

**Mass Fatality Annex**  
**of the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)**

**1.0 Introduction**

**1.1 Purpose**

The Mass Fatality Annex to the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is designed to provide management objectives for response and mass fatality coordination guidance for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, to include pandemic and mass fatality mutual aid, in Douglas County and establishes the **Fatalities Management Unit** of the EOC. It also provides agency roles and responsibilities and overall responsibilities of the County EOC during an emergency event involving mass fatalities in the County or in nearby jurisdictions when mutual aid has been requested. This annex outlines how Douglas County will endeavor to manage the coordination before, during and after the emergency and addresses only general strategies used for any emergency. Specific Tactical actions are described in individual agency procedural guidance. *(Please Note: This Annex is not designed to provide management objectives specific to law enforcement mass casualty events such as an active shooter/active knife attack, etc. While many aspects of the mass fatality management noted in this Annex may be applied in the aftermath of a law enforcement event resulting in mass fatalities, mass fatality management and objectives in a law enforcement event will always be driven by the applicable law enforcement standard operating procedures and those procedures can and will supersede the mass fatality objectives as outlined in this Annex.)*

This annex is not intended to provide specific guidance to field fatality management personnel, the Douglas County Coroner's Office (DCCO) or Family Assistance Center (FAC) staff members. Rather, this annex is intended to provide mass fatality management guidance for the County and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) generally, and the Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit of the EOC specifically, so that EOC staff can support:

- field operations
- resource mobilization, management and tracking
- update resource ordering and tracking at the EOC
- provide accurate information to the Public Information Officer (PIO)/Joint Information Center (JIC)
- update situation status at the EOC
- appropriately support staffing of mass fatality response functions
- request mutual aid as needed

Fatality management is a core capability of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Target Capability List. The Capability is defined as follows: Provide fatality management services, including body recovery and victim identification, working with state and local authorities to provide temporary mortuary solutions, sharing information with mass care services for the purpose of reunifying family members and caregivers with missing persons/remains, and providing counseling to the bereaved.

The overall intent of this annex is to support the provision of an acceptable standard of services for mass fatality management during a natural or man-made disaster.

## 1.2 Scope

This annex is intended to address the need to coordinate and manage mass fatality services following a disaster, to include pandemic and mass fatality mutual aid. A mass fatality disaster is an event that results in a number of fatalities which overwhelms the normal capacity of the coroner's office of jurisdiction. A disaster may include but is not limited to the following: major motor vehicle accident, passenger rail accident, natural disaster, industrial accident, act of terrorism, etc.

Specific requirements of effective mass fatality response include functions at the EOC, the incident site, the examination center operations (to include a temporary examination center if necessary) and the FAC. It should be noted that multiple departments and agencies in addition to the DCCO will have responsibility across these functions. (Example: Law Enforcement is responsible for collection and recovery of items of evidence while the DCCO is responsible for personal property actions.)

### EOC:

- Resource ordering, management and tracking
- Information coordination
- Consequence management

### Incident Site:

- Scene documentation
- Collection and recovery of the dead
- Collection and recovery of victim's personal effects
- Collection and recovery of items of evidence

### Examination Center Operations

- Decontamination of remains and personal effects (if required)
- Storage, documentation, recovery and transportation of forensic and physical evidence
- Determination of the nature and extent of injuries
- Identification of fatalities using scientific means
- Certification of the cause and manner of death
- Processing, identification and returning human remains and personal effects of the victims to the legally authorized person(s) (if possible)

### Family Assistance Center

- Interaction with and provision of legal, customary, compassionate and culturally competent services to the families of the deceased
- Provision of mental health support services and referrals to the victims and the disaster workers.

This annex is not intended to provide specific guidance to field fatality management personnel, DCCO or FAC staff members. Rather, this annex is intended to provide mass fatality

management guidance for the County and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) generally, and the Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit of the EOC specifically, so that EOC staff can support the field operations, provide accurate information to the PIO/JIC, update situation status at the EOC, mobilize, track and manage resources at the EOC and appropriately support staffing of mass fatality response functions and request mutual aid as needed.

This annex provides the following information:

- Authorities and References for implementation of mass fatality services in the County
- Assumptions and considerations that were made in developing this annex and that are valid when activating the mass fatality management function
- Roles and responsibilities of agencies and organizations in preparing for and conducting mass fatality operations
- Concept of operations to coordinate mass fatality activities as a function of the County EOC.

Tasks identified in this annex are to be addressed as needed and are not necessarily contingent on the EOC being activated. When the EOC is activated, the responsibilities for mass fatality coordination fall to the Coroner and the EOC Fatalities Management Unit.

This annex has been developed in alignment with several other regional, State and Federal plans, including mass fatality specific procedures and operations. Several of the plans included in the development of this annex are listed below.

**Tri-County Public Health Emergency Operations Plan - Annex A: Emergency Support Function #8 Annex.** Under this Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) ESF #8 annex Coroners have responsibility for mass fatalities management, death investigation and participation with the ESF#8 as appropriate with an informal relationship to TCHD in the EOC. This annex notes that the Office of County Coroner is an elected position with the statutory responsibility to provide guidance and expertise in a number of mass fatality management areas and that it is the role of TCHD not to dictate how coroner's office will perform their functions during response efforts, but rather, to detail how TCHD may support coroners' offices in an effort to allow them the capacity to fulfill their responsibilities in a more efficient and effective manner.

TCHD as the local public health agency is responsible for the monitoring of any potential disease outbreaks including those that may be the cause of the increased number of fatalities. In the event that the fatalities are disease or infection related, TCHD will coordinate and maintain communications with the County OEM and CDPHE.

**Colorado North Central Region (NCR) Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan.** The revised 2015 NCR Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan notes that the county Coroner's office is the agency vested with the primary jurisdiction for coordinating mass fatality operations within their jurisdiction and has the authority and responsibility to determine the cause and manner of death of any fatalities, victim identification, and notification of next of kin from incidents which occur within the county jurisdiction.

The NCR Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan also notes that resource mobilization is coordinated to effectively manage, order, and supply mass fatality response resources with operational coordination for local, regional, and statewide support. Resource mobilization for

mass fatality response will work to benefit the respective Coroner's offices, the Incident Command System (ICS), Financial Tracking and Documentation Activities, and will be facilitated through local, county, and state Emergency Operations Centers (EOC).

**Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8**

This Douglas County functional annex aligns with the ESF 8 of the 2015 Colorado SEOP. State mutual aid aligns with this function.

The Colorado SEOP assigns the lead for Public Health and Medical Services coordination to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Their role is to coordinate activities and services statewide in support of local jurisdiction resource needs for preparedness, response and recovery from emergencies and disasters.

**Mass Casualty Incident - Annex XI - Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP)** The 2015 revision of the Colorado SEOP notes as its purpose the coordinated, effective, and timely State level response to a mass casualty incident in the state of Colorado and to facilitate a coordinated response by state agencies in their response to requests from local jurisdictions.

**National Response Framework (NRF) Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8.** This Douglas County functional annex aligns with the ESF #8 of the National Response Framework for Public Health and Medical Services. Federal Mutual Aid aligns with this function.

### 1.3 Policy

It is the policy of the County to develop plans and procedures to address the coordination of mass fatality services for citizens and visitors to the County who have been impacted by a disaster, both in the support of the recovery of fatalities and in support of providing services to families of victims. The County will also support the collection and dissemination of forensic data, as needed.

Local resources in support of a mass fatality incident are ordered, managed and tracked the Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit of the EOC. If local resources are not sufficient, the County will access additional resources via mutual aid in the NCR Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan, from the state from the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) and from Federal sources as needed, according to the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

## 2.0 Authorities and References

### Federal

- The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288, as amended - Authorizes federal resources to supplement state and local efforts; defines the intent of federal disaster aid; establishes federal assistance programs and procedures; establishes federal and state disaster preparedness programs.
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)

- National Response Framework, 2008 - Sets forth roles and responsibilities of federal and certain non-federal entities after catastrophes overwhelm state and local government.
- Presidential Policy Directive / PPD-8: National Preparedness
- Homeland Security Act of 2002
- Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006
- Government Code Title 1, Div. 4, Ch. 8, Sec. 3100-3101 - Public Employees as Disaster Service Workers) (This ensures implementation of the federally funded crisis counseling provisions, especially in support of FACs)

## Colorado

- C.R.S 30-10-606 - The Coroner's Office has authority over the care and handling of the deceased. This outlines the authority of county coroners and gives them jurisdiction over any and all deaths in their county.
- C.R.S 15-10-106.5 - Petition to determine the cause and date of death directly resulting from a disaster.
- C.R.S. 15-10-107 - Evidence of Death
- Colorado Disaster Emergency Act of 1992, C.R.S. 24 -33-.5-704 - "The governor is responsible for meeting the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters. Under this par 7, the governor may issue executive orders, proclamations, and regulations and amend or rescind them. Executive orders, proclamations, and regulations have the force and effect of law."
- C.R.S. 24-32-2101 - Colorado Disaster Emergency Act of 1992
- G.E.E.E.R.C - C.R.S. 24-33.5-704(8) - "There is hereby created a governor's expert emergency epidemic response committee. The duties of the committee shall be to develop by July 1, 2001, a new supplement to the state disaster plan that is concerned with the public health response to acts of bioterrorism, pandemic influenza, and epidemics caused by novel and highly fatal infectious agents and to provide expert public health advice to the governor in the event of an emergency epidemic. The committee shall meet a least annually to review and amend the supplement as necessary. The committee shall provide information to and fully cooperate with the council."
- C.R.S 25-2-103 - designates the state registrar as responsible for maintaining and administering vital statistics, including death certificates.
- C.R.S. 25-2-110 - promulgates timelines and procedures regarding the filing of death certificates.
- C.R.S 25-2-111(1) - defines burial practices, and requires that any person requested to act as a funeral director for a dead body or otherwise whoever first assumes custody of a dead body shall obtain authorization for disposition of the dead body from either the local health department or the county coroner, as may be applicable, before burial.
- C.R.S. 24-33.5-701-176 - Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), March 2015 - The plan defines the roles and responsibilities of state agencies during a disaster, assigned in the form of Emergency Support Functions (ESF). CDPHE is responsible for state ESF #8: Public Health and Medical Services. ESF #8 provides supplemental assistance to local governments in identifying and meeting the public health and medical needs of victims of a disaster. CDPHE coordinates Colorado health, medical and mortuary resources that may be needed to supplement depleted county and municipal assets in response to emergency public health, medical care and mortuary needs of a significant natural or manmade disaster.

## Local

- County Resolution No. R004-036 Establishing the Douglas County Incident Management Team. March 23, 2004,
- County Resolution No. R005-175 Creating the Office of Emergency Management and authorize the preparation of a Local or Inter-jurisdictional Disaster Emergency Plan. December 13, 2005,
- County Resolution No. R-011-114, approving Disaster-Emergency Mutual Aid and Disaster-Emergency Resources Assistance in and among the Town of Castle Rock, The Town of Parker, The City of Lone Tree, The City of Castle Pines, The Town of Larkspur, The Douglas County School District, The Highlands Ranch Metro District, The Douglas County Public Library District and Douglas County, Colorado by the Board of County Commissioners and the Sheriff, August 23, 2011.
- County Resolution No. R012-092, approving Intergovernmental Agreement for Emergency Management State-wide, September 11, 2012,

AND

- County Resolution No. R016-\_\_\_\_, defining Emergency and Disaster Authorizations and approving the Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan, September\_\_\_\_, 2016.

### 3.0 Assumptions and Considerations

- This Mass Fatality Annex is developed to support the County EOC and to provide guidance to those responsible for coordination services for field/response teams.
- Hospitals and medical centers may have their own plan for mass fatality management.
- This annex is designed to support public safety in coordinating their mass fatality response to a natural or man-made disaster. Coordination and operations for mass fatality management that arises out of a criminal event (i.e. mass shooter/mass knife attack, etc.) will be managed according to applicable law enforcement policies and standard operating procedures. Public safety and local hospitals will communicate to coordinate family assistance, reporting, crisis information and other sensitive data.
- The Coroner is ultimately responsible for mass fatality management in Douglas County resulting from a disaster. Under Colorado law, the county Coroner's office is the agency vested with the authority and responsibility to determine the cause and manner of death of any fatalities, victim identification, and notification of next of kin from incidents which occur within the county jurisdiction.
- The Coroner may or may not be deployed to the EOC, having responsibilities at the fatalities incident site, at examination center operations and/or at the FAC. If not deployed to the EOC the Coroner will appoint a representative to the EOC as the Fatalities Management Unit Leader to coordinate County resources and request and respond to mutual aid services. The Coroner or Fatalities Management Unit Leader will respond to the EOC when activated in support of a mass fatalities event. The Fatalities Management Unit will co-locate with the ESF 8 Lead if ESF 8 is activated.
- The Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit will be in charge of coordinating local and regional mass fatality operations utilizing this annex.

- The Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit will support other local, state and federal agencies that may have jurisdiction for the event including, but not limited to, the Sheriff's Office, National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB), etc.
- Depending on the capabilities of the county facilities and personnel, and the number of fatalities, the Coroner's Office resources may be quickly overwhelmed.
- For incidents resulting in mass fatalities which overwhelm local resources, mutual aid (written or unwritten) may be requested from those agencies which make up the North Central Region (NCR).
- In a localized mass fatality incident, not all bodies may require an exam. The need for exams to be performed will be incident-specific, and will be determined by the Coroner's Office who has primary jurisdictional authority.
- The Coroner will adhere to the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS) when used in managing operations.
- Resource mobilization is coordinated to effectively manage, order, and supply mass fatality response resources with operational coordination for local, regional, and statewide support. Resource mobilization will work to benefit the respective Coroner's offices, the Incident Command System, Financial Tracking and Documentation activities, and will be facilitated through local, county, and state Emergency Operations Centers (EOC).

#### **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **4.1 Overview**

Providing mass fatality services during a natural or man-made disaster in the county is a responsibility of the Douglas County Coroner. However, there are many situations that would exceed the County's capabilities to conduct all phases of a mass fatality response (the three phases being field incident management, examination center operations and the FAC). Regional, State and/or Federal government services will likely be needed to augment County services. Requests for assistance would be initiated through the NCR Fatality Response Team (see the NCR Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan), then to the State EOC or Federal Coordination centers.

In the case of a transportation accident on State or Federal highways, or due to an aircraft crash, both the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan and the National Response Framework are activated to meet their respective responsibilities for mass fatality management under their jurisdictional plans. (For aircraft, train and commercial common carrier crashes, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will assign staff to field investigations, examination center detail and FACs.)

The Coroner's Office or its' designee is assigned to the Douglas County EOC Fatalities Management Unit, and is responsible for designating staff and training representatives of their agency, ensuring that appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for field activities are developed and maintained. The Coroner's office must also identify staff and maintain notification procedures to ensure appropriately trained staff are available for extended emergency duty in the County EOC, field disaster sites, examination center operations, and FAC.

## 4.2 Roles and Responsibilities Reference Matrix

The matrix table below shows the primary entities that will be involved with Mass Fatalities Management during a disaster situation in the County; it is not inclusive of all the possible entities that could be involved. For example, in a large regional disaster, other county and regional entities, as well as the State and Federal Government may also be responsible for providing response and fatality management services.

County personnel that are trained to provide services during mass fatality incidents may also be requested to provide mutual aid regionally during an event in a nearby county. Mass fatality events require a significant number of trained personnel to effectively complete the functions.

Roles and Responsibilities Table In support of Non-Crime Scene* Mass Fatality Management Operations								
L - Lead S - Support								
Cooperating Agency	Fatalities Management Unit - EOC	Field Incident Management	Temporary Field Examination center	FAC	Designated Memorial Site	Mass Fatality Field Support/Logistics	Security	Public Information
<b>Douglas County</b>								
Coroner	L	L*	L	S		S	S	S
Tri-County Public Health		S	S	S				S
Douglas County Sheriff's Office		S	S	S	U		L	
Victim's Assistance					S			
FFESS				L	U			
Red Cross				S				S
AllHealth Network				S	S			
OEM	S	S		S		S		S
JIC/PIO		S		S				L
<b>North Central Region</b>								
NCR Fatality	S	S	S	S		S		S



<b>Response Team</b>								
<b>State of Colorado</b>								
	S	S		S		S		S

\* The DCCO has lead for body disposition in the field for natural and man-made disasters but operates in a support role with the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office or the NTSB as the Lead entity if the scene is deemed a crime scene.

**4.3 Local Government Entities**

The following local government entities have a role in preparedness and implementation during a disaster requiring mass fatality services. Some have a primary role and are always activated, and some provide support as needed and are called upon by their emergency managers.

**4.3.1 Douglas County Office of Emergency Management/EOC/ESF 8**

The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will support the Coroner with preparing staff during County training and exercise programs. Training and exercises, especially those that involve the activation and use of the Douglas County EOC, greatly enhance the ability of all participants to operate in the case of an actual event.

During a disaster event, OEM will provide leadership in the EOC and support the decision making, coordination and situation status development for the Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit., as it will for all staff. If there is a need for mass fatality site operations, examination center operations or a FAC, OEM will support the coordination of the multiple EOC functions that will be needed to provide appropriate services for the County.

OEM will ensure that the Coroner’s needs for carrying out its responsibilities in a mass fatality event are met by supporting the Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit’s lead role in managing the mobilization, management and tracking of the resources needed to successfully manage all phases of the mass fatality event.

OEM will ensure that the PIO position is established at the EOC, and will establish a Joint Information Center (JIC), or liaise with a regional, state or Federal JIC, if required.

**4.3.2 Douglas County Coroner/ESF 8 -Mass Fatality Unit**

On a day-to-day basis, the county Coroner is responsible for conducting investigations to determine the manner of death, notifying the next of kin, managing the proper movement of human remains and operates the central examination center where remains are housed and exams take place.

In a mass fatality disaster, these same skills are needed, but expanded in scope to deal appropriately with the scale of the disaster and numbers of fatalities. The Coroner is the lead in managing all phases of the mass fatality operations.

There are numerous scenarios when State or Federal agencies will also assume authority for mass fatality incidents and in these cases the county Coroner will work in a Unified Command with their colleagues. Examples include mass fatality incidents occurring on State or Federal highways, incidents involving crashes of commercial airliners, incidents recognized as initiated by terrorists or incidents which are federally declared disasters.

The Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit of the County EOC will activate in any incident involving multiple disaster related fatalities. The Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit will coordinate in the EOC to request skilled staff and volunteers. If the disaster-related mass fatality operations needs are beyond the resource capacity of the Coroner, Sheriff's Office and county, they will call up trained staff and medical professionals via the NCR Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan and will assure that these resources are tracked through the County EOC resource mobilization, management and tracking system.

#### **4.3.3 Tri-County Health Department/ESF 8 -Public Health Unit**

Tri-County Public Health Department (TCHD) may serve in two roles during a mass fatality incident: ESF #8 Lead and as the local public health department. In the roles as ESF #8 Lead, TCHD will coordinate with the county coroner and other external partners for the provision of trained workers and staff to support survivors and mass fatality response staff, including trained medical personnel, and other staff as requested through the EOC. TCHD may also serve to support in the acquisition of additional supplies required in response to the incident such as PPE, body bags, etc. In its primary role as the local public health department, TCHD will provide incident specific guidance regarding infectious diseases to include but not limited to A TCHD representative is the ESF 8 Public Health Lead for the Douglas County EOC during a disaster and is either located in the county EOC or in the TCHD Departmental Operations Center (DOC). Regardless of location, the TCHD ESF 8 Lead works in concert with the Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit of the EOC in providing support to the Coroner's Office in their capacity as Lead for a Mass Fatality disaster.

If the mass fatality is related to an infectious disease, TCHD will be serving as either incident command or in a unified command in response to the incident. TCHD will coordinate with emergency management to obtain a disaster declaration in order to access additional resources and alleviate certain rules and restrictions as related to the health and medical response to the incident.-

#### **4.3.4 Douglas County Victim Assistance Unit**

The Douglas County Victim Assistance Unit responds to victims of crimes and family survivors in cases of violent and/or sudden death. Advocates address emotional issues, confusion and trauma. Advocates also make long-term referrals to help victims get on the path of recovery. They also act as liaison between the criminal justice system and the victim. The program is supported by a coordinator, three advocates, one part-time advocate and dedicated victim assistance volunteers. An advocate is always available for crisis response.

In a large scale mass fatality disaster the Victim Assistance Unit will coordinate with the Behavioral Health component of the ESF 8 Annex. An activation of the Behavioral Health component of the ESF 8 Annex would usually include assurance that mental health resource are deployed to appropriate locations, including the FAC and any designated memorial site.

#### **4.3.5 AllHealth Network/ESF 8 - Behavioral Health Unit**

The AllHealth Network (AHN) (formerly Arapahoe/Douglas Mental HealthNetwork) is the network of mental and behavioral health providing services to Douglas County. In a mass fatality incident AHN would have responsibility for activating and providing trained staff to the FAC, especially for crisis and grief counseling, and family support services. The AllHealth Network may also be activated to respond to a designated memorial site to assist with crisis and grief counseling and referrals not only for family members and friends at that site but also for affected members of the public who may benefit from support and mental health referrals.

In a large scale mass fatality disaster TCHD, as the ESF Co-Lead, will coordinate with the Behavioral Health component of the response under the provisions of the ESF 8 Annex. This coordination includes assurance that: behavioral health response related messaging need will be provided to the PIO, resource needs will be communicated to partners, and all situation status data will be provided to the ESF 8 Co-Leads and the EOC Situation Unit.

### **4.4 State of Colorado**

#### **4.4.1 Colorado Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management**

The Colorado Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DSHEM) is responsible for standing up the State Emergency Operations Center to support the operational areas with coordination of mutual aid requests, gathering situation status information, providing public information support , and for providing technical expertise as needed. DSHEM also provides updates to the Governor and requesting resources as needed.

#### **4.4.2 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment**

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) provides technical assistance to the county as requested during any mass fatality incident. During a mass fatality incident that is caused by a pandemic or other influenza, CDPHE will have additional responsibilities for decision making, data collection, laboratory services, healthcare facility readiness and action steps regarding the control of the outbreak and the number of fatalities. They will also be available for support to incident sites (field operations, examination center, and FACs) and provide support regarding the control of an outbreak. Such authorities are outlined in the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan and all coordination will be funneled through TCHD as the ESF 8 Lead and local public health lead.

### **4.5 Federal Partners**

#### **4.5.1 National Transportation Safety Board**

In the event of an aviation or passenger rail accident, the National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) will be the lead agency in establishing and operating a FAC. NTSB will coordinate assistance efforts with local and state authorities, including the coroner, local/County/State law enforcement, an emergency management agency, hospitals and other emergency support personnel.

During incidents in which NTSB does not have a legislated role to coordinate FAC services, the NTSB may serve as a technical advisor to assist local jurisdictions with FAC Operations.

#### **4.5.2 Department of Health and Human Services National Disaster Medical System, Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Team**

A Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Team (DMORT) may be activated in the event of a mass-fatality incident if Douglas County Coroner and NCR Regional Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan resources are overwhelmed to assist with victim identification and mortuary services. DMORT may provide the complete suite of mortuary operations resources and staff members to an incident. They can also establish and provide support staff to the incident FAC. The DMORT would need to be requested by the Colorado SEOC once all local and state resources were overwhelmed. A Presidential disaster declaration is required before DMORT can be activated.

#### **4.5.3 Federal Bureau of Investigation**

After an incident, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a member of the US Department of Justice (DOJ), may be able to aid in fingerprint collection and supplementing laboratory assets. In the event that an incident is officially classified as a criminal act the FBI assumes a leadership role in unified command and may coordinate communications with families and friends to gain and provide information about the incident. The FBI will also be the lead agency on coordinating Crime Victim Assistance for families.

#### **4.5.4 Non-Profit Organization - American Red Cross**

In the event of a legislated aviation or passenger rail accident the American Red Cross (ARC) is the lead agency of family care and crisis intervention after the accident. ARC may also be requested by the county to support a non-legislated Mass Fatality event. They will coordinate and manage the numerous organizations and personnel offering counseling, religious and other support services to the operation. If necessary, they will also deploy a Critical Response Childcare Team to coordinate on-site childcare services.

In other mass casualty or mass fatality incidents, the ARC may be called on to help to provide Mental Health and Spiritual Care support to the FAC or provide other assistance depending on local resources and local plans.

### **5.0 Concept of Operations**

The Coroner and staff respond in a coordinated fashion to a mass fatality incident in the County. In an incident involving only a few individuals, the County Coroner may have the capacity to

manage the situation. However, in an incident involving numerous individuals, the County may need the support of other local, regional, state and federal staff to support the operations, including supporting the FAC, examination center operations site, field site management and public information.

### **5.1 Pre-Response/Initial Actions**

The Douglas County Coroner, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the Douglas County OEM work with County agencies, non-governmental partners, contracted resources and stakeholders to determine the disaster services support needed for mass fatality incidents.

### **5.2 Activation**

This annex will be implemented under any of the following circumstances:

- The Coroner determines it is appropriate to implement the plan
- OEM requests that the plan be implemented
- The County has declared a disaster that involve mass fatalities
- Mutual Aid requests from other local jurisdictions in the NCR have requested support.

The Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit of the EOC is activated during any mass fatality incident. Additional law enforcement personnel can be contacted via internal communications or dispatch as needed.

### **5.3 Mass Fatality Response Functions**

The key response functions for mass fatality management include:

- EOC coordination via the Coroner/Fatalities Management Unit
- Management of the mass fatality incident scene
- Establishing secondary sites for examination center operations (if the DCCO is at capacity)
- Establishing a mass fatality FAC
- Providing media with accurate messaging
- Provide mutual aid, as needed.

#### **5.3.1 Activate the Fatalities Management Unit in the EOC**

The Coroner or members of the Coroner's Office staff will fill the duties of the Coroner/Mass Fatalities Unit in the ESF 8 of the EOC. The staff members will follow the ESF 8 Policies and Procedures and ensure both staff and resources are coordinated for maximum support of disaster victims and their families. Assuming the Coroner will likely be in the field, the Coroner can delegate a Coroner's Office staff member to the County EOC.

#### **5.3.2 Management of the Mass Fatality Incident Scene**

Incident Command is used to manage all field tactical components of the mass fatality emergency. Coroners will assume the appropriate positions within the Operations Section as designated by the Incident Commander. The Operation Section is responsible for developing key branches, including an incident site recovery branch, a

security branch, a mortuary branch (that manages the admitting, processing and disposition of remains at examination center operations), and the FAC Branch.

### **5.3.3 Examination Center Operations**

Douglas County's body storage capacity is 78 deceased, and could be quickly exceeded during a mass fatality event. As a planning number, 10 or more deaths that occur as part of a mass fatality situation will trigger the activation of the Mass Fatality Annex.

When the Douglas County Coroner determines that county resources will not be sufficient to handle a mass fatality incident the Coroner will activate the NCR Mass Fatality Incident Response Plan and call upon partners in the NCR to provide personnel and resources to meet the needs of the incident. For planning purposes the NCR will utilize all NCR resources, and then seek assistance from the state to activate the State Resource Mobilization plan.

A temporary examination center will be considered only if all other options are utilized and/or are not feasible.

### **5.3.4 Establishing a Mass Fatality Family Assistance Center**

A FAC will be established for the family members of missing, unaccounted for and deceased persons, in order for them to obtain necessary information, resources and amenities following the incident. It also provides a central location for public officials to have access to the families to gather information in support of remains identification. Douglas County Fleet, Facilities and Emergency Services Support (FFESS) will establish and manage a FAC upon request by the Incident Commander or local OEM/EOC. Incident Command will coordinate with local law enforcement to secure the area around the FAC in order to create a safe place for the victims' families to gather. Victims Assistance will be available to provide support to the FAC and mental health referrals to victim's families.

The FAC will be established at an appropriate distance from the incident scene and in facilities that can accommodate any and all persons needing to access the services provided. Examples of appropriate facilities include a hotel, school or other public building. This facility will have areas available for large gatherings, if possible, as well as private areas for individual families.

A Victim Identification Center is a sub-set of the FAC designed to provide a space and resources for public officials to meet with families to gather information in support of remains identification and to distribute information to the families of the deceased. The Victim Identification Center is established at a distance from the larger FAC in order to protect the privacy of victims' families.

The American Red Cross can be invited by the county to manage a FAC on a longer term basis and has established and trained resources to provide FAC supporting personnel and resources.

### **5.3.5 Establishing a Designated Memorial Site**

When individuals have died in a sudden or shocking manner it has become common in the United States for spontaneous shrines to appear. These ad hoc memorials allow relatives, friends and the general public to acknowledge the circumstances of the death by leaving objects, notes or other remembrances as a public form of grieving. These temporary memorials sites often spring up at or near the location of the mass fatality event - creating issues in crowd control, scene security and management due to the influx of people and objects not related to the event itself.

In order to avoid issues it is advisable to formally designate a nearby area as the designated memorial site. This Designated Memorial Site will be established at an appropriate distance from the incident scene and in locations that can accommodate any and all persons wishing access to the site. This location will be an area available where people can come to express their grief, leave objects or hold faith based activities. Selection, set up and demobilization of a designated memorial site is the responsibility of Douglas County FFECS. Physical management of the site is the responsibility of the DCSO, the Sheriff's Office Community Support Volunteers (CSV's) as directed, or by any agency that the DCSO designates as the site manager. Victim support at the site is the responsibility of the Douglas County Victims Assistance Unit and can be supported by community based behavioral health responders such as AllHealth Network.

## **5.4 Post-Disaster Services**

### **5.4.1 Releasing the Scene and the Closure of Facilities**

The incident site will need to be confirmed safe for public reentry. If a temporary examination center was instituted, it will need to be cleaned, disinfected, and certified safe for public reentry. The FAC will need to be eventually closed, but will likely need to be kept open until all next of kin have been notified, the deceased have been properly interred, and family members no longer require the service of disaster counseling.

## **5.5 Public Relations**

During a mass fatality incident, the Incident Commander will coordinate with the Public Information Officer (PIO) at the scene to handle any media or public information needs.

**The PIO may not release any information regarding victim identification, number of fatalities, personal information, cause of death, etc., without consent from the Coroner.**

Public information will be coordinated by the jurisdiction's PIO and will include all agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions involved in the incident through the Joint Information Center (JIC). This will ensure information and messaging is coordinated and agreed to among all responding entities prior to dissemination. The incident PIO will release information to the public. Once family members are notified of the deceased, the Coroner's Office will wait 1 hour before providing victim names to the JIC. Names will be released through the incident PIO.

## Appendix A: Acronyms

AHN	AllHealth Network
ARC	American Red Cross
CDPHE	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
CRS	Colorado Revised Statutes
CSV	Community Service Volunteer
DHSEM	Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
DMORT	Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team
DOC	Departmental Operations Center
DOJ	Department of Justice
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FAC	Family Assistance Center
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
ICS	Incident Command System
JIC	Joint Information Center
NCR	North Central Region
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRF	National Response Framework
NTSB	National Transportation Security Board
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
PIO	Public Information Officer
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SEOC	State Emergency Operations Center
SEOP	State Emergency Operations Plan
TCHD	Tri-County Health Department
VAU	Victims Assistance Unit