

## Emergency Responses

### *Level I*

If the Coroner's Office is equipped to handle the number of dead resulting from a disaster, the normal routine of examining, performing autopsies, fingerprinting, identifying, photographing and recording personal property of the deceased may be undertaken. If the number of fatalities overtaxes the Coroner's Office, then a temporary staging or collection area can be staffed by local funeral directors.

### *Level II*

The normal functioning of the Coroner's Central Morgue is likely to be disrupted. To facilitate the process of carrying out normal procedures, the establishment of multiple staging areas or morgue sites may be necessary. Collection areas may be staffed by Coroner's personnel, funeral directors and volunteers. These personnel may handle the operational details of the Coroner's facility for their area. It also will be necessary to establish fatality collection areas for persons who die while in the hospital or en route to treatment areas. To avoid additional trauma to surviving victims, it is important that fatality collection areas be established away from hospitals or treatment facilities.

### *Level III*

In a major disaster, identification of the deceased may pose a significant problem. This problem may not be resolved immediately; therefore, storage facilities for an extended period or mass burial may be necessary.

It will be imperative to have the bodies and possessions tagged and labeled as to the location found, as well as record any other vital information that may lead to a future identification. Embalming of the bodies may be necessary for preservation as well as disease prevention. X-rays and dental charts may be used for making an identification.

It is conceivable that some bodies will not be identifiable before burial. Therefore, it is imperative that records be kept of grave sites, (unidentified person) numbers, case numbers and burial orders. Each body should have attached to it a tag,

preferably metal or plastic, which contains the identification information.

**Fatality Collection Areas (FCAs)**

Should the number of dead exceed the resources of the Coroner's Office, the Coroner will organize and operate an FCA at the disaster site. The facilities, located as near as possible to areas with heavy death toll, should have, if feasible, showers, hot and cold water, electricity, parking areas and communications. They should be fenced or locked for the security of bodies and personal property, be removed from public view, and have sufficient space. Facilities of potential use are existing mortuaries, cemeteries, National Guard Armories, etc. Once FCAs are established, the Coroner's organization should obtain refrigerated trailers as deemed necessary. The trailers can be moved to whatever location designated by the Coroner. If refrigerated trailers are not available, the Coroner's office can arrange for railroad refrigeration cars or ocean container vans to aid in the preservation of bodies.

The functions to be performed at the FCAs are:

- ◆ Receive the dead brought in from the disaster area.
- ◆ Identify the dead, record the identification or collect and record evidence that may lead to later identification of the bodies that may have to be buried in an unidentified state.
- ◆ Receive, label and impound property of the dead. Use the property as necessary for identification of the dead, and hold the property for the next of kin or the Public Administrator.
- ◆ Keep records of names and numbers of dead. It is essential to maintain a postmortem board containing all known information regarding all remains or parts of remains that may be identifiable.
- ◆ Receive telephone inquiries from or solicit relatives and friends of the dead or missing persons to assist in the identification. This function may be handled by American Red Cross personnel or volunteers who have

been trained to provide relief for survivors in times of disaster. Members of the clergy within an area may provide assistance in dealing with relatives and friends, as well as assisting in notification of death.

- ◆ File and record emergency death certificates.
- ◆ Photograph, x-ray and chart teeth, determine the cause of death.
- ◆ Embalm bodies for preservation and disease prevention.
- ◆ Release bodies to mortuaries or a transportation service for transport to burial sites.
- ◆ Obtain all the necessary equipment, supplies and personnel to accomplish these tasks.

### **Locating, Retrieving and Tagging of Bodies at the Disaster Site**

Personnel from the Coroner's Office, with the aid of other disaster team members, will aid in the recovery and identification process as follows:

- ◆ Security arrangements at the disaster site must be made. Admission to the disaster area should be restricted to authorized personnel, equipment and supplies.
- ◆ A method of indicating the location of bodies at the disaster site may be needed. A format whereby the disaster site is marked off in grids and each is designated in alphabetical sequence has been found to be effective. Bodies within each grid are designated in sequence and prefixed with prearranged letters and numbers. Locations within the grid are fixed by street numbers, streets, intersections, etc.
- ◆ Parts of bodies are identified and tagged using these numbers as the prefix, followed by the designation "P" for part. Parts will not be assigned to bodies at the scene.

- ◆ If time, security and safety allow, photographs of bodies, body parts and property will be taken at the scene.
- ◆ Bodies should not be searched or identified at the scene.
- ◆ Bodies will be removed from debris, tagged, put into body bags or wrapped in plastic sheeting, and readied for transport to the FCA.
- ◆ Personal property will be tagged and sent with the body.
- ◆ Property and clothing not actually on a body will not be assigned to a body.

### **Transport of Bodies to Fatality Collection Areas**

Transportation of bodies from disaster sites to FCAs will be coordinated by the local Coroner/Medical Examiners. Transportation sources could include Coroner's vehicles, vehicles supplied from local mortuaries or other sources.

### **Mass Burial**

Mass burial may become necessary when the number of victims becomes a public health hazard and the dead cannot be:

- ◆ Adequately refrigerated or embalmed to prevent decomposition.
- ◆ Processed and identified.
- ◆ Released to the next of kin.
- ◆ Transported to and/or cared for by cemeteries, mausoleums, crematoriums, etc.

The decision to begin mass burial must be made by the Coroner and County Health Officer in conjunction with the State Department of Health Services. Coordination also should be achieved with State OES, the County Emergency

Operations Center, campus officials, city officials and religious leaders within the community.

The site of mass burial also must be agreed upon by the above agencies, taking into consideration the number and location of dead to be buried. Ideally, an existing cemetery would be the most logical location of mass burial. However, that may not be possible because of the numbers to be buried and the area available, its proximity to the disaster site and the damage the cemetery received during the disaster.

The next consideration should be given to federal-, state-, county- or city-owned property or rights-of-way, such as:

- ◆ Parks and recreational areas.
- ◆ Flood control basins (weather permitting).
- ◆ Sides of freeways and river beds.
- ◆ Areas beneath high power lines.
- ◆ Rail yards and areas along rail lines.

The final consideration should be given to privately owned property (except cemeteries), preferably large open fields such as are found in industrial or agricultural areas, etc. Access and egress also are important factors, along with the type of terrain and the need to facilitate later exhumations. These exhumations will be ordered to attempt to identify unknown bodies and for the re-interment of those identified by the next of kin in the cemetery of their choice. Bodies remaining unidentified must still be re-interred in a designated cemetery.

Those bodies designated for mass burial should be processed to ensure that:

- ◆ Body has been rechecked for any type of jewelry or other item that may assist in identification.
- ◆ Postmortem information has been properly documented, especially scars, tattoos, deformities and other physical descriptions.

- ◆ Fingerprints have been taken; if not, fingers should be rechecked and prints taken if possible.
- ◆ Mandible and maxillary have been removed and placed into a properly marked container.
- ◆ An additional body tag has been attached, properly filled out and placed into a small, sealed plastic bag.
- ◆ If remains are not arterially embalmed, the body has been wrapped in celu-cotton or other absorbent material.
- ◆ Embalming fluid (2 to 3 gallons cavity fluid or 10% formalin) has been poured over remains.
- ◆ Body has been wrapped in plastic sheeting or disaster pouch and tied/zipped to prevent leakage.
- ◆ A tag has been attached to the pouch containing the body.
- ◆ If possible, body has been placed in a wooden or metal container for burial; that container has been marked (spray painted) with corresponding identification numbers.

Exact location of each body buried must be recorded on grid maps, including dates, times and other information necessary for exhumations at a later time. Each burial site also must be marked (staked) with the correct corresponding identification numbers.

### **Counseling Service**

An information and/or counseling service staffed by American Red Cross workers, mental health workers, clergy and others experienced in Coroner activities should be established for relatives and friends of missing or deceased persons.

### **Movement**

The movement of persons from hazardous or threatened areas to lower-risk reception areas is the responsibility of the

Operations section of the Emergency Management Organization. Relocation and transportation functions will be assisted by Law Enforcement and Plant Operations.

**County and City**

County and City Movement Coordinators are responsible for coordination of movement operations within their jurisdiction. Since campus evacuations are likely to involve movement into or through neighboring jurisdictions, it is essential that coordination be established with these jurisdictions.

Localized evacuations may be conducted as a part of established Incident Command Systems. Larger, area-wide evacuations would be directed from the jurisdiction's EOC or from a 24-hour dispatch facility.

**Operational Area**

The County Sheriff or designee is the Operational Area Movement Coordinator. In large-scale evacuation operations, the Operational Area Law Enforcement Coordinator is responsible for county-wide traffic control operations and will be assisted by the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The Operational Area Coordinator is responsible for coordinating transportation resources and operations on a county-wide basis. These Coordinators function as the Operational Area Movement Operations Group. Requests for support and other relevant information will be submitted to the Mutual Aid Movement Operations Group.

**Mutual Aid Region**

A designated member of the CHP will function as the Office of Emergency Services (OES) Mutual Aid Region Movement Coordinator and will coordinate traffic control operations on a region-wide basis. The Movement Coordinator will be assisted by a representative of the State Department of Transportation (CALTRANS), who will function as the Mutual Aid Region Transportation Coordinator. These Coordinators will constitute the Mutual Aid Region Movement Operations Group. They will refer requests for assistance from other regions and other relevant information to the State Movement Operations Group.

**State**

The coordination and support of movement operations on a State-wide basis will be accomplished by the State Movement Operations Group. This Group will be chaired by the Director (or a designated representative) of State OES and will include a Traffic Control Coordinator (CHP representative) and Transportation Coordinator (CALTRANS representative). State agencies that may be involved in a major evacuation effort include:

- ◆ California Highway Patrol (CHP)
- ◆ Military Department
- ◆ Department of Transportation (CALTRANS)
- ◆ Department of General Services
- ◆ Public Utilities Commission

**General Evacuation Procedures**

An event may occur that requires an evacuation not covered by a site-specific evacuation plan. For such an event, it will be necessary to determine the area to be evacuated and the number of persons involved, based on information obtained at the time of the incident. Evacuations involving only a small number of people generally can be handled without elaborate measures by on-scene public safety personnel. Evacuations involving a large number of people will require the determination and establishment of traffic and access control points, evacuation routes, evacuation assembly points and mass care facilities.

If the entire campus is to be evacuated, it may be necessary to divide it into sub-areas in order to expedite and prioritize movement. Persons closest to the hazard generally would be warned and evacuated first. The evacuation area would be expanded until all of the threatened population is evacuated.

**Warning the Community and Providing Movement Instructions**

Once the decision to evacuate has been made, the campus community will be alerted and given evacuation instructions by various means, including radio announcements, TV announcements, sirens, mobile loud speakers and personal contact. Whenever feasible, mobile units will be dispatched to the areas to be evacuated.

If an event has not occurred but is imminent, warning and public-information operations will take place under extreme time pressure. General and site-specific warning messages and EPI material prepared during the Pre-Emergency Period will be used to the extent possible to accelerate these operations. Movement information provided to the campus will include the following:

- ◆ Why they must evacuate.
- ◆ The authority for the order to evacuate.
- ◆ Routes to take, including conditions of roads, bridges and freeway overpasses.
- ◆ What to do if vehicle breaks down.
- ◆ The locations of assembly points for those without access to automobiles.
- ◆ Where to go for mass care until the emergency situation has passed.

Close coordination must be established with the news media and neighboring jurisdictions to assist in providing timely evacuation announcements.

### **Identifying Evacuation Routes**

The EOC Movement staff, in coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, selects the best routes from the endangered area to mass-care facilities, considering the size of the population to be moved, road capacity and the roads that could become impassable if the hazard event occurred. Evacuation routes relating to site-specific plans should be pre-identified. For areas not covered by site-specific plans, the best evacuation routes will have to be selected at the time of the hazard event. As the emergency situation progresses, the Movement

staff will request regular updates from law enforcement and other field personnel on the condition of the road network and will adjust the selection of evacuation routes accordingly. Changes in evacuation routes will be communicated to traffic-control personnel, transportation resource coordinators, access-control personnel and Public Information Officers.

### **Providing Transportation Assistance**

Some members of the campus community will not have access to a motor vehicle. Some people with disabilities, infirmities or illnesses may require special transportation assistance. The number of persons requiring transportation assistance may vary substantially by time of day and day of week. Buses, vans, ambulances and other transport vehicles will be requested from transportation providers through established channels. Initial requests will be based on estimates of the number of persons requiring assistance. Units will be dispatched to assembly points, campus facilities or to designated pickup routes. The community will be told where to go to obtain transportation. A telephone number will be provided for persons who require special assistance.

Evacuation assembly points (where persons requiring transportation will go to be picked up) will be selected with consideration given to walking distance, accessibility for buses and safety of evacuees. The assembly points will be readily identifiable locations.

### **Controlling Traffic**

Traffic controls will be established at key intersections and at access points to evacuation routes as needed to expedite the flow of traffic. In some cases, it may be necessary to control traffic on routes outside the hazard area to minimize conflicts with evacuation traffic. Traffic controls should be established in coordination with neighboring jurisdictions.

For areas covered by site-specific plans, pre-designated Traffic Control Points (TCPs) will be used, with adjustments being made during the emergency, as necessary. For other areas, TCPs will be selected at the time of the emergency, considering the amount of evacuation traffic expected and

the configuration of the road network. Communications will be maintained with traffic control personnel to monitor the progress of the evacuation, to coordinate traffic controls, and to implement any changes in evacuation strategy that may be required.

### **Controlling Access to Hazard Area**

As an area is being evacuated, access controls will be established by University Police Department. Controlling re-entry protects persons from exposure and injuries and protects unattended property within the vacated area.

Security of the vacated area will be obtained by establishing staffed Access Control Posts and barricades at key locations around the perimeter. Any staffed barricades will be patrolled periodically. Special entry passes will be issued at the staffed control posts in accordance with established policies.

### **Position: Movement**

**Position Responsibility:** Coordinate the movement of persons from dangerous or threatened areas to lower-risk reception areas.

#### **Duty—Checklist:**

- ◆ Report to the campus EOC.
- ◆ Determine evacuation routes and brief EOC staff.
- ◆ Assign personnel to staff Emergency Assembly Points (EAPs).
- ◆ Request placement of evacuation route and information signs.
- ◆ Coordinate with Law Enforcement for the assignment of traffic control personnel.
- ◆ Ensure that transportation is provided for non-mobile resident and non-resident personnel, children in day care center, and physically challenged individuals.

- ◆ Coordinate with city, county, etc., agencies.
- ◆ Maintain records and logs.