



# AWR 232: Mass Fatalities Planning and Response for Rural Communities

Participant Guide

*August 2012*



**FEMA**



**The Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC)** was established by Congress and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-FEMA (DHS-FEMA) to develop and deliver relevant all-hazards training in support of rural homeland security requirements. All training delivered by the RDPC is certified by DHS and offered tuition-free to the nation's emergency response community and associated stakeholders. Visit [www.ruraltraining.org](http://www.ruraltraining.org) to view the course catalog and training schedule or call 877-855-RDPC (7372) for more information.



**Northwest Arkansas Community College/Institute for Corporate and Public Safety (ICPS)** is a comprehensive training institute working with the public and private sectors to provide for collaboration and mutual support to address preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation related to all-hazard crisis events. ICPS courses are developed on behalf of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency in association with corporate partners to ensure incorporation of best practices in an ever-changing global environment. Visit <http://icps.nwacc.edu/> to view training schedule or call 479-619-4170

This program was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 2007-GD-T7-K007, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Preparedness Directorate, National Training & Education Division. Points of view or opinions in this program are those of the author(s) and do not represent the position or policies of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency.



## Course Description

---

### Overview

From the largest of cities to the most rural of communities, the possibility of a mass-fatality incident exists every moment of every day. Whether the mass fatality results from a manmade incident (either deliberate or accidental) or from a force of nature such as a hurricane or tornado, the needs of the affected public remain the same. Responding to a mass-fatality incident, which includes the recovery, identification, and reunification of the deceased, is one of the most difficult aspects of a disaster response. Despite the grim nature of fatality management, it is the responsibility of authorities in the jurisdiction where the incident occurs to manage the response. The need to establish recovery, morgue, and family assistance center (FAC) operations are the same in rural communities as they are in large metropolitan cities. Rural communities often find it more difficult to respond due to the lack of local infrastructure and required assets necessary to provide an adequate mass-fatality response. The goal of this awareness-level course is to teach participants the basics of mass-fatality response while providing them with the opportunities to exchange rural perceptions and brainstorm for solutions to simulated emergencies.

One of the most common misconceptions regarding mass-fatality responses is that the only difference is the number of bodies that must be dealt with following a mass fatality from that of daily Coroner/medical examiner operations. This is an incorrect assumption as there are significant differences in establishing and managing a response to a mass-fatality event than that of daily coroner/medical examiner operations. This misunderstanding often leads to the lack of preparation for responding to a mass-fatality event as the need to prepare and train is not apparent. Additionally, there are numerous factors, including roles and responsibilities, asset management, remains processing and identification, diversity considerations, and the development of a mass-fatality plan; all affect the construction of a mass fatality response and the need for rural communities to appreciate the dynamics of a response effort, as well as the various agencies and organizations who may be involved.

By definition, a mass fatality is an event producing a number of deaths that exceed the capacity or capability of local authorities, thereby requiring assistance from outside the local jurisdiction. Regardless of the agencies or organizations that respond, whether governmental agencies or private or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the responsibility to coordinate and manage these outside resources rests with local authorities.

### Scope

This awareness-level course is designed to provide local and county law enforcement agencies, public health managers and planners, local and regional emergency management agencies, emergency medical services, hospitals, paid or volunteer emergency planners and managers, and personnel in local and/or county emergency operations centers in rural communities with basic knowledge should a mass fatality incident impact their jurisdiction. The *Mass Fatalities for Rural Communities* course serves as a training tool to provide rural communities with information to manage an actual mass-fatality response and to assist in the development of a mass-fatality response plan for their jurisdiction. The process of recovery, identification, and disposition of human remains following a mass fatality event will differ from the "normal" daily operations to which local authorities are accustomed. Understanding and appreciating these differences and the dynamics of a mass fatality will enable the rural communities to respond in



## Course Description

---

an efficient manner and provide the assistance and guidance needed by the affected community.

### Target Audience

This protocol model has been developed for, but is not limited to:

- Local and county law enforcement agencies.
- Public health managers and planners.
- Local and regional emergency management agencies (EMAs).
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
- Hospitals.
- Paid or volunteer emergency planners and managers.
- Personnel in local and/or county emergency operations centers (EOCs).

### Prerequisites

Prior to attending this course, prospective participants should attend and complete the following Independent Study (IS) courses.

- IS 100 -- Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)
- IS 700 -- National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction
- IS 800 -- National Response Framework (NRF), An Introduction

### Required Facilities/Materials

#### Facilities:

- Classroom able to accommodate a minimum of 15 students or a maximum of 30 students
- Tables and chairs to accommodate a maximum of 33 people (30 students, 2 instructors and an observer)
- Large whiteboard and markers
- Instructor podium or table
- Parking arrangements for a maximum of 33 personnel

#### Audio/Visual

- IBM compatible computer with Microsoft Office and Adobe Reader
- LCD projector compatible with computer and remote capability
- Projection screen compatible with class size
- Table to accommodate audio/visual (A/V) equipment and power cords
- Sufficient and/or power cords/strips to support A/V equipment

#### Classroom Materials

- Two instructor manuals



## Course Description

---

- A maximum of 30 participant manuals
- Attendance roster
- Name tents and/or name tags
- Copies of pre-tests and post-tests
- Copies of pre-test and post-test answer keys
- Copies of course evaluation and registration forms
- Supplemental material/information provided on a compact disk (CD) includes but is not limited to:
  - Emergency Support Functions (ESF) Annex.
  - Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs).
  - National Incident Management System (NIMS).
  - Emergency Response Guidebook 2010.

### Testing/Certification

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) courses require each participant to complete a course pre-test to assess knowledge prior to instructional delivery. Each participant will be required to successfully complete a post-test attaining a minimum score of 70% to meet the course completion requirements. It is anticipated that each participant passing the post-test will receive a Certificate of Completion.

### Evaluation Strategy

- Observation of student participation during each module and end of course exercise
- Instructor facilitated verbal review of each module's content
- Course post-test
- Student course evaluation



## Course Agenda

---

Course Agenda		
Hour	Activity	Time in minutes
0800-0845	Introductions/Overview/Pre-Test and Administration	45
0845-0945	Module 1: Introduction to Mass Fatality Responses	60
0945-1000	Break	15
1000-1100	Module 2: Roles and Responsibilities	60
1100-1140	Module 3: Asset Management	40
1140-1240	Lunch	60
1240-1340	Module 4: Remains Process and Identification	60
1340-1410	Module 5: Diversity Issues	30
1410-1455	Module 6: Developing a Mass Fatality Plan	45
1455-1505	Break	10
1505-1605	Round table discussion addressing the key issues	60
1605-1615	Break	10
1615-1630	Post-test	15
1630-1700	Course evaluation and course wrap-up	30



## References

---

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2005). *Altered Standards of Care in Mass Casualty Events: Bioterrorism and Other Public Health Emergencies*. AHRQ Publication No. 05-0043. Rockville, MD.
- Bostick, N. A., Subbarao, I., Burkle Jr, F.M., Hsu, E.B., Armstrong, J. H., James, J.J.. (2008, September 2). *Disaster Triage Systems for Large-Scale Catastrophic Events*. *Disaster Med Public Health Prep*. Suppl 1:S35-9.
- Cashman, John R. (2000). *Emergency Response to Chemical and Biological Agents*. Lewis Publishers.
- Centers for Disease Control. (2002). *Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness: Competencies for All Public Health Workers*.
- Christen, H. T., Maniscalco, P.M.. (2002). *Mass Casualty and High Impact Incidents: An Operations Guide*. Upper Saddle River, N. J: Brady – Prentice Hall.
- 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. *Medical Examiner/Coroner Guide for Mass Fatality Management of Chemically Contaminated Remains*.
- Forensic Magazine. (2006, December/January). *“Life in a Disaster Morgue – Mass Disasters Mean Two Things: Multiple Deaths and DMORT Deployment”*.
- Management of Mass Fatalities. Vance County Emergency Operations Plan. North Carolina. (Updated: 2009, January 11).
- Mass Medical Care With Scarce Resources: The Essentials, AHRQ Pub. No. 09-0016 (2009, September).
- Orecki, Deborah H., Director New York State Department of Health Bureau of Funeral Directing. (2008, March 18). *Caring for the Dead in a Pandemic*.
- Pan American Health Organization. (2006). *Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: A Field Manual for First Responders*. Washington, D.C..
- Steinhauser, K. E., Clipp, E. C., McNeilly, M., Christakis, N., McIntyre, L. M., and Tulsky, J. A.. (2000). *Annals of Internal Medicine*;132:825-831. *In Search of a Good Death, Observations of Patients, Families and Providers*.
- A Supplement to the State of California Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan. (2007). *The California Mass Fatality Management Guide*:
- U.S. Army Medical Research of Infectious Diseases. (1996). *Handbook, Medical Management of Biological Casualties*.



## References

---

- U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command. (2001). *Guidelines for Mass Fatality Management During Terrorist Incidents Involving Chemical Agents*.
- U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command. (2000). *Guidelines for Mass Victim Decontamination During a Terrorist Chemical Agent Incident*.



## Module 1: Unique Challenges of a Mass Fatality Incident in Rural Communities – Administration Page

---

### Duration

60 minutes

### Scope Statement

This module will provide participants with a basic overview of the characteristics and challenges in responding to a mass-fatality event in a rural community and the operational components that make up a response. Participants will identify limitations faced by small/rural communities in preparing for and responding to a mass-fatality event, give a general overview of a mass fatality response, the Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF#8) – Public Health and Medical Services structure, the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), and common terminology associated with mass fatality management.

### Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)

In order to understand the unique challenges faced by rural communities, participants will be able to identify the significant differences in the death-care process following a mass fatality event from that of the normal, daily process and list possible mass-fatality scenarios that may affect their communities.

### Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)

At the completion of this module, participants will be able to:

- 1-1. Define a mass fatality and list the types of mass fatalities and possible mass-fatality scenarios in their respective jurisdictions.
- 1-2. Identify the differences in principle duties and objectives of a rural community following a mass fatality event.
- 1-3. Identify possible locations that may be utilized during a mass fatality response and the stakeholders involved in the response.
- 1-4. Explain the Emergency Support Function #8 – Public Health and Medical Services structure and the role of the National Disaster Medical System.
- 1-5. List terminology commonly used in mass fatality responses.

### Lesson Topics

- Definition and types of mass fatalities
- Possible mass-fatality scenarios
- Factors affecting a mass-fatality response
- Possible locations that can be utilized in a mass-fatality response
- Stakeholders involved in mass-fatality responses
- Emergency Support Function #8 (ESF#8) – Public Health and Medical Services
- National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)
- Terminology



## **Module 1: Unique Challenges of a Mass Fatality Incident in Rural Communities – Administration Page**

---

### **Instructional Strategy**

This module will be provided as a combination of lecture and class discussion centered on rural communities, the dynamics of a mass fatality response and the construct of a response, differences in mass fatality responses, the operational components, and challenges faced by rural communities and stakeholders that may be involved.

### **Assessment Strategy**

Observation of classroom involvement by participant

Observation of participant interaction with other participants

### **Practical Exercise (PE) Statement**

NA



## Module 2: Human Remains Recovery Operations – Administration Page

---

### Duration

60 minutes

### Scope Statement

This module will outline human remains recovery operations, the role recovery operations play in the overall identification process, and assets needed to facilitate the operations. Participants will learn the components of a recovery team, the equipment and vehicles needed, and safety issues related to recovery operations and the recovery process itself. Additionally, participants will examine the movement of human remains from the site of recovery to the morgue operations and issues related to evidence recovery and chain of custody.

### Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)

Participants will identify the roles that recovery operations play in the identification process, the procedures for properly, safely, and respectfully recovering and documenting deceased human remains and associated personal effects, and the staff and equipment needed.

At the completion of this module, the participant will be able to:

- 2-1. Describe human remains recovery operations.
- 2-2. Identify individual team members that comprise a standard recovery team.
- 2-3. Identify equipment and vehicles needed for recovery operations.
- 2-4. Describe the role recovery operations play in the identification process.
- 2-5. Describe the recovery process and human remains movement from recovery site to the morgue.
- 2-6. Identify safety concerns that are applicable to the recovery process.
- 2-7. Describe the documentation process and chain of custody.

### Lesson Topics

- Recovery operations and the identification process
- Recovery team staffing
- Recovery vehicles
- Field numbering system
- Recovery procedures
- Safety issues
- From recovery site to morgue
- Chain of evidence



## Module 2: Human Remains Recovery Operations – Administration Page

---

### **Instructional Strategy**

This module will be provided as a combination of lecture and class discussion centered on the human remains recovery process to include staffing, hard assets needed, procedures, safety issues and the role recovery plays in mass fatality operations.

### **Assessment Strategy**

Observation of classroom involvement by participant

Observation of participant interaction with other participants

### **Practical Exercise (PE) Statement**

NA



## Module 3: Temporary Morgue Operations – Administration Page

---

### Duration

40 minutes

### Scope Statement

In this module participants will be provided information regarding the morgue operations following a mass-fatality event. This module examines the typical stations found in morgue operations and the skill sets required to staff the morgue. In addition, this module will examine the interaction between recovery operations and the Family Assistance Center (FAC) and how morgue operations factor in the identification process.

### Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)

Participants will be able to describe morgue operations during a mass fatality response, the skill sets needed to work at various stations found in the morgue, the interaction between morgue and family assistance operations and the role recovery operations play in the overall identification process.

At the completion of this module, the participant will be able to:

- 3-1. Describe morgue processing from initial intake to eventual release.
- 3-2. List the stations typically found in a mass-fatality morgue operation.
- 3-3. Identify the skill sets needed to adequately examine human remains in the morgue.
- 3-4. Describe the interactions between morgue operations and the family assistance center.
- 3-5. Describe the role morgue operations play in the identification process.

### Lesson Topics

- Morgue processing – intake to release
- Morgue stations
- Skill sets needed for morgue operations
- Interaction between morgue and Family Assistance Center (FAC) operations
- Morgue operations and the identification process

### Instructional Strategy

This module will be provided as a combination of lecture and class discussion centered on mass fatality morgue operations including operational procedures, staffing needs, interaction with family assistance center operations and the identification process.

### Assessment Strategy

Observation of classroom involvement by participant

Observation of participant interaction with other participants

### Practical Exercise (PE) Statement

NA



## Module 4: Family Assistance and Antemortem Data Collection Administration Page

---

### Duration

60 minutes

### Scope Statement

This module will examine the Family Assistance Center (FAC) operations in a mass fatality response, its role in the identification process, the components that comprise FAC operations, the antemortem data that is collected at the FAC, support services that are typically a part of the FAC operations, and staffing needs.

### Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)

Describe the FAC's role in the identification process, along with the components, staffing needs and support services to facilitate FAC operations.

### Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)

At the completion of this module, the participant will be able to:

- 4-1. Describe the family assistance center operations following a mass fatality incident.
- 4-2. List the components that typically comprise FAC operations.
- 4-3. Identify antemortem information that will be collected at the FAC.
- 4-4. List the support services needed for the staff and visitors at the FAC.
- 4-5. Identify the skill sets needed to staff the various components of the FAC operation.

### Lesson Topics

- Family Assistance Center (FAC) role in the identification process
- Components that comprise FAC operations
- Antemortem data collection
- Support services
- Skill sets needed for FAC operations

### Instructional Strategy

This module will be provided as a combination of lecture and class discussion centered on Family Assistance Center operations and the antemortem data collection process.

### Assessment Strategy

Observation of classroom involvement by participant

Observation of participant interaction with other participants

### Practical Exercise (PE) Statement

NA



## Module 5: Federal Resources for Mass Fatalities – Administration Page

---

### Duration

30 minutes

### Scope Statement

In this module, participants will learn of the federal resources available to support rural communities following a mass-fatality event, how to obtain needed resources, and how these resources can be coordinated on the local level. In addition, participants will examine the Incident Command System (ICS) and transition activities for releasing federal resources when response activities are such that they can be handled by local authorities.

### Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)

Participants will examine some of the federal resources available following a mass-fatality event, how to obtain these resources, and how they are coordinated by local authorities. They will also be able to describe the Incident Command System, how federal and local resources work together, and the process for the eventual release of Federal resources.

### Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)

At the completion of this module, the participant will be able to:

- 5-1. List federal resources available to assist rural communities in a mass-fatality response.
- 5-2. Describe how these federal resources are coordinated by local authorities.
- 5-3. Describe the Incident Command System.
- 5-4. Identify methods of obtaining federal resources.

### Lesson Topics

- Federal resources available for assistance for mass fatality responses
- Coordination of federal resources
- ICS and federal resources
- How to obtain federal resources
- Transition plan –the release of federal resources

### Instructional Strategy

This module will be provided as a combination of lecture and class discussion centered on federal resources available to assist rural communities following a mass fatality incident, how these resources are obtained and coordinated, the eventual release of federal resources, and the Incident Command System.

### Assessment Strategy

Observation of classroom involvement by participant  
Observation of participant interaction with other participants



## **Module 5: Federal Resources for Mass Fatalities – Administration Page**

---

### **Practical Exercise (PE) Statement**

NA



## Module 6: Federal Resources for Mass Fatalities – Administration

### Page

---

#### Duration

45 minutes

#### Scope Statement

In this module, participants will learn about the importance of developing a mass-fatality response plan, some of the issues that have to be considered in developing the plan, and the framework that can be established as a base for a plan. Additionally, participants will learn that the process of mass-fatality planning is an ongoing process, not an isolated event.

#### Terminal Learning Objectives (TLO)

Describe the importance of planning for a mass-fatality response on the local level, the issues that must be considered in the planning process, the framework of a mass fatality response, and the ongoing process of mass-fatality planning.

#### Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO)

At the completion of this module, the participant will be able to:

- 6-1. Identify issues to be considered in mass fatality response planning.
- 6-2. Explain the importance of mass fatality response planning.
- 6-3. Identify potential federal, state and private resources included in a response plan.
- 6-4. Describe how a local plan can support a larger federal response.
- 6-5. Describe the ongoing process of mass fatality response planning.

#### Lesson Topics

- Importance of mass fatality response planning on the local level
- Planning considerations
- Plan framework/components
- Federal, state and private resources
- Plan integration into federal plan
- Planning process

#### Instructional Strategy

This module will be provided as a combination of guided discussion of lecture material to reinforce the importance of mass fatality response planning and relative issues pertaining to the planning process. In addition, there will be a tabletop exercise to aid participants to appreciate their understanding of a mass fatality response and the importance of pre-planning.

#### Assessment Strategy

Observation of classroom involvement by participant

Observation of participant interaction with other participants



## Module 6: Federal Resources for Mass Fatalities – Administration Page

---

### Practical Exercise (PE) Statement

Participants will participate in a mass fatality table top exercise which will focus on five major aspects:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Asset management
- Remains processing and identification
- Diversity issues
- Mass-fatality response planning

Participants will discuss who in their region/jurisdiction has mass fatality response plans in place.

Participants will complete the Knowledge Check activity.