

ANNEX N - MASS FATALITIES
ESF #8

I. MNWALK REQUIREMENTS

Item #: 1, 4, 51, 60, 64

II. PURPOSE

To provide an overview of how mortuary services will be established in the event of a mass fatalities incident in Stearns County/City of St. Cloud. The Stearns County Sheriff's Department will be the lead in the event of a mass fatalities incident and will be responsible for removal and examination of the deceased, notification of next of kin and determination of the need for investigation and/or autopsy or the release of and disposition of remains.

III. SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Situations and Assumptions

1. Multiple deaths may occur during an emergency or disaster.
2. Local systems and resources providing victim identification and mortuary services may be insufficient or disrupted by a disaster.
3. The Stearns County Sheriff or Designee will determine whether local resources and capabilities will be exceeded and can request assistance from the State Disaster Mortuary Emergency Response Team (DMERT).
4. The Stearns County Sheriff or Designee can ask the State to request Federal assistance from the Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Team (DMORT) if the assts and resources at the State level are insufficient for responding to the mass fatalities incident.
5. Disaster workers and family of the victims may require mental health resources following a mass fatalities incident.
6. Any changes to regular practice pertaining to the management of autopsies and handling of bodies during a pandemic would require the authorization of the Ramsey County Medical Examiner/Coroner.
7. Many religious and ethnic groups have specific expectations about the handling of bodies, the ceremonial wishes, and embalming.
8. Family Assistance Centers will serve as an information collection area and a coordination site for information concerning safe disposition of human bodies and the return of remains as designated by the family/next of kin.
9. An incident involving hazardous materials or weapons of mass destruction event will require precautions when handling, identifying and processing human remains.
10. Under extreme circumstances mass burial may be required and will be done in accordance with regulations set by the Minnesota Department of Health and a local subject matter expert.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Following a mass fatalities event an estimate can be made of the dead, temporary morgue sites will be established (morgue site requirements are outlined in Attachment 3 & 4 at the end of this annex); remains will be covered and moved to the temporary morgues for identification purposes and safeguarding personal effects found on the dead. Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Team (DMORT) protocols and forms will be utilized during a response to a mass fatalities incident. The protocols and forms are on file in the EOC.

The Emergency Operations Plan has been designed based on the NIMS model utilizing the Incident Command System. The Command Staff includes a Legal Advisor, Public Information Officer, Liaison, and Safety Officer. The General Staff includes the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance and Administration Section Chief. The Command and General Staff all report to the Emergency Operations Center Director. The Emergency Operations Center Director is the Stearns County/City of St. Cloud Emergency Management Director. In the event where the primary impacts are health related, a unified command structure will be utilized in collaboration with the Stearns County Public Health. In addition to these staff positions there are Branch Directors and Unit Leaders that represent the 21 annexes of this emergency operations plan. Branch Directors and Unit Leaders report to Section Chiefs, as outlined in attachment 3 of the Basic Plan.

V. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. Our emergency organization is described in Section IV of the Basic Plan.
2. Incident Command System – EOC Interface
 - a. The Incident Command is in charge of all on-scene operations. This coordination takes place at an Incident Command Post. On-scene logistics personnel will order supplies, resources and personnel to manage the scene in accordance with Incident Action Plan.
 - b. Not all emergencies require on-scene operations or the establishment of an Incident Command Post. For those emergencies that may be over a wide area (flooding, ice storm, winter storm) or are health based the Command Post and Emergency Operations Center may be co-located.
 - c. A division of responsibility should be agreed upon between the Incident Commander and the EOC. The Incident Commander will manage operations on-scene, while the EOC coordinates operations beyond the incident site, taking into consideration the community at large, while supporting the Incident Action Plan developed by Incident Command.

B. Lines of Succession

1. Lines of succession for the Mayor, County Board Chair and Emergency Management Director are outlined in the Basic Plan.

2. Lines of succession for each department and agency director shall be done in accordance with operating guidelines and delegations of authority within each department.

C. Responsibilities

When multiple deaths occur and when requested by the Stearns County Sheriff's Dept. the DMERT will aid in estimating the number of dead. When required, temporary morgue sites will be selected and activated. The remains will be recovered and taken to the morgue site for identification and sanitary preservation in preparation for final disposition as designated by the Stearns County Sheriff's Dept. Personal effects on the remains will be collected and kept in a secure place. Necessary information about each victim will be compiled using DMORT protocols.

Stearns County Emergency Management Director

The Stearns County Emergency Management Director (or designee) is responsible for carrying out the emergency management program for Stearns County/City of St. Cloud. The Emergency Management Director (or designee) will activate the Emergency Operations Center as required or requested to coordinate/support the activities of all departments/organizations assisting with response and recovery efforts. The Emergency Management Director (or designee) will establish response and recovery priorities through the Emergency Operations Center and will coordinate the resources needed to support emergency operations.

Local Governing Authority

The Mayor of the municipality or the Chair of the County Board is responsible for determining the need for declaring a local emergency pursuant to Minn. Stat. §12.29, in order to invoke necessary portions of the response and recovery aspects of applicable local or inter-jurisdictional disaster plans. Also, the governing body is responsible for determining whether a request should be made to the governor to declare an emergency and request his assistance relating to the safe disposition of dead human bodies pursuant to Minn. Stat. §12.381.

Sheriff's Department

The Stearns County Sheriff's Department has the responsibility of scene security, retrieval of the human remains, and public information. The Sheriff's Department will contact the Ramsey County Medical Examiner/Coroner for autopsies of human remains or the State Duty officer to request a DMORT team if Human Remains exceeds local resources and capabilities. The Sheriff's department will also coordinate transportation of the bodies to Ramsey County in the event the DMORT team is not arriving on scene to operate a temporary morgue.

Ramsey County Medical Examiner/ Coroner

The Ramsey County Medical Examiner and Coroner's Office is contracted to conduct autopsies of Human Remains that originate in Stearns County as well as, personal effects recovery, human remain documentation, human remain identification and Issuing a Death Certificate. They will also give guidance to the DMORT team in terms of procedures.

Subject Matter Expert

A subject matter expert from the area will assist the local jurisdictions when a mass fatality incident is being conducted in Stearns County. Their knowledge of the industry within the area will greatly help operations. This person would aid the EOC in knowledge of the industry and possible resource sources.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §390.11, Subd. 8:

Investigation procedure; coroner or medical examiner in charge of body. Upon notification of the death of any person as defined in this section, the coroner or medical examiner staff or their designee may proceed to the body, take charge of it, and arrange for transfer of it, when appropriate. This provision also applies to bones, body parts, and specimens that may be human remains. Discovery of such bones, body parts, and specimens must be promptly reported to the coroner or medical examiner. When necessary, the coroner or medical examiner staff, coordination with the applicable law enforcement agency, may order that there be no interference with or compromise of the body or the scene of death. In the event a person is transported to an emergency vehicle or facility and pronounced dead, the scene of death shall include the original location of the decedent when first discovered to be ill, unresponsive, or stricken prior to removal by emergency medical personnel. Any person violating such an order is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. The coroner or medical examiner staff shall make inquiry regarding the cause and manner of death and, in cases that fall under the medical examiner's or coroner's jurisdiction, prepare written findings together with the report of death and its circumstances, which shall be filed in the office of the coroner or medical examiner. The County Medical Examiner/Coroner is also responsible for determining whether release of a body or body parts will interfere with an autopsy or investigation pursuant to Minn. Stat. §525.9213.

Mortuary Team

The DMORT team's focus is to establish the methods for the sensitive, respectful care and handling of deceased human remains in multi-death disaster situations. The DMORT team is assigned to be available to aid in the necessary acts of recovery, evacuation, identification (sanitation and preservation such as preparation or embalming as authorized), and notification of next of kin, counseling (which may include families as well as disaster workers) and facilitating the release of identified remains to the next of kin or their representative under direction of authorized persons.

Mass Fatalities Unit Leader

The Mass Fatalities Unit Leader provides general direction in the field to those agencies that are working in the field. This position makes final decisions on subjects such as temporary morgue locations, temporary burial location, and the process of operations.

VI. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

A. Records

1. Records will be maintained on the use of all equipment, whether owned, leased, rented or borrowed. These records/contracts will be used as basis for possible recovery of emergency operations expenses from a responsible party or for potential reimbursement from the State or Federal Government. All records/contracts generated by the Mass Fatalities Section should be provided to the Finance and Administration Section Chief for cost recovery and reimbursement documentation.

2. Each department, agency or service of government will provide for the maintenance of records during an emergency. These records include work hours, equipment hours, supplies and materials consumed, injuries to personnel, and damage to public facilities and equipment. All records generated during an emergency will be collected and maintained in an orderly manner so a record of actions taken is preserved for use in determining response costs, settling claims, and updating emergency plans and procedures.

B. Resources

1. Local resources can be found on file in the resource database. Record databases for resources and contacts of each department shall be updated on a regular, scheduled basis to keep the Resource Database current to reflect current capabilities. These resources are also to be reported to emergency management when there has been a significant change in a resource, in addition to the scheduled maintenance. This schedule is maintained by Stearns County Emergency Management. These resources still retain confidentiality within the Emergency Management department and sensitive information will not be released without prior approval.

C. Post Incident Review

1. Following activations of the Emergency Operations Center or use of the Emergency Operations Plan, Emergency Management will coordinate a review of each annex of the Emergency Operations Plan to identify needed improvements, procedure changes, personnel and facility changes or resource needs.

D. Training and Exercises

1. Personnel identified in the Emergency Operations Plan and those who staff the Emergency Operations Center will receive National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) training. Although some personnel may receive more advanced training, everyone will receive IS-100, IS-200, and IS-700. A full list of personnel and required training can be found on file in the Emergency Management office. Personnel who staff the Emergency Operations Center shall also receive appropriate training on their role in the Emergency Operations Center and on the operations of the facility. This training should be arranged by the Law Enforcement Branch or the Emergency Management Department.
2. Emergency Management follows the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) exercise requirements to exercise and evaluate the Emergency Operations Plan. Once every three years a functional exercise including all components of the Emergency Operations Plan is conducted. In the remaining two years of the cycle tabletop exercises and community wide exercises will include additional opportunities to exercise components of the Emergency Operations Plan. A more detailed explanation of the County/City exercise plan can be found as Attachment 2 of the Basic Plan.

VII. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The Stearns County/City of St. Cloud Emergency Operations Plan, including the Basic Plan and Annexes, is updated on an annual basis. Each annex representative is responsible for participating in the full

review process every other year and for independently reviewing the annex on an annual basis. The overall responsibility for maintaining the Emergency Operations Plan is that of the Stearns County Emergency Management Department.

Any standard operating guidelines, personnel directories, maps or other tools needed to support emergency operations should be developed and maintained by the responsible department. It is the department's responsibility to ensure access to this information during times of large scale emergency or disaster, to coordinate training for personnel in regard to these procedures and to inform Emergency Management of any changes that directly impact the Emergency Operations Plan.

VIII. REFERENCES

- Additional resources regarding Mass Fatalities can be found in the Resource Manual
- Disaster Mortuary Response Team Protocols and forms can be found on file in the Emergency Operations Center and through the Internet at the link provided below
<http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/responders/ndms/teams/Pages/dmort.aspx>
- Disaster Mortuary Emergency Response Team (DMERT) protocols can be found on file in the Emergency Operations Center and through the Internet with the provided link below.
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpsc/mortsci/dmerty.pdf>
- Minnesota State Statutes Chapter 12, 12.381, 375.08, 382.01, Chapter 390, 390.11. Minnesota Statutes 525.921-525.9224, 525.9213 and 149A.91 these can be found at the link provided.
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/pubs/>
- Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU) Inventory on file in the Emergency Operations Center

IX. AUTHENTICATION



Mark J. Benson
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11-14-14

Date