

- If embalming remains, perform final rinse after embalming procedures.

5. Final Disposition.

- Determine location for storage until final disposition.
- Determine if a public health hazard exists.
- Return of remains to family:
 - Traditional burial.
 - Sealed casket burial.
 - Voluntary cremation.
- Government sponsored disposition.
 - Government burial.
 - Cremation.

Additional Coordination

1. Participate in establishing the Family Assistance Center (FAC).

- Convey FAC requirements to the Emergency Manager:
 - Determine specific role of the ME/C at the FAC.
 - Determine who will oversee FAC (e.g., Public Health, American Red Cross).
 - Hotline/help-line for notification and identification process.
 - Location should be in reasonable proximity to Temporary Morgue.
 - Coordinate information dissemination to family and Public Information Officer (PIO).
 - Need for multiple religious leader support.
 - Address if and when personal effects may be released.

2. Maintain managing the daily caseload.

- Add additional shifts to handle incident remains so that original staff can focus on daily caseload.
- Keep incident and daily caseloads separate.

3. Establish security for all aspects of the Mass Fatality Incident.

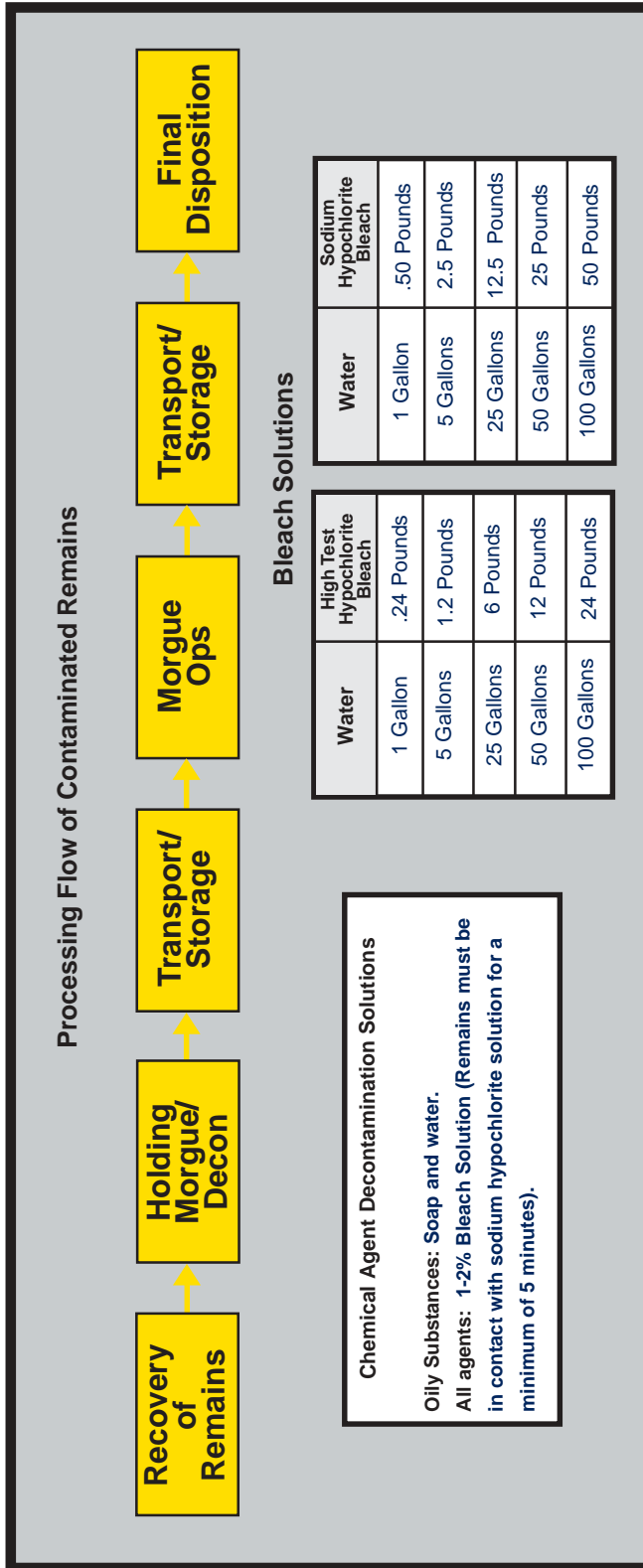
- To include all aspects of the incident operation, the daily caseload and the FAC.

4. Determine financial issues.

- Determine if incident is considered a presidential declared disaster.
- Track all activities and expenses.

Websites:

- SBCCOM - www2.sbccom.army.mil/hld
- DOJ - www.ojp.usdoj.gov/osldps
- Office of Victims of Crime - www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc
- DMORT - www.dmort.org
- National Transportation and Safety Board - www.nts.gov



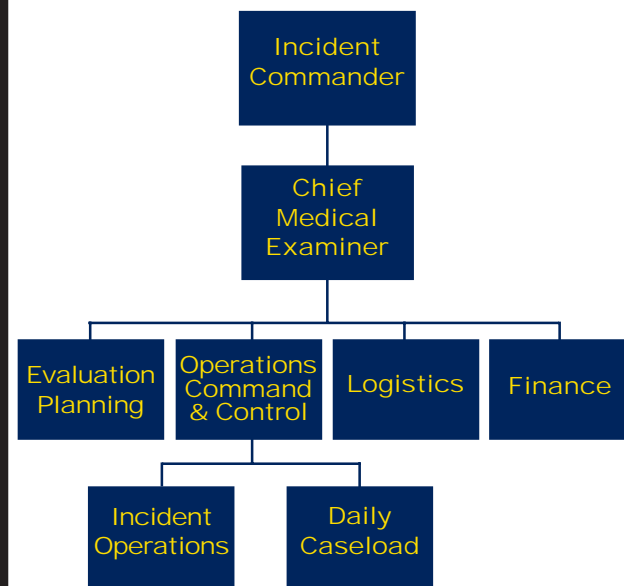
MEDICAL EXAMINER/CORONER GUIDE FOR MASS FATALITY MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALLY CONTAMINATED REMAINS

Prepared by

Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of State & Local Domestic Preparedness

Department of Defense, US Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command, Improved Response Program

Notional Mass Fatality Incident Command



Chief Medical Examiner/Coroner (CME) Role is to create an infrastructure that can process a large number of contaminated remains, as well as accommodate integrating supporting assets into the response effort.

Emergency Manager (EM) Role is to provide coordination between the Medical Examiner/Coroner (ME/C) and county, state, and federal assets to support the ME/C in processing remains in a Mass Fatality Incident (MFI).

Managing The Incident Site

1. Obtain information from Incident Commander (IC).

- Type of incident and possible hazards.
- Type of chemical agent.
- Estimated number of remains.
- Location of scene and accessibility to remains.
- Location of incident command post.

2. Form a team to evaluate the specific incident.

- Form an evaluation team with Medical Examiner (ME/C), Hazmat technicians, Law Enforcement and other relevant agencies and prepare to enter the scene.
- Check required level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). ME/C should have two 2-person groups (primary/backup) that can operate in Level A PPE.
- During evaluation:
 - Determine issues (e.g., fragmentation, difficult excavation).
 - Take initial pictures of site.
 - Determine total number of remains and their location.
 - Determine initial number of cases for autopsy.

3. Plan incident specific operations with appropriate agencies (e.g., Law Enforcement, Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Emergency Manager, and Department of Public Health).

- Coordinate security requirements for remains processing with Incident Commander.
- Determine morgue requirements and location: Holding Morgue and Temporary Morgue.
 - Try to co-locate Mass Fatality Management functions in close proximity to one another.
- Determine decontamination solvents and safe handling procedures based on the specific agent.
- Establish criteria for autopsy based on ME/C capability and Law Enforcement evidence requirements.
- Determine chemical monitoring method and procedures, monitoring location and who will perform the monitoring.
 - To obtain accurate chemical vapor concentration reading, monitor bodies at the same temperature that they will be processed.
- Create infrastructure to process remains (see processing flow of contaminated remains diagram on the back of this guide).
 - Establish who, what, when, where, and how for each function of Remains Processing.
 - Personnel must continue to wear PPE until remains are verified clean by chemical agent monitoring.
- Evaluate requirements for embalming based on incident circumstances.
- Establish effective communications between Holding Morgue, Temporary Morgue, Family Assistance Center (FAC), and the ME/C Headquarters.
- Avoid 24-hour operations when possible.

4. Assemble necessary resources.

- See Resource Management.

Resource Management

1. Personnel.

- Determine and assemble personnel who can operate in PPE and assist in the response effort.
- Determine and assign responsible jurisdiction's ME/C personnel to supervisory positions.
- Form teams with local ME/C and law enforcement for each function.
- Determine if additional non-ME/C personnel are needed and assign task to each.
- Establish shifts/breaks with PPE limitations in mind.
- Coordinate water/hydration stations.
- Establish support for ME/C staff (e.g., Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)).

2. Assemble other agencies according to established plan.

- Local agencies: HazMat teams, funeral home directors, surrounding ME/Cs, local forensic labs, public health department, etc.
- State agencies: Dept of Environment, National Guard, public health department.
- Federal agencies: Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Military agencies: Joint Task Force–Civil Support.
- Volunteer agencies: American Red Cross (ARC).

3. Assemble equipment according to established plan:

- Appropriate level of PPE for personnel.
- Waterproof durable tracking tool.
- Decontamination line/equipment for Holding and Temporary Morgues.
- Refrigerated trucks for temporary storage/transportation.
- Ventilation fans.
- Storage containers for personal effects.
- Tents/structure to keep remains from public view.
- Embalming station to include final rinse station (based on incident specific decision).
- Additional remains pouches and duct tape.
- Additional evidence collection containers (e.g., new paint cans).

Remains Processing

1. Recovery.

- Determine who will perform the recovery of remains.
- Determine and assign team leaders and members as per plan.
 - Assign tasks to each agency assisting in the recovery.

- Determine what order personnel will enter scene to perform tasks, between the ME/C and Law Enforcement.
- Use waterproof durable tracking/triage tag for remains and personal effects.
- Triage remains – autopsy or external examination.
- Take photographs of remains (i.e., where they were found) to facilitate identification and evidence collection.
- Consider establishing temporary cold storage if the holding morgue is not able to process remains quickly.

2. Holding Morgue.

- Establish private area at the incident site to perform:
 - Evidence collection.
 - Initial external evaluation.
 - Initial ID check.
 - Removal and tagging of personal effects - separate into durable and non-durable items.
- Determine:
 - If law enforcement is needed to help identify evidence.
 - If ME/C needs to perform additional procedures as part of the external evaluation (e.g., chemical agent body swab, clothing samples).
- Obtain:
 - Refrigeration storage units/vehicles based on situation.
 - Bulk storage for personal effects (e.g., 55-gallon drums).
 - New/unused paint cans to store evidence.
- Establish area to perform decontamination.
 - Water and bleach/detergents for decon.
 - Can incorporate detailed decon and monitoring remains to verify clean.
 - Mitigate contaminated water run-off.
 - Use double remains pouches - first sealed with duct tape.

3. Transportation and Storage.

- Obtain refrigerated vehicles (e.g., trucks or railroad cars).
 - Do not stack remains (use shelving units).
 - Do not place remains higher than waist level of handlers.
- Use of available storage facility in accordance with established plan.

4. Morgue Operations.

- Determine if all morgue operations can be centralized in one location or if it must be decentralized into several smaller locations.
- Establish morgue flow.
 - Perform detailed decontamination and monitoring if remains are not previously verified clean.
 - Perform autopsy on designated remains.
 - Perform external examination on all remains.
 - Perform identification procedures.