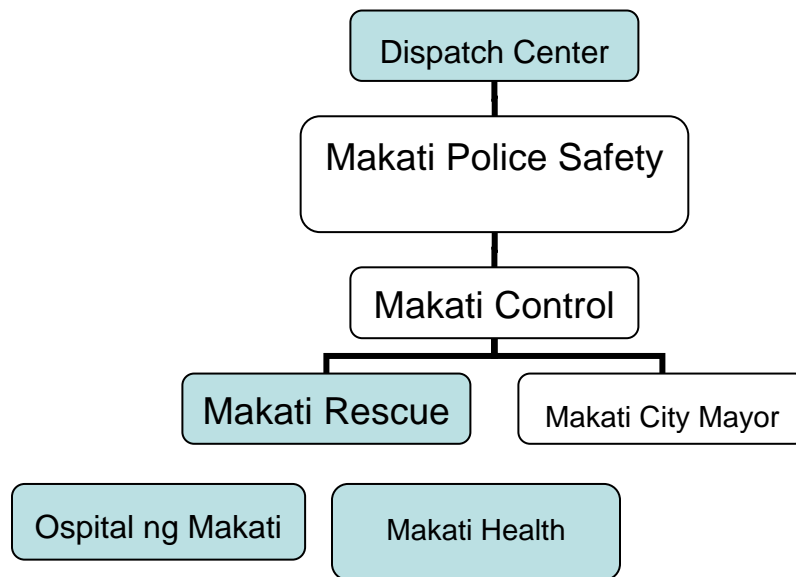
Makati City has an emergency access telephone number, 168. Service is available 24 hours. Once accessed by a person in need, appropriate units of the MEMS are dispatched through an “communications cascade” (Figure 3). A medical dispatcher provides life-saving and pre-arrival instructions to the person(s) in need of medical help before the pre-hospital response teams get to the scene. According to call prioritization, the response configuration is either single or multi-tiered; this pertains to a situation in which what type of response

should be sent, and not whether or not to send response. A team of emergency medical technicians performs extrication, rescue and basic to intermediate life support under strict medical direction. The response team, which must be dispatched within one minute, must arrive at the scene within eight minutes eighty percent of the time.



**Figure 2.** Organizational chart of the Makati City Disaster Coordinating Council.

Protocols and standards are strictly adhered to. Medical protocols are reviewed every six months to ensure that these are suitable to emergency practice. Rescue and patient transport facilities adhere to international standards. Makati City Hall has been able to build up the logistical facilities and equipment by allocating the necessary funds. The budget for MEMS has increased from an initial budget of 50,000 pesos to 21.9 million pesos for FY1999-2000. Funds also come from the training course fees.



**Figure 3.** Communications cascade of the Makati Emergency Management Service System.

The MEMS is able to maintain high standards by continuous training and skills updating. It is also supported by research and documentation. Time and motion studies of the “activation cascade” are being conducted time and again to obtain satisfactory performance level.

The MCDCC has been conducting training for barangay residents and school children. The Barangays have a Barangay Disaster Coordinating Council and a disaster brigade also. One challenge faced by the MCDCC in emergency response is that the turnover rate of residents is rather fast, i.e., people go in and out of barangays in a dynamic way so that trained residents could be gone a short while after they have received training.

As corollary features of the health care system of the city, medical services are free for Makati citizens who are issued the “yellow card.” All citizens can avail of medical services at any medical facility including the Makati Medical Center, a private hospital which is acknowledged as the most advanced in the country. To ensure that patients are given the necessary medical care, the MEMS also entered into mutual aid agreements with other recipient facilities in Metro Manila.

## **Monitoring**

Proper performance is monitored through measures and mechanisms that help gauge progress and obtain feedback. Among these are:

- (1) Assessment and evaluation through meetings, reports and scheduled drills and exercises;
  - a. Conducting regular meetings for assessment and quality check on unit performance;
  - b. Conducting drills (such as bomb drills, fire drills) provides the occasion to check capabilities and potentials. For instance, a state of complacency is manifested by the quality of performance by drill participants and are recorded through critical evaluation by relevant department heads; response times, delivery of care, and quality of service are assessed;
- (2) Benchmarking with other cities/municipalities and other countries to assess the quality and standard of the MEMS;
- (3) Recordkeeping and documentation procedures on a day-to-day basis as well as those of specific events;
  - a. Monthly/quarterly accomplishment/performance reports and special reports are submitted to the City Mayor.
  - b. The process is documented also through records of assessment meetings
- (4) Strategic planning workshops participated by relevant personnel to enhance the program;
- (5) Feedback from the citizens to the mayor.
  - a. Meeting of the mayor with barangay community members (called Ugnayan sa Barangay) where a wide range of concerns are tackled. Weekday meetings are scheduled on evenings by the Office of the Mayor in all 33 barangays throughout the year. One meeting lasts one to two hours on the average.
  - b. The mayor also receives feedback through a one and a half radio program aired every Sunday evening.

An issue that often gets highlighted during times when the mayor interacts with citizens concern multiagency response or tapping other agencies.

Among the indicators include:

- (1) The increase and decrease in the number of personnel;
- (2) The availability of equipment;
- (3) Number of trainees in courses held every six months;
- (4) Number of crisis intervention (including suicide attempts);
- (5) Number of lives saved.

Observing the capabilities of other LGUs, a key officer of Makati Rescue identifies three major obstacles faced by LGUs to effectiveness in providing the service; these are:

- (1) Personnel have not been provided training focusing on pre-hospital care (as against in-hospital care) in a continuous manner;
- (2) Citizens are not entitled to medical treatment privileges similar to that which can be enjoyed through the yellow card that Makati provides its citizens; and,
- (3) Rather than financial resources to purchase equipment, the political leadership particularly the city executive or mayor does not put the appropriate degree of priority on disaster management.

This practice is an adaptation of the United States Emergency Medical Services System. U.S. standards were adopted to cope with international standards to ensure effective delivery of emergency services. Some local protocols and practices were also devised to meet local needs.

### **The Megacity Context**

While Makati has pioneered in pre-hospital care and is ahead of the rest of the LGUs in Metro Manila in this field, Makati has extended its services to the other Metro Manila LGUs and others outside in greater frequency that to its own constituency within its boundaries.

It may be difficult to replicate the system without considering the political background of a locality, budget constraints and technical expertise. Replication of the practice is possible but rests strongly on the “idiosyncracies of mayors” (quoting one city officer) or what may be called political will and decision of the top elected official of the city. An EMS requires a firm budgetary commitment. Some LGUs are not in a position to purchase all the equipment and supplies.

Depending on the characteristics of municipality or city (such as the types of buildings, settlements, population density and topography), some aspects can be adopted. Makati and Manila, for instance, have similarities in terms of urban character such as the existence of commercial buildings. On the other hand,

proximity or distance between the LGUs will determine whether it feasible to share an “emergency system” resource, particularly where medical or health concerns are of paramount concern. The idea of different departments or agencies of the same city government close communicating and properly linked is do-able and should be pursued.

**References:**

City of Makati, undated. Makati Medical Services System (mimeograph).

City of Makati, 1997. City Ordinance No. 97-093. An Ordinance Creating the Makati Emergency Medical Services (Makati EMS).

Documentation

Photos from actual rescue scenes



Photos courtesy of the City of Makati.



Disaster brigades talking with barangay residents



A meeting of barangay disaster brigade members.

*Photos courtesy of the City of Makati.*

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**Knowledge Base Coding Reference:**

Name of the Practice: Makati Emergency Management Services System (MEMSS)  
Contact Person(s): Col. Victor Pagulayan, Hector Reyes of Makati Rescue & health staff, Makati  
Contact Address: Tel. 899-8931; Fax 895-8229  
Written by: A.L. Fernandez, EdM Team 4, based on draft by S. Mattingly