**Department Fatality Management Plan**

**Template**





\*\*This template has been designed to help you develop your fatality management plan. Some sections have been completed for you while others require input. Each template includes critical planning elements but planning teams may continue to add additional elements as they see fit. Each department, agency, organization, or facility has unique needs and each plan should be tailored to meet those needs. This is ONLY a template and is meant to provide additional guidance in your planning efforts.\*\*

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# Community Fatality Management Plan Template

The primary objectives for fatality management planning include recovering and identifying victims in a safe, timely, and dignified manner while respecting their religious and cultural traditions and providing family members’ assistance to cope with tragedy and tools for rebuilding. The primary audience for this template includes emergency management staff, the ME/Coroner staff, other department and agency heads and their senior staff members, leaders of local volunteer organizations that support emergency operations and others who may participate in mass fatalities management efforts.

## Introduction

A mass fatalities incident (MFI) is any event that causes multiple fatalities and that exceeds the routine capability of the community, requiring additional staff and equipment resources to meet the demands of the response.

The purpose of this fatality management plan is to provide basic guidelines and procedures to properly manage a mass fatalities incident (MFI).

The overall intent of this plan is to support the provision of an acceptable standard of services for fatality management during a disaster.

## Plan Maintenance and Distribution

The [insert name of department, agency, organization or facility Name] is responsible for the distribution and maintenance of this fatality management plan. The plan will be reviewed annually and revised as needed to incorporate federal, state, and regional guidelines applicable to address operational issues identified during training, exercises and incidents.

## Record of Changes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of Change(s)** | **Page(s)** | **Brief Description of Change(s)** | **Feedback Provided By:** | **Change(s) Made By:** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## Purpose and Scope

**Purpose**

The purpose of the [Insert department, agency, organization or facility Name] fatality management plan is to establish the overall framework within which all entities of the [Insert department, agency, organization or facility Name] will operate in an integrated and coordinated fashion before, during and after a mass fatalities incident.

Specifically, the fatality management plan establishes the key policies, roles and responsibilities necessary to respond to a mass fatalities incident. The plan is designed to accomplish the following:

1. Establish the systems and coordination that will allow for optimal response to and recovery from a mass fatalities incident
2. Outline the coordination and key activities required to respond to and recover from a mass fatalities incident
3. Define the policies and roles and responsibilities of [Insert department, agency, organization or facility Name] that may be requested to provide assistance before, during or after a mass fatalities incident
4. Guide strategic organizational behavior before, during, and after a mass fatalities incident.
5. Assist in developing an enhanced level of disaster preparedness and awareness throughout the [Insert department, agency, organization or facility Name]
6. Identify linkages to the emergency/disaster policies and plans that guide and/or support the fatality management plan
7. Synchronize (both vertically and horizontally) with relevant policies, plans, systems, and programs to ensure full integration and unity of effort
8. Outline procedures for requesting and coordinating state and federal disaster assistance
9. Acknowledge the importance of flexibility in disaster response, and allows for the creative and innovative approaches that will be required to address the problems presented by mass fatalities incidents

*\*Note: A mass fatalities plan does not address the needs of injured survivors. A mass casualty plan attends to the needs of injured survivors. A mass casualty plan’s goal—to ensure adequate and coordinated efforts to minimize loss of life, disabling injuries, and human suffering of those who survive the incident—will typically operate alongside the mass fatalities plan.*

**Scope**

The fatality management plan should address all hazards, all phases of emergency management, all potential impacts, all people, and all stakeholders.

* 1. Emergencies are routine events which make up the majority of incidents and are handled by responsible jurisdictions or agencies through other established authorities and plans
	2. Disasters are non-routine events which exceed the capability of local jurisdictions or agencies (or exhaust their resources) requiring countywide coordination and/or assistance from the county, state, or federal governments
	3. Catastrophes are extremely rare events where most, if not all, of the following conditions exist:
* most or all of the county is destroyed or heavily impacted
* local government is unable to perform its usual services
* help from nearby communities is limited or cannot be provided
* most or all of the daily community functions are interrupted

This plan is intended to address the need to coordinate and manage fatality management services following a disaster.

## Authorities and References

The coroner/medical examiner is the legal authority to conduct victim identification (or assist the lead investigative agencies to complete victim identification), determine the cause and manner of death, and manage certification of death for a mass fatalities incident. This mass fatalities plan derives its authority from that legal responsibility and from the related plans with which it is consistent. It has been coordinated with [list office and address of local ME].

This plan is consistent with:

* 2013 Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 390 (Medical Examiner), Individual sections as they apply to individual jurisdictions

## Situation and Assumptions

**Situation**

1. The coroner/medical examiner is ultimately responsible for the overall coordination of activities related to mass fatalities incidents; however, there are many other organizations that are involved in the resolution of such events.
2. A mass fatalities incident, by definition, is any situation where more deaths occur than can be handled by local resources.
3. The [Insert department, agency, organization or facility Name] Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) identifies a number of hazards that have the potential to cause a mass fatalities incident.
4. A disaster resulting in mass fatalities would quickly overwhelm the resources of the [Insert department, agency, organization or facility Name].
5. Regardless of the size of the mass fatalities incident, the medical examiner is the legal authority to conduct victim identification (or augment the lead investigative agencies to complete victim identification), determine the cause and manner of death; manage death certification, and notification of next of kin.

**Assumptions**

1. Most mass fatalities incidents will require resources and assistance from regional, state, and federal partners.
2. Mass fatalities incidents create widespread traumatic stress – for responders, families that are impacted, and at times, the community-at-large. Traumatic stress can lead to physical illness and disease, precipitate mental and psychological disorders, and can destroy relationships and families.
3. In the event of pandemic influenza or similarly contagious disease, external resources may not be available and some services will need to be delivered differently to minimize the spread of disease.
4. Mass fatalities incidents due to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear factors will present an added difficult dimension to the mass fatalities response, recovery, identification, and final disposition of deceased victims.
5. In most instances, a mass fatalities incident may not generate state and federal disaster declarations and their inherent provisions and support.
6. A mass fatalities incident may be the result of (or occur during) a disaster that has severely impacted critical infrastructure, systems, supplies, and or other essential services.
7. Activation of a department, agency, organization or facility Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will depend on the scope of the incident and the need for additional support.

## Plan Activation

Activation of this Fatality Management Plan is dependent on various criteria presented below. The activation of this plan will allow for the formation of a department command, consisting of representatives from department, agency, organization or facility, and any other necessary representative as required. (*please modify this section as necessary*)

Any incident consistent with one or more of the following criteria may precipitate the activation of this plan:

* Any incident having the potential to yield [Insert #] or more fatalities
* Any incident involving a protracted or complex decedent recovery operation
* Any situation in which there are remains contaminated by chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive agents or materials
* Any incident or other special circumstance requiring a multi-agency or regional response to support fatality management plan operations

## Concept of Operations

This section outlines overall goals and summarizes the conceptual flow of decedent operations. The overall goals of fatality management are to recover, identify and effect final disposition of remains in a dignified and respectful manner; and collect evidence (as needed); and provide family assistance to victims’ relatives and loved ones.

As [Insert department, agency, organization, or facility Name] can adequately store and maintain [INSERT NUMBER] of full-body remains, the possibility must be recognized that circumstances could result in surge of deaths that would exceed the department, agency, organization, or facility’s capacity to handle remains. Such circumstances would transition the intuitional process into a community-based collaborative process. In the event the incident exceeds the department, agency, organization, or facility’s capacity to store remains, the following steps will be initiated:

1. Notify the [Insert Jurisdiction Name] Medical Examiner/Coroner Office and [Insert Jurisdiction Name] Emergency Manager of the situation, circumstances and need to activate the fatality management plan and, if appropriate, community fatality management plan.
2. Alternative remains storage facilities will be considered as outlined herein.
3. All tracking and documentation of off-site storage of remains will be under the direction of the Coroner/Medical Examiner and pursuant with the [Insert Jurisdiction Name] Fatality Management Plan.
4. Final disposition of remains may be delayed if volume exceeds the capacity of funeral homes. Pursuant with [Insert Jurisdiction Name] Fatality Management Plan, remains may need to be retained in inventory until capacity of disposition is able to meet the demand.

## Public Information and Messaging

A trained and experienced public information officer (PIO) from the coroner/medical examiner office or their representative is an integral member of the Joint Information Center (JIC) leadership and staff for a mass fatalities incident. A JIC will be established in accordance with the [Insert Annex Name] Annex of the EOP. The local EMA will work with the coroner/medical examiner (ME) or medical examiner/coroner representative and representatives from the incident site, Victim Identification Center (VIC) and Family Assistance Center (FAC) for news conferences and interviews as requested by the Joint Information Center (JIC).

When requested, [insert appropriate position] will provide information to the JIC to coordinate the release of information to the media and public. All media requests should be funneled through the JIC. If information is requested by the media from the ME staff-staff should not release information. They should let their supervisors know, who will, in turn notify the JIC.

## Interoperable Communications

Following any mass disaster, including a MFI, responding agencies will follow their normal communications protocols. Any time the Fatality Management Plan is activated, the [Insert department, agency, organization or facility Name] Emergency Operations Center will be activated to help coordinate communication. See the Communication Section of the EOP for details.

## Resource Requirements

The following resources will likely be needed and are currently available from [insert resource supplier name] to support the [insert department, agency, organization, or facility name] fatality management operations:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Resource Description | Quantity | Location |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

The following resources might be needed and would need to be requested/purchased at time of need to support the [insert department, agency, organization, or facility Name] fatality management operations:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Resource Description | Quantity | Source |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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The resource requirements list can be added as a checklist to ease an annual inventory and update process and should include all of those items needed to meet every phase of the response from plan activation, mobilization or resources, operations, and demobilization. The process for doing an annual update or inventory should also be documented.

## Incident Command System (ICS)

Primary and/or support roles and responsibilities for an ICS should be detailed and coordinated with outside agencies that may have active participation in a mass fatalities incident response. Organizational charts should be included in your plan. Details should include ***who*** has the authority to activate/deactivate ICS for the department, agency, organization, or facility.

[Insert Fatality Management Operations/Branch ICS ORG Chart]

## Logistics

Mass fatalities response operations are very resource intensive events. Mass fatalities incidents can be either man-made or natural events. In the case of man-made events, financial claims for reimbursement will or can be made against an entity that is deemed responsible for the incident. Regardless of the cause, it is necessary to maintain detailed records of costs and expenditures in the event reimbursement is possible.

It is critical to plan for an individual or team to be responsible for the accounting of all resources used in the mass fatalities response operation. The Logistics section is generally responsible for the coordination of all Logistics and resource management activities. In some cases, a Community Auditor or Financial Officer may be an appropriate choice to lead the effort as a Logistics Administrator.

The Logistics Administrator should be a member of the emergency management team of the affected community since the Logistics activities of the operation continue long after the closure of the actual mass fatalities response operation. Local resources and vendors are most likely to be used extensively, requiring the Logistics Administrator to have a sound knowledge of the local business community to maximize effectiveness.

# Appendix A: Acronyms

AAR After Action Review

ABMDI American Board of Medico-legal Death Investigators

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

AED Automated External Defibrillator

AM Ante mortem

ARC American Red Cross

ATF Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives

BCP Body Collection Point

CBRNE Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosive

CERT Community Emergency Response Teams

DEXIS Digital X-ray Imaging System

Decon Decontamination

DHS Department of Homeland Security

DMORT Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team

DoD Department of Defense

DNA Deoxyribonucleic Acid

DVR Deceased Victim Record

EMS Emergency Medical Service

EMT Emergency Medical Technician

EOC Emergency Operations Center

EOP Emergency Operations Plan

ESF-8 Emergency Support Function-8

FAC Family Assistance Center

FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation

FM Fatality Management

FOG Field Operating Guides

FSRT Fatality Search and Recovery Team

GPS Global Positioning System

Hazmat Hazardous Materials

HHS Health and Human Services

HIPAA Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

HVAC Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

IAP Incident Action Plan

IC Incident Command or Incident Commander

ICE Immigration and Customs Enforcement

ICS Incident Command System

ICP Incident Command Post

IT Information Technology

JIC Joint Information Center

JIS Joint Information System

MA Mortuary Affairs

MFI Mass Fatalities Incident

MOU Memorandum of Understanding

NIMS National Incident Management System

NGB National Guard Bureau

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NOK Next of Kin

NPO Non-Profit Organization

NRF National Response Framework

NTSB National Transportation Safety Board

PD Police Department

PE Personal Effects

PIO Public Information Officer

PM Postmortem

PPE Personal Protection Equipment

SAR Search and Rescue

SME Subject Matter Experts

SOP Standard Operating Procedure

THIRA Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

UVIS Universal Victim Identification System

WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction

#

# Appendix B: Definitions

Ante mortem: Prior to death.

Casualty: A person who is injured in a Mass Fatalities incident but does not die.

Cause of Death: A formal, certified opinion by an attending physician or the medico-legal authority of the internal medical condition and/or external incident or chain of incidents that resulted in death.

Emergency/Disaster Declarations: Official emergency declarations made by specified elected officials at the local, state, or federal level authorizing the use of equipment, supplies, personnel, and resources as may be necessary to cope with a disaster or emergency. Formal declarations are made when the incident requires more assets and resources than exist within the jurisdiction.

Family Assistance Center: The designated location/facility established to exchange accurate, timely information render support services for victim family members of mass fatalities and friends who travel to the incident location.

Fatality: A person who dies as a direct or indirect result of a Mass Fatalities incident (interchangeable with victim, decedent).

Fatality Management: The process of locating, recovering, processing, identifying, and releasing for final disposition deceased victims of a Mass Fatalities incident.

Final Disposition of Remains: The concluding arrangement for the remains of the decedent, a decision of the next of kin. Options include burial, entombment, cremation, or donation.

Incident Command System: A prescribed method of command, control, and coordination within the National Incident Management System to provide a common organizational structure designed to aid in the management of facilities, equipment, personnel, supplies, and information.

Mass Burial: A large plot of land used for burying multiple victims in partitioned, marked graves.

Mass Fatalities Incident: Any incident that results in more fatalities than a local jurisdiction can adequately manage, whether natural or man-made, accidental or intentional.

Medico-legal: Of or pertaining to law as affected by medical facts.

Missing Person: Those persons whose whereabouts are unknown to family or friends following an incident.

Morgue: The facility location where decedents undergo external and internal physical examinations.

National Incident Management System: The part of the National Response Framework that outlines how the government and private entities at all levels can work together to manage domestic incidents, regardless of their cause, size, location or complexity.

Next-of-Kin: Immediate family members including: parents, spouses, siblings, and children.

Non-Governmental Organization: Independent organizations free from government control.

Non-Profit Organization: A business or enterprise that does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead uses them to help pursue its goals.

Personal Effects: Belongings of an individual including clothing, clothing accessories, jewelry, and other property on their person or otherwise in their possession.

Postmortem: After death.

Remains: A deceased body or fragmented parts from a deceased body.

Survivor: Anyone who is exposed to or otherwise encounters a Mass Fatalities incident that does not perish as a result of the incident.

Temporary Interment: A location where decedents are interred underground in individually marked spaces that may or may not become the final disposition location for some decedents.

Victim: A person who dies as a result of a Mass Fatalities incident (interchangeable with fatality, decedent).

Victim Identification Center: Temporary morgue

# Appendix C – Decedent/Missing Person Information Form

Use this form following a mass fatality incident to collect family information regarding a missing person.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Facility Name:** |  |
| **Information Collected By:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |  Print Name & Title |
| **Time:** |  | **AM/PM** | **Phone:** |  | **Fax:**  |  |

**Information Given By**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Last Name:** |  | **First Name:** |  | **Middle Name:** |  |
| **Phone:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Relationship:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **City:** |  | **State:** |  | **Zip Code**: |  |

**Contact Person for Missing Person** (If different from above)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Last Name:** |  | **First Name:** |  | **Middle Name:** |  |
| **Phone:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Relationship:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **City:** |  | **State:** |  | **Zip Code:** |  |

**When was the last known contact with the missing person?**

**Missing Person Information**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Last Name:** |  | **First Name:** |  | **Middle Name:** |  |
| **Maiden Name:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Phone Number:** |  |
| **Relationship:** |  |
| **Marital Status:** |  | **Date of Birth:** |  | **Age:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **City:** |  | **State:** |  | **Zip Code:** |  |
| **Does the person require any medications?** |
| **Does the person have any major medical or mental health issues?** |

**Legal Next of Kin**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Last Name:** |  | **First Name:** |  | **Middle Name:** |  |
| **Phone:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Relationship:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **City:** |  | **State:** |  | **Zip Code:** |  |

**Physical Description**

Mark with an **X** the most appropriate response and add additional information in the space provided

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Approximate Height** | **Approximate Weight** |
| **Sex** | Male Female Unknown   |
| **Age Group** | Infant Child Adolescent Adult: 20’s 30’s 40’s 50’s 60’s 70’s 80’s >80’          Unknown Other   |
| **Race/ Ethnicity** | White Black/African American Asian Native American Hispanic/Latino    Unknown Other   |
| **Skin Color** | Light Medium Tan Dark Freckles Unknown Other       |
| **Hair Color** | Blonde Brown Black Grey White Red Dyed      Unknown Other   |
| **Hair Length** | Short-chin level Medium – shoulder level Long – below shoulder Unknown Other    **** |
| **Hair Type** | Straight Curly Wavy Shaved Bald Pattern of Baldness     Unknown Other   |
| **Facial Hair** | None Beard Moustache Stubble Sideburns Goatee Unknown      Other  |
| **Eye Color** | Brown Blue Green Hazel Black Grey Unknown      Other  |
| **Eye Wear** | Contact Lenses Yes No  | Glasses Yes No Describe Frames: |
| **Dental Characteristics** | Dentures Yes No Partials Yes No  | Bridge Braces Crowns Missing   Chipped Gaps Other   |
| **Unique Features** | Shape of faceEyebrows:Nose:Chin:Hands:Feet: | Shape of EarsAttached Yes No Detached Yes No  |
| **Toenails** | Manicured Yes No Color: Decorated Yes No Describe:   | Other: |
| **Fingernails** | Manicured Yes No Color:  Decorated Yes No Describe:  | Other: |

**Distinguishing Body Marks**

Provide a brief description and location of the following distinguishing body marks and mark its location on the body sketch

|  |
| --- |
| **Tattoos** (description and location) |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |

|  |
| --- |
| Scars (Description & Location) |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3.  |
| 4. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Piercings (Description & Location)** |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3.  |
| 4. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Birthmarks** (description and location) |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Missing Organs/Amputations** (description and location) |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |

|  |
| --- |
| **List Prosthesis/Implants** (e.g. pacemaker, metal plates, screws, hearing aid) |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |



 Front Back

Mark on body sketch the presence of:

* **Scars S**
* **Tattoos T**
* **Piercings P**
* **Birthmarks B**
* **Amputations A**

**Place Patient Identification Sticker Here or Patient Tracking Unique Identifier**

**Photographs**

List and describe all photographs attached below (or attached to this form)

1.
2.
3.
4.

**Place Photo Here Place Photo Here**

**Place Photo Here Place Photo Here**

**Personal Effects**

**Description of clothing:** Describe type of clothes worn in as much detail as possible. Include **size, color, material and any inscription**.

1.

6.

2.

7.

3.

8.

4.

9.

5.

10.

**Description of Footwear:** Describe type of worn footwear in as much detail as possible. Include **size, material, color and any inscription**.

**What is his/her shoe size?** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Jewelry Items:** Describe the type, color, stone and any inscription in as much detail as possible. (e.g. yellow metal ring with clear stone)

**Worn at Time of Disaster: Jewelry Items “Always Worn”**

1.

5.

2.

6.

3.

7.

4.

8.

**Other Personal Items Found on Person:** Such as wallet, purse, keys, cell phone, contents of pockets, etc. Provide as much detail as possible

1.

5.

2.

6.

3.

7.

4.

8.

|  |
| --- |
| **Additional Comments:** |

# Appendix D – Decedent Tracking Log

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DATE/TIME PREPARED:** | **OPERATIONAL PERIOD DATE/TIME:** |
| **NAME** | **SEX** | **DOB** | **NOK NOTIFIED YES/NO** | **ENTERED YES/NO** | **DECEDENT STORAGE AREA** |
| **NOTIFIED VIA PHONE** | **EDRS** | **LOCATION** | **IN DATE/ TIME** | **OUT DATE/ TIME** | **LOCATION** | **IN DATE/ TIME** | **OUT DATE/ TIME** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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