

Preparedness in the Southwest Course

Module 15: Mass Fatality

A mass fatalities incident can overwhelm the mortuary affairs system making it crucial for communities to have a crisis response plan in place to effectively carry out the management of human remains and respond to the needs of survivors.

Although, public health only plays a supportive role in response to a mass fatalities incident, this role is critical to the overall management of such an event. It is essential for public health professionals to understand and appreciate the issues concerning the management of dead bodies and the mortuary affairs system. This module will provide public health professionals with an overview of the mortuary affairs system and present pertinent issues that need to be considered in planning for and responding to a mass fatalities incident.

Learning Objectives:

1. Define Mass Fatalities.
2. Describe the importance of mass fatalities planning in disaster preparedness.
3. Describe the Incident Command Structure employed during a Mass Fatalities Incident (MFI).
4. Describe the role of public health departments and professionals during a MFI.
5. Identify planning considerations that need to be incorporated into MFI preparedness plans.
6. Adapt the planning considerations into your own preparedness activities.
7. Understand and appreciate the importance of interagency coordination in managing a MFI.
8. Describe the Mortuary Affairs (MA) system.
9. Understand the unique challenges posed to mass fatality management by a Pandemic Influenza incident.

Core competencies addressed:

Competency 1: Describe the public health role in emergency response in a range of emergencies that might arise.

Competency 2: Describe the chain of command in emergency response.

Competency 4: Describe his/her functional role(s) in emergency response and demonstrate role(s) in regular drills.

Target Capabilities:

Fatality Management

Public Health Epidemiology& Investigation