



State of California Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan



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PREFACE

California is the most disaster-prone state in the nation. Despite this unfortunate title, the state's emergency response system is effective and considered a model for the United States. We have been fortunate over the years to have not experienced a significant number of disasters with mass fatalities that have taxed our capability to respond. The backbone of our emergency response system is the mutual aid system which is an essential component of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The Coroners Mutual Aid system remains a valuable organization and process that is in place when needed.

However, in order for the Coroners' Mutual Aid System to be effective, it requires the participants to have a fundamental and sustained working knowledge of the organization and the procedural protocols for requesting and receiving mutual aid. Occasionally, failures or breakdowns in our response to disasters can be attributed to a lack of knowledge and/or discipline by the responsible agencies in following the mutual aid system. Therefore, it is recommended that departmental staff assigned to perform coroner mutual aid activities be familiar with this plan and its companion documents.

The Coroners' Mutual Aid System and Plan is a product of the collective and coordinated effort of the Sheriff/Coroners, Coroners, Medical Examiners, California State Coroners' Association, California State Sheriff's Association, and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services Law Enforcement Branch. Any comments or suggestions in improving this plan are always appreciated.

Finally, it is recognized that the Coroner/Medical Examiner's responsibility of the operational area may reside with a Sheriff or appointed/elected Coroner/Medical Examiner. For the purpose of this plan, the term Coroner/M.E. will represent all three types of coroners in California.

NOTE: A concise overview of the California Coroners Mutual Aid System has been developed to assist you in quickly referencing key Coroner/M.E. protocols and resources. Please refer to the "Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Quick Reference Guide" located at www.caloes.ca.gov.



INTRODUCTION

The California Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan is a companion of the California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan. Both derive their authority from the California Emergency Services Act and from the State Master Mutual Aid Agreement. The Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan describes the statewide Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, and Medical Examiner organization, mobilization, and functions. It also describes other assistance available from the California State Coroners Association, and other state agencies, and the resources of the federal government. Mission statements included in this plan provide functional capabilities of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Department of Justice, California Department of Health Services, California Department of Motor Vehicles, California National Guard, California Dental Identification Team, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

An additional document has been prepared as a complement to the Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan titled: *"The California Mass Fatality Management Guide: A Supplement to the State of California Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan."* While not a "how to" guide, this publication offers more detailed information on the fatality management process and issues pertaining to a catastrophic mass fatality incident.

BACKGROUND

The Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan is intended to complement and support law enforcement activities during major disasters resulting in mass fatalities. The Plan delineates proper procedures for notification and response of coroners under the Coroner Mutual Aid Plan. To ensure an effective and efficient mutual aid response, the Law Enforcement Branch of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services coordinates all inter-regional; state agency activity relating to mutual aid under the Coroner Mutual Aid Plan; and any out-of-state requests for coroners' mutual aid under the nationally recognized Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).



PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to create a standardized and accepted statewide coroners' mutual aid system for response and recovery related to major disaster situations resulting in mass fatalities. This plan will serve as a guide for mutual aid assistance that supports Coroner/M.E. efforts.

Additionally, this plan provides for coroner mutual aid planning and joint operations; incorporates the Incident Command System (ICS), the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as per California State Law (Government Code Section 8607; California Code of Regulations Title 19, Sections 2920, 2925, 2930 in the Disaster Assistance Act); and integrates those actions with other ongoing disaster and emergency operations.

This plan prescribes the mutual aid organization of coroner/medical examiner personnel that can be tailored to the specific need of the Operational Area or a Region requiring assistance from other Operational Areas or Regions.

AUTHORITY

The State of California Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan is developed under the authority of California state law, including: Master Mutual Aid Agreement; California Emergency Services Act (Gov. Code Section 8550 et seq.); California Labor Code, Section 3211.92 (Disaster Services Workers); Sections 2400-2450 of Title 19, Division 2 of the Code of Regulations (Standardized Emergency Management System – SEMS).

NOTE: The California State Coroners' Mutual Aid Plan reflects the official policy of the Principals of the California State Coroners' Association as consistent and compatible with the Master Mutual Aid Agreement concerning coroner mutual aid planning and operations in California.



DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Note that some definitions are not verbatim from related codes and regulations but are paraphrased for clear understanding of the concepts involved.

Catastrophic Mass Fatality Event: A catastrophic mass fatality event is one in which loss of life overwhelms the state's mutual aid system and requires extraordinary support from state, federal, and private resources.

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT): Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams are federal resources under the authority of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. These teams are comprised of private citizens, each with a particular field of expertise, who are activated in the event of a disaster. DMORT members are required to maintain appropriate certifications and licensure within their discipline. When members are activated, licensure, and certification is recognized by all States, and the team members are compensated for their duty time by the Federal government as a temporary Federal employee. During an emergency response, DMORTs work under the guidance of local authorities by providing technical assistance and personnel to recover, identify, and process deceased victims. DMORT teams are composed of funeral directors, medical examiners, coroners, pathologists, forensic anthropologists, medical records technicians and transcribers, finger print specialists, forensic odontologists, dental assistants, x-ray technicians, mental health specialists, computer professionals, administrative support staff, and security and investigative personnel.

Disaster Portable Mortuary Unit (DPMU) Equipment: The DPMU equipment supports the establishment of a portable mortuary established in a field setting, often at or near an incident site. It comes complete with equipment and supplies needed to perform a full external and internal examination (autopsy), and for assessing decedent's identification by means of fingerprinting, photographing, obtaining dental and body x-rays and gathering DNA samples. A DPMU can be used as a whole unit, or can be used in part to support limited mortuary operations such as DNA and fingerprinting.

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC): The Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is a state-to-state mutual aid system that can be utilized during a Governor proclaimed state of emergency. EMAC is administered by the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA).

Incident Command System (ICS): The Incident Command System is under the umbrella of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). When applicable jurisdiction is determined, the first Deputy Coroner/Coroner on the scene is the Coroner Incident Commander.



Law Enforcement Branch: The Law Enforcement Branch of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services is the state facilitator of inter-regional Coroner/M.E. mutual aid response resources to operational areas. The Law Enforcement Branch also provides ongoing liaison with operational areas, municipalities, state, and federal agencies during non-emergency periods to facilitate emergency preparedness planning and mutual aid awareness training. The Branch also coordinates the state's search and rescue and law enforcement mutual aid programs, and other activities in support of local law enforcement mutual aid response.

Local Emergency: "Local emergency" means the duly proclaimed existence of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of a county or city. The peril may be caused by such conditions of air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, drought, sudden and severe energy shortage, plant/animal infestation or disease, the Governor's warning of an earthquake or volcanic prediction, an earthquake, or other conditions. Conditions resulting from labor controversy would not be included. These conditions are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of that political subdivision and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat. With respect to regulated energy utilities, a sudden and severe energy shortage which requires extraordinary measures beyond the authority vested in the California Public Utilities Commission (§8558(c),GC).

Mass Fatality: An incident where more deaths occur than can be handled by local Coroner/M.E. resources. See Health & Safety Code, §103451.

Mutual Aid Region: A Mutual Aid Region is a geographic area comprised of multiple operational areas (see Figure 1). A Mutual Aid Region manages and coordinates information and resources among operational areas within the mutual aid region and between the operational areas and the state level.

National Incident Management System (NIMS): The National Incident Management System is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines.

Operational Area: A County, along with political subdivisions within that county, constitutes an Operational Area.

Operational Area Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinator: The Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, or Medical Examiner of the county.

Regional Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinator: A Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner or Medical Examiner nominated and elected by those vested with coroner responsibility in each Operational Area within that specific Region, to carry out regional Coroner/M.E. mutual aid activities.



Standardized Emergency Management Systems (SEMS): The Standardized Emergency Management System is a system used for coordinating state and local emergency response in California. SEMS provides a multiple level emergency response organization that facilitates the flow of emergency information and resources.

State Law Enforcement/Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator: The Chief of the Law Enforcement Branch at California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, through his designated Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator, is responsible for administrative action and coordination between State and Regions and Operational Areas for Coroner Mutual Aid. The State Coordinator also acts as the state point of contact for EMAC requests.

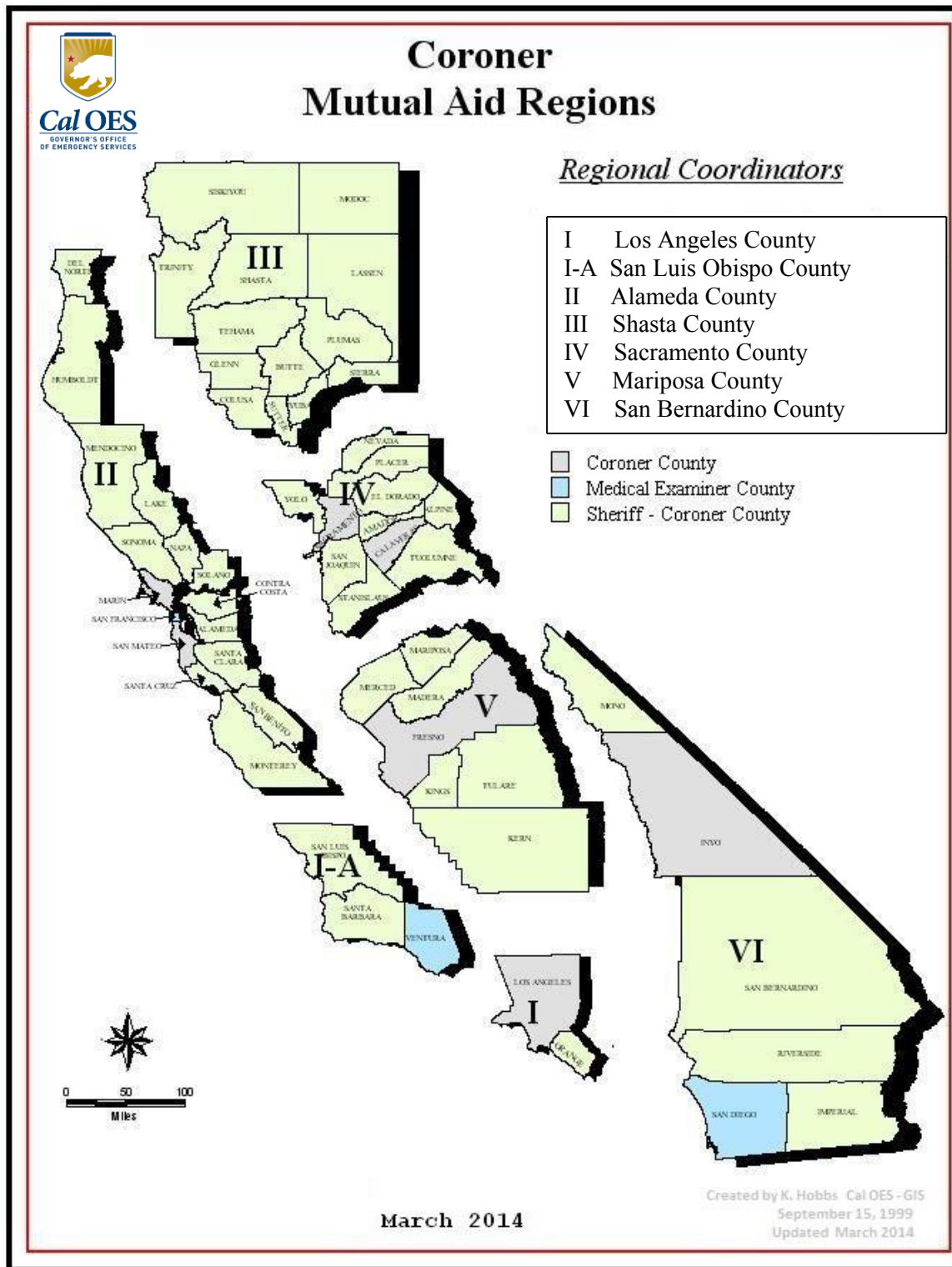
State of Emergency: "State of Emergency" means the duly proclaimed existence of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the state. The peril may be caused by such conditions as air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, drought, sudden and severe energy shortage, plant or animal infestation or disease, the Governor's warning of an earthquake or volcanic prediction, or an earthquake, or other conditions. Conditions resulting from a labor controversy would not be included. The conditions, by reason of their magnitude, are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of any single county, city and county, or city and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to combat. With respect to regulated emergency utilities, a sudden and severe energy shortage which requires extraordinary measures beyond the authority vested in the California Public Utilities Commission. (Section 8558 (b)(GC)).

During a state of emergency, the Governor has complete authority over all agencies of state government and the right to exercise within the area or regions designated, all police power vested in the state by the Constitution and laws of the State of California (GC, Article 12, Section 8620 and Article 8627, "California Emergency Services Act"). During a state of emergency, mutual aid is mandatory.

State of War Emergency: "State of war emergency" means the condition which exists immediately, with or without a proclamation thereof by the Governor, whenever this state or nation is attacked by an enemy of the United States, or upon receipt by the state of a warning from the federal government indicating that such an enemy attack is probable or imminent. (Section 8558 (a) GC)

Unified Command: Unified Command is comprised of jurisdictions and agencies that have an implicit/direct responsibility for the incident. The objective and strategy of Unified Command should be to reach consensus in the consolidated action plan for the incident. In this manner, it increases the effectiveness of the response to a multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incident.

Unusual Occurrence: An event involving potential or actual personal injury or property damage arising from incidents such as: natural and manmade disasters, acts of terrorism, and civil disturbance.





ORGANIZATION FOR MUTUAL AID

The organizational framework for all mutual aid in the State of California is based on levels of increasing responsibility. These levels, lowest to highest, are: a) Operational Areas, b) Regions, c) State, and d) Federal.

Operational Area

Each county in California is an Operational Area, and the Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner, or Medical Examiner is the Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator for the Operational Area.

Region

The State of California is divided into seven Coroners' Mutual Aid Regions as Figure 1 on the previous page depicts. Note that the mutual aid regions are compatible with the law enforcement mutual aid regions. Each mutual aid region has a Sheriff/Coroner, Coroner or Medical Examiner, who is elected by the majority of their peers within the Region. Each Coroner Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator should designate, as alternates, two senior officers within their department to function as the Coroner Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator during their absence or their inability to serve. Please refer to the Election Process in Appendix C for further information.

State

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services is responsible for coordination and application of state resources in *support* of local jurisdictions. This office is also responsible for the receipt and dissemination of current information relating to existing or potential major disasters or extraordinary events on which to base coroners' mutual aid operations. Cal OES, through the Chief of the Law Enforcement Branch, and the Chief through his/her assigned staff, has responsibility for coroner mutual aid coordination at the state level.

Out-of-State

While rare, there may be occasion to send Coroner/M.E. personnel and resources to another state under an official national Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request. The Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch will process and coordinate all Coroner/M.E. EMAC requests.



Federal as represented by the Department of Health and Human Services and Federal Bureau Investigation (FBI)

The Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for coordination and application of federal agencies resources, i.e., Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT). A federal agency is defined as any department, independent establishment, government, corporation, or other agency of the executive branch of the federal government, including the United States Postal Service, but does not include the American National Red Cross (www.fema.gov).

The FBI may be requested at any time through the nearest FBI field office.

Private

Private resources may be utilized in an incident response and be included in a coroners' mutual aid response organization.

Volunteers

Volunteer organizations, such as the California Dental Identification Team (CalDIT), may be utilized to support local Coroner/M.E. operations.



PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING MUTUAL AID

Basic Policy

The Master Mutual Aid Agreement and the California Emergency Services Act make mutual aid mandatory when the Governor proclaims a State of Emergency or State of War Emergency. Mutual aid is also mandatory in situations of "local peril." The basic policy of regional or state assistance to Operational Areas is to support Coroner/M.E. with resources after all of their resources are committed and the magnitude of the disaster is, or soon will be, beyond their resources and capabilities. Requests for assistance must be made through the appropriate chain of command – Operational Area to Region; Region to California OES (State); State to other Regions and/or Federal Government. Figure 2 below illustrates the proper channels for requesting mutual aid. Requests for federal resources can be made by the State on behalf of the requestor after consultation with the impacted operational area and Coroner/M.E. and their Regional Coroner/M.E. Coordinator.

Specific federal resources may be requested at any time during the disaster. However, the impacted operational area Coroner/M.E. should consult with the Regional Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator and the State Cal OES Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinator to determine if the request of a federal resource (e.g., DMORT, Dept. of Defense) is the most appropriate resource given the specific incident.

Channels for Requesting Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid

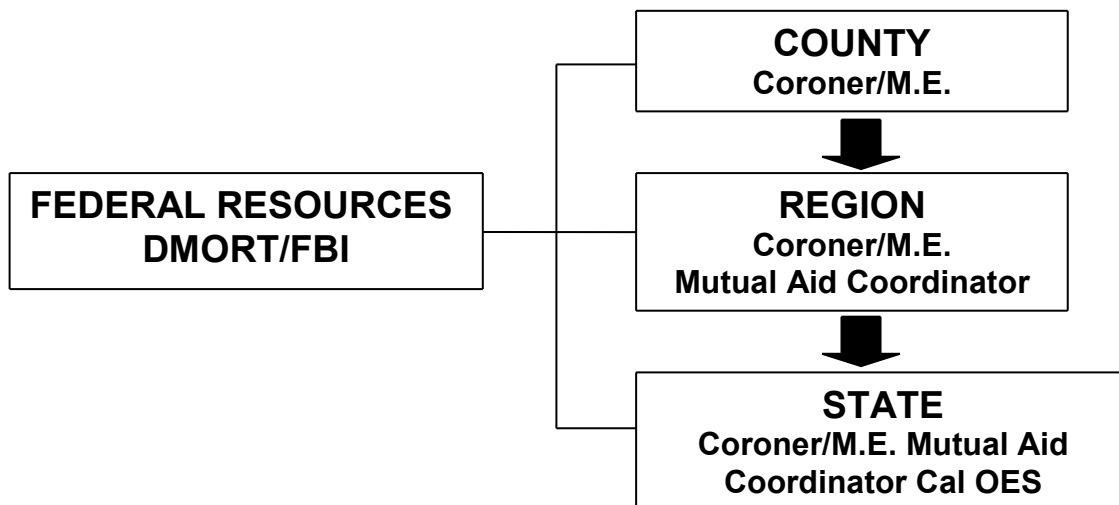


Figure 2



Regional Guidelines

Whenever an existing or unforeseen mass fatality emergency is of such magnitude as to require resources from one or more operational areas, it is the responsibility of the Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator to organize and coordinate the committed resources within their respective region (Section 26602 of the Government Code). The Regional Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator must keep the Cal OES Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator apprised of the situation and status of the incident. Should assistance from adjoining regions become necessary, requests will be made through the Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator.

State

If the combined resources of regions are not sufficient to cope with an emergency mass fatalities situation, or if such deficiencies are imminent, the State Coroners Mutual Aid Coordinator via the Chief of Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch, through the Director of the Cal OES, may request federal assistance from the Department of Homeland Security - Federal Emergency Management Agency. If Coroner/M.E. resources are needed from other states, the process for obtaining these resources will be requested through the EMAC system.

Federal Assistance

Upon mutual agreement between the impacted operational area, Regional Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinator, and the Cal OES Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinator, federal resources may be requested to augment existing coroner mutual aid. Federal resources are not intended to usurp the authority of the local jurisdiction.

Basic Policies

Each Coroner/M.E. Operational Area and Coroners' Mutual Aid Region within the State of California should develop a separate coroner's mutual aid response plan based on Coroner/M.E. resource capability within that Coroner Operational Area or Coroner Mutual Aid Region and input from the Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch.

The regional plan should adhere to and include:

- California Coroners' Mutual Aid System
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)
- Incident Command System (ICS)
- Communications plan
- Personnel alert procedures
- Resource list

Maximum use of locally existing resources must be made prior to the initiation of a mutual aid request. This is the main tenet of mutual aid operations. The responsible local official in whose jurisdiction the incident occurs will remain in charge (Government Code 8618). To assure an effective response, effort should be made to provide each successive level of authority in the Coroner Operational Area and its Region with complete, current, and accurate information relating to emerging situations that may require further mutual aid or state and federal assistance.



Guidance for Mutual Aid Operations

Mutual Aid Operations are based on the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and Incident Command System (ICS). SEMS consists of five functional areas that must be considered for effective management. These functional areas are as follows:

- Management
- Operations
- Planning and Intelligence
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration

For more information on SEMS, see Appendix B.

CORONER/M.E. MANAGEMENT OF CONTAMINATED REMAINS

A mass fatality incident can be an extremely demanding event for a Coroner/M.E. It can be made more complex and difficult to manage when the dead are contaminated and pose health and safety risks to the responding Coroner/M.E. personnel. Furthermore, a mass fatality event caused by an act of terrorism creates more jurisdictional issues and requires closer cooperation and assistance among the various health and public safety disciplines at all governmental levels.

Dealing with contaminated remains and rendering them safe to handle is not new to Coroner/M.E.s. However, it is not routine and with the escalation of terrorists' acts throughout the world and in our nation, the potential use of exotic chemical, biological, and radiological agents demands new planning, coordination, and response requirements. Also, it must be considered that the assistance the Coroner/M.E. may have received by hazmat teams and other outside agencies in past contaminated fatality incidents would be fully engaged in life-saving decontamination efforts in the event of a "weapons of mass destruction" type of incident and probably will not be available to assist the Coroner/M.E.

It is not the purpose of this plan or within the authority of Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch to prescribe policies, procedures, and resources to the Coroner/M.E. to adequately *respond to* and *manage* a contaminated mass fatality incident. Since these types of events start and end locally, it is in the best interests of the local Coroner/M.E. to develop, in coordination with other local, regional, and state organizations, appropriate plans and cooperative agreements.

Each operational area Coroner/M.E. should develop contingency plans that, at a minimum, address the following issues:

- Planning process needs to engage other disciplines (e.g., fire service, EMS, health, law enforcement, death care industry) and jurisdictions (e.g., city, county, region, state, federal, and private)



- Develop field response protocols for chemical, biological, or radiologically contaminated human remains.
- Identify resources that may be available to assist in the handling and disposition of contaminated remains.
- Proper identification/type and proper use of personal protective equipment for the various WMD types of environments.
- Consideration of jurisdictional issues and handling of the “de facto homicides” in a terrorist-caused mass fatality. Significant law enforcement/criminal justice issues require cooperation and understanding of roles and responsibilities, especially with the FBI; the lead investigatory agency in terrorist incidents.
- Incorporate standards for decontaminating human remains, including who determines when/if potentially contaminated remains are safe for routine handling.
- Identify locations for storing human remains, including remains that may be contaminated.
- Disposition of contaminated and/or decontaminated human remains. Consider protocols for cremation, isolated burial, mandatory mass disposition, and return to family.

The California OES Law Enforcement Branch Coroners Mutual Aid Program Coordinator will endeavor to work closely with the Coroner/M.E. in planning and preparing for mass fatality incidents; including events involving contaminated human remains.



THE ROLE OF THE STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT CORONER MUTUAL AID COORDINATOR

The Regional Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator is a *de facto* member of the California's Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid System's "advisory board." Even more complex than the role of an Operational Area Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator, the Regional Coordinator, during an incident, must balance not only the needs and resources of their own department, but also those of the Operational Area and the other Operational Areas in the Region.

Duties and Responsibilities include:

1. Organizing and acting as chairperson of a Regional Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinating Committee, comprised of Operational Area Coroners/M.E.s within the region. This committee may include others as deemed necessary by the chairperson. This committee shall meet at least once each year and may hold additional meetings as deemed necessary by the chairperson.
2. On receipt of information of an emergency within the region which may require Regional Coroners' Mutual Aid, or upon request of the Cal OES Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinator, assumes responsibility for coordination of Regional Coroners' Mutual Aid resources.
3. Participate in conference calls initiated by the Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch after the onset of a mass fatality incident.
4. The Regional Coordinator should designate one or more points of contact in his/her agency to assist in coordination of the mutual aid activities of the region.
5. The Regional Coordinator shall evaluate requests for assistance from the operational area; determine the resources from that operational area(s) within the region that can provide the most-timely assistance, and initiate appropriate response thereof. When resources within the region are insufficient, either for lack of timely response or the magnitude of requirements are beyond regional capability, additional mutual aid requests must be made to the state.
6. The Regional Coroners' Mutual Aid Coordinator is not responsible for any direct emergency operations except those which occur within the jurisdiction of its own department, agency, or etc. The Operational Area Coroner/M.E. in whose jurisdiction the emergency exists shall remain in full charge of all coroner resources furnished for mutual aid operations.



7. The Regional Coordinator should assess the region's Coroner/M.E. mutual aid capabilities and be able to communicate this information to the State Coroner Mutual Aid Coordinator.
8. The Regional Coordinator should meet periodically with the Operational Area Coroner/M.E. in his/her Region to exchange information that would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Coroner/M.E. mutual aid operations.
9. If Federal resources (e.g., DMORT), are requested by the operational area Coroner/M.E., the Regional Coroner/M.E. Mutual Aid Coordinator will assist in the request and coordination protocols for DMORT/DPMU deployment to impacted jurisdiction(s).



STATE AGENCIES ROLES AND RESOURCES

The following state agencies have resources which can be made available during a Mass Fatalities Incident.

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

The CDPH will assist local government in assessing health hazards and ensuring compliance with health regulations.

The CDPH is responsible for ensuring observance of health regulations and policies. To assist in Coroner operations, CDPH will provide or assist in providing emergency supplies of death certificates, disposition forms, and training in their use. CDPH is also responsible for the administration of the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) and the Fetal Death Registration System (FDRS).

The services of DHS should be obtained by contacting the Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Missing/Unidentified Persons Section

The DOJ's Missing/Unidentified Persons Section (MUPS) maintains statewide files containing the physical characteristics, photographs, and dental records of missing and unidentified persons reported to DOJ by law enforcement agencies and county coroners in accordance with mandates contained in Penal Code Sections 14200-14251 and Health & Safety Code section 102870. In the event of a mass disaster where there are believed to be missing persons or unidentified deceased persons, the MUPS can offer the following services to California law enforcement agencies and official emergency services agencies:

- ***Physical identification*** - MUPS compares missing person reports against unidentified person reports, and vice versa, to determine if there are possible matches. Possible matches can be made from comparison of physical characteristics such as hair color, eye color, height and weight, or from comparison of other physical identifiers such as clothing, jewelry, scars or tattoos. MUPS also makes inquiries into a variety of governmental and private databases to find information that may result in the location of missing persons. If any possible matches are made or any information is found, the appropriate law enforcement and emergency services agencies are notified.
- ***Dental identification*** - MUPS classifies, indexes and compares missing person dental records against unidentified person dental records, and vice versa, to determine possible matches. If a possible match is made, the appropriate law enforcement and emergency services agencies are notified.



- **NCIC searches** - MUPS possesses expertise regarding the operation of the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) Missing and Unidentified Persons System. The NCIC MUPS contains information regarding missing and/or unidentified persons that is input by law enforcement agencies. MUPS staff can compare this information to locate missing persons and/or identify unidentified deceased persons.

DOJ Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) Section

The California Department of Justice carries out the constitutional responsibilities of the Office of the Attorney General. The department works 24-hours a day to provide a wide range of support to state and local law enforcement agencies through forensic sciences, criminal investigation, intelligence and training. The Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) is the scientific arm of the Attorney General's Office, whose mission is to assist the criminal justice system. The BFS maintains 10 full-service crime laboratories throughout California that provide the following forensic services.

- **Crime Scene Response** - BFS Scientists provide local law enforcement agencies with on-site investigative support. Full service crime laboratory analysis can be applied to any evidence collected (e.g., chemical analysis, toxicology, firearms examination, toolmark analysis, questioned document examination, etc.). Agencies are provided with reports explaining findings and disposition of evidence and offers expert testimony in court. In the event of a mass disaster, crime scene specialists can assist in the collection and analysis of forensic evidence and human remains. Services include:
 - **Latent Prints** – Using state-of-the-art crime fighting tools and scientific methods BFS scientists assist in processing major crime scenes. Scientists search crime scenes and evidence for latent prints. In addition to standard black powder dusting methods, cyanocrylate fuming, fluorescent dyes, and high intensity lasers, other chemicals are used to develop prints on difficult surfaces such as paper, Styrofoam, and duct tape. Sophisticated digital equipment is used to enhance the image quality of marginal latent prints and to document the evidence. Detailed reports are provided explaining examinations, comparisons, and disposition of latent print evidence. BFS personnel will provide expert testimony in court.
 - **Questioned Documents** – Scientists examine and compare questioned handwriting and printing on documents such as, threatening letters, anonymous notes, and robbery demand notes. Other examinations are conducted on inks, papers, computer printers, copiers, typewriters, ribbons, and charred documents. Evidence collected at crime scenes are examined and compared to known writings of possible suspects. Scientists use an electrostatic detection apparatus to make indented writings visible and a



variety of infrared and ultraviolet light sources for differentiating inks. Detailed reports explaining examinations, comparisons, and disposition of evidence are provided to the client. BFS personnel will provide expert testimony in court.

DNA Analysis

The BFS DNA Laboratory has significant expertise in the analysis of degraded human remains, and the statistical analysis of putative family relationships. DOJ has a strong working relationship with every Coroner/M.E. office in the state as all are required to submit samples from unidentified persons for DNA analysis. DOJ assists law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in investigating missing and unidentified persons through DNA analysis and data comparison. In the event of a mass disaster, DOJ personnel provide the following services to ensure identifications occur in a timely manner:

- ***Scene Assessment*** - On-site assessment to determine DNA services, personnel, and supplies required to ensure the proper collection of biological evidence necessary for DNA analysis.
- ***Sample Collection of Remains*** - Assist in the coordination, collection, documentation and submission of biological samples from unidentified remains for DNA analysis. Knowledge of the best samples available from partial, decomposed or otherwise compromised human remains can make the difference in the ability to utilize DNA for identification.
- ***Reference (Family Member) Sample Collection*** - Assist in the coordination, collection, documentation and submission of biological samples from family members of missing persons or personal articles belonging to the missing person for DNA analysis.
- ***Family Assistance Center Assistance*** – Provide staff and computerized mass fatalities DNA sample submission tracking system to assist in the Family Assistance Center to ensure proper collection and documentation of family reference samples. To provide the best opportunity for identification, it is imperative that collections of biological samples from family members are collected in accordance with DOJ specifications.
- ***DNA Collection Kits*** – Provide DNA collection kits for remains, personal articles from the missing, and reference samples from family members of the missing.
- ***DNA Analysis*** – Using state-of-the-art equipment, highly trained DNA scientists perform nuclear and mtDNA analysis and data comparison. Knowledge of the technical tools available for analysis, the inheritance of both sources of DNA (nuclear and mitochondrial), and the statistical weighting of putative matches is critical to



making an appropriate comparison and drawing conclusions of identification. BFS also focuses on forensic applications of DNA by analyzing biological evidence seized by law enforcement in criminal cases. The laboratory has an established computerized DNA identification data bank to which evidence analysis results can be compared to identify unknown offenders involved in violent crime cases.

- ***Examination and Findings Reports*** – Detailed reports are provided to explain examinations, comparisons, and disposition of biological evidence.
- ***Court Testimony*** – DNA scientists provide expert testimony in court.
- ***Media Support*** – DNA expert to provide consultation to Coroner/ME for questions from the media pertaining to the DNA methods used to assist in the identification of the victims.
- ***Ongoing Support*** – On-going support of DNA services for the identification of unidentified persons.

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

The California DMV's Information Service Branch will assist in the identification of deceased by providing photographs and thumbprints from its driver license records and vehicle/vessel ownership information from its vehicle registration files.

In addition, the DMV's Information Service Branch will provide assistance to law enforcement agencies during emergencies by performing the following searches:

- ***VR Law Search*** – A work order processes the search for vehicle/vessel records using a variety of information including the partial license plate number, partial VIN number, and vehicle makes, year, and models.
- ***DL Law Search*** – Searches on name, partial name, height, weight, hair color, eye color, age, sex, county, and etc.
- ***DL/ID Card Address Search*** – Provides all the names of individuals residing at a specific address as indicated on a DL/ID card.
- ***VR or DL ANI Search*** – Provides a cross-reference between a driver's name and DL/ID card number or between a registered owner name and vehicle registration.
- ***ANI Edit*** – Provides a list of names for further follow up when initial searches result in 16 or more records matching the criteria.



The Registration Automation Development Section will perform the following searches:

- ***VR Name File Pass*** – Provides vehicle description and address information pertaining to a specific name.
- ***VR Address File Pass*** – Provides vehicle description and name pertaining to a specific address.

The Driver License Automation Development Section will perform the following search:

- ***Journal Search*** – Provides information concerning all inquiries, updates, requests, and responses from the VR, DL, and ANI journal tapes.

National Guard (CNG)

The State Military Department, when authorized by the Governor and requested through Cal OES, may provide personnel and equipment necessary for collection, identification, transportation, and storage of the deceased, as well as a variety of requested support services.

The State Military Department will assist civil authority to discharge lawful responsibilities by performing tasks which are not limited to the protection of life and property, search and rescue, and general logistics.

The Governor, through Cal OES, will commit the State Military Department resources in support of local authority under Sections 143 and 146 of the Military and Veterans Code and only upon determination that emergency or highly perilous conditions exist or are imminent.

The State Military Department will support, not supplant, local authorities and will terminate their support at the earliest practical time.

Where military resources are deployed, a military liaison will co-locate with the Incident Commander at the Incident Command Post. Military support will, at all times, remain under the military chain of command. Support may be obtained by officials of local government making a request through Cal OES when a disaster or emergency is, or is about to be, beyond the capabilities of local government and all mutual aid resources have been exhausted.



FEDERAL AGENCIES ROLES AND RESOURCES

Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Under Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, (P.L. 93-288 as amended by P.L. 100-707), the Governor of the affected state may request that the President make a declaration that a major disaster exists. Such a request shall be based on the Governor's determination that the disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments, so federal assistance is necessary. As part of such request, and as a prerequisite to major disaster assistance under this Act, the Governor shall take appropriate response action under state law and direct execution of the state's emergency plan. The Governor shall furnish information on the nature and amount of state and local resources which have been or will be committed to alleviate the results of the disaster, and shall certify that, for the current disaster, state and local government obligations and expenditures (state commitments must be of significant proportion) will comply with all applicable cost-sharing requirements of this Act. Based on this request, the President may declare that a major disaster or emergency exists.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) is a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - National Disaster Medical System, which responds to a mass fatality disaster when requested. They are usually requested when local and state resources have been depleted. They have over 1200 trained volunteers who can respond to assist a local jurisdiction. They can provide assistance in the following areas:

- Mobile Morgue Operations
- Forensic Examination
- DNA Acquisition
- Remains Identification
- Scene Documentation
- Medical/Psychology Support
- Embalming/Casketing
- Family Assistance Centers
- Antemortem Data Collection
- Postmortem Data Collection
- Records Data Entry
- Database Administration
- Personal Effects Processing
- Coordination of Releasing Remains for Burial or Other Disposition.
- Provide Communication Equipment
- Safety Officers and Specialists



California is in DMORT Region IX. A DMORT response is an element of the federal Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

The FBI may assist at any time, free of cost on an approved request for assistance.

Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 0.85P(b), authorizes the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to provide identification assistance in disasters and for other humanitarian purposes, subject to the general supervision of the Attorney General, as part of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Since 1940, the FBI Disaster Squad has provided fingerprint specialists for assistance in printing the deceased at disaster scenes, assistance in collecting antemortem fingerprints of victims, and assistance in identifying friction ridge skin of the deceased. Under certain conditions the Disaster Squad, they may aid local officials in identifying human physical characteristics and characteristics of jewelry belonging to the unknown deceased persons. Additionally, each FBI field division has an Evidence Response Team (ERT). ERT members process crime scenes and mass fatality disasters.

The FBI Disaster Squad is part of the FBI's Laboratory Division, currently located at Quantico, Virginia, and is part of the Latent Print Support Unit

Deployment of the FBI's Disaster Squad requires consent from the disaster scene coroner or medical examiner, a ranking law enforcement or government official, a representative of the National Transportation Safety Board, or a representative of the U.S. Department of State.

Requests for assistance must be made through the nearest FBI field office, or the FBI's Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) at (202) 323-3300 twenty-four hours per day.

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)

The EMAC was established in 1996. EMAC is administered by the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). EMAC is a congressionally ratified organization that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid. Through EMAC, a disaster impacted state can request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently. The EMAC system resolves upfront the issues of liability and reimbursement. (www.emacweb.org).



Other Federal Resources

Section 402 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 93-288 as amended by P.L. 100-707) provides that in any major disaster, the President (through FEMA) may direct any federal agency under federal law, with or without reimbursement, to utilize its authorities and the resources granted to it (including personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and managerial, technical and advisory services) in support of state and local assistance efforts. The Federal Bureau of Investigation may assist in the identification of the deceased on its own authority without any declaration or proclamation.

Department of Defense Resources

During the immediate aftermath of an incident, the Governor may request the President to direct the Secretary of Defense to utilize resources of the Department of Defense. The resources can be used for the purpose of performing on public and private lands. This would include any emergency work made necessary by such incident in which is essential for the preservation of life and property.



PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

California State Coroners Association (CSCA)

The California State Coroners Association (CSCA) represents all 58 Sheriff/Coroners, Coroners, and Medical Examiners in the State. The association is committed to the exchange of information, expertise, training, and disaster preparation.

California State Sheriff's Association (CSSA) – Coroner Liaison

The California State Sheriff's Association (CSSA) maintains a coroners committee to be the liaison to the California State Coroners Association. In addition, the CSSA Coroners Representative maintains a liaison with the Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch.

California Dental Identification Team (CalDIT)

California Dental Identification Team (CalDIT) provides support to a jurisdiction that may be overwhelmed during a mass disaster involving a large number of deceased persons. In all cases, CalDIT serves at the under the direction of the local Coroner or Medical Examiner and serves to support the forensic odontologist(s) assigned to the event. Members of CalDIT can perform a valuable role in acquiring post mortem dental information on the deceased and comparing the results with antemortem dental records to obtain positive identification.

The Cal OES Law Enforcement Branch maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with CalDIT as a volunteer resource to support the Coroners' Mutual Aid System.

California Funeral Directors Association (CFDA)

The purpose of California Funeral Directors Association (CFDA) is to advocate and provide continuous professional development and enhance the economic viability of member funeral service practitioners in order to provide services as desired by consumers.

CFDA is a resource for consideration when taxed for skilled and experienced fatality management personnel.

Private Resources

Private resources may be needed and requested on an incident by incident basis. Generally, costs for private resource are borne by the impacted jurisdiction.