

OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK



# Responding to Mass Fatality Incidents: Medical Examiner

Frank DePaolo, RPA-C  
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# Response to a Mass Fatality Incident

## OBJECTIVES

- Recover & Process Decedents in a Dignified & Respectful Manner
- Determine Cause & Manner of Death
- Perform the Accurate & Efficient Identification of Victims
- Provide Families with Factual Information and Compassionate Support
- Rapid Return of Decedents to the legal Next of Kin

## FUNCTIONS

- Develop a Victim Manifest
- Conduct Recovery & Medicolegal Investigative Operations
- Provide a “Fatality Surge” Capability
- Collect ante-mortem data through the FAC
- Process Decedents
- Perform Disaster Victim Identification

## CHALLENGES

- ME/C have limited resources – last on list
- Heavy reliance on Federal Resources
- Limited Grant Opportunities
- Lack of National Guidance
  - NRF, NIMS
- All Disasters are Local
- Lack of MFM Planning results in a Failure in the Overall Response



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# Response to a Mass Fatality Incident

- **A Few Solutions**

- Unified Victim Identification System (UVIS)
  - A Comprehensive Disaster Management System
- Regional Mass Fatality Response System Initiatives (FEMORS, NEMORS)
- “Fatality Surge Plan” to Manage In & Out of Hospital Deaths



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# NYC Strategy to Manage Fatality Surge

- The Medical Examiner's strategy to relieve health care facilities, as well as the funeral industry, of the burden associated with managing numerous decedents, is to arrange for the recovery, transport, storage, tracking and processing of fatalities, to avoid competing for scarce resources.



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# Response to a Mass Fatality Incident

- Recommendations

- Address Mass Fatality Management in NRF & NIMS/ICS
- DHS – Acquire UVIS for Distribution to ME/C Community
- Completion of a comprehensive ESF#8 Mass Fatality Management CONOPS
- OASPR HPP Grant – MFM Objectives to require ME/C participation in MFM Planning
- DMORT – Consider “true” regionalization similar to USAR
- Consider Contingency Contracting for MFM (UK Model)
- Support the HHS Federal Fatality Management Interagency Steering Committee (FMISC) through FTE staff and funding



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