

EMERGENCY MORTUARY SERVICES ANNEX

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to define, outline, and describe, the role and functions served by the Effingham County Coroner's office pertaining to locating, recovering and processing fatalities that may occur during disaster situations.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. A disaster is any situation where the demand for resources exceeds the available supply.
2. Provided with only minimal manpower, equipment, and resources, any unusual demand would tax the capabilities of the office and require supplementation from external sources.
3. The county could suffer mass casualties from transportation, weather related, industrial, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and nuclear incidents.

B. Assumptions

1. First response would be by fire, rescue, and police agencies.
2. Initial response by this office would be by staff on hand.
3. Supplemental resources would be from the local community.
4. More extensive assistance would come from other governmental entities and the private sector.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Under Illinois law, the Coroner is responsible for the investigation of sudden unexpected or unusual deaths. This includes identifying fatalities and arranging for the disposition of the remains.

A. The Coroner will maintain rosters of his/her office's personnel and any volunteers that will assist in disaster operations. These will include the local funeral directors who have agreed to assist.

B. If needed, the Coroner will establish a temporary morgue away from the disaster site.

1. Mortuary services personnel will operate from that site, maintaining communication with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by phone or radio.

C. Morgue facilities will be provided dependent upon the necessity.

D. The Coroner is responsible for notifying his/her personnel and determining if the situation warrants 24-hour operations. If around-the-clock operations are required, then available personnel will be assigned to shifts.

1. Staff personnel will utilize necessary resources to provide needed levels of coverage.
2. The successor's emergency authority will become effective upon the unavailability of the authority. The authority may upon necessity appoint the successor to fulfill his/her duties upon his inability to serve such as injury, sickness, or commitment elsewhere.
3. When a succession has been made and someone assumes responsibility for a particular function, all agencies will be notified. This will be done by making the announcement to the EOC and having each EOC representative relay the information to their agencies. The alternate method will be to have the EMA communications center make the announcement.

E. Mutual aid agreements have been negotiated, coordinated, and prepared.

F. Logistical support for operations will be accessed from the Effingham County EMA office.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Coroner has developed Standardized Operational Guides (SOGs) for the coordination of emergency mortuary services, the establishment and operation of temporary morgues, and the identification of remains.

1. The SOG will be located in the Coroner's office and EMA office.
2. Basic responsibilities for operation would be divided into locating, recovering, and processing areas which would be overseen by the Coroner's command structure and supplemented by the police, fire, and rescue agencies, and the Illinois Coroner's and Medical Examiners Association.

V. SUCCESSION OF COMMAND

If the Coroner is not available to direct emergency response operations, the chain of command shall be:

1. Effingham County Coroner
2. Effingham County Deputy Coroner
3. Effingham County Deputy Coroners
4. Designee of the Effingham County Coroner

VI. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EMERGENCY MORTUARY SERVICES ANNEX

The responsibility for revisions, annex maintenance, review and updating this annex belongs to Effingham County Coroner's Office with the assistance of EMA.

VII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

- A. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended 42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.*
- B. The Illinois Emergency Management Act (20 ILCS 3305).
- C. County Ordinance relating to Emergency Management as adopted by the Effingham County Board on January 18, 2005.
- D. *Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning: State and Local Guide (101)*; FEMA April 2001

VI. APPENDICES

- A. Pre-emergency Operations Checklist
- B. Response Operations Checklist
- C. Recovery

▪ **APPENDIX A. PRE-EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CHECKLIST**

1. Train assigned mortuary service response staff and voluntary augmentees to perform emergency functions.
2. Maintain personnel list and emergency response resources.
3. Update Mortuary Services Annex as needed based on emergencies, deficiencies identified through drills and exercises, and changes in government structure and emergency operations.
4. Negotiate, coordinate, and prepare mutual aid agreements.
5. Identify and make provisions to protect records or other items essential for continuing operations.
6. Develop SOGs to ensure successful response during a major disaster.
7. Develop a system to track deployed resources for disaster response.

▪ **APPENDIX B. RESPONSE OPERATIONS CHECKLIST**

1. Continue training assigned mortuary service response staff and voluntary augmentees to perform emergency functions.
2. Report appropriate information to the EOC during emergency operations.
3. Obtain necessary protective respiratory devices, clothing, equipment, and antidotes for mortuary personnel to perform assigned tasks in hazardous radiological or chemical environments.
4. Expand mortuary services in an emergency.
5. Designate and establish an emergency mortuary to manage organization resources and response personnel and to maintain contact with the EOC during emergency situations.
6. Provide Public Information Officer with necessary information.
7. Maintain necessary radiation exposure records for all Coroner personnel and required dosimeter readings.

▪ **APPENDIX C. RECOVERY OPERATIONS CHECKLIST**

1. Support cleanup and recovery operations during disaster events.
2. Decontaminate mortuary equipment.
3. Release unneeded mortuary personnel.
4. Continue mortuary services until last identifications are made and remains released to next of kin.
5. Arrange for appropriate disposal of unidentified remains.